THE THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE

WITH

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

The Joan Shorenstein Center

PRESS · POLITICS

·PUBLIC POLICY·

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The Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics commemorates the life of the late reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post,* entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and Oriental languages. In 1939, he witnessed the bombing of Peking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship, and later explained, "Three thousand human beings died; once I'd seen that I knew I wasn't going home to be a professor."

During the war, White covered East Asia for *Time* and returned to write *Thunder Out of China,* a controversial critique of the American-supported Nationalist Chinese government. For the next two decades, he contributed to numerous periodicals and magazines, published two books on the Second World War and even wrote fiction.

A lifelong student of American political leadership, White in 1959 sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised to drop such an academic exercise by fellow reporters, he took to the campaign trail and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with *The Making of the President 1960.*

White's *Making of the President* editions for 1964 and 1972, and *America in Search of Itself* remain vital historical documents on campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, Theodore White also served on the Kennedy School's Visiting Committee, where he was one of the early architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. Blair Clark, former senior vice president of CBS who chaired the committee to establish this lectureship, asked, "Did Teddy White ever find the history he spent his life searching for? Well, of course no, he would have laughed at such pretension. But he came close, very close, didn't he? And he never quit the strenuous search for the elusive reality, and for its meaning in our lives."

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR. is one of he most articulate and powerful voices or American conservatism. He has been eferred to as the "philosophical archiect of the conservative insurgency." The seminal event that defined Buckley s an emerging spokesman of conservaism was in 1951 with the publication of his controversial book *God and Man at Yale,* which excoriated Yale Univerity for "fostering liberal values and stifling the political freedom of its more conservative students." In 1955, at the age of 30, Mr. Buckley founded the *National Review,* a magazine of political opinion, which today is considered to be one of the nation's most influential political journals. He was the editor of the *National Review* until 1990, at which time he became editor-at-large. His writings for the *National Review* and other publications have helped to consolidate and shape the political dialogue for the conservative movement.

In addition to writing and editing for the *National Review,* in 1962 Mr. Buckley began writing a weekly syndicated column called "On the Right" which has appeared three times a week since 1964 and is now syndicated in approximately 300 newspapers across the country. In 1965, deciding to take an active role in politics, he ran for mayor of New York City receiving 13.4% of the vote on the conservative party ticket. That was his first and last foray into politics.

In 1966 he began hosting a weekly television show called "Firing Line" on which he spars with guests from the world of politics and the arts. "Firing Line" is one of the longest running programs on either public or commercial television and won an Emmy Award in 1969. The combination of Buckley's incisive inquiry and quick wit has generated a program of lively and informative debate.

The author of nearly forty books, both non-fiction and fiction, Mr. Buckley has written on topics ranging from politics to sailing, political philosophy to espionage novels. His most recent books are *Happy Days Were Here Again,* Reflections of a Libertarian Journalist and *Brothers No More,* a saga of the peccadilloes of two Yale classmates. In addition to being a prolific author, he is also a musician and has performed solo harpsichord with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, the Yale Symphony Orchestra, as well as for the Stamford Chamber Orchestra, the Connecticut Grand Opera and Orchestra and the Washington Bach Consort.

Mr. Buckley is the recipient of many honors including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Julius Award for Outstanding Public Service, the Best Columnist of the Year Award, the Cleveland Amory *(TV Guide)* Award for Best Interviewer/Interviewee, the Young Republican National Federation 1979 Americanism Award, and the American Book Award for Best Mystery for *Stained Glass.* He has received honorary degrees from several colleges and universities including the College of William and Mary, New York Law School, the University of Notre Dame and Syracuse University.

William F. Buckley, Jr. is the statesman of conservative political thought, having had a major influence on the nation's political narrative over the last forty years.

THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE
NOVEMBER 2, 1995

Mr. Kalb: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Good evening. I'm Marvin Kalb, Director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. And it is my pleasure, indeed my honor, to welcome you to the annual Theodore H. White lecture. The lecture is tonight and our follow-up seminar is tomorrow morning.

It was in 1989 that friends of journalist and writer Theodore H. White, one of the exceptional products of Harvard, endowed this lecture series. The effort was spearheaded by his friend Blair Clark, also a journalist and a former network executive. From the beginning, year after year, our speakers, including among others Walter Cronkite and Ben Bradlee, have explored the role of the press and television in fashioning our politics and formulating our public policy.

Teddy White was one of the preeminent journalists of his time. His first book, *Thunder Out of China*, co-authored with Annalee Jacobee, opened our eyes to the potential of Mao's revolutionary forces. His next book, *Fire in the Ashes*, explained the confusion and the excitement of post-World War II Europe.

And then, when White turned his attention to American politics, with his ground breaking series of campaign books called the *Making of the President*, he introduced a new kind of political coverage, the reporter as eyes and ears on every aspect of a presidential campaign. In his books and articles, not only was the major speech covered but every back stage battle leading up to the major speech. Who was up, who was down, at crucial stages of the campaign; personal vendettas, marital strains, even gossip went along with exhaustive legwork.

By the mid 1970's, White himself realized that his books had such a major impact on political journalism that ironically the American people were being short changed. Too much emphasis on what proved to be trivial. Too little on what was truly substantive. We are still living with that unhappy legacy as we try to understand the new political currents running through this country.

Tonight, I'm happy to say we hear from one of the founding voices of modern American conservative thought, that of William F. Buckley, Jr., once of a place called Yale.

Normally, I would introduce him as I've introduced other lecturers in the past, but tonight I have a better idea. I have asked the esteemed John Kenneth Galbraith, the Paul M. Warburg Professor of Economics Emeritus at Harvard, to do the honors. Not because Professor Galbraith agrees with Mr. Buckley's political philosophy and is here to praise him, but rather because he has spent so much of his long, fruitful and exemplary life fighting against Mr. Buckley's conservatism. Indeed, the Galbraith-Buckley wars have raged playfully at dinner parties, humor-

ısly and elegantly at public forums for quite a few years.

So for the latest chapter, I call on Professor Galbraith, who will, in his wn inimitable style, introduce the Theodore H. White lecturer for this ear, William Buckley, Jr.

(Applause)

Mr. Galbraith: I need hardly say how pleasant it is for me to be here ıis evening with Catherine Galbraith, and I must also say with Pat uckley, who has made the journey from New York with Bill, to honor s on this occasion. Pat we love you very much.

Let me also just say a word too, about the man whom we honor ɔnight for his contribution to journalism, Teddy White, a personal ord. When I arrived in the 1930's at Harvard, there was wonderfully a ıortage of economists for teaching the elementary course, so I was put nmediately in charge of a section where my star student was Teddy Vhite. He was my favorite student for all that year.

The next year I moved to Winthrop House and my first thought was ɔ get him to come to Winthrop House so I could be his tutor. And so I rranged one day to be on the admissions committee that then sat on pplicants and arranged also, in an impartial way, for Teddy to apply hat day. He applied and after some thought, I admitted him.

And then I ran against the nature of Harvard in those primitive days. was told by those really in charge that we had a full complement of the roletariat and could not have any more. Teddy came, as you know, rom South Boston. So, much to my sorrow, I must say, I really was ngry about it. My admission was revoked and he had to move. I think t was to Lowell House or some other inferior quarter.

I then came to know Theodore White in later years where we were ɔoth members of the staff of Time Incorporated before the great days of Time Warner, when it was still an institution with some personality. And later, of course, in the 1960 campaign, where I was traveling with Adlai Stevenson and he was writing the book which correctly, I think, eriously damaged the whole concept of the presidential campaign and urned it, the primary campaign, into show business and something of a ircus. I share your regret.

And now, not reluctantly, I come to Bill Buckley. He's a wonderful ɔerson, lovable friend, generous, thoughtful, a marvelous conversation-ılist. I've said many times that the wonderful thing about Bill Buckley ıre the qualities that you so much enjoy as long as you can keep him off ɔf politics. Oh, did I make a mistake there.

(Laughter)

Mr. Galbraith: Bill Buckley has been my friend, a family friend now ior 30 years or more. We have debated. We have most of all joined together as fellow skiers. I remember the one time when politics intervened in our enjoyment of skiing. It was a spring day in Switzerland. The ski runs were very bad. Bill accomplished the run with competence;

I with great difficulty. As we joined eventually at the bottom of the ski slope, Bill said, 'How long have you been skiing, Ken.' I wasn't going to give him anything at all. I said, oh, about 30 years. He said, 'Same length of time you have been studying economics.'

(Laughter)

Mr. Galbraith: There was that other, one other occasion, Bill, when I was leaving Switzerland to go to Russia, then the Soviet Union. And Bill said to me, 'What are you going to do in that country?' And I straightened up and said, I'm going to give some lectures and he said, 'What do you have left to teach them?'

(Laughter and applause)

Mr. Galbraith: There's nothing that gives one more enjoyment than introducing Bill Buckley, because one knows that the longer one speaks, the greater limit he places on Bill's doctrine. But I'm going to be tolerant. I only have one final suggestion. At one juncture this evening, I was asked to be moderator, and I said that I couldn't because moderation is not possible when Bill Buckley is here.

Bill, I give way reluctantly to you.

(Applause)

Mr. Buckley: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, Professor Galbraith, Mr. Kalb, Mr. Shorenstein.

I note from material so thoughtfully sent to me by Mr. Kalb that my predecessors introduced their talks, where such a link existed, by recalling personal experiences with Theodore White. I happily do as much, because we were good friends.

There's nothing that gives one more enjoyment than introducing Bill Buckley, because one knows that the longer one speaks, the greater limit he places on Bill's doctrine.

I met him first in the fall of 1965. He had been commissioned by *Life* magazine to do a piece on the mayoralty campaign in New York, in which I contended. I say I contended, though it never crossed anyone's mind, let alone my own, that I might actually become the mayor. My purpose was entirely didactic, which is to say, to take advantage of the attention the press would need to pay to my campaign for the purpose of propagating my views on sound municipal government, which views were newsbreakingly sensational in New York City then, as they would be now.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Considerable attention was given to what I said as it was progressively acknowledged that the contest between the Democrat and the Republicans would probably turn on the size of the vote for the conservative. Sitting in my little office, Teddy White scribbled in his

otebook, with that total absorption for which he was noted, my replies
his questions. At one point I introduced some levity. He raised his
and, a rabbi's calm demurral. "Wait," he said. "Wait for that. We can
come friends later at lunch."

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: "The next hour it's all business."

Not many years later a little club materialized in New York City. Its membership limited to six people. It had a single function, namely to convene for lunch every six weeks or so. I think we were rather heady with the power we exercised. Teddy White was demonstrably the most sought-after journalist in America. Oz Elliott ran *Newsweek*. Abe Rosenthal ran *The New York Times*. Irving Kristol ran the neocons. Dick Clurman ran the correspondents of *Time* magazine. John Chancellor ran NBC News. And of course, I owned the conservative movement.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: We really did have a wonderful time, among other things exchanging any number of professional intimacies without any fear of a leak. It was at one of these lunches, in January of 1972, that Teddy described with feverish anticipation the forthcoming trip to China of President Nixon. He had applied, he told us, for one of the eighty-five seats reserved for journalists, and he was confident, though in expounding that confidence he betrayed his apprehension, that given his distinctive history as a China specialist, he would receive favorable consideration in his bid for one of the most coveted slots in modern journalism.

I responded that, prompted by his enthusiasm, I too would apply to the White House. Teddy White paused, his eyebrows furrowed. He stared over at me brandishing contingent fear and loathing. "Buckley," he said, "if you are on that plane and I am not, I will never talk to you again."

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: We were both not only on that press plane, but seated together. Teddy White was buddha-happy. He had a bulging satchel-load of books and magazine articles and clippings he worked over on those long, long airplane legs, Washington to Hawaii, then to Guam, then to Shanghai, then to Peking.

From his pile, he would from time-to-time, pluck out an anti-Red Chinese tidbit and offer it to me playfully in return for anything favorable to the Red Chinese I might supply him from my own pile, gentleman's agreement.

Now he beamed. "I have a clip here that says the Red Chinese have killed thirty-four million people since they took over China. What will you offer me for that?" I foraged among my material and triumphantly came up with a clip that said the Red Chinese had reduced illiteracy from eighty percent to twenty percent. But White scoffed me down like

a professional pawnshop broker. "Hell," he said, "I have that one already. Everybody has that one."

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: I scrounged about for more pro-Chinese Communist data and finally told him, disconsolate, that I could not find one more item to barter for his plum. He smiled contently at this tactical victory, but I remember wondering mewhether, in fact, he had lost the war.

Books have been written about what happened in the ensuing ten days. I wrote ten columns and a long essay for *Playboy* magazine. I recall, as a footnote relevant under present auspices, that before that issue of the magazine appeared on the streets, I adapted the article to give it as a speech before what had been described to me as a small seminar at the Kennedy School here at Harvard. That seminar, by the time word had got around, became a lecture to over a thousand students, one more triumph for the free market.

Teddy White...always engaged the reader's attention, by his total commitment to the narrative excitement of what he was writing...

Teddy White came to grips with his disappointment, which in subsequent books he examined and reexamined, with a conscientiousness that approached scrupulosity, but always he engaged the reader's attention, by his total commitment to the narrative excitement of what he was writing, dramatized by his sense of theater and radiant with his concern for the language.

The Chinese experience in 1972 is useful in giving perspective to my thoughts on the curious under performance of the press, and the bearing of these shortcomings on public matters. Some years ago, I gave to Professor Galbraith to read, the draft of an essay I was writing for *Foreign Affairs* on human rights and public policy. He advised me, with that ambiguity for which he is renowned, to put my conclusion up front, in the manner of the scholarly essay.

