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# Dole's '74 Senate race got down and dirtier

Republican Sen. Bob Dole faced a fierce challenge from Democratic Rep. Bill Roy in 1974. A series of Dole television ads fueled the bitter campaign.

By Richard Ben Cramer

The ads showed a standard campaign poster of Bob Dole, and off-camera, a narrator said:

"Bill Roy says Bob Dole is against the Kansas farmer." (FWAP ... a big glob of slimy mud hit the poster, and slid down Dole's face.)

"Roy says Bob Dole voted to cut school lunches." (FWAP ... another glob of mud.)

"Roy says Bob Dole voted against cuts in the federal budget." (FWAP ...)

Then the announcer rebutted all the charges, and said Dole was for budget-cutting, school lunches, and the Kansas farmer. ... Meanwhile, the film was reversed, the mud started flying off the poster, leaving a handsome and smiling Bob Dole.

"All of which makes Bob Dole look pretty good," the narrator said. "... And makes Bill Roy look like just another mudslinger."

The ads caused an uproar. Kansans had never seen their politics played out so graphically.



Editor's note: This is the third of four excerpts from journalist Richard Ben Cramer's book, "What It Takes: The Way to the White House," published by Random House.

Half the voters thought these were Bill Roy's ads — they were furious: How could he fling that slime at Dole? The other half understood they were Dole ads — they were mad at Dole for throwing mud at his own face! ... Voters called the TV stations, wrote letters to the papers, they denounced dirty campaigning and candidates who sullied the airwaves — and



Dole



Roy

Kansas!

Then, too, the Roy campaign decided not to answer the anti-abortion nuts. They were after Roy as an obstetrician who had performed abortions when the health of his patients required them. In fact, Roy had hated abortion since his residency in Detroit, when he watched a teenage girl die in his emergency room because a back-alley abortionist had perforated her uterus. But the Roy campaign decided not to "dignify" the issue. Abortion was a matter of medical ethics — and Roy was, first and foremost, a doctor. He'd jumped from medicine to Congress, in 1970, in a three-month campaign — politics was not his life.

He would find out, it was Bob Dole's life.

The great confrontation was the half-hour Agriculture Debate at the Kansas State Fair, in Hutchin-

son. Dole insisted on the Lincoln-Douglas format — no moderator, no panel, just the two candidates, toe-to-toe, in a tent, and on statewide TV. Both candidates tried to pack the arena. The Dole crowd, Russell folks, were convinced that Roy's people were nothing but thugs.

Those Roy people were cheering when their man asked Dole:

"Why did you support legislation to do away with the Department of Agriculture, when it's so important to the farmers of Kansas?"

Dole didn't know what legislation Roy was talking about. (His staff had put together a fat briefing book — last minute, of course, dictated from phone booths — Bob never looked at it.) Dole hemmed and hawed: He couldn't answer.

With one minute left, Dole strode to the podium. "Why do you do abortions?" Dole said. "And why do you favor abortion on demand?"

There was an instant's hush in the tent ... the crowd began to boo. This was so ugly ... hundreds of people — not just Roy's crowd — were hooting Dole back to his chair.

Roy stammered out words, but

nothing like an answer. He knew he had less than 30 seconds. The statewide broadcast ended with his senseless mumble into the microphone, the angry hoots of the crowd, and Bob Dole stalking off stage.

Dave Owen (a key campaign aide to Dole) found an account of Dole's war service in a vets' magazine; he had the story reprinted on hundreds of thousands of fliers, under the headline GUTS! ... then dispatched crews in motor homes to hand them out — for days at a time, one Main Street after another. It was the first time the Bob Dole story had been told in anything other than whispers.

In the end, there was also a mailing to Legion vets, which alleged (in another headline): THE ONLY MILITARY TERM BILL ROY KNOWS IS AWOL. Then there was a little asterisk. You had to go to the next page to find a box that explained: Bill Roy was absent from the House of Representatives for two votes on military matters. (They'd happened to fall on Fridays — Roy was back in Kansas.)

In the end, there were stops at local high schools, where Dole would tell the kids, at the close: "Go home and ask your parents if

they know how many abortions Bill Roy has performed."

In the end, the mudslinger ads went back on TV — no one seemed to think they were shocking anymore ... By that time, there were newspaper ads, too, showing a skull and crossbones: one bone was labeled "Abortion" the other "Euthanasia." Underneath, it said: "Vote Dole." By that time, the last week (especially that Sunday of the last weekend), there were thousands of fliers found on windshields. Those showed photographs of dead babies in garbage cans: "Vote Dole."

Dole said this stuff didn't come from him. He was trying to stop it. This kind of thing didn't help him!

But it did.

In the end, Bob Dole was returned to the Senate. On election night, his supporters gathered in jubilation at that Ramada, in Topeka.

Dole would not come downstairs to speak till after 2 o'clock the next morning. Dave Owen said they had it won. The reporters downstairs said Dole had it won. The network TV said Dole had won. But Dole called 105 county clerks before he would claim it.

Wednesday: Bob Dole loses the New Hampshire primary in 1988.

