

THE PEOPLE, THE PRESS AND THE 1988 CAMPAIGN
SURVEY REPORT

Conducted for:
TIMES MIRROR

Conducted by:

KEY FINDINGS

- o Public opinion toward news organizations continues to be less favorable than it was before the Iran-Contra story broke in late 1986. Favorability ratings for network television news and daily newspapers have recovered only slightly over the past year, and remain well below those recorded prior to Iran-Contra.

In general, Republican-oriented groups have a less favorable view of network television news than Democratic groups, with Enterprisers being most critical. Not all Republican groups, however, give network news lower than average favorability ratings -- Upbeats, in fact, given the networks above average ratings -- and a Democratic groups, the Seculars, are among the biggest critics of network television news.

- o The best known and best liked people in the news business -- network television anchormen -- have not escaped the loss of public favor. Fewer people today express highly favorable views of Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, and Dan Rather than did so two years ago.
- o Of the three anchormen, Dan Rather has suffered the most. In 1985, with his CBS Evening News the ratings leader, Rather had the distinction of being the public's favorite newsman. Today, his favorability ratings are no higher than those of Brokaw and Jennings and Rather has attracted more criticism than his peers.

Dan Rather is a lightning rod for Enterprisers' criticism of network television news. These economic Republicans are more than twice as likely to have an unfavorable opinion of Rather (30%) than they are to give Tom Brokaw (13%) or Peter Jennings (12%) a negative rating.

- o News stories that affect people on a personal level -- tragic accidents, life-or-death situations, reprisals against terrorists -- capture a great deal more public attention than stories dealing with major political or economic events. The recent news story about baby Jessica -- the infant girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well -- was followed very closely by more than two-thirds of Americans (69%). In contrast, fewer than half of the public (40%) paid this much attention to coverage of the October stock market crash, a story taking place in roughly the same time period and given exhaustive coverage by the news media.

Of the typology groups, only the Enterprisers and Seculars followed the stock market crash story as closely as the baby Jessica story.

- o Even for a political story, the 1988 presidential campaign is getting little public notice. Only 15% say they have been following coverage of the Democratic presidential candidates very closely; only 13% have been paying similar attention to coverage of the Republican candidates. Since Gallup has been tracking public attentiveness to contemporary news stories, no topic measured has received less attention. Moreover, there has been no increase in interest in campaign coverage since September.

Most attentive to coverage of the Democratic race are the Sixties Democrats and New Dealers. Moralists, social agenda Republicans, are giving coverage of the GOP candidates or closer look than the Enterprisers, the fiscally conservative party establishment.

- o Press performance in covering the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns is given very low ratings. More than one-third of those following coverage of each party's race give news organizations an "only fair" or "poor" evaluation of their performance. Coverage of the presidential campaigns is rated less favorably than coverage of the Iran-Contra affair, the previous low for any news story tested by Gallup.

- o The public's chief complaints about news coverage of the campaigns have to do with intrusiveness. Invasion of the candidates' personal lives is considered to be the most objectionable aspect of coverage. Press treatment of Gary Hart in this context is mentioned more often than any specific campaign event.

- o The public is bored by the "character issue" that has played such a large part in news coverage of the campaign and is dissatisfied with how the press has handled the issue. Compared with things like the candidates' positions on the issues and their qualifications and record, personal character is regarded by few people as the area they would like to see emphasized in news coverage of the candidates. While other aspects of coverage also get subpar evaluations, coverage of the character issue gets the poorest grades.

The Moralists are most likely to feel the character issue should be the focus of press coverage. The Upbeats, Seculars, and Sixties Democrats are inclined to prefer coverage that is issue-oriented.

The Seculars and the Partisan Poor give news organizations their lowest marks for their handling of the character issue.

- o The press is widely felt to have crossed the line separating responsible journalism from sensationalism in the case of the Gary Hart-Donna Rice story and in the story about Pat Robertson's first child being conceived out of wedlock. Less of a consensus is seen in opinion about coverage of Joe Biden's plagiarizing and the Dukakis campaign's use of videotapes to discredit Biden. For both the Biden and Dukakis stories, public opinion tilts toward the belief that news organizations acted properly in their reporting.

A majority of all political typology groups, even the Moralists, feel that Hart was wronged by the press.

- o The public expresses some clear preferences for what sorts of personal indiscretions by presidential candidates should be reported -- and which ones are best left unreported. Two-thirds majorities feel it is almost always appropriate to report a story dealing with a candidate evading income taxes, fudging his academic credentials, or faking his military record. A majority would nearly always favor disclosure if it was found that a candidate was homosexual. On the other hand, the majority don't feel that information about a candidate's extramarital affairs or a past marijuana arrest should be routinely published or broadcast. In fact, sizable numbers feel that marital infidelity and youthful involvement with marijuana -- even if there was an arrest -- are subjects that nearly always should be left unreported.