... it is my premise that the politics of our free society suffer from...the media's failure to correct factually incorrect perceptions.

Given that he has been so kind as to officiate over this assembly tonight, and to give me shelter tonight when I am done, I oblige him here by saying, up front, that it is my premise that the politics of our free society suffer from the failure of the media to announce verifiable conclusions. Announce is perhaps not exactly the word I want. Sustain such conclusions is better. Even better, the media's failure to correct factually incorrect perceptions.

I say the Nixon trip to China gives us perspective. I was especially ıuck by an episode in Shanghai the day after we arrived. The banquet the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square was hugely impres-ve. And the exuberance of President Nixon was such that following s after-dinner toast, he raised his liqueur glass and circled the table, ıwing one after another, to every one of the twelve men and women who shared with him Chou En-lai's head table.

... Richard Nixon's ınthusiasm was at so ıigh a pitch he'd have mbraced Alger Hiss...

I remember in my dispatch that evening remarking that Richard Nixon's enthusiasm was at so high a pitch he'd have embraced Alger Hiss if he had been seated at that table. (Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: The following day, those of us who selected the academic option — our hinese schedulers gave us three or four daily choices of what to do to ıstruct ourselves in the regime of Mao Tse-tung — were seated at the ffice of the Rector of the University of Peking to learn about university fe under the revolutionary government.

At either end of the silver-haired rector, a scholar in his early seven-es, stood a brachycephalic Red Guard, age perhaps 20, 22, their faces ɪimly construed to suppress any temptation to geniality. The Rector ʻas addressing us in Chinese, his words simultaneously interpreted by n official standing behind him. After a moment or two John Chancel-ɔr motioned to me and to Teddy White. He whispered, "I sat next to ıat guy last night. He speaks perfect English. He got his Ph.D. in hemistry from the University of Chicago."

It transpired that the Red Guards were in effective control of the ntire university system and they had forbidden the Rector to speak to s in English because they did not themselves understand English and, herefore, weren't equipped to intercept any ideological error by the hancellor of their university. This way, by hearing the words in Chinese, with a mere flick of the wrist, one or both could motion to the ranslator, interdicting heresy or inchoate heresy.

Later that morning, after surveying the ravaged university library, Teddy said to me, "The most unpretentious college in America with a China Department could not make do with a library as sparse as this ɔne."

Teddy White, the China specialist, was astonished by the lengths to ʌhich the Cultural Revolution had gone. The China of Owen ʌattimore had been widely accepted as the flower of Chinese culture. The most widely read essays on contemporary China, devoured by every ɔne of the journalists who traveled there in February, 1972, had been ɔublished in two succeeding issues of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Professor Ross Terrill described life in China, subsuming everything

he saw in his reverie. He had concluded by asking, "Is China free?" and answering, "but there is no objective measure of the freedom of a whole society. ... At one point, we and China face the same value judgment. Which gets priority, the individual's freedom or the relationships of the whole society? Which unit is to be taken, the nation, trade union, our class, my cronies, me? This is the hinge on which the whole issue turns."

He gave the example of the writer Kuo Mo-jo who, before Liberation, used to satisfy himself by writing books suited to his own taste, for small audiences. Mao's government decided he should appeal to wider audiences. "The writer," Mr. Terrill explained, "cannot now do books for 3,000 or at most 8,000 readers, as Kuo used to do in Shanghai in the 1930's, but must write for the mass millions and he's judged by whether he can do that well or not. Is that wrong?"

Now, in the office of the Rector of the University of Peking, we had direct experience of what Professor Terrill had called the "hinge" on which the whole issue turns.

Yes, of course, we all acknowledge that ideology impinges upon the press and even on scholarship. But I am on my way to a different, but related point, which is that the politics of a free society, specifically our own, are influenced, sometimes even dominated by impressions either created by headstrong press or tolerated by an indifferent or collusive press, and that the result of this under-education is that self-government is what? Led astray? Corrupted? Traduced?

Let me move, so to speak, to the other end of the inquiry, the political end. Some time ago, I came across an observation, by a journalist, as it happens, to the effect that Great Britain is in several respects other than self-governing. He mentioned capital punishment. Capital punishment, hanging in the British tradition, was abolished in 1965, notwithstanding that the polls established that the practice was approved of by over 70 percent of Britons, public support for capital punishment that continues to this day.

It was the point of the journalist who raised the subject, that members of Parliament, in this instance, dominated by the sentiments on the subject of capital punishment of Oxbridge, and for this reason, capital punishment could not be restored. We deduce, along with the lonely British editorialist, that in respect of penology, Great Britain cannot lay claim to self-government.

What interests me less than the future of capital punishment in England, which interests me not at all, is how to frame an explanation of this anomaly. Let us suppose that Parliament, over the last thirty years, quite simply understands itself as resisting mobocratic bloodlust. What draws attention is that I have never seen attention paid to this anomaly, save in that one editorial.

It is exactly that, an anomaly, most graphically expressed in the

syllogistic mode. One, the British people are self-governing; two, the British people wish to restore capital punishment; three, capital punishment is nevertheless denied; whence we are required to shorten the pants of the major proposition which now reads, The people of England are in some respects self-governing or perhaps the people of England are self-governing for so long as they have the impression that they are self-governing.

An amplification of this modifier would have you say, it is appropriate when the Parliament chooses to defy the will of the people, to distract attention from what it is that they are doing. If the subject is brought up, change the subject. If you don't succeed, temporize.

Democratic hygiene, one would suppose, suffers from such impurities. The tablet keepers might be expected to speak out demandingly, saying such a thing as: This is outrageous! The people want penological reform and Parliament refuses to give it to them. A calmer way for the defenders of democratic rectitude to proceed would be to say, Go ahead. Go public with this business.

But Parliament has the obligation to acknowledge the default. It should declare, in a public manifesto, that the people of England, in respect of capital punishment, are uncouth. That the people desire of their representatives something their representatives cannot oblige them with given that they are guided by more learned counsels than those of the people. That they are blessed with a moral vision more foreseeing and that, therefore, Parliament must respectfully decline to reinstitute capital punishment.

Edmund Burke and John Quincy Adams spoke such language and the electorate accepted the trade-off. This hasn't been done by Parliament, not explicitly, and the press is acquiescent.

Here is a relatively recent — and in the context I speak of, utterly unnoticed — example back here in the United States, of the phenomenon of press and politics, passing each other on opposite sides of the street. This has to do with Candidate Clinton, subsequently President Clinton, and the national election of 1992.

Very soon after Mr. Clinton's inauguration, *The New York Times* published a series of articles by its Washington correspondent, David Rosenbaum. He undertook to give the reader what Mr. Rosenbaum called the push and pull over taxes. In the introductory piece Mr. Rosenbaum wrote, "One popular misconception is that the Republican tax cuts caused the crippling federal deficit. The fact is, the large deficit resulted because the government vastly increased what it spent each year, while tax revenues changed little."

You will have surmised that my question is, why was there a popular misconception in this matter? How is it that the truth about the real economic picture of the 80's, in the Spring of 1993, so routinely now reported on by *The New York Times*, was so very different from what

the American people were led to believe was true during the campaign and after that, in the debate on the 1993 budget bill?

The misperceptions go on. What about public spending on the infrastructure, under Reagan-Bush. In *Newsweek* magazine, early in March of 1993, we read economist Robert Samuelson, and he told us, "Clinton's basic rationale for more government is that investment in America has lagged. Actually, that isn't the case."

What? How so?

He went on, "...Business investment has risen in every decade since World War II. In the 1980's, it averaged 11.5 percent of gross domestic product, up from 10.5 percent in the 1970's, 9.5 in the 60's, 8.9 in the 50's. ...Research and development spending, by business, government and universities, jumped dramatically in the 80's. The increase was 52 percent compared with only 12 percent in the 70's. Even government investment has revived somewhat. Since 1980, highway spending (adjusted for inflation) has risen about a quarter. Contrary to popular impression, road conditions have gradually improved. Between 1983 and 1991, the share of urban interstate highways rated as poor dropped from seventeen to eight percent."

... I wonder that the press declines a responsibility to illuminate that which is knowable in public controversy...

You will have surmised, again, that I wonder that the press declines a responsibility to illuminate that which is knowable in public controversy, and to maintain that spotlight on that which is known, when there are indications that the shadows of ignorance of or obfuscation threaten.

Many years ago I wrote a book, the subtitle of which was, *The Superstitions of Academic Freedom*. In it, I deliberated on what is now pretty generally classified, and widely tolerated, as epistemological pessimism, the position that nothing is truly knowable.

The premise of academic freedom, back in the 50's, was that all ideas should be permitted to start even in the race, to use the phrase of Professor William Hurd Kirkpatrick of the Columbia School of Education. His position can be said to have stood on the shoulders of John Stuart Mill, who, of course, instructed us that no question can be deemed to be closed so long as a single person dissents from it. One supposes that deconstructionism is the apotheosis of this line of humble reasoning, which is, of course, the purpose of reason is an intellectual conceit, a position that, in many forms, flowers everywhere, as among the jurors who freed O.J. Simpson.

No scholar will underwrite the superstition that raising the minimum wage will raise the effective income of those the measure seeks to help without lowering the income of others. How does the press react?

How should it react to statements by politicians who go about denouncing the minimum wage as unacceptable in modern circumstances?

It isn't a matter of conjecture but of established knowledge, that when taxes are raised and lowered, people will manage their economic lives differently, yet we continue to countenance economic projections based on static models. We know that inflation has devalued what might, but for inflation, have been capital gains, but much of the press is given to a nonchalant silence when arguments against a capital gains tax cut are advanced in the context of fairness.

Public ignorance...happened because less than the truth suits the political strategies of ambitious office seekers who rely on a press willing... to defer noticing such anomalies...

If it was knowable that the Maoists totally eliminated freedom in the Chinese academy, that the British view on penology was routinely defied by Parliament in the 80's, that spending and taxes and public investment moved differently from how the public was led to believe they did, why were all these facts not universally known? Public ignorance in these matters happened because less than the truth suits the political strategies of ambitious office seekers who rely on a press willing, given congenial ideological circumstances, to defer noticing such anomalies, and widely accepted misperceptions, perhaps indefinitely, as in The People versus The Parliament on the matter of capital punishment.

The alternative here was for the press to accept responsibility to inform the public on what is really going on, and not merely to inform it, but to keep it informed, which is the equivalent of focusing on publicly ventilated misrepresentations as required, as often as it is required, to dispel encroaching ignorance.

On behalf of the Brookings Institution, John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, respectively a senior Brookings fellow and a political science professor at Stanford, conducted a rigorous statistical analysis of a massive schools and students data base. They reached the conclusion, two years ago, that school choice is essential to the improvement of high school students' standardized test scores. The great lobby on the other side, the teachers' unions, is just that, a lobby so successful at the expense of relative American illiteracy. Why is such a lobby safe from relentless public exposure?

And, of course, the voucher question brushes up against a Constitutional interpretation, most conspicuously against the engulfing interpretation of the religion clause as forbidding any grant-in-aid to religious schools. Professor Eugene Genovese is a historian and political scientist of some distinction, in political sympathies a socialist.

In a recent essay, he remarked in passing on what he called the monstrous rulings of the court at the expense of the freedom of the community to specify the nature of religious instruction in the local public school. Ad hoc, we get away with it; in Brooklyn, the schools close for Yom Kippur, here and there they close on Good Friday. But such freedoms are exercised in constant fear of judicial intervention.

The ministers, priests and rabbis of New York City combined thirty-five years ago, to formulate a prayer which, in their judgment, was free of any denominational opportunism. That prayer, devised by religious leaders, deputized to undertake that function by the men and women whose children attended and attend New York City's public schools, was struck down by the court as constituting an encroachment on the separation of church and state.

The Court was not quite willing, in Engel v. Vitale, to opine that the saying of that prayer itself constituted the union of church and state. Rather, it relied, as most of the Courts' votaries continue to do, on the slippery slope argument, that if you admit common prayer, or as we would subsequently see, the exposure of the Ten Commandments on a school wall, you are risking a loss of constitutional gravity, auguring free fall into the arms of theocracy.

Now, all this reasoning appears to me an assault on self-government, that the press condones because the anti-religious sanctions appeal to secularist sensibilities.

Probing the question with Mr. Ira Glasser of the American Civil Liberties Union, I recently volunteered to make a major subscription to his organization if he would submit to a truth test that documented his genuine fear that the restoration of common prayer would risk the advent of a theocratic state. He laughed and changed the subject, but I knew that he was—

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: I knew that he was crying on the inside.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Why does the press play dead on this point, or is it hypnotized? And if so, on what else is it hypnotized? And does it lose any sleep over the spurious concern given to theocratic hobgoblins, or like Harry Truman after he ordered the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, does it simply turn in for a good night's sleep?

Why does the press play dead on this point, or is it hypnotized?

The list of public misperceptions is pretty long. In October, grown senators and congressmen, including one or two who had served as college professors, including one who served here as a college professor, were describing the proposed tax bill as a "rip-off for the advantage of the rich." Let us suppose that every penny of the proposed capital gains tax reductions would flow only to the rich, never mind that it isn't so. Even

then, capital gains tax reductions account for 25 percent of the proposed tax reductions. So that the defensible way to communicate one's opposition to the bill would be, "One quarter of the tax reductions will flow to the rich, who are the predatory class."

It has been established beyond serious debate that economic forecasts done on static models do not tell us what is going to happen, so then why are such forecasts treated as extrapolations? I rephrase that. Politicians will take any provision they dislike in any bill and proceed to condemn the whole of it. My question isn't how do you get politicians to stop doing that kind of thing, because that enterprise requires reshaping human nature. But I wonder why the press doesn't require the politician to confront his distortions.