4A THE WICHITA EAGLE Wednesday, July 8, 1992

# New Hampshire left Dole haunted by missed chances

Republican Bob Dole won the Iowa primary in 1988, but when the campaign moved on to New Hampshire, Dole's effort began to unravel.

By Richard Ben Cramer

There was one chance to send a message, statewide: a televised debate at St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H. Dole spent most of his 90 minutes trying to be Nice ... and angling for a chance to answer Bush on taxes. But all of a sudden, from Dole's other side, Pete du Pont pulled out a copy of the standard New Hampshire no-tax pledge — and poked it at Dole.

"Sign it," du Pont said. Dole wasn't going to sign anything — couldn't hold it without his glasses! (If Dole were the kind to sign whatever they handed him, he could have saved himself a huge headache on the INF treaty — he could have signed on, like Bush, before he'd even seen the thing.)

But now he was squinting at this paper, on stage, on TV — with du Pont and everyone else staring at him ... what was he supposed to do? This kind of stunt was fine for du Pont. But if Dole got to be president, he was going to have to close a gap of \$200 billion a year.

Dole let the paper drop from his gaze. "Give it to George," he said. "I'd have to read it first."

Good line. Got a laugh. And Dole lost his chance to make his point on taxes.

Dole would replay that scene in his head for years afterward. Sometimes he'd lie awake at night, thinking what he could have said. Maybe he should have signed the damn thing.

It was certainly bad politics to refuse — his supporters said it killed his chances in New Hampshire. They said it was the only time in '88 that anyone lost on a matter of public policy.

It was over. The Big Guys were talking about the South, Super Tues-



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day, Illinois. But Dole knew it was over. The way Bush was organized down South, Dole's only chance was to win New Hampshire, to win everything on the way to Super Tuesday.

That night, George Bush won New Hampshire by nine points. Dole spent the night trying to be gracious: he hit his marks, he made his statement, he thanked his volunteers and supporters, he vowed to go on. He smiled ruefully and told the cameras: he'd made up a lot of ground in a week — he never expected things to be easy.

At the end of the night, the very end ... he was on live remote with NBC ... and who was next to Brokaw — beaming like the cohost of the big election special? George Bush! ... But Dole didn't know that. He had no monitor ... no one warned him. He was sandbagged. Brokaw said to Bush: Any message for Dole?

"Naw, just wish him well," Bush said. "And meet him in the South."

Then, Brokaw and Bush, both smiling, turned toward the monitors — to see Dole ... but he couldn't see them. He was sitting in a hotel room, looking at a camera lens. The

talk in his earpiece sounded like the chatter before any interview:

Senator, can we get a mike check? ...

Senator, can you hear Tom? ...

And then Brokaw's voice:

Senator? Any message for the vice president?

It was Dole's face on the air — but he didn't know that. The camera caught the dark flash in Dole's eyes, as he said:

"Yeah. Stop lying about my record."

Dole said later, he deserved one chance to tell the truth.

Elizabeth Dole said later, Bob was so tired ... he was not himself.

Of course, the wise-guy community said right away, Dole was a hatchet man. New Hampshire proved, the voters saw, Dole could never learn to be Nice.

What did it prove? What did any of it prove? All the work, all the people who helped him — little people who never took a dime, didn't want anything — they're the ones who got shafted for trying, against the odds. Dole thought he should have known. He blamed himself. There were a hundred things he could have done, could have tried. God knows, he tried, but ...

He couldn't sleep ... couldn't sleep at all, lay there all night, tried to lie still ... until he couldn't try anymore and it was five o'clock and there was no reason to lie in bed. That's when Dole came down to the lobby of the hotel and sat — no one around, he just sat. Pen in his hand. Careful suit. Perfect shirt, tie. And no one around. What would he have said, anyway? He was sorry? ... He was sorry. He didn't say that often ... but that's what it was, this time. This was his time. And now, it was over.

He'd lost it, lost the feeling — and the hope. It was always going to be tough in the South, even if he'd won New Hampshire. Bush had been making friends in the South for ... well, 10 years, probably more. People would say to Dole: "Well, we



Bob Dole, in Bedford, N.H., gets a kick out of a crowd of cheering children as he campaigns during the 1988 primary. His loss in New Hampshire effectively ended Dole's presidential hopes.

like you, Bob. But this is George's time."

When was Bob Dole's time?

This was his time. And they took it away! ... He'd lost before. He wasn't going to whine. But this time was different. This time, he couldn't sleep at all, couldn't stop his head: things that could have been different ... all the things he'd done ...

probably wrong — half the things, anyway.