The most socially liberal groups, the Sixties Democrats and Seculars, express sharply different views from the other groups on whether a candidate's homosexuality is a legitimate topic for press coverage. A plurality of both groups would rarely, if every, want to see such information published or aired.

The Moralists are the only group to have a majority view that a candidate's extramarital affairs should almost always be fair game for press coverage. In the case of a past marijuana arrest, however, not even the Moralists would, in the majority, always want to see the story reported.

- o The role of the press in the presidential nominating process is criticized by the majority of the public. Six in ten believe that news organizations have too much influence in determining the eventual nominees. The system itself, however receives the endorsement of the majority. Less than a third would prefer to revert back to placing most of the power to select the nominees in the hands of party leaders and elected officials.

Old politics Democrats -- the New Dealers -- and the politically marginal Followers are those most likely to prefer the old system of selecting candidates. Among all other groups, the majority endorse the state primary system.

- o News organizations are often criticized for being too tough on certain types of candidates, in particular women, candidates identified with religious groups, candidates far behind in the race, and blacks. The public rarely sees the press going too easy on any type of candidate.

- o Despite all this fault-finding, there are some common press criticisms that do not apply to campaign '88. The amount of coverage is not seen as a problem -- most feel it is getting the attention it deserves -- and relatively few believe the coverage is politically biased or unfairly favors one candidate over another. This implies that the public doesn't believe the press was out to get Hart, Biden or Pat Schroeder, but instead feels news organizations got carried away in their efforts to get a good story or were misguided in their efforts to protect what they saw as the public interest.

- o The public values the press' role as a watchdog on politicians too much to give it up -- even if the watchdog has perhaps been overzealous in recent campaign coverage. The majority feel close scrutiny of political candidates is worth it, even if this might discourage many good people from running for office.

Most likely to question whether press scrutiny is worth the cost are the Disaffecteds, Bystanders, Seculars, and Sixties Democrats.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

Public Favorability Toward the Press

The public continues to regard news organizations less favorably than it did before news of the Iran-Contra affair changed public opinion. A Gallup/Times Mirror survey conducted last January found that the President's declining popularity had a fallout effect on other institutions, including the press. Since January, there has been some modest improvement in the favorability scores for news organizations. The proportion of the public expressing unfavorable views has decreased somewhat for both network television news (13% now vs. 22% in January) and local daily newspapers (13% vs. 19%). Current ratings, however, are substantially below those recorded earlier in 1986 and 1985, an "era of good feeling," when the President's high approval rating buoyed up ratings for other institutions. In July 1986 the proportion with a very favorable opinion was eleven percentage points higher for network news (30% vs. 19% now) and seven percentage points higher for local dailies (28% vs. 21%).

Cable News Network has seemingly been unaffected by the Iran-Contra fallout. In fact, CNN's favorability scores are actually higher than they were in June 1985, the only other time Gallup asked about CNN (total favorable 53% now vs. 44% in 1985). Of course, CNN has a much more restricted audience than the major network news department -- 44% can't rate or haven't heard of CNN.

Network television news may be taking some heat from those sympathetic to Ronald Reagan and the GOP for delivering the bad news about Iran-Contra. In general, Republican-oriented groups have a less favorable view of network television news than Democratic groups, with Enterprisers

being most critical. Interestingly, attitudes toward Cable News Network show no such political division, as it appeals about equally to both Republican and Democratic groups.

Criticism of the networks, however, is not limited to people with Republican sympathies and not all GOP groups tend to be critical. The optimistic Upbeats are among those least likely to have unfavorable views of network news (6%), and a Democratic group, the Seculars, are among the network's biggest critics (18% unfavorable).

There is less of a partisan slant to opinion of daily newspapers. Enterprisers are no more likely to be critical than are Democratic groups with a high level of political sophistication. The percent with an unfavorable opinion of "the daily newspaper you are most familiar with" is an identical 16% for Enterprisers, Seculars, and Sixties Democrats.

The best known and most well-liked people in the news business -- network television anchormen -- have not escaped the loss of public favor experienced by major types of news organizations. Fewer people today have highly favorable views of Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, and Dan Rather than did so two years ago. Of the three anchormen, Rather's ratings have fallen most. Forty percent had a very favorable view of the CBS anchor in June 1985; only a quarter (24%) have such highly positive views today. Rather's ratings are now statistically indistinguishable from those of his peers.

The survey provides evidence that Dan Rather's popularity has decreased from what it was six months ago. Last spring, 84% had a very or mostly favorable opinion of Rather, compared with 73% currently. In September, Rather stormed off the CBS Evening News set in a dispute over pre-emption of the start of his newscast by a sports event, resulting in

viewers' screens going blank for several minutes. The survey, however, provides no direct evidence on how much this event may have eroded his popularity.