... I wonder why the press doesn't require the politician to confront his distortions.

In 1950, Senator Robert A. Taft, the primary sponsor of the Taft-Hartley Bill passed that year, and universally denounced by labor leaders and many Democrats as the slave labor act, ran for reelection in Ohio. His agents quietly distributed a poll among a valid sample of labor union members itemizing a number of measures regulating union activity. The questionnaire asked, which of those measures were approved by the union member filling out the form. The experiment established that 14 of the 17 provisions of the Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Bill were popular with 80 percent of the slave laborers of the state of Ohio. But it was Senator Taft who brought that off, not Hearst or Scripps Howard or UPI.

A healthy politics is one in which the rights of the individual are assured. Following which, the mores of a free people are given legal sanction as required. Less than that, but palpable social sanction, as prompted, one would hope by virtuous and Libertarian public inclinations. But defensible self-government presupposes knowledge at various degrees of intimacy of what the public question is and how it is proposed to deal with it.

The dissemination of this knowledge, of course, is primarily the function of the press, which one supposes is the reason Jefferson once said he'd take a free press over government, if the choice had to be made, is a mad current passion to increase the size of the vote. We now receive a voter registration card when applying for a driver's license, which application the applicant need not demonstrate his ability to read. This is a fetishistic extension of the Democratic argument. Voting is a civil sacrament and to vote thoughtlessly is to blaspheme.

It used to be that a voter needed to prove his literacy in English. First they, the trend setters, dropped the need for literacy, subsequently, the need for English. We're asked to assume that the vote is the important

thing, not the information required to inform that vote. But information, of course, is not enough.

I'll repeat it here only because to fail to do so, in the context of my analysis, will seem strange to those who have heard it. What I wrote thirty years ago, pleading the case for political judgment, as needed to supplement sheer knowledge, was that I would sooner be governed by the first two thousand names in the Boston telephone directory than by the faculty of Harvard.

... I would sooner be governed by the first two thousand names in the Boston telephone directory than by the faculty of Harvard.

But for all the delinquencies of the press, there is out there a hard, inquisitive intelligence.

Seven years ago, I met with Professor Galbraith on schedule on the "Today" Show, the morning after the election of 1988, in which the Democratic challenger for Massachusetts received only the electoral vote of Massachusetts. Mr. Bryant Gumbel asked my reaction to the returns and I said that the vote in Massachusetts perhaps established that there is after all a need for federal aid to education.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Mr. Galbraith, remarked that Massachusetts has always prided itself on being ahead of the general political culture.

Belatedly I defer to Professor Galbraith's tribute. Yesterday, Governor Weld of Massachusetts proposed abolishing most state agencies here to affect a $650 million saving, those he would not eliminate, he would privatize. He was acting on recommendations made by individual citizens who had, at his invitation, filed their recommendations.

The moment is clearly at hand to thank Mr. Galbraith, first for his courtesies tonight, even as I thank you for yours, and then to congratulate him on his residence in the proud state in which the culture of our Mayflower forefathers has given us one more bloom.

(Laughter and applause)

Mr. Kalb: Thank you, very much, Mr. Buckley.

As I warned you, there is now an opportunity for questions. And just to point out the obvious, there are microphones here and up above and if you have a question, please come to the microphone now. When you ask your question, ask a question and identify yourself when you do so. And I would call upon Professor Galbraith, who I know would like to ask the first question. The microphone is right there, professor.

Mr. Galbraith: In the tradition of this distinguished school, questions, Bill, are very rarely followed by a question mark, usually by an exclamation mark.

(Applause)

Mr. Galbraith: I have two observations which I will put in the form of a question. One isn't really a serious question. I rejoice, as did so many others, on your comment following that mayoralty election in New York when you said that if elected your first action would be to ask for a recount.

(Laughter)

Mr. Galbraith: This appealed to me deeply, as I know it did to the people in New York.

(Laughter)

Mr. Galbraith: My second one is a question. You tonight, as so often before, have aligned yourself strongly against the social and public responsibilities of the state, most recently your applause for Governor Weld. For many years, Catherine Galbraith and I have been devoted television viewers of "Firing Line", really one of the great educational enterprises of all time. Bill, where do you stand on public television?

(Applause)

Mr. Buckley: Well, to comment, first on the matter of the mayoralty election, it is true that inadvertently I made that remark and hurt a few people's feelings. They were very pleased to remind me ever since that I got only thirteen percent of the vote, so this wasn't a prospect. Actually, I consider thirteen percent of the vote dangerously large and it was then that I said if I run again my slogan would be: 'Voting by invitation only.'

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: On the matter of "Firing Line", it receives no subsidy whatever. And I've simply wondered at the prevailing notion that the subsidy provided by Washington, which means the subsidy by which Washington receives money from Massachusetts in order to return to Massachusetts, is really required. I don't know what the statistics are in Boston, but I know what they are in San Francisco, four percent of the expenses of public broadcasting are sustained by the government, the balance by the people.

... if I run again my slogan would be: 'Voting by invitation only.'

I've always been astonished by the apparent innocence of what has always struck me as an elementary analytical perspective. Fifty percent of the taxpayers pay ninety-five percent of all taxes. So that, when we instruct Washington to administer a social program, we are instructing Washington to turn around and tax us to do it. I see no other explanation for it. Under the circumstances, we are asking for auto-taxation, raising the question of why don't we simply give it ourselves in the first instance because any dollar that goes to Washington spends an expensive night out on the town before it returns here.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: So, I like to think that we didn't have to wait for Richard Nixon to start the national endowment or the public television in order to certify that the people of Massachusetts would sustain their own public

broadcasting station. Okay?

Mr. Galbraith: Marvelous evasion.

(Laughter)

From the Floor: Hi, Mr. Buckley. I need your help as a very honest and earnest and revolutionary reporter. Tomorrow morning my plan is, armed with your answer to my question, to revolutionize the U.S. media and make it the kind of press that you seem to be advocating, much more incisive, critical and honest. So, the help I need is the answer to the question, given that there are some very admirable reporters out there, can you describe what you see as stopping these reporters from doing their job well, on an individual basis? How is it that some of the individual reporters that you've known to be men of integrity and women of integrity, have failed to make the media what you think it should be?

... any dollar that goes to Washington spends an expensive night out on the town before it returns here.

Mr. Kalb: Who are you going to write that story for?

From the Floor: Just for myself. I have a little journal at home.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Well, I touched on possible motives. One was a general sense of acquiescence in the ideological objectives of the people with, about whom they are reporting. The second is a certain sloth. And a third is a kind of a determinism, i.e., if I tell you that two plus two equals four and I hear you two days later saying that two plus two equals five, I sort of give up on you. Those three, I think, do contribute.

There is also, I think, an identity that a lot of reporters feel which is an aspect of ideological affiliation. The other night I saw a reference to Mr. Gingrich's defiant stand against President Clinton's threatened veto. It struck me that that was not quite right since he was representing a legislature of four hundred and seventy people over against a single person who exercises the Presidency. Wouldn't it have been okay to say resolute rather than defiant because defiance does suggest, does it not, a kind of mutinous relationship?

So, all those factors add up, but actually, I'm sorry that you asked me to exactly describe those factors, because I have hope that tonight and tomorrow I will hear from my confederates, explanations which, for this under performance, as I put it, that haven't already occurred to me. Perhaps there are others. I'm eager to hear what they are.

Mr. Kalb: Was there ever a time when, in your view, the press performed well in this country?

Mr. Buckley: Oh, there have been hundreds of times when they performed well. I remember the earthquake in Los Angeles. Brilliantly covered.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: You know, sometimes the under performance of the press is because they, the press, are simply misled. The principle Soviet reporter for *The New York Times* predicted early in 1960 that by 1970 the production of the Soviet Union would exceed that of the United States. I don't think Mr. Schwartz was by any means moved by ideological predispositions. He simply read the data in that way. He was egregiously wrong, but not, in my judgment, suborned by any ideological animus.

One has to analyze these things as one goes, but I think it is correct. We know that eighty-five percent of the press voted Democratic two elections ago. The poll conducted by Mr. Lichter and his partner. So it is, I think, difficult entirely to conceal one's bias and, however strenuously the effort is made, it is not always successful, people being human as most of you are.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: Yes, please, your question.

Mr. Williamson: Yes, Thad Williamson is the name.

On the question of the media and public ignorance. I wonder why, at least to my knowledge, you and other conservatives have voiced relatively, if any, little concern on the documented and not particularly controversial complicity of institutions of the American state, in the death of 150,000 persons carried out by the Guatemalan army since 1980, for one example.

Another would be one-third of the population of East Timor dead since the Indonesian invasion in 1975. I just wonder how you explain that and what you feel the consequences might be if these were not matters of public ignorance.

Mr. Buckley: On the Indonesian business, I think it was underreported. I think it is true that there was considerable exuberance over a situation in which communists were overthrown. What didn't receive sufficient attention was the cost of that counterrevolution and especially the cost of the up to 200,000 people who were slaughtered in the course of that combustion. It is widely reported that this was as a result of insufficient data reaching the press. Whether that was a satisfactory excuse, I simply don't know.

From the Floor: Conservatives don't always agree on foreign policy issues. I understand that Jack Kemp and Alfonse D'Amato were very much concerned about our policy toward Lithuania when George Bush was President and James Baker was Secretary of State. And Richard Nixon was very much concerned about the situation in Russia shortly before he died. Some people think the Communists might win an election in Russia and they think that the election might even be called off. How do you see the conservative role in foreign policy, particularly regarding Russia and East Europe?

Mr. Buckley: Well, the post Cold War conservative position on

foreign policy has concededly not crystallized. There are tensions within the Republican party which are not all that different from the tensions one sees in the Democratic party. Mr. Clinton, for instance, announced in 1993 that he would not extend the most favored nation consideration of China, unless China manifestly followed certain reforms which he proceeded to stipulate.

A year later, he simply backed off on it because the pressures from Republicans and from Democrats were to the effect that whatever the time table that would be most desired, it was simply unrealistic to impose it on China. Let China get along with as little acupunctures of capitalism and see whether or not after a while the entire corpus was revived.

But the conservatives have been, on the whole, over the last 40 years, mobilized on the proposition that the entire resources of the state, as required, were and ought to be available, to guarantee the sovereignty of the country. Those conservatives like those liberals who wanted to charge after all errant communities in search of a magnification of human rights, did not dominate. John Quincy Adams, as you all recall, said in, I think, 1824 that the American people are friends of liberty everywhere but custodians only of their own.

For that reason, it was correct to mobilize all the resources of a nation to confront the Soviet Union, which was manifestly a danger to our own liberties. But not as a result of that franchise, automatically authorizing us to enter Lithuania, or for that matter Somalia, or for that matter Haiti, however praiseworthy our motivations.

Mr. Kalb: Question from the balcony.

Mr. Mehringer: Yes. Hi, my name is Chris Mehringer. I'm a student here at the Kennedy school.

I recently read Dan Wakefield's book on New York in the 50's in which you were referenced with some frequency. I was hoping you could comment—

(Laughter)

Mr. Mehringer: I was hoping you could comment on that era and also perhaps on today's environment for young thinkers and writers.

Mr. Buckley: Oh, no, I can't do that in a couple of sentences. I would wear you out.

Mr. Mehringer: How about a good story from New York in the 50's, then.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Well, in the 50's, in New York City, *National Review* was born, so that for that reason there is a shrine appropriate to those quarters in Murray Hill in New York City. I have written a certain amount about the 50's. Unfortunately, I've written a certain amount about everything.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Dan Wakefield writes with the luxury of time and long meditative chapters in which he can recall this or the other episode. But it's not really appropriate to the telegraphic requirements of a public session. So, if you will come and visit me, I will chat with you as long as you can stand it, but without holding five hundred people hostage.

Mr. Mehringer: Thank you.

Mr. Kalb: Yes, sir.

From the Floor: There was in this past Sunday's *Washington Post*, on the front page — which unfortunately costs $1.25 to buy up here if you can get it and in several New England states it's not available at any price — an article about the state of the American daily newspaper today. We're talking about your premise of under-reporting, non-reporting.

And it was pointing out the decline in circulation and pointing out the kind of news that is appearing in our daily newspapers. And that the polls that the newspapers have taken show that the people are not interested in national news. They are not interested in world news. They are interested in a lot of the fluff.

Now, do you agree that there is a decline in our newspapers as far as reporting on national and international matters? And, if so, what do you forecast for the future about the state of the citizens' ability to know what is happening in our world if they are so interested?

Mr. Buckley: Well, you know, Carlyle said that politics is the preoccupation of the "educated", and I find that entirely appealing to the extent that one can skip the news. There's no reason not to do so to the extent one needs to be informed of it. That is a civic obligation.

It is true that newspapers have reduced circulations and fewer newspapers are being published than was the case thirty-five or forty years ago. The reason for that is quite plain, namely that seventy percent of the American people get their news from television. They are perfectly satisfied to do with a half hour with Jennings or whomever or now with CNN.

But this, I don't think, answers the question whether the news that is published discharges the responsibility that I feel belongs to it. A poll just a year or so ago asked by what are you primarily influenced, by the press or by politicians. Answer, forty-four percent press, twenty-two percent politicians. So, most people think that the press sets the agenda, and I think they are probably correct in thinking that, under the circumstances, to the extent that news does get through, it ought to be news that is aflame with a certain mission insufficiently, as I have suggested tonight, discharged.

Mr. Kalb: One final question from the balcony, please.

Mr. Weinmann: Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Buckley. My name is Peter Weinmann. I'm up here. I'm a student here at the Kennedy School.