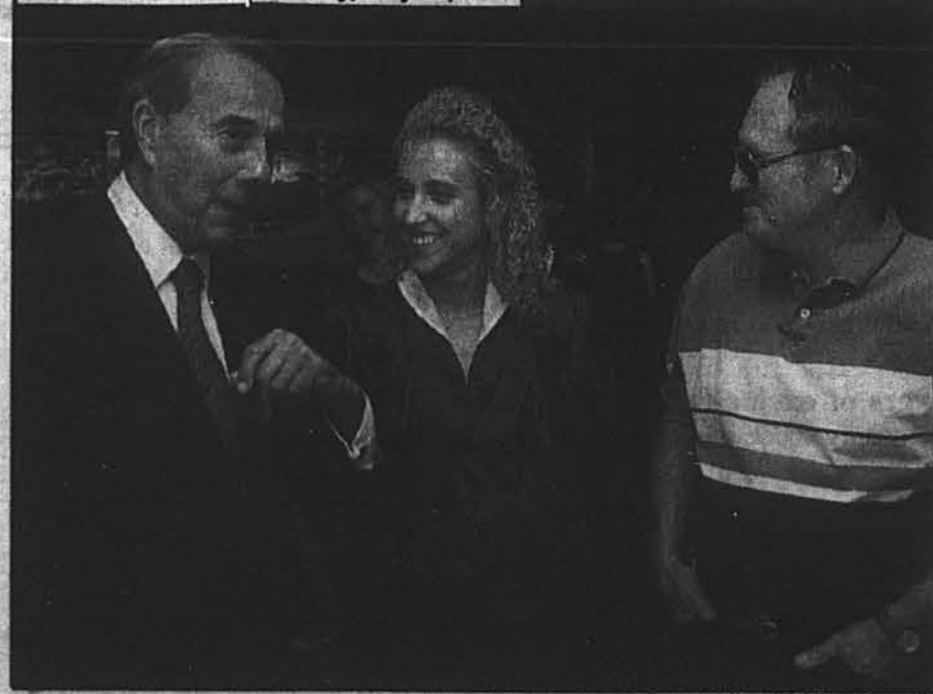
But the worst part wasn't things he'd done. It was the pictures of Bush — that's what he couldn't stop — pictures of Bush! In his head! Bush throwing snowballs, driving trucks, forklifts ... unwrapping his Big Mac. Dole never wanted to see that in his head. And he never want-

ed to say — even in his head ...

It would not leave him alone ... five in the morning! Had to come down to the lobby ... but he couldn't get away from it. For the first time in his career — first time in 30 years, anyway — Bob Dole said to himself:

"Maybe I could have done that ... if I was whole."

The Salina Journal Sunday, July 12, 1992



Sen. Bob Dole jokes while Julie Daniels Mohn, and her father, Harold Daniels, Abilene, have their picture taken at Brown Mackie's graduation.

# Dole wants U.S. to stay a world leader

## Dean Evans honored at Brown Mackie graduation

By NICOLE RHINE  
Journal Staff Writer

U.S. Sen. Bob Dole backed support of Russia and its move toward democracy and urged Americans to get more involved in foreign policy during a speech Saturday afternoon at Brown Mackie College's graduation.

"I don't see sensible programs of American aid as just some kind of giveaway," said Dole, R-Kansas. "I see it as an investment in America's future."

Dole was the featured speaker at the Salina junior college's graduation, which celebrated its centennial.

The ceremony at the Bicentennial Center also honored S. Dean Evans, a well-known Salina and alumnus of the college who died in 1991. An annual scholarship has been created in Evans' name at Brown Mackie.

Dole opened his speech with comments about

Evans, who was a friend of his.

"Certainly Brown Mackie and the city of Salina and many of you here in the audience could not have had a better friend than Dean Evans," Dole said. "It's fitting that you are honoring him today. He liked young people and he would want them to succeed."

## Accepting leadership

Dole noted that polls show Americans are worried only about domestic problems. He blamed the end of the Cold War as the reason some Americans believe they can retreat from their role as world leaders. But the isolationism, he said, is a mistake.

"We won the Cold War," Dole said. "Now we can enjoy some of the fruits of that success. We can ask others, we can ask our allies to bear a higher portion of the cost of keeping international order. We can pay more attention to the problems here at home."

"But we cannot afford to lay down the mantle of world leadership. We cannot stick our heads in the sand and let history pass us by. Too much

is at stake."

He believes Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who recently visited Kansas, wants for his people what the United States provides for its — security, justice and opportunity.

"Yeltsin made it clear that he doesn't see (American aid) as just a giveaway, either," Dole said. "But as the beginning of a whole new kind of cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship across the board. He wants a partnership and an investment."

## Staying in touch

Dole's visit to Salina was just one of many appearances scheduled in Kansas before the Nov. 3 general election. Later this month Dole will visit Kansas City, Wichita, Topeka and Ottawa, as well as joining Army Gen. Colin Powell in Leavenworth for a ceremony dedicating the Buffalo Soldier monument. He also will attend the Czech Festival in Wilson.

Before stopping in Salina, he traveled to

Concordia on Friday to survey the damage there from the recent wind storm, and he then made an appearance in Wellington on Saturday morning.

Though Dole is expected to easily win his party's nomination to a fifth, six-year term, he says he will use the trips from Washington to get in touch with Kansans.

"We're not really campaigning," Dole said. "We're not handing out fliers or any of that. We're just letting people know we're alive and well."

Dole, 68, has served in the Senate since 1969 and is the Senate minority leader. His challenger in the Aug. 4 primary is Richard Rodewald, a retired General Motors worker who farms in Douglas County.

In the Democratic race for Dole's