Dan Rather, targeted in the past by conservative groups as a symbol of a liberally biased media, has been a focus of criticism for Enterprise Republicans. Enterprisers are more than twice as likely to have an unfavorable opinion of Rather (30%) than they are to give Tom Brokaw (13%) or Peter Jennings (12%) a negative rating.

TRENDS IN FAVORABILITY RATINGS

	<u>Very Favorable</u> %	<u>Mostly Favorable</u> %	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u> %	<u>Very Unfavorable</u> %	<u>Never Heard Of</u> %	<u>Can't Rate</u> %	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Number of Interviews</u>
<u>Network TV News</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	19	62	10	3	*	6	100	(1501)
Apr/May 1987	21	63	11	3	*	2	100	(4244)
Jan 1987	19	55	16	6	--	4	100	(1502)
July 1986	30	53	10	4	--	3	100	(1504)
Aug 1985	30	51	8	4	*	7	100	(1018)
June 1985	25	59	8	2	*	6	100	(2104)
<u>Daily Newspapers</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	21	58	9	4	*	8	100	(1501)
Apr/May 1987	22	59	12	3	*	4	100	(4244)
Jan 1987	19	57	13	6	--	5	100	(1502)
July 1986	28	51	11	6	--	4	100	(1504)
Aug 1985	25	52	10	5	--	8	100	(1018)
June 1985	25	56	8	3	*	8	100	(2104)
<u>Cable News Network</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	23	30	3	2	6	36	100	(1501)
June 1985	20	24	7	1	10	38	100	(2104)
<u>Tom Brokaw</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	23	46	6	2	6	17	100	(1501)
Apr/May 1987	----- NOT ASKED -----							
June 1985	29	40	8	1	10	12	100	(2104)

TRENDS IN FAVORABILITY RATINGS

	<u>Very Favorable</u> %	<u>Mostly Favorable</u> %	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u> %	<u>Very Unfavorable</u> %	<u>Never Heard Of</u> %	<u>Can't Rate</u> %	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Number of Interviews</u>
<u>Peter Jennings</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	25	49	5	2	4	15	100	(1501)
Apr/May 1987	----- NOT ASKED -----							
June 1985	33	41	8	1	8	9	100	(2104)
<u>Dan Rather</u>								
Oct/Nov 1987	24	49	9	5	3	10	100	(1501)
Apr/May 1987	24	60	6	2	3	5	100	(4244)
June 1985	40	41	8	2	4	5	100	(2104)

Public Attentiveness to News Topics

News stories that affect people at an emotional level -- tragic accidents, life-or-death situations, reprisals against terrorists -- capture a great deal more public attention than stories dealing with major political or economic events. The explosion of the space shuttle Challenger is the news story most closely followed by the public over the past two years, according to the Gallup/Times Mirror research. The current survey, however, finds the recent news story about baby Jessica -- the little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well -- to be second to only the Challenger among all stories tested in catching people's attention. The baby Jessica story was followed very closely by more than two-thirds of Americans (69%). In contrast, coverage of the October stock market crash, a huge story getting extensive coverage in a similar time period, was very closely followed by fewer than half of the public (40%).

Of the typology groups, only the economically-minded Enterprisers and the Seculars, the group closest to the popular conception of yuppies, followed the stock market story as closely as the baby Jessica story.

Most Americans have yet to tune into coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign. Even for a political story, the campaign is getting little notice. Only 15% say they have been following news coverage of the Democratic presidential candidates very closely; only 13% have been paying similar attention to the Republican candidates. Since Gallup has been tracking public attentiveness to contemporary news stories, no topic measured has received less public attention. Moreover,

there has been no increase in public interest since September, when 14% said they were very closely following coverage of the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates.

PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO SELECTED NEWS TOPICS

	<u>Follow Very Closely</u> %	<u>Total Follow Closely*</u> %
Challenger	88	96
Little girl in well	69	90
Libya air strikes	58	85
TWA hostage crisis	48	79
Chernobyl	46	80
The stock market crash	40	68
U.S. escort of Kuwaiti ships in Persian Gulf	37	72
Achille Lauro	35	68
Iran-Contra hearings	33	72
Gary Hart - Donna Rice	28	63
Iran-Contra affair	20	67
Discussions of U.S./Soviet arms agreement	19	60
Bork nomination	17	40
Democratic presidential candidates	15	43
Republican presidential candidates	13	41

*Combined very and fairly closely.

The Sixties Democrats and the New Dealers, the groups found to be most likely to participate in next year's primaries and caucuses, are paying most attention to coverage of the Democratic race, with 59% and 55%, respectively, paying very or fairly close attention. Moralists, social agenda Republicans, are more closely following the GOP race than are the Enterprisers, the fiscally conservative party establishment (61% vs. 53%). This may be good news for candidates like Jack Kemp and Pat Robertson who are non-traditional alternatives to establishment figures George Bush and Bob Dole.