In view of your critique of the media, I wonder what your view is of

the impact on the country of the proliferation of right wing media pundits and talk show hosts throughout the country?

Mr. Buckley: Well, the proliferation of right-wing anything is good.

(Laughter and applause)

Mr. Buckley: I say that recognizing that it is a disarming question I was asked. Two or three weeks ago at Williams College, somebody got up and said, what do you think of Rush Limbaugh? So, I said, well, I remember being in Madrid in 1970 when, of course, Franco was the total dictator and hearing a wonderful story about an intellectual who ran into another intellectual at a bar and he tapped him on the shoulder and he said, what do you think of Franco? And he said, well, follow me. So, he tip toed out of the bar, out of the barrio, across a great park, down to the side of a lake, got into a canoe, rowed out into the middle of the lake and said, I like him.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: I think that the—

(Applause)

Mr. Buckley: —the proliferation of right wing talk shows really has to do with a felt need to react to what is recognized as establishmentarian opinion. If you can't crank up opposition to the *Washington Post* or to *The New York Times*, then you find your little niches, either as a columnist or as a radio talk show host.

Here, people can actually call in and say, look, isn't this bunk. To which the host says, yes, it is bunk and the sense of the emancipation radiates in that exchange.

... the proliferation of right-wing anything is good.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: So, that's why I think that is happening. I'm terribly glad it is happening. I wouldn't for a second obviously condone any exchanges on radio anyway that are cuckoo, but nobody has quoted any to me, at least from Mr. Limbaugh. So, on the whole, I urge you to sleep peacefully.

(Applause)

Mr. Kalb: Thank you, very much. Thank you, Bill.

Once again, my thanks to Professor Galbraith and to our Theodore H. White lecturer, William F. Buckley, Jr. To our audience, of course, thank you, very much and good night.

Theodore H. White Seminar
November 3, 1995

Mr. Kalb: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. And welcome to the second half, so to speak, of the Theodore H. White Lecture. We always do it in two parts, the speech the evening before, and then, the follow up seminar, designed really to explore in more depth, what it is that the speaker said, or was attempting to say.

In the case of our speaker today, I think he said what he intended to say. And let me quickly run down our panel, though I see one person still missing, but she will be along shortly. But we know William F. Buckley, Jr., he was our speaker yesterday. And I will not run through this incredibly long list of identifications here.

John Kenneth Galbraith, likewise, our introducer of last night, the Warburg Professor of Economics Emeritus of Harvard University.

Suzanne Garment to my right, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. She is also a contributing opinion editor to *The Los Angeles Times*. She was the associate editor of the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*, and wrote a weekly column from 1981 to 1987. And she is the author of a book called *Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics*.

To my left here, seated in that empty chair, and she will materialize shortly, will be Pearl Stewart, who is the former editor, features editor, and reporter at *The Oakland Tribune*. Formerly a columnist for *The Express* in Berkeley California. A reporter for *The San Francisco Chronicle*. She was a professional in residence at Howard University, taught journalism there and is currently a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center.

To my right, Sidney Blumenthal. A special political correspondent at the *New Yorker* magazine, author of three books. But most important, he is the author also of a play called "This Town", which is a satire about Washington journalism. It premiered in Los Angeles and we're hoping to get it to Washington as soon as possible.

On the left, only a geographic description, Howard Fineman, chief political correspondent and deputy Washington bureau chief for *Newsweek* magazine. He appears weekly on CNN's "Capital Gang, Sunday", and has appeared very regularly on "Washington Week in Review". He has covered every president, every congress, every national election since 1980.

We normally start by asking those who did not participate last night, meaning at this point three and soon to be four, what their view was of our speaker? What was he trying to say? Did he succeed in what he wanted to say?

And we'll begin with Suzanne Garment.

Ms. Garment: Well, I thought Bill was, as usual, brilliant, with the

exception that he is perhaps not pessimistic enough. The press is guilty of almost all that he says that it's guilty of. But, I am not sure that a press can be anything but derivative in any culture. And when there is no consensus on facts, and when there is no establishment in the best sense, to exert some discipline on public debate, it strikes me as quite unsurprising that journalists are not going to be able to take up the slack.

Mr. Kalb: Okay.

Howard Fineman.

Mr. Fineman: Well, gee I had all these things prepared, I better keep it short. Let me say first of all, that I know that the purpose of this is to bury Bill Buckley, not to praise him, but I am going to do it anyway.

In covering American politics, I have had to read a history in my youth that I didn't live, namely a conservative one. And I know that he and his brother-in-law are essentially two of the founding fathers of modern conservatism and a real, if it doesn't sound too corny to say, hero of American democracy. So, thank you.

As to his complaint, his civil complaint, let me admit and deny various things, very quickly. Do we under perform? Every week. Are we slothful? If you've seen my office, you'll know the answer to that one. Do we acquiesce in the ideological objective of the collective estate? Maybe we used to, but I don't think we do anymore.

Bob Samuelson, whom you mentioned from *Newsweek* is not an economist, he is a journalist. He is as individualistic a curmudgeon as I know.

And I personally live in Northwest Washington, send kids to private school, have a wife who is a corporate lawyer, and am in no collectivist mood whatsoever.

Do we have secularist sensibilities? Yes, regrettably, there is no denying that. The real culprits though are some ones that you mentioned, and some others that you didn't. The notion that all truths are relative, marries perfectly with TV's insatiable need for combat, and thus the media's need for combat. I'll just tell a quick story about that, and then, shut up.

Many years ago, or several years ago, when Michael Kinsley was busy, the call went out from Bill Buckley's producer to find me a Kinsley, and I guess Sidney was busy that day, so they went down the chain and came to me. And I was preinterviewed, as they say, by the producer Warren Steibel. And about halfway through the interview, he paused on the other end of the phone, and he said, well you are a liberal aren't you. Because for the sake of combat he needed a liberal interlocutor, and I was greatly offended by the question. I really was. I'm just old enough to have gone through the old school that says you try to strive for objectivity as a journalist.

And I didn't like the idea of being labelled. But I was presented with

a modern problem of the age which, I'm sure Sidney has lampooned to a fare-thee-well, in his play "This Town". By the way, I asked him if I could read the play and I thought in the hesitancy that he offered, that I was going to appear in there somewhere.

Anyway, so I was faced with the problem, do I admit, do I claim to be a liberal so I can get on the show or not. And I sort of mumbled, and they put me on the show.

... in our video society the narrative trumps the facts.

Mr. Galbraith: You mumbled on the show too?

(Laughter)

Mr. Fineman: I didn't mumble on the show. I said, I actually thought there was a lot of questioning involved. Actually, it was sort of like being Ed McMahon. But anyway, I think that combat that we all engage in, has had a destructive effect.

And the last thing I will mention is, narrative is all. It is not accidental that the entertainment companies and the journalism companies are merging, because in our video society the narrative trumps the facts. A good story, narrative is king, and that's where we are all headed, and that is truly scary, in my view.

Mr. Kalb: Sid Blumenthal.

Mr. Blumenthal: Thank you.

I appreciated Bill Buckley's half tribute to the Boston telephone book. If I were to title his speech, I would title it properly, "Homage to the New York Nynex White Pages, Boston area, including Brookline, Cambridge, Somerville". I happened to have pulled a copy of this book out of my room in the hotel, and I found that the names listed most were twenty-six Aarons, eleven Aaronsons, five Abads, and six Abbas. Bill wishes to be ruled by the first hundred names. Two thousand, oh I see. These people I believe have voted, and their representative is Barney Frank.

Mr. Buckley's thesis is one part Rousseau, a belief in the general will, and one part Franco, a belief in the general.

Mr. Buckley's thesis is one part Rousseau, a belief in the general will, and one part Franco, a belief in the general.

(Laughter)

Mr. Blumenthal: I'm afraid your voice did carry from that light, Bill. First, on the one hand, the people's belief is distorted and suppressed by the press. Which has its own driven ideological agenda. If only the people could decide, if only the press would let them. Second, on the other hand, the electorate should be restricted to the virtuous and the right thinking, that it is the right wing.

Mr. Buckley speaks of the fetishistic extension of the democratic

argument, even calling it blasphemy. When such rhetoric is marshalled we are not far from hearing an echo. So, Mr. Buckley wishes to have it both ways. What he believes is the general will, except when it isn't enforced. In which case, enter the generalissimo. What are we to make of this confection, made of equal parts sugar and salt. Let's not nibble on this, let's move on.

Above all, Mr. Buckley is a defiant man, who refuses to say, yes. He is, in this age of Speaker Gingrich, a lonely, but brave minoritarian, doing battle again, with the hosts of liberalism, assembled before him, like the Roman legions. Perhaps he mistakes Rupert Murdoch for Bob Reich. This may be understandable coming from an editor facing the juggernaut of a newly launched Murdoch competitor.

Mr. Buckley should take more credit for the effects on journalism of the movement he has played such a decisive role in. In particular, casting objectivity and professionalism as an ideological posture, setting in motion a knee jerk reflex for balance that has allowed opinionated right wingers to fill an ever expanding vacuum. Conservatism in journalism owes a good deal to liberal guilt.

At a moment when a Republican Congress is hacking away at the foundations of programs and ideas, set in place by Bill Clinton and John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt, Bill Buckley winces inappropriately. He should cease complaining. This is his time for triumphalism. It seems bizarre, when Newt Gingrich is center stage, to suggest that a conservative display more self-esteem, more, if you will, defiance. But Bill Buckley should stop short changing himself, and take credit for his achievements.

Mr. Kalb: I believe you have an opportunity to speak, Mr. Buckley.

Mr. Buckley: Okay. Marvin, several times over the summer, pleaded with me to write my paper sufficiently in advance to make it available to the panelists. I told him that for temperamental reasons, this was difficult, because I tend to finish my projects at the last minute, as probably most of us do. I see his point, that it would have been useful to circulate it, so that Sidney would have had a chance to read it, a little bit more carefully, than manifestly he has. For instance, to make mistake one hundred for two thousand, is to make a rather complex error, isn't it?

Then he speaks about the role of the general, to the extent that people don't behave virtuously, when what I said was, one would hope the people would be guided by a virtue, by virtuous and libertarian inclinations. I hope that in the same sense that Hamilton hoped that when he wrote in the Federalist Papers, that there is absolutely no guarantee against a distemper of the people if it should actually take over, and that in the absence of virtue, we are all a hostage.

So, those clarifications it seems to me to have a rather corrupting effect on Mr. Blumenthal's thesis. But since he likes hobgoblins and I

don't know how he could operate without them, I'm perfectly glad to volunteer, because he handles them with nice grace, don't you agree?

On the point that Suzanne makes, I think that she is quite right, that there are unconsolidated postulates in our culture, which are the result of a kind of rampant relativism. And that in the absence of those, it does become difficult to make a derivative of generalities. But still they can, in fact, be made.

And again, I attempted one that escaped the attention of Mr. Blumenthal, when I said that the gritty, hard, inquisitive intelligence of the American people, very often penetrates that which the establishmentarians would like them to see. As witness, I cited Governor Weld as recently as the day before yesterday, and of course Gingrich would be the manifest example for a year ago.

I have not said ever that the people are permanently lead to misperception. I have said that certain misperceptions in which they manifestly engage are not challenged by a press that knows them to be misperceptions. When *The New York Times* reports that everybody, of course, is under the impression that the great deficit in our budget during the '80's was a result of a tax decreases, and manifestly it isn't the case. I wonder why *The New York Times* should sponsor a report that says, as everybody supposes. Why do people suppose that?

Mr. Fineman says that it's not a matter really of sloth. He acknowledges that there are secularist sensibilities, which probably intone the quality of their high reception of the Supreme Court, when it rules against any form of religious expression in schools. And then, he says it used to be that ideological affinities dominated the tendency of those reports. But that isn't any longer the case.

I think, as a matter of fact, I would acknowledge that it is less the case, but I still think there were enough examples of it to make it a problem we ought all to address. Especially Mr. Blumenthal.

Mr. Kalb: Pearl Stewart. We had gone around and each of the panelists was giving his or her interpretation and analysis of Mr. Buckley's speech last night. And we would like to have yours.

Ms. Stewart: Thank you. I apologize for being late, I was delayed by your wonderful public transportation system this morning.

Mr. Buckley: Which will be privatized, right?

Ms. Stewart: And oddly enough, after this morning's experience, I may have changed my mind about privatization for public transportation.

I was struck by a couple of things in Mr. Buckley's remarks last night, and I should say it's the first time I've ever had the opportunity to hear one of your orations in person. I've only been graced with your remarks on television and so I appreciated the opportunity to hear you expound at greater length than I am used to hearing.

The main thing that I was struck with and really that I would just

like to get your response on, is: We seem to be in sort of a heyday for conservatism and if anything, conservative thought seems to be getting quite a bit of exposure. It seems to be pretty much dominating the airwaves, and the print media as well. And I'm struck by your apparent concern that the dominance of conservatives (you mentioned radio talk shows and other avenues that seemed to have welcomed conservatives, where they actually seem to dominate, but they're not), is only sort of a response to the liberal media. The liberal media that continues to be very liberal.

And I'm a little confused by this, because I hear it a lot that the conservative, whether it's talk show hosts in general are really just the little guys, sort of responding to the liberal press that has always sort of ruled the roost. And I am wondering about that now, because it seems very clear that is no longer the case, but it continues to be communicated that way by conservatives. So, I would like to just get your comments on that.

Mr. Buckley: Well, my comments are that I have acknowledged that there is this evolution. It is probably an evolution that simply acknowledges certain political reality, when all of a sudden, Mr. Gingrich takes over Congress, it becomes an event that can't be made to sort of evanesce, by simply not acknowledging it.