Among the Independent groups, the Upbeats, Seculars and, surprisingly, the Followers, report higher levels of attention to the campaigns than do the Bystanders and the Disaffecteds.

Press Coverage of the '88 Campaign

The survey finds widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the press in covering the campaigns. More than one-third (35%) of those who are following news coverage of each party's race give news organizations an "only fair" or "poor" evaluation of their performance. Coverage of the presidential campaigns is rated more negatively than coverage of any news topic previously tested. The previous low was found for the Iran-Contra affair coverage, receiving a total negative rating of 31%.

It may come as some small consolation to news organizations that people who have most closely followed coverage of each party's presidential candidates give press performance more favorable ratings than

those who have paid it less attention. In fact, about a quarter of those following each race very closely give press performance an "excellent" rating.

<u>Quality of Coverage</u>	<u>Coverage of Democratic Race</u>		<u>Coverage of Republican Race</u>	
	<u>Followed Very Closely</u> %	<u>Followed Fairly Closely</u> %	<u>Followed Very Closely</u> %	<u>Followed Fairly Closely</u> %
Excellent	24	9	24	8
Good	43	52	44	51
Only fair	23	31	26	32
Poor	8	5	4	6
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100

The public's chief complaints about the way news organizations have covered the campaign have to do with intrusiveness, something that has historically been one of the public's major problems with the press. Far more often than any other area of criticism, invasion of the candidate's private lives is cited by respondents as the one thing they most dislike about campaign coverage. Press treatment of Gary Hart in this context is mentioned more often than any specific campaign event. Gallup surveys taken around the time the Donna Rice story became public showed a solid majority of Americans disapproving of the Miami Herald's decision to stake out Hart's townhouse to verify the Rice allegations.

The Character Issues

Press intrusiveness has become an even greater factor in coverage of campaign '88 than it might have been otherwise due to the large part the "character issue" has played. The survey suggests that the public is bored by the character issue and is displeased with how the press has handled the issue. Relative to candidates' positions on issues and their qualifications to serve as President, personal character is regarded by few people (9%) as the proper focus of news coverage. And while other aspects of coverage get subpar evaluations -- roughly half give the press "only fair" or "poor" grades for covering the issues (49%) and candidates' qualifications (51%) -- handling of the character issue gets the poorest marks. One-half (49%) rate the press negatively on character coverage, including one-fifth (20%) who give it the lowest rating of "poor."

The Seculars and the Partisan Poor give the press the lowest marks for their handling of character -- 63% and 56%, respectively, give such coverage a negative rating. The Moralists are the group most likely to

feel character should be the focus of the coverage (17%), but even among this group there is considerable dissatisfaction with press performance (46% negative on character). The Upbeats, Seculars, and Sixties Democrats, all socially liberal types, would most like to change the subject to issues.

In their delving into the candidates' lives in pursuit of character, the press is widely felt to have crossed the line separating responsible journalism from sensationalism when reporting the Gary Hart-Donna Rice story and in the story that Pat Robertson's first child was conceived out of wedlock. A majority of all political typology groups, even the Moralists, feel that Hart was wronged by the press. Less of a consensus is seen in opinion about coverage of Joe Biden's plagiarizing and about the Dukakis campaign's use of videotapes to discredit Biden. For both the Biden and Dukakis stories, public opinion tilts toward the belief that news organizations acted properly in their reporting. Roughly a third, however, are critical of press handling the Dukakis story and more than a third (36%) take the press to task for the Biden story.

Defining the Boundaries of Character Coverage

The public has some clear preferences for what sorts of personal indiscretions by presidential candidates should be routinely reported by the press, and which are best left unreported. Two-thirds majorities feel it is almost always appropriate to report a story dealing with a candidate evading his income taxes (65%), fudging his academic credentials (64%), or faking his military record (68%). A majority (55%) would nearly always favor disclosure if it was found that a candidate was homosexual. On the other hand, the public feels it has a less urgent right to know

about a candidate's sexual indiscretions and past drug involvement. A majority don't feel that information about a candidate's extramarital affairs or a marijuana arrest during a candidate's college days should be routinely published or broadcast. In fact, sizable numbers feel that marital infidelity and youthful involvement with marijuana -- even if there was an arrest -- are matters that nearly always should be left unreported. The surveys findings on the marijuana arrest support recent Newsweek/Gallup survey results showing that the public did not feel Supreme Court nominee Douglas Ginsburg's past marijuana use had much to do with his suitability for the Court.

The most socially liberal groups, Sixties Democrats and Seculars, express sharply different views from other typology groups on the question of whether a candidate's homosexuality is a legitimate topic for press coverage. As shown in the following table, a plurality of both groups would rarely, if ever, want to see such information published or aired. Fittingly, the Moralists are the only group to take a majority view that candidates' extramarital affairs should almost always be fair game for press coverage. In the case of the past marijuana arrest, however, not even the Moralists would, in the majority, always report the story.

ATTITUDES TOWARD REPORTING STORIES ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATES' PERSONAL MORALITY

Feel Press Should Almost Always Report:

	<u>Candidate is</u> <u>Homosexual</u> %	<u>Candidate</u> <u>Had A Past</u> <u>Marijuana Arrest</u> %	<u>Number of</u> <u>Interviews</u>
Total	55	36	(1501)
Enterprisers	58	31	(181)
Moralists	78	44	(149)
Upbeats	52	40	(145)
Disaffecteds	60	32	(165)
Bystanders	46	36	(94)
Followers	58	45	(110)
Seculars	37	25	(136)
'60s Democrats	32	26	(143)
New Dealers	71	42	(141)
Passive Poor	60	51	(116)
Partisan Poor	50	29	(121)

Press Influence on the Nominating Process

The public is critical of the press' role in the presidential nominating process. Rather than being an observer and reporter of events, the press itself is seen as a participant in the process. Six in ten (59%) believe that news organizations have too much influence in determining the eventual nominees of the two parties. The system itself, however, which allows the press to be as influential as it is, receives the endorsement of the majority. Fewer than one in three (30%) would prefer that the parties revert back to the old system of selecting the nominees, putting most of the power in the hands of party leaders and elected officials.

Old politics Democrats -- the New Dealers -- and the marginally politically involved Followers are the groups who most prefer to turn the process over to the politicians. Among all other typology groups, the majority endorse the state primary system.

PREFERRED SYSTEM FOR CHOOSING PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

	<u>State Primary Elections</u> %	<u>Let Convention Delegates Decide</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Number of Interviews</u>
Total	56	30	14	100	(1501)
Enterprisers	57	30	13	100	(181)
Moralists	57	30	13	100	(149)
Upbeats	70	21	9	100	(145)
Disaffecteds	61	27	12	100	(165)
Bystanders	44	27	29	100	(94)
Followers	45	36	19	100	(110)
Seculars	62	26	12	100	(136)
'60s Democrats	61	33	6	100	(143)
New Dealers	42	37	21	100	(141)
Passive Poor	64	30	6	100	(116)
Partisan Poor	54	33	13	100	(121)

With Gary Hart and Joe Biden knocked out of the Democratic presidential race after controversies involving the press, it is no surprise that the public feels news organizations are often too tough on presidential candidates. In fact, for all seven types of candidates tested in the survey, the public was more likely to feel the press was too tough, rather than too easy, on the candidate. The only possible exception to this rule is that sizable number (29%) of those with extremely conservative views feel the press is too easy on candidates with liberal views. In the public mind, those candidates particularly likely to get tough treatment from the press are women candidates (48%), candidates identified with religious groups (36%), candidates well behind the rest of the field (31%), and black candidates (30%).

Press Performance and the Watchdog Roles

Despite all this fault-finding, there are some common press criticisms that do not much apply to campaign '88. Overcoverage is not seen as a problem -- the majority (58%) believe the campaign is getting the right amount of coverage -- and relatively few feel coverage is politically biased or unfairly favors one candidate over another. This implies that the public doesn't believe the press was out to get Hart, Biden or Pat Schroeder, but instead feels that news organizations often get carried away in their efforts to get a good story or are misguided in their attempts to protect what they see as the public interest.

As previous Gallup/Times Mirror surveys have shown, the public highly values the role of the press as a watchdog on the politicians. Even when the public feels the watchdog has been overzealous -- in this case hitting the character issue too hard -- it is unwilling to give up the watchdog.

The majority (59%) feel that close scrutiny of the private lives of presidential candidates is worth it, even if it might discourage many good people from running for office.

Most likely to question whether the press scrutiny of candidates' private lives is worth the costs are two Democratic groups, the Sixties Democrats and Seculars, groups who have seen liberal candidates' campaigns ended after embarrassing press reports, along with the Republican-oriented Disaffecteds and the apolitical Bystanders.

In sum, the public is critical of the way the press has handled its coverage of campaign '88, believing that news organizations too often invade presidential candidate's private lives and have too much influence on the nominating process. Despite these criticisms, the public still highly values the press' role as a watchdog over the politicians and would not like to see it stop scrutinizing the lives of those who seek the nation's highest office. Moreover, the public prefers to keep the current system of choosing presidential candidates in place, which almost ensures the press will play a large role in the screening process. What the public wants, for the most part, is for the press to step back from emphasizing personal indiscretions that may be personally embarrassing, but don't speak to fundamental values and suitability for the presidency. This means the press shouldn't hesitate to report information that reveals the candidate is fundamentally dishonest, but should think twice before reporting something that merely makes the candidate look bad.