But, I still think that as the press tends to acknowledge that reality, it still tends to undermine what it does by encouraging resistance, by using the word, as I had mentioned last night, defiant, when you have Congress which is what, five hundred and seventy people over against the White House which is one person, the defiance is really in the other direction. It is appropriate to say defiance when the President defies Congress, not the other way around. That's not, I think, a controversial point.

... the press declines to affirm, and sustain, reality when that reality is misunderstood...

So that, my accent was on the way in which the press declines to affirm, and my words, sustain, reality when that reality is misunderstood, and that was the point I had attempted to make.

Mr. Kalb: Professor Galbraith, your second thoughts.

Professor Galbraith: Well, my second thoughts go a bit beyond the extraordinarily interesting lecture last night, the discussion, to the larger question of the reaction of the press in general, to particularly the developments of this past couple of years and more. And that is the tendency that's possible here today, to emphasize ideology over the larger course of history.

It wasn't liberals, for example, who invented public health care, that goes back to the fact that in this last half century, the extraordinary

developments in medicine and surgery have greatly prolonged, greatly advanced the opportunity to prolong life. And of course, the fact that people no longer smoke cigarettes has also greatly increased medical problems, because people once died early and inexpensively and now live long and very expensively. And this whole development created this situation, that the difference between life and death was the role of the state, the role of government in providing support to health. People could no longer be allowed to die simply because of a shortage of money.

I was born on a farm and I've been on an escape from work ever since.

I would make the same point as regards to the broad structure of social security, now also under some measure of attack. Fifty years ago, when I first became associated with these problems, the United States was predominantly an agricultural country. I began my role in economics as an agricultural economist. Over half of the gainfully employed were in agriculture. There was no problem of unemployment. There was no problem, really, of old age pensions, the farm could be sold for whatever would pay the cost of retirement, or there was another younger generation coming along to do the extremely nasty work on a farm. I was born on a farm and I've been on an escape from work ever since.

And one can extend that list to the point where one sees much of what is under conservative attack. And much, I regret to say, for which my fellow liberals take credit, is really part of the broad thrust of history. And that the tendency of the press, of which I never criticize when I think I have something I would like to publish, the tendency of the press is to think of these matters in political terms, to think of these terms in ideological terms, and not to see that what we have been experiencing and what is now under discussion, is as I say, part of the larger sweep of history, rather than the narrower result of political choice.

... what we have been experiencing is part of the larger sweep of history, rather than the narrower result of political choice.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, Professor Galbraith.

Mr. Buckley: May I comment on that?

Mr. Kalb: Oh, by all means, yes.

Mr. Buckley: I think that Professor Galbraith is correct about the broad sweeps of history.

Professor Galbraith: Why don't you just stop at that point.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Because the broader sweep of history wouldn't permit me to do so. The broader sweep of history has that note of Marxism, they said no to socialism and they begin to say something to us, and to our particular adjustment to these social questions.

On the matter, for instance, of social security, which is considered absolutely untouchable, we have to remind ourselves that it had been touched eleven times since it was inaugurated. And that there is a model right now in Chile which is extremely attractive. One ought to be permitted to look at it. It is very difficult to find anybody who says the idea of social security is wrong. And very difficult to find any thoughtful person who says social security operates perfectly.

In regard, for instance, to public housing, Irving Kristol told me a while back that he really bumped into, or he was really mugged by reality twenty-five years ago, when he noticed in the same issue of *The New York Times*, the cost of refurbishing a house, a public housing unit, for a family was seventeen thousand dollars. A house in Levittown, at that time, was selling for sixteen thousand eight hundred dollars.

So it is a fresh look at what has been accepted as irresistible historical tidal waves that I think, I find myself urging. I remember a rather definitive extrapolation of where it is otherwise leading, made by Malcolm Muggeridge to me one time, when he said, my dear Bill, as I study the figures for population growth in Sweden there is one piece of good news, by the year 2060 there won't be one left.

Mr. Kalb: Any other comment?

I wanted to ask a question that wasn't clear to me on the basis of what you were saying last night. And I asked the question last night, and I would like to return to it again.

Was there a time when you felt that the press, overall, and it is so difficult to use that one word to suggest all of the complexity of the news media today. But, was there a time when you felt it was doing a good job? What were the circumstances at that point?

Mr. Buckley: Well, I mentioned the San Francisco earthquake, but you didn't like that analogy anyway?

Mr. Kalb: No, no.

Mr. Buckley: Let me think. Yeah, I think it would be absolutely correct to say that the shortcomings of President Carter were pretty diligently recorded in 1979 and 1980. That would be just sort off the cuff, you might not agree to that.

Mr. Kalb: Watergate?

Mr. Buckley: Well, Watergate was a brilliant explorative job. But the assumptions that were urged on the heels of Watergate were absolutely incorrect. There is no reason why Mr. Nixon's iniquity should have brought about a huge Democratic majority in the elections of 1974. But this was, as a result of it being urged on people that the iniquity of Mr. Nixon was inherent in Republican opposition. That was wrong, i.e.,

they made the right point, but they let the baby out with bath water.

Mr. Kalb: How would you account for press activities, for example, or non activities, such as the failure to report the savings and loan scandal throughout the 1980's?

Mr. Buckley: Well, I think it was a terrible delinquency. It was of course an act that, the primary responsibility was in increasing the immunity of the investor from a hundred thousand dollars to, it made from three thousand dollars to a hundred thousand dollars, and then ultimately, to everything. This was done, as you know, by a Democratic committee, and one has to assign to the President the formal responsibility for not keeping the executive house in order, and assign to the Congress the responsibility for all the enabling legislation that made that scandal prosper. It was a wrong thing to do and blame, I think, should be allocated everywhere.

Mr. Kalb: If the story had been covered in detail, as we proceeded in the '80's, it would have been an indictment, would it not, of the Reagan administration?

Mr. Buckley: No. It would have been an indictment of the Democratic Congress.

Mr. Kalb: Okay.

Mr. Fineman: Marvin?

Mr. Kalb: Yes, Howard?

Mr. Fineman: Can I? Since in my own slothful way, I have a story about Colin Powell to write, yet again. Do you mind my asking you here, yesterday in Washington a group of people calling themselves leaders of the conservative movement in the country, held a press conference, basically telling Colin Powell not to dare enter the race. I would just like, if you wouldn't mind, to get your views on the Powell candidacy, if there is to be one. And also your view of how the press has played a role in his political fortunes.

Mr. Buckley: Well —

Professor Galbraith: While you're doing that Bill, clarify why you hold the executive branch innocent of the savings and loans scandal, and put all the blame on the Congress.

Mr. Buckley: Well, there would not have been the scandal, there would not have been a scandal except for two things. Number one, is that the sum of money protected rose from three thousand dollars to a hundred thousand dollars. Number two, the banking regulations that had been imposed on S&L's were rescinded. With the result that they were able to chase after money, paying a higher interest rate than they otherwise would be. But there was no way in which the S&L's could have bid for this money, except by that release of Regulation G, which was a congressional act.

On the question asked about General Powell. It seems to me that the division between the Republicans and the Democrats as shaping up, is a

very important division comparable to the division between Mrs. Thatcher and the labor party in 1979. It is not in my judgement the kind of division that recalls Mr. Eisenhower coming in as sort of an emollient president.

The differences between Mr. Eisenhower's policies and those of Adlai Stevenson were not really significant. It was really a matter of belle lettre-ism versus a somebody whose background was different. But here, I think there is a definite clash indicated, and it's the only one in a democratic society that can be fought out politically. It isn't one that can, I think, be simply subsumed under the general benevolence of a very nice, very intelligent, admirable, human being.

Given that he has, in the last two or three months, given slight vague enunciations, which could undermine the structure of conservative affinities. The time is, I think, to call him forward on it, and let him decide. He might decide to run as a Democrat. If he decides to run as a Republican, it seems to me he has to admit to reversing or changing or altering his positions to a certain extent.

Garry Wills wrote a devastating column a couple of days ago, in which he gave twenty-four questions, I think it was, to General Powell. Among them, okay, you say that you are a Rockefeller Republican, as distinguished from, say, a Dewey Republican. Now, while Mr. Rockefeller was governor, the state services went up one thousand percent, taxation went up seven hundred percent, there was a great flight of industry, and New York has been perpetually sort of underwater since then. So, explain to us what it is about the Rockefeller administration that appeals to you?

I happened to have been in the room, with a dinner party of twelve people, at which then Governor Rockefeller and then Governor Reagan, were present. And at the toasting time, Governor Rockefeller lifted his glass and said I have to say this semi-publicly to you here, that I think you, Ronald, have done a better job in handling welfare in California, than I have in New York State. That unfortunately was semi-public, and perhaps if he had made it more public, General Powell would have reconsidered.

In any event, I see happening a yes or no, on the question of whether government has gone too far, is too ambitious, ought to be structurally remodeled. And this asks us to pass judgement really on what Professor Banfield once referred to as the Monday, Tuesday problem. Where the conservatives urged you to think in terms of what would happen on Tuesday, the liberals tend to urge you to think of what could have happened on Monday, because on Monday they're going to give you everything, free health, free enduring longevity, and so on and so forth. It is the Republicans' responsibility, it seems, to say you can't lose weight unless you diet. You can't simultaneously eat and diet, you can't simultaneously smoke and not smoke, and that the advantages of

a certain husbandry pay off in the long run, very spectacularly.

This is not, I think, a lesson that General Powell either has learned or certainly has not perfected a skill in evangelizing. So, for that reason, I think that this protest in Washington was probably very healthy.

Ms. Stewart: Could I just ask—

Mr. Kalb: Yes, Pearl?

Ms. Stewart: —about General Powell? Are you suggesting that if he changed or reversed his opinions on abortion, or affirmative action, for instance, that he would be accepted by the Republicans as someone who had reversed himself on those very important issues?

Mr. Buckley: Yes, the way Bush was.

Mr. Kalb: Sid?

Mr. Blumenthal: I think Bill Buckley is, on this subject, absolutely correct. I think that he states very clearly what the mission of Colin Powell must be if he decides to enter the Republican race for the presidential nomination. It would be to take on the conservative influence within the Republican party and to seek to extirpate it, and to draw the Republican party back to a moderate, not simply a Rockefeller position, but a more or less, even less defined Eisenhower position.

Powell is very, I find, ambiguous about his motives. I'm not sure what his motive exactly is, if he chooses to seek the presidency. I found also that the press has been exceedingly deferential towards Colin Powell and his public record. That may be because he has not yet announced, and that the press only examines when he announces. But there is a remaining question of whether the press will examine him as thoroughly as it has other candidates.

Mr. Kalb: Why would it not, Sid?

Mr. Blumenthal: I think that the press is exceedingly deferential to Colin Powell.

Mr. Kalb: No, but why would it not examine him more critically if he announces?

Mr. Blumenthal: I think that they are, that's a very good question. I'd like to see what happens and then, I might be able to analyze it. I'm more of an empiricist, more of a journalist on these matters. But I will say that right now Colin Powell is given credit for his biography, which is inspirational, and it is assumed to be his public life, which has yet to be looked into.

But Bill Buckley has very clearly, I think, stated what lies before Powell. Which Powell himself, at least so far, has yet to recognize. And that includes recognition of the implications of his own, so far, vaguely stated views.

Mr. Kalb: But Bill, if it were true that it seemed as if Colin Powell had the popular strength to deliver the White House to the Republican party, would you then continue the objection? After all, power would be there then, not only in the White House, but in Congress.

Mr. Buckley: The objection does not dominate the question, who would you vote for. When Ken Galbraith was asked in my presence, by the interlocutor on the "Today Show", who is your candidate for 1992, his words were, the leftward most viable candidate. Changing a single word, you have my opinion on the matter.

Mr. Kalb: Howard, you wanted to follow up?

Mr. Fineman: I was just thinking about what Sidney was discussing.

There is some of what passes for soul searching, if we have them, about what the press has done for or to the idea of leadership in the country, the possibility of leadership. We've come a long way from the loose days, when leadership was basically his theme. And Powell has an opportunity to benefit, at least for a while, and has already benefitted, I think, to some extent, from our collective unconscious guilt about making it impossible for anyone to lead. That would not be enough to buy him all the time he needs, if he announces, to get from here to there, without the proctological scrutiny for which we are famous. That will happen.

And Sidney is also right that he has been selling himself on the basis of his biography; *My American Journey* is basically his campaign document.

But there is a public record, at the Pentagon. The Pentagon and the NSC are, not to put too fine a point on it, his Arkansas. And what I mean by that is Bill Clinton's record in Arkansas was never really thoroughly examined by us in the national press corps. If I have one self-criticism, and there are many that I could make that I would mention today, we didn't really do the obvious thing about Bill Clinton, which is to go look and see what kind of Governor he had really been, minute by minute, year by year, in Arkansas.

I don't know if Powell announces, how much time we will spend mucking around in the Pentagon and the NSC, but I imagine quite a bit. And I think the usual dynamic eventually will take hold. But for the first six, if he announces, I think that first five or six weeks are critical. How he takes the inevitable and annoying questions he's going to get on matters like My Lai and Iraq from ignorant political reporters, who don't appreciate his genius, will be interesting to see.

Mr. Kalb: Before we leave the Colin Powell issue, I would like to ask if anybody else has a question, in which case this would be the time to ask it.

Suzanne Garment?

Ms. Garment: What Howard talked about, the soul searching, or at least the ambivalence of the press is not such a rare occurrence now a days. Clinton himself benefitted from similar ambivalence in 1992 over what had been done to previous political candidates on the matter of sexual misbehavior.

And it is one sign, I think, of an institution, if one can talk of it

collectively, that has lost a lot of self-confidence, if it hasn't actually taken steps to reform itself.

Mr. Kalb: Any questions or comments about the Colin Powell phenomena?

Mr. Buckley: Charles Krauthammer advanced an interesting position a while ago, that I think has to be taken seriously. And that is that whatever the ambitions of a consolidating conservative are salient, in respect of important domestic reforms, the important problem right know is race relations. And that for that reason, even if only for that reason, a token of absolute good faith to black skeptics, would be the election of Powell.

The very fact that he is considered so prominently is a very good sign. And I acknowledge this as an important factor.

And by the way, Sid, I think probably, it does help to account for the fact of an immunity that others might not have lasted, in others, quite this long. And it is, what I am saying, it is admirable that there is no resistance, that I can see, to General Powell because he is a black, and it may very well be true, that if he were elected, it would have an enormous magical effect.

I wrote a piece for *Look* magazine in 1972 saying I hoped the Republican party would nominate a black by 1980. As Mr. Galbraith would say, I am often prophetic, but I'm a few years behind on this one.

Mr. Kalb: Pippa Norris?

Ms. Norris: I wonder whether you saw that there was a revival of conservatism amongst the African-American community, which is symbolized both by the Powell candidacy and the idea that there is an African-American who can stand, who can be very creditable within the Republican party, but also by the Million Man March and Farrakhan, because much of what he was saying was very conservative in the sense of individual responsibility, not looking to government for solutions, and how African-Americans have to look for and take responsibility for the problems in their own back yard. Is this a realignment, and a very significant one, in American politics?

Mr. Buckley: Well, I think that is an important point. I think anybody who lived in the South, or acknowledges that there are some profoundly conservative traditions, and instincts among the black people.

As a manager of Mike Tyson said a while ago about him, Mike has a lot of good points, it's his bad points that aren't so good. And it's the high incidence of crime among the black people, the high incidence of illegitimate children that is a really sundering cultural feature.

It is true that ninety, to ninety-five percent tend to vote Democratic. On the other hand, forty percent voted for Governor Kean in New Jersey, and about fifteen percent voted for Nixon a couple of times around. The reinforcement of the conservative tendencies among

blacks has got to be done by their own leadership.

And this is what makes it so infuriatingly difficult to deal with Farrakhan, as you suggest, that he is on the one hand, an absolutely kooky human being, on the other hand occasionally a man who says some pretty bright things. Jesse Jackson has a little bit of the same problem.

But, perhaps if General Powell became president, his leadership would have the kind of effect you are looking for. Whether you can stop the production of illegitimate children at the current rate is another question.

Ms. Stewart: I would like to take issue with your characterization of illegitimacy and crime as cultural features, I think you used the term, among the African-American community.

Mr. Buckley: Well, there are a million illegitimate children born every year. In 1965, six percent of whites were illegitimate, they are now eighteen percent. So it has increased by a factor of three hundred percent more than it has among blacks, but the blacks started at eighteen and are now at sixty-three.

Now, the statistics reveal that if you have a single parent household, the chances of that child growing up in poverty, inclining to drugs, committing crime, and barely achieving literacy, are six hundred percent higher than in households where there are two parents.

A recent poll advertised by Ed Koch, by two scholars, shows that whereas, in respect of crime, the graph is this way among blacks versus this way among whites. If you prescind from the blacks, those who grow up in two parent households, they run pretty much on a track. And that is a terribly important indicator, in my judgement, isolating the single parent household as the central social disruption of our day.

Mr. Kalb: Peggy Charren, did you have a question? If you did, come to a microphone.

Ms. Charren: It's a very short question. I'm not sure I understand why a candidate that is considering running can't be investigated in any way by the press until he or she decides to run. And that it seems to me that I would be interested in reading whatever the press could find now about the candidates that are talking about it, instead of just waiting.

Mr. Kalb: Howard Fineman.

Mr. Fineman: Yeah, we've done some of that. And we are excellent, just to talk about *Newsweek* for a second, our very good Pentagon correspondent wrote a very, very tough piece in *Newsweek*, about a month ago, on Powell's record as a military bureaucrat.

But you ask a very good question. I might not have much of an answer for it, except that in addition to narrative trumping facts, as I was saying before. The drama created by his decision making process has sort of crowded out the rest of the story for the time being.

And a month ago, we were all, two months ago, chasing after the

book. What was in the book, and so forth. But if you read the book carefully, yeah, that book as I say, is his campaign document. And like any campaign document is now being carefully examined for, you know, internal inconsistencies, and so forth.

But you make a very good point, and I don't have a good answer for it.

Mr. Kalb: Peggy, also the press doesn't have a lot of time to go into, generally, to go into the backgrounds of people who are considering a run. And in fact, as we all know, Colin Powell, we are talking about him now, has received an enormous amount, more attention, than just about anybody else considering a run.

So, from that point of view, it, when a story coalesces and becomes obvious as a news story, journalism wakes, but generally speaking, not before that.

Nolan Bowie, please.

Mr. Bowie: First I would like to respond to Pippa in terms of this black conservative movement. I would point out that two of the leading black conservatives just recently resigned from the American Enterprise Institute. I would also point out that many black African-Americans have traditionally, as well as the institutions, have been conservative.

I'd point out that the civil rights movement has been essentially a conservative movement based on traditional core, human values.

Now, I have some questions for Mr. Buckley. I was surprised last night that I agreed with some of the things you said. Not most, but some of the things you said. But before I go to that, you made a statement that the general will of the people ought to be followed.

Back in 1980, Lou Harris did a poll on the First Amendment, in which the people favored a fairness in balance in all media, print as well as electronic. Promoting that there ought to be a right to respond to personal attacks, that there ought to be balance and varied points of view in all media, regardless of what is spent, or electronic.

Now, what I agreed with is, you made a statement that the media is often hypnotized. I agree with that. And I think mostly about itself. It's what, in fact, Ben Bagdikian refers to as some of the media taboos, and that's when it is included.

You said that it is very important that the citizenry be informed, particularly if they are going to participate in government. I highly agree with that.

You also mentioned that most people rely on television for their news and information, something like seventy percent. I would point out that all media, whether it is print or electronic, generally only about four percent of the content is of a political nature, according to Russell Neuman, and he did his study prior to deregulation. That even a program like that concentrates on, say, political information and news, such as MacNeil/Lehrer, Ted Koppel on "Nightline", the program amounts to about thirty-eight hundred words, if you look at a written

transcript. Which I think is too little information.

But moreover, since the early '80's, broadcasters have had no legal obligation to present any news, any information, any public affairs spots. Since 1987, there has been no issue access, no fairness requirement. And now, we are faced with bills before Congress that would allow a single entity to own all of the radio stations, and more than one third of the television stations as well as the newspapers, cable systems, and telephone companies delivering video, in their same communities. And yet, the media seems to be hypnotized about this issue, not informing the public.

Moreover, there is also within this bill, a provision to allow for the auctioning of the airwaves. In other words, you would privatize the airways. If that were to come to pass, would there be access to political candidates on these privately owned airwaves and systems? Would the public be better informed by having such a high degree of concentration?

Mr. Buckley: Well, the answer is I don't know. We do know that, unhappily, the public ratings of programs like C-SPAN, are very low compared to what, "Wheel of Fortune" or whatever. There is no way we can control that. But the, I think, the single compensating event that clarifies the issues you raise, is the ubiquity of new channels.

... I don't think the record documents that the ownership by a single person of a number of radio or television stations means that they issue the same point of view.

Yesterday's *Time* magazine, or a couple of days ago, carries in it an ad for a disk for six hundred and eighteen dollars, whatever it is, that brings you five hundred stations. I guess what I am saying is that people are going to be able to find whatever they want, observation number one.

Observation number two, is that I don't think the record documents that the ownership by a single person or single company of a number of radio or television means that they issue the same point of view.

Gannett had six newspapers in New York State, three of whom came out for my brother when he ran for reelection, three of whom came out for his opponent. I think, I don't think that even Murdoch, the bad man in all situations, tells his editors what to do with *The Chicago Sun-Times*, which does not run my column, and the *Post* does, so does the Boston paper. So, I don't think that there is, as I say, that uniformity.

And that we have primarily to worry about two things. Number one, will access to these alternative channels be cheap enough to be accessible to those who want it, and can't pay out seventy-five or eighty dollars a month. And number two, how can we interest them in the

quality of news that does need deliberation.

Mr. Bowie: The last one, in terms of access. I just point out that CNN was denied access to AT&T because they saw a conflict of interest. During the Vietnam War, Business Executives Against the War, could not buy an ad, a political ad on CBS.

In terms of viewpoint diversity, it is not guaranteed by the number of channels, mostly you get the same old stuff, you look cable, you flip through the dial, and go surfing on it, you find mainly the same programs.

... viewpoint diversity is not guaranteed by the number of channels...

Mr. Buckley: Well, you would get different stuff, if somebody urged different stuff on you and you wanted it.

Mr. Bowie: And moreover you said that people can find what they want on the multiplicity of channels, but only if they can afford it. Now what do you do for the information have nots? How do you guarantee—?

Mr. Buckley: Well, you encourage a pattern that we have seen in the last fifteen years, which is a steady lowering of prices in all technology, of microelectronic technology. The computer that I have here, that just broke, would have cost fifty thousand dollars, fifteen years ago. It's a two thousand dollar unit.

But, by the same token, the mere existence of the disk cuts cable costs by, well you can amortize it in two years, after which in effect you get all this stuff free, paid for at the other end by advertisers. So, I don't think there is anyway in which we can give people a greater volume of what is theirs by paying fairly modestly for it.

I do resent that *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* cost two dollars and ninety-five cents, or is it one ninety-five.

Four hundred magazines, new magazines, started last year. So I think we're drowning in the stuff. I don't think it's a problem.

Mr. Kalb: Jacqueline Sharkey has a question.

Ms. Sharkey: I would just like to follow up on some of the ideas that Nolan presented, and ask a question myself.

In fact, when you make the point that people can find what they want on cable, in fact, many cable markets, for example, don't carry C-SPAN. I live in Tucson, Arizona much of the year, where there used to be both the C-SPAN channels and one was removed, and replaced by a cartoon network. When people called it was just discussed that, well this wasn't profitable enough. So, there really isn't as much access in individual cable areas as you might think. And the fact that cable franchises in many areas are exclusive, so there isn't, because the technology, the cable is so expensive to lay, cities give exclusive agreements, so, you really don't have competition in cable.

In addition, I would take issue with your characterization of Mr.

Murdoch's benign attitude toward news media that he owned.

Mr. Buckley: I didn't say benign, I said stand off.

Ms. Sharkey: Stand off. Well, in Hong Kong, for example, the Hong Kong Journalist Association and many freedom of expression groups, including Freedom House, were very upset when Mr. Murdoch pulled the BBC off his Star TV operations in Hong Kong, because the Chinese government, which has a huge market that he hopes to enter once Hong Kong becomes part of China in 1997, raised objections to the content of the BBC. And Mr. Murdoch, in what apparently he has acknowledged quite openly is an economic decision, pulled the BBC off in order to keep good relationships with the Chinese government.

And I am wondering what you think about these kinds of actions in light of the telecommunication bill's provisions that would take away some of the restrictions on the amount of foreign ownership of U.S. media, including news media?

Mr. Buckley: Well, I think that it really establishes nothing that we don't know to point out that people are often cowardly. And pursue the dollar. Whether it is Mr. Murdoch retreating in Hong Kong, or whether it is Time Inc. retreating on gangsta rap. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not good.

William Bennett and Senator Liebermann have urged people to withdraw their support from the talk shows that heap on kooky, kooky sex. This is a form of pressure, which I, for one, hope succeeds.

Now, the fact that China exerts pressure on a broadcasting station in Hong Kong, is not really hot news, this kind of thing happens. The fact that foreign ownership wants a higher than twenty percent interest in American television, doesn't happen to bother me. If somebody would tell me what it is about it that is a threat, I want to know what that threat is, as long as it becomes possible for people who resist, and the apparent hegemony to start up their own station.

Ms. Sharkey: Let me make two follow up points to that. The reason that Mr. Murdoch disturbed many journalists and many, again, human rights organizations concerned with free expression, is because Mr. Murdoch owns enormous numbers of media properties here in the United States. And if indeed, for example, the cross ownership and the foreign ownership restrictions are reduced, then we're going to have exactly the hegemony that you spoke of.

And then, we are going to have the airwaves, which are supposed to belong to the public, I think that's been sort of universally acknowledged by the Supreme Court and by members of Congress. Then you have the public not having the ability to get the diversity of use, which you yourself say are so crucial for people to be informed when they go to the ballot box.

So, I think, indeed there is, although Hong Kong itself, may not interest the U.S. public, the precedent that has been set there, and the

idea that individuals can own all of the media in any single market works against the very idea of diversity of viewpoints in the marketplace of ideas that you yourself say is one of the cornerstones of having an informed electorate.

Mr. Buckley: Well, two observations on the matter of the airwaves it's quite true, that when this was considered finite property they were extremely valuable and still are extremely valuable, but much less so than they were. The share of the market by the networks last year was down to forty percent, compared to say fifteen years ago when it would have been a hundred percent. Now that certainly indicates that there is room for other people competing for the attention of the public.

... the idea that individuals can own all of the media in any single market works against the very idea of diversity of viewpoints in the marketplace of ideas that you yourself say is one of the cornerstones of having an informed electorate.

The second point is, as long as you have a free market, people can resist that which you don't like. If Mr. Murdoch tried to buy all the stations in the whole world, he wouldn't succeed. Because somebody is going to deny him his station on the grounds that denying him gives him access to all those people who don't like Murdoch fare.