Survey Methodology

For this survey, The Gallup Organization interviewed a nationally representative sample of adults, age 18 years and over, by telephone between October 25 and November 4, 1987. The margin of sampling error is \pm three percentage points.

1-3 = BLANK

N = 1501

CARD 1

SEX: M[] F[]

INTERVIEWER'S NAME: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

INTERVIEWER'S I.D.: _____ 6-7-8-

TIME FINISHED: _____

DATE: _____

LENGTH: _____

REP: _____ 9-10-

4-5-
G087141

PAGE: _____ 11-12-

13- 1[] PINK -- RSVP
2[] BLUE -- MCGRAW HILL

THE PRESS AND THE '88 CAMPAIGN I

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I am _____ calling from The Gallup Organization of Princeton, New Jersey. I would like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home. (IF NO MALE, ASK:) May I speak to the oldest female, 18 years or older who is now at home.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as President?

14-
54 1[] Approve

35 2[] Disapprove

11 0[] Don't know

100

2. Now I'd like your opinion of some people and organizations. First, is your opinion of network TV news very favorable, mostly favorable, most unfavorable, or very unfavorable? (RECORD RESPONSE BELOW) Next, what is your overall opinion of (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? REPEAT FOR REST OF LIST.

Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard Of	Can't Rate
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- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------------|
| a. Network TV news | 15- | 1[] 19 | 2[] 62 | 3[] 10 | 4[] 3 | 5[] * | 0[] 6 = 100 |
| b. The daily newspaper you are most familiar with | 16- | 1[] 21 | 2[] 58 | 3[] 9 | 4[] 4 | 5[] * | 0[] 8 = 100 |
| c. Cable News Network (CNN) | 17- | 1[] 23 | 2[] 30 | 3[] 3 | 4[] 2 | 5[] 6 | 0[] 36 = 100 |
| d. Tom Brokaw | 18- | 1[] 23 | 2[] 46 | 3[] 6 | 4[] 2 | 5[] 6 | 0[] 17 = 100 |
| e. Peter Jennings | 19- | 1[] 25 | 2[] 49 | 3[] 5 | 4[] 2 | 5[] 4 | 0[] 15 = 100 |
| f. Dan Rather | 20- | 1[] 24 | 2[] 49 | 3[] 9 | 4[] 5 | 5[] 3 | 0[] 10 = 100 |

3. Next, I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past year. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. (READ LIST. START AT 'a')

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not Too Closely	Not At All Closely	Can't Say	
a. The stock market crash.	22- 1[]40	2[]28	3[]20	4[]12	0[]	* = 100
b. The little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well.	23- 1[]69	2[]21	3[]8	4[]2	0[]	* = 100
c. News about the Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination.	24- 1[]15	2[]28	3[]35	4[]21	0[]	1 = 100
d. News about the Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination.	25- 1[]13	2[]28	3[]36	4[]22	0[]	1 = 100
e. The U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf.	26- 1[]37	2[]35	3[]18	4[]9	0[]	1 = 100
	* 9/87 - 38	38	16	7	1	= 100

Trend * 9/87
N = 1903

Coverage of the Democratic & Republican candidates for the Presid. nomination	14	34	37	14	1	= 100
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* Typology Double-back

FOR EACH STORY FOLLOWED "VERY CLOSELY" OR "FAIRLY CLOSELY" IN Q. 3, ASK Q. 4:

4. In general, how would you rate the job news organizations have done in covering (INSERT ITEM FROM Q. 3. START AT 'a'): excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
a. The stock market crash.	27- 1 [] 42	2 [] 42	3 [] 12	4 [] 2	0 [] 2	= 100
b. The little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well.	28- 1 [] 66	2 [] 28	3 [] 5	4 [] *	0 [] 1	= 100
c. News about the Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination.	29- 1 [] 14	2 [] 49	3 [] 29	4 [] 6	0 [] 2	= 100
d. News about the Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination.	30- 1 [] 13	2 [] 49	3 [] 30	4 [] 5	0 [] 3	= 100
e. The U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf.	31- 1 [] 30	2 [] 50	3 [] 16	4 [] 2	0 [] 2	= 100

On another subject. . .

5. The Presidential nominees of the Republican and Democratic Parties are now chosen mainly through a system of state primary elections. Do you think this system is the best way to chose the parties' presidential nominees OR do you prefer the previous system of having the nominees chosen by convention delegates selected to make the choice?

³²⁻
56 1[] State primary elections

30 2[] Let convention delegates decide

14 0[] Don't know

100

6. How much influence do you feel news organizations have on which candidates become their parties' presidential nominees: too much influence, too little influence, or about the right amount of influence?