Plus also, I think we should add, that having gotten used to the airwaves when there were six or seven, or eight, nine, channels, we can't really look back on their performance with a whole lot of pride, can we. That is to say, I can't imagine they'd be much worse if Mr. Murdoch had run them. Every now and then you get a Frank Stanton or a Henry Luce who simply insists on standards, never mind what it does to profit, up to a point, but this is pretty unusual.

... as long as you have a free market, people can resist that which you don't like.

In his generic, in his generic characterization of capitalist behavior, Professor Galbraith is as right as Adam Smith was when he said, that when there are more than three people in a room, the chances are they are conspiring against the public good.

Mr. Kalb: Walter Shorenstein.

Mr. Shorenstein: You mentioned that eighty percent of the press votes Democratic.

Mr. Buckley: No, I didn't say that, pressmen.

Mr. Shorenstein: Pressmen?

Mr. Buckley: Yeah, people who work in the press. Not of corporate

properties.

Mr. Shorenstein: Well, that is correct. So that is my point. That are they informed, uninformed? Or should we follow them since they are in the best position to understand all the issues and should we vote accordingly? And when you say that Rush Limbaugh is to offset that eighty percent, do two wrongs make a right, that's a point, anyway.

And I would like to comment on the savings and loan issue. The sense that the regulatory bodies were under the control of the executive branch, and would you in your right mind loan money to a borrower without monitoring that?

Mr. Buckley: No, but the rules are set up by Congress, the regulation needs a congressional provision. What the responsibility of the executive was to call attention to Congress to what was happening as a result of the latitudinarian policies of Congress, that was the executive responsibility. To the extent that was not done, that can properly be said to have been a defect of Mr. Reagan.

On your other point, whether two wrongs make a right? You've got to classify them as two wrongs to begin with, and you've got to face the intricate philosophical question of, in what direction do those wrongs point. If I wrongly urge a law that keeps you from smoking cigarettes, I am actually acting in an anti-libertarian way. But to the extent that I succeed in doing so, you benefit from a longer life, as Professor Galbraith — you did say that didn't you Ken?

Mr. Kalb: Yes, he did.

Shirley Williams, you had a question?

Ms. Williams: Yes, I want to follow up a bit further on what Jackie said. I regard Mr. Buckley as the most articulate and intelligent spokesman for his ideological point of view.

Mr. Buckley: Are you my Shirley Williams?

Ms. Williams: Yes, I am.

Mr. Buckley: Well, how are you?

Ms. Williams: How are you? The National Health Service still survives.

Mr. Buckley: We debated throughout the seventies.

Ms. Williams: Anyways, let me go back whence I came.

You said, and I quote, you produced a marvelous array of words, but I don't think you addressed the principle just now, in answer to Jackie. Let me push the principle for a moment.

As I understand it, her argument was that when you get dominant forces and the great conglomerates are coming together globally, as you know, in the field of communications, sometimes the power and domination of those forces is such as to simply exclude certain pieces of information all together.

Two examples, one was given by Jackie, I think the extremely disturbing example of the rejection of the BBC feeding into the Murdoch

empire's global communication system, because, Mr. Buckley, they had a program about the sale of organs from Chinese prisoners to the free market. I mean something that you wouldn't conceivably accept, and nor would I, because it is straightforwardly, morally wrong.

And for doing a program on that, the BBC has now lost a very substantial part of its potential international market. That's the way the market operated in this case.

And the second example was about Berlusconi's control of the only two major national private television systems in Italy. In order to promote his election, which indeed happened, on the part of a man who most commentators in Italy agree, if he had not dominated those two television programs, probably wouldn't have been elected.

Now, I accept your argument about competition, but let's look for a moment at the ultimate outcome of the free market in communications, where you do not have control over conglomeration, or concentration of ownership, because with great respect, I don't think your answer reflected the extreme seriousness of the situation we are facing the global media market.

Mr. Buckley: Well, perhaps not. I have zero to say in response to anybody who points to individual iniquity in commerce, because it seems to me, omnipresent, it happens everywhere. I don't think *The Wall Street Journal* or was it *Time*, should have apologized in Singapore, I mean, I think it just shouldn't have been done. Which one was it, *Wall Street Journal*?

Mr. Kalb: I think it was.

Ms. Sharkey: *The International Herald Tribune.* They fought it for years, and spent huge amounts of money fighting those law suits. *The International Herald Tribune* declined to fight the lawsuit, and apologized and printed basically a retraction.

Mr. Buckley: Well, that was at least a case of pusillanimity, perhaps worse even than that, i.e., they were safeguarding a commercial prospect.

Now, if you say the consequence of this particular behavior is this particular deficiency, I can say yeah, I can think of a lot of situations which that's true. The absence of Radio Free Europe will have certain consequences in the diminished accessibility to the right kind of news, over a very broad part of the Earth.

But, I'm here to discuss whether or not that act of pusillanimity, or of submission by Murdoch or by the *Herald Tribune* justifies a different policy. And if so, what ought that policy to be? I think the best way to handle situations like that is by public obloquy. Now I don't think public obloquy is without force, it turned around Time Warner for instance, on the matter of the gangsta rap, quite recently, and could conceivably have some effect on the most outrageous talk shows.

So, it is pressure of that kind, I think, rather than attempting to

reorder the whole basic understanding, which is to encourage competition, deny monopoly and fortunately technology is working very hard to restore the centrality of the individual in an age in which it was widely assumed that he would be engulfed by great tides of commerce. So, on that point I am extremely optimistic.

It is so good to see you again.

Mr. Kalb: This gentleman right here. I'm sorry you've been waiting a long time.

From the Floor: Many people consider foreign policy to be well, President Clinton's most vulnerable area.We might have three major wars on different oceans in 1996 if we get too deeply involved in Bosnia, and if the Chinese decide to attack Taiwan, and if something flares up in the Persian Gulf, we might have three major wars next year, if we aren't careful.

I want to know what you think, how you think Colin Powell will handle various areas of foreign policy? I am encouraged that he was involved in nuclear issues with the Russians for a long time. I think he has a lot of experience in this area, and he is not a hot head. If there is anybody that doesn't want to get us into unnecessary wars, Colin Powell might appeal to some of the anti-war people among others.

I'm wondering if he can be effective on human rights. I don't think he'll want to send the Marines in. But can we count on Colin Powell for it to be effective on human rights. And might he perhaps show some initiative on Africa?

Mr. Buckley: Marvin, is there a rubric that governs where we go? Because I mean, should I just talk about foreign policy?

Mr. Kalb: I wanted to get us back, actually, to conservatism. And I was going to do that. But this gentleman waited a long time for a question, so why don't we answer it and then, we will move on.

Mr. Buckley: Are we talking about conservatism? I thought we were talking about press and politics.

Mr. Kalb: And conservatism.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Oh, okay.

Mr. Kalb: Why don't we answer that question, and then, we can move.

Mr. Buckley: Sure, sure. Well, the answer to that is that nobody knows. The Woodward book which seems to be the principle source of Woodward knowledge, persuades us that he was very reluctant to enter the Gulf War. It was an enterprise that he urged President Bush not to undertake. And that he was among those who were in the forefront of those who urged the President to end the war, before we would find ourselves, as I think the expression was, shooting at the backs of soldiers who are running away.

Now, both of those decisions, certainly in retrospect, seemed to have

been strategically flawed. Whether we can generalize from them, on his judgement in foreign policy in general, I don't know. I think it is probably correct that as a general, trained to look after the physical security of the United States, he would be in the forefront of anyone, he would be in the forefront of the movement that pursued the development of the proliferation of nuclear arms and the most recent threat, which is of course, biological and chemical weapons.

So, I would offhand, assume that he would be diligent on that matter and as effective as Secretary of Defense, as he would be as President.

Mr. Kalb: Professor Galbraith.

Professor Galbraith: I think that's a very good answer, Bill. But, wouldn't it be well to add one thing, that such is the nature of foreign policy, it would be a hell of a lot better to wait until we are somewhat closer to the actual circumstance, before we ask anybody to make up their mind, and tell what they would do?

Mr. Kalb: Okay.

I wanted very much to attempt to shift our discussion back to the idea of press, politics and conservatism. And picking up a thought of Sidney Blumenthal before, that there should be a moment of triumphant exhilaration on the part of American conservatism, given what has happened on Capitol Hill.

And I was just wondering if we could all get into a discussion of the way in which the press, up to this point, has covered this emergence or reemergence of American conservatism, whether the conservatives think they are being short changed still by a liberal press, whether the press is finally doing a highly professional and competent job in this area?

I would like to try to get us into that kind of a discussion and why don't we start, Bill, if you could give us your sense of whether, in your judgement, the press, in fact, is doing a good, competent, thorough job in reporting the reemergence of American conservatism.

Mr. Buckley: It isn't. And I gave an example last night to which I return. It is popularly supposed that the proposed tax reduction is primarily done for the physical care and comfort of the rich; the figures absolutely defy that interpretation. If everybody is going to get five hundred dollars a year per child, unless you assume that only rich people have children, it is hardly interpretable as a special act of reference to the rich. And yet that accounts for fifty percent of the proposed tax bill.

As I said last night, only twenty-five percent is devoted to capital gains. And if they aren't indexed, that reduces to twelve percent.

Now, in the course of any discussion of the question, it is almost impossible to turn on television without hearing Mr. Gephardt or whoever talk about this rip-off for the rich. Now, my thesis last night was that there ought to be a sense of obligation by the commentators of

the press to say Mr. Gephardt is incorrect, i.e., seventy-five percent of this tax deduction is not directed toward anybody who can call themselves rich.

Now, to find a way of saying that, that doesn't upset you professionally is your obligation, but that that way ought to be discovered is, it seems to me, plain.

Mr. Kalb: Howard, did you want to enter on that?

Mr. Fineman: Just a couple of points. As to the whole conservative movement, generally, I think the attitude is still basically one of fear and wonderment.

I happened to have come to Washington just at the time of the first Kemp Tax Bill being proposed and the story of my time, while I've been in Washington, has been the rise of the conservative movement within the Republican party and in the country generally.

People like Sidney and I have spent a lot of time trying to educate ourselves in this history from the debate in Woolsey Hall at Yale on. But I think it is kind of amusing to watch some of my colleagues who first became interested in this sweep of history right after Newt Gingrich, on election night last year. There is a long history about which most of my colleagues are essentially ignorant, that is the first point.

The second point, on how we characterize what's happening on the Hill. There has been a long and amusing debate over whether you call the Republican proposals on Medicare cuts or slowing the growth. And I think you can argue it both ways. I noticed that Pat Buchanan committed the great heresy of calling them a cut. He has an ad on in New Hampshire in which he attacks his fellow Republicans for cutting Medicare. So, he's now confessed error in that, and is back to saying slowing the growth of. On that small point—

Mr. Buckley: Which is correct though, isn't it?

Mr. Fineman: Yeah, it is correct. Generally speaking, the press has characterized the Republican proposals on Medicare, in the mainstream press, as slowing the growth of, or some such phrase. A small but an important matter and indication of some attempt to try to tell the story straight.

Mr. Kalb: Sid, Suzanne?

Ms. Garment: You first.

Mr. Blumenthal: Okay. Thank you.

I think that the press has been, if I can use the word, inadequate, in covering the rise of this recent conservatism in the Congress on two scores. One, ideological. I've written two books on conservatism, edited a third, and I think that the press has not covered the extent of the providence of the thought of conservatism and how it has risen.

The second score, economic. I think that this Congress has been very spottily covered by the press in terms of the influence of special inter-

est. This Congress, in my view, is a throwback to the Congresses of the nineteenth century. Nelson Aldrich, the old Senator who was the ruler of the Senate in the nineteenth century, would have been quite comfortable here.

In committee, after committee, bills are being written by the K Street lobbyists and the law firms. It has been covered to a small degree by individual reporters. The resources of the massed press have not been devoted to this, there are not reporters sitting in these committees day after day. And there ought to be since there is a massive undoing of the economic and social and environmental legislation proceeding.

Mr. Kalb: Professor Patterson?

Professor Patterson: I just want to suggest that conservatives have probably done fairly well by the press. I mean it's true that a majority of journalists are liberals, but is a kind of pinched liberalism, I think, as indicated for example by the relative inattention to police brutality in minority neighborhoods, until quite recently.

But even more, I think, the rules of journalism offer conservatives quite substantial protections. You know, I think Howard was quite correct in talking about fairness. And if you look at the distribution of coverage between conservative and liberal spokespersons, it is about equal.

You might argue that maybe liberals are made to look a little bit better, but I think you have to stretch that argument a bit too. But that tendency, if there is one, that liberal tendency, I think is a smaller tendency compared to the adversarial tendency that exists in the press. And the emphasis on conflict and infighting, and what's wrong with politics.

And the public really surfs the news. They don't dig deep into the news. And the message for many people about politics is that it is only a game of self-interest, and that government doesn't work. And that very much feeds into the conservative argument of small government. And I think it is one of the things that we need to look at, in trying to resolve an apparent contradiction in public opinion. And that is that the American public are very dissatisfied with government, wants smaller government, but yet, when you identify almost any single particular program, they favor the program.

And I think there is this problem of image, and it works very much in the conservatives' favor, and that's the image of ineffective government.

Mr. Kalb: Suzanne Garment.

Ms. Garment: I was going to speak to Bill's previous point, about finding a way to say that Representative Gephardt is wrong. Which is, in my view, usually a worthy enterprise, but, I don't know where we are supposed to get this vocabulary in a way that is not dangerous.

If journalists are encouraged to say Representative Gephardt is wrong, you know damn well who they are going to say is wrong next.