³³⁻
59 1[] Too much

5 2[] Too little

31 3[] Right amount

5 0[] Don't know

100

7. Is there anything you don't like about the way news organizations have covered the 1988 Presidential campaign so far? (IF YES, ASK: What do you dislike most?)

Intrusiveness (net) - 18% ^{Invasion of candidates' private lives - 17%}
Gary Hart Situation - 3%

34- Too Biased - 5%

35- Sensationalism - 3%

36- Too Much Coverage - 2%

Insufficient Reporting 2%

66 9[] Nothing

6 0[] Don't know

9. So far, do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage to the 1988 Presidential campaign, too little coverage to the campaign or the right amount of coverage?

27³⁷ 1[] Too much

16 2[] Too little

58 3[] Right amount

5 0[] Don't know

100

9. In reporting on a Presidential candidate, what one factor do you think should news organizations pay the most attention to: (READ)

38³⁹ 1[] A candidate's personal character?

41 2[] A candidate's stand on issues?

45 3[] A candidate's past experience and qualifications?

5 0[] DON'T KNOW

100

10. How would you rate the job news organizations are doing in reporting about the personal character of the candidates for President: excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

13³⁹ 1[] Excellent

34 2[] Good

29 3[] Only fair

20 4[] Poor

4 0[] Don't know

100

11. How would you rate the job news organizations are doing in reporting about the Presidential candidates' stands on the issues: excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

⁴⁰⁻
81 [] Excellent
392 [] Good
393 [] Only fair
104 [] Poor
40 [] Don't know
100

12. How would you rate the job news organizations are doing in reporting about the Presidential candidates' past experience and qualifications: excellent, good, only fair or poor?

⁴⁵⁻
81 [] Excellent
372 [] Good
383 [] Only fair
134 [] Poor
4 [] Don't know
100

13. In the way they have been covering the Presidential race so far, do you think that news organizations are biased in favor of the Democrats, biased in favor of the Republicans, or don't you think news organizations have shown any bias one way or the other?

⁴²⁻
161 [] Democrat bias
112 [] Republican bias
623 [] No bias
11 [] Don't know
100

14. Next, I'd like your views on how news organizations are covering each party's race for the presidential nomination so far. First, in their coverage of the Republican presidential candidates, do you think that news organizations are biased in favor of a candidate, biased against a candidate, or do you think news organizations have shown no bias in their coverage? (MARK ONLY ONE ANSWER CATEGORY)

⁴³⁻
12 1[] Biased in favor -- ASK Q. 15 THEN GO TO Q. 17

11 2[] Biased against -- GO TO Q. 16

2 3[] Biased in favor and biased against --ASK Q. 15 THEN ASK Q. 16

65 4[] No bias

10 0[] Don't know

GO TO Q. 17

100

15. Which candidate have they been biased in favor of? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

BASED ON TOTAL SAMPLE

⁴⁴⁻
6 1[] George Bush

2 2[] Bob Dole

* 3[] Pete duPont

1 4[] Alexander Haig

* 5[] Jack Kemp

1 6[] Pat Robertson

1 7[] OTHER (SPECIFY): _____

6 0[] Can't say

16. Which candidate have they been biased against? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

BASED ON TOTAL SAMPLE

⁴⁵41[]George Bush

| 2[]Bob Dole

*3[]Pete duPont

| 4[]Alexander Haig

| 5[]Jack Kemp

3 6[]Pat Robertson

*7[]OTHER (SPECIFY): _____

6 0[]Can't say

ASK ALL:

17. In their coverage of the Democratic presidential candidates so far, do you think that news organizations are biased in favor of a candidate, biased against a candidate, or do you think news organizations have shown no bias in their coverage? (MARK ONLY ONE ANSWER CATEGORY)

⁴⁶11[]Biased in favor -- ASK Q. 18 THEN GO TO Q. 20

10 2[]Biased against -- ASK Q. 19

2 3[]Biased in favor and biased against -- ASK Q.18 THEN ASK Q.19

6 6 4[]No bias

11 0[]Don't know

GO TO Q. 20

100

18. Which candidate have they been biased in favor of? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

BASED ON TOTAL SAMPLE

- 47 1 [] Bruce Babbitt
1 2 [] Joseph Biden
2 3 [] Michael Dukakis
1 4 [] Richard Gephardt
1 5 [] Albert Gore
2 6 [] Gary Hart
2 7 [] Jesse Jackson
1 8 [] Paul Simon
* 9 [] OTHER (SPECIFY): _____
7 0 [] Can't say

19. Which candidate have they been biased against? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

BASED ON TOTAL SAMPLE

- 48 ~~7~~ 1 [] Bruce Babbitt
2 2 [] Joseph Biden
* 3 [] Michael Dukakis
* 4 [] Richard Gephardt
* 5 [] Albert Gore
5 6 [] Gary Hart
3 7 [] Jesse Jackson
* 8 [] Paul Simon
* 9 [] OTHER (SPECIFY): _____
4 0 [] Can't say

ASK ALL:

20. All in all, do you think that news organizations are too easy, too tough, or are they generally fair in their coverage of the following types of presidential candidates: (READ LIST. START AT 'X')

	Too Easy	Too Tough	Fair	Don't Know	
a. A candidate who is the frontrunner	49- 1[]15	2[]24	3[]55	0[]6	=100
b. A female candidate	50- 1[]5	2[]48	3[]40	0[]7	=100
c. A candidate who is far behind in the race	51- 1[]12	2[]31	3[]48	0[]9	=100
X d. A candidate with liberal views	50- 1[]15	2[]22	3[]55	0[]8	=100
e. A candidate who is associated with a religious group	53- 1[]10	2[]36	3[]46	0[]8	=100
f. A black candidate	54- 1[]9	2[]30	3[]55	0[]6	=100
g. A candidate with conservative views	55- 1[]10	2[]23	3[]60	0[]7	=100

21. Some say that close scrutiny of political candidates by news organizations is not worth it, because it discourages too many good people from running for President. Others say that press scrutiny is worth it because it lets voters really know who is and is not personally qualified to be President. Which comes closer to your view?

~~54~~ 32[] Not worth it
 59 2[] Worth it
 9 0[] Don't know

 100

22. In reporting each of the following stories about presidential candidates, do you think news organizations went too far in the way they reported the story, or do you think news organizations acted properly? First. . . (READ LIST. START AT 'X')

	Went <u>Too Far</u>	Acted <u>Properly</u>	HADN'T HEARD ABOUT (VOL.)	No <u>Opinion</u>	
X a. The charges that Gary Hart was having an affair with Donna Rice	57 1[]68	2[]29	3[]1	0[]2	=100
b. The charges of plagiarism against Joe Biden	58- 1[]36	2[]42	3[]14	0[]8	=100
c. The charges that the Dukakis campaign gave news organizations video tapes showing that Biden plagiarized his speeches	59- 1[]32	2[]45	3[]15	0[]8	=100
d. The charges that Pat Robertson's first child was conceived out-of-wedlock	60- 1[]65	2[]25	3[]6	0[]4	=100

23. For each of the following stories about presidential candidates, please tell me whether you feel it should almost always be reported, whether it should sometimes be reported depending on the particular circumstances, or whether it should almost never be reported. (START AT 'a')

	Almost <u>Always</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	Almost <u>Never</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	
a. A candidate is a homosexual	61- 1[]55	2[]17	3[]26	0[]2	=100
b. A candidate is found to have exaggerated his academic record	62- 1[]64	2[]25	3[]9	0[]2	=100
c. A candidate is having an extramarital affair	63- 1[]41	2[]25	3[]32	0[]2	=100
d. A candidate is found to have been arrested for marijuana possession when he was a college student	64- 1[]36	2[]25	3[]37	0[]2	=100
e. A candidate is found to have exaggerated his record of military service	65- 1[]68	2[]22	3[]8	0[]2	=100
f. A candidate is found to have not paid federal income tax once in his past	66- 1[]65	2[]22	3[]11	0[]2	=100

24. In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

⁶⁷271[]Republican -- GO TO Q. 25

342[]Democrat -- GO TO Q. 26

333[]Independent

44[]No preference

*5[]Other party

20[]Don't know

100

GO TO Q. 27

Rep +
Leaver
42

Dem +
Leaver
47

25. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

⁶⁸111[]Strong

162[]Not strong

*0[]Don't know

GO TO Q. 28

26. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

⁶⁹131[]Strong

202[]Not strong

10[]Don't know

GO TO Q. 28

27. Would you say you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

⁷⁰751[]Republican

132[]Democratic

110[]Don't know

71 - 74 - BLANK

75 - 78 - RESP ID

79 - 80 - '01'

And now, just a few questions so that my office will have some information about the background of each respondent.

101. If "1" represents someone who is very conservative in politics and "6" represents someone who is very liberal, where on this scale of 1 to 6 would you place yourself? You may, of course, choose any number between 1 and 6. (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

CONSERVATIVE

LIBERAL

52- 1 2 3 4 5 6 0[]DK
 6 12 35 28 10 4 5 = 100

102. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

549 1[]Most of the time

322[]Some of the time

143[]Only now and then

44[]Hardly at all

10[]Don't know

100

103. How often would you say you vote -- always, nearly always, part of the time, or seldom?

549 1[]Always

302[]Nearly always

553[]Part of the time

04[]Seldom

05[]OTHER (SPECIFY): _____

06[]NEVER VOTE (VOLUNTEERED)

60[]Don't know

100