Mr. Buckley: That's the slippery slope argument again. But, let me ask you this. When they show a picture of Farrakhan saying the Jews are a bloodsucking race, it is presumed unnecessary to say the opposite because most people know this is simply errant anti-Semitism.

But in something in which there is doubt, because the correct answer has not consolidated in the public memory. Isn't there an additional challenge on the part of the person who is acting as the midwife of the news? If I am invited by NBC to comment on the existing legislation and I say the Republicans simply want to end public medical care, period, isn't the obligation of the interlocutor to say Senator Buckley, is evidently unaware that under the Republican plan Medicare is going to continue to grow? In fact three trillion dollars in the next seven years, compared to four trillion dollars by the Democratic plan.

I know, and that's why I grope for it, and that's why I am hoping to get help from you and others, how exactly you formulate this. Because it sounds very intrusive, it sounds sort of stepfatherly, and it isn't easy to do. But I'm in search, as I hope others are, of a device by which a) the responsibility to do so becomes acknowledged, and b) some formula is arrived at by making it tolerable.

Ms. Garment: You know there are devices that people try to use now, the most common, I guess, is the finding of the expert. And I am on the other end of it, often, because when a scandal arises they call scandal lady, and they know exactly what they want, when they call me, they know what they want me to say. And in that sense, the ability of a journalist to pick his or her sources, is one way of trying to get around the problem.

Mr. Buckley: Is it the best way?

Ms. Garment: Best? In all possible worlds? It's not the best, it's very inadequate because you're limited by the available supply of experts, or the availability of experts that you know. Which is I suppose another indication of the difficulty of the press rising above the general level of the culture in which it operates.

Mr. Buckley: Well, let me suggest that there might be a protocol that would encourage this. If the interlocutor and the interviewee were thought of more as equals than simply as robots. In "Firing Line", its charter in the 1960's was an exchange of opinions. It is not my obligation on "Firing Line" to ask you what you think. It is my obligation to ask you why you think it and to say why you shouldn't think that, if appropriate.

Maybe the way to handle the situation I just mentioned would be to have the person who has a question, how can you say that Mr. Gephardt, when the Republican bill, in fact, calls for an increase in public health spending. Now, would that violate the protocols of the press in existing situations? It wouldn't get in the way of people who do the "60 Minutes" thing, but what about as just a straight out question

by the press of a candidate?

Mr. Kalb: Because that's not a journalistic question, Bill.

Mr. Buckley: Exactly. Because—

Mr. Kalb: It's not a journalistic question at all. It's a wrong way for a pro to ask it.

Mr. Buckley: So, I am saying, should we change the protocols, and make it a journalistic responsibility?

Mr. Kalb: What do you think?

Ms. Sharkey: I'm Mary Anne Sharkey, from *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. And I am a real press person, a print person.

... punditry has now been substituted for real reporting.

First of all, I found your very premise last night, difficult to accept that the press is somehow responsible for public ignorance, because I think you're giving us way too much credit. I think in many ways the public is just not interested in a lot of political coverage.

But what I find really troubling and disturbing in the discussion today, is that we are not discussing real journalism. I agree with you about the slothfulness of reporters, but I think that is because punditry has now been substituted for real reporting.

I don't know how many of you have filed FOI requests or gone into courtrooms and spent a lot of time researching records, but to me, that's the third alternative, and that's real reporting.

Ms. Stewart: I just wanted to return for a moment to the cultural features that you mentioned earlier, because I have been sitting here thinking about it. And I think that it represents an overall disrespect.

What I'd like to do is just to point out that for instance, other crimes like fraud, embezzlement, serial murder, would be called cultural features of white America. Because they predominantly, almost exclusively, take place among whites. And I think everyone would agree that that's ridiculous because we accord more respect to that group.

And I'd just like to make that point.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you, Pearl.

Shirley Williams.

Ms. Williams: My question is not to Bill Buckley it's to the rest of the panel. One of the things as it were and as a foreign observer of U.S. politics, it struck me very much in the last two years, was I think a failure of the press to capture the cumulative decay of the Democratic party in Washington. They caught the decay of the Congress, that's different. What they didn't do was to show us the extent to which the Democratic party was beginning to fragment, to fall apart, to lack any central theme.

And I think when you talk, as I did recently, to a whole range of Democratic Congressmen and women, what you discover is a great sense of despair about what I might describe as this cumulative decay.

If we had known that before the elections of '94, I think we would have been much less surprised by the outcome.

So, I would like to ask the members of the panel, whether this is due to what one might describe as incumbent punt, which meant that the press was reluctant to tell that story truthfully, and I don't think they ever did.

Ms. Garment: I doubt that there is a single answer. But, it has been years since journalists or students of politics in general have assigned central importance to the political parties in this country. And therefore, it is very easy for the degeneration to escape notice.

Mr. Fineman: I think also, there was, in the '92 election, on the part of some of us, a kind of willing suspension of disbelief that benefitted Bill Clinton, that he was going to square every circle, that he was going to somehow make the Democratic party whole again, when he got forty-three percent of the vote.

I would also like to agree with Sidney about coverage of Congress. And that is an institutional bias of the media, generally, we're undercovering and poorly reporting that story, because of our continued obsessive focus with the presidency, even at a time when Newt Gingrich is basically leading the parade. I mean, this is a congressional year, not a presidential one, and we are not covering it well, at all. So, I agree with Sid.

Mr. Kalb: Okay, we have fifteen minutes to go, and I've got about ninety-two questioners who would like them.

Professor Delli Carpini, Professor Just.

Professor Delli Carpini: I would like to return to the talk you gave yesterday and the thesis underlying it. I found myself agreeing with the principle of a press that played a role of informing and also arbitrating issues of fact. In the application of that thesis, I found myself being concerned, and therefore, beginning to doubt the principle itself again.

There are certainly issues of fact that can be arbitrated. I think in the question of the Medicare cuts, it is a cut in the growth rate. On the other hand, there are also issues of what the impact of that will be, in terms of the quality of health care in the future for citizens. That's a more ambiguous question, in which you can make predictions, and in which you can make arguments about whether we will be better off as individuals and whether the trade off of the costs outweigh the potential harm that may come to individuals if there is going to be a cut in quality.

But in hearing you talk about what constitutes a fact and the role of the press in that, it was bleeding of a fact into opinion. And in conjunction with some of the issues that have been raised here about the centralization of the media, I become uncomfortable with the notion of single or a limited set of arbiters that are not only talking to and informing the public, but also making those final decisions as to not only is a

fact right, but is someone right or wrong in their opinion.

I wonder if you could clarify your view here of what the role of the press is, and you don't have to be a deconstructionist to agree there are differences at this level.

Mr. Buckley: Quite correct. I use the word knowability. I believe in most situations there are certain facts that are knowable and those knowable facts ought to be communicated to people who have a curiosity about public issues.

I believe there are certain facts that are knowable and those knowable facts ought to be communicated to people who have a curiosity about public issues.

When *The New York Times* reported, Mr. Rosenbaum said, 'contrary to public belief...'; why contrary to public belief since those beliefs were obviously engendered by a combination of press and politicians. To the extent that it was the politicians who were responsible for those misperceptions, it is the responsibility of the press, I think, to correct those misperceptions.

But it is, of course true that for instance, on the matter of health, people would be healthier if we spent five trillion dollars in the next seven years rather than three trillion dollars. But they would be healthier still if we spent seven trillion dollars. And therefore, one might say, since it has to stop somewhere, where should it stop?

Well, you might say the commission appointed to examine this question by President Clinton, said the whole program will have to end in the year 2002, because it will have run out of money. As it is now, the entitlement will rise from sixty-seven to seventy-two percent in the next four years, if the Republican bills are accepted.

Now, everything I touched on in just that last statement, strikes me as in the area of fact, rather than the area of evaluation. But you are perfectly free to say, I would rather go broke, and end our defense policy and everything else, in order to have free and luxurious health care. In which case, it is your privilege to incline in that way.

But I don't think that I have poached on the world values in anything I just said to clarify the public health question.

Mr. Kalb: Professor Just?

Professor Just: I just want to return to perhaps one of the larger questions that you have addressed here which is about public ignorance and how the public can make informed decisions.

If that's the question that we are concerned about and the role of the press in helping a public make informed decisions, I am wondering why you would concentrate so much on the, what we used to call the working press, as opposed to the slothful press. Why concentrate on the working press rather than on those who make the decisions as to when

news programs will air, whether news programs air. It's not the decision of the working press to have "Wheel of Fortune" replace the evening news in its normal time slot.

So, why should we be concentrating there, on the press, which presumably is aiming at that job, rather than on this very larger and concentrated conglomerate.

Mr. Buckley: Quite right. I had, as it happened, a very, very long, very intimate association with Frank Stanton over a period of three years, because we were both members of the same commission. And in the course of those three years, I saw him from time to time opine on these matters. And then he would act as president of CBS to say, for instance, as he once did, under no circumstances can you in preparing a documentary lift a sentence from here and stick it in the man's mouth there, when to do so gives an absolutely incorrect opinion, incorrect frame of the question.

Now, you can obviously say, well management is always responsible for everything that happens because management is perfectly free to hire and to fire. But I would like to meet the man who would fire Walter Cronkite. I think Walter Cronkite is a marvelous human being, and has a marvelous record.

Mr. Kalb: Bill Lender is his name.

Mr. Buckley: Well, who fired Walter Cronkite?

Mr. Kalb: 1980, yes. They forced his retirement in 1980, in order to make room for Dan Rather. They forced his retirement.

Mr. Blumenthal: Do you watch television news?

Mr. Buckley: No. I knew he was no longer there, but I thought he ran into the same thing Frank Stanton did, did he fire himself, because you see at age sixty-five, he had to vacate his office.

It's not the decision of the working press to have "Wheel of Fortune" replace the evening news in its normal time slot.

Mr. Kalb: That was a matter of principle on Frank's part that he would leave at the age of sixty-five. But Cronkite was moved out very directly, given an increase of four hundred thousand dollars a year in salary, and a ten year contract, but he was moved out, in order to leave. Leave news, I mean leave, just be quiet.

Ms. Garment: It wasn't over a substantive issue though, was it?

Mr. Buckley: No. Because they wanted somebody else.

Mr. Kalb: No, no, but your point was who would ever try to move Walter Cronkite; he was moved.

Mr. Buckley: Well, who would try to move him because they weren't satisfied with his performance, which strikes me as simply inconceivable.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: I think it is inconceivable that Walter Cronkite should be criticized, except every now and again, when he sort of let it hang out. Which he does every now and then. Walter Cronkite is a hard-left liberal. And my very good friend.

(Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: The point is that the culture that affects newsmen inevitably and correctly informs management. So you very seldom have a situation in which there is unity among the newsmen, and the press, and the commentators and an absolute refusal to honor or listen hard to their points by management.

So therefore, when I speak of the press, if I may, I speak not only of people who speak the news of the radio, or write on the print, but also, the broad fraternity that are a part of the institution of the press.

... the culture that affects newsmen inevitably and correctly informs management.

What did I say to make people laugh, that Walter Cronkite was invincible, is that why you laughed?

Mr. Kalb: Well, I guess that you had the impression that you thought nobody would every summon up the courage to move him away from that microphone. Where he was the most trusted man in America, for many, many years. But there was a decision that was made by management in 1980, that Rather could not be lost to ABC, and he had to be given a raise and a promotion.

Mr. Buckley: And Walter was getting old.

Ms. Garment: Yeah.

Mr. Kalb: I don't think there was the impression that he was getting old, it was simply that Rather had to have that seat. So, even Cronkite was moved out, was my only point.

Mr. Buckley: Was that a sound management decision?

Mr. Kalb: I don't think so.

Ben go ahead.

Mr. Kahn: Well, these decisions, as well as the decision to air, what's it called, "Wheel of Fortune" instead of a news show might be examples of market driven decisions.

And I would like to refer back to what Suzanne Garment said about people wanting the press to rise above the culture in which it operates. It seems to me that the press is constantly being criticized for its reflection of our culture these days. Almost every criticism I ever hear is one that can be responded to with the point that the press is becoming increasingly consumer driven. And it is the consumer base of our country that is becoming increasingly a free market culture. And people debate whether that is good or bad, the free market.

Mr. Kalb: Ben, we're driven by time, so what is your question?

Mr. Kahn: And we're driven by time, so I'll ask a question.

How do you explain the paradox that we see, that we know the press is not a monolithic rational actor. We know that people like Howard Fineman or Sidney Blumenthal are not slothful or acquiescent, as you accused the press of being last night. And we know that the press is becoming increasingly consumer driven.

... are you deploring the consequences of the press being so increasingly consumer driven...

So are you, the question is, are you champion of market forces, champion of the will of the people, critic of public television, are you deploring the consequences of the press being so increasingly consumer driven, and not focusing on substance, instead focusing on simplistic conflicts and bland entertainment?

Mr. Buckley: Well, you see you have arrived at the epiphany that Sid Blumenthal began the morning with. That's when I call the general. You see I want General Franco to come in and take over and tell people what to do because they are not doing the correct thing. Pending that we simply have to live with such inconveniences as a free market both in politics and in economics.

Mr. Kahn: And their effects on the treatment of substantive issues and the failure to treat substantive issues carefully?

Mr. Buckley: Sure. If management were as exercised, as in my judgement, it ought to be, in matters that I have touched on, then they would at least make the attempt to see that these things happen. Even as an attempt was made, however half-heartedly, during the days in which both points of view were supposed to be expressed over the radio to log those in. It is absolutely, as Ms. Garment says, a cultural default. But it is a cultural default to force the expressions of which in that press that Mr. Kalb summoned us to discuss.

... we simply have to live with such inconveniences as a free market both in politics and in economics.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, Bill.

I am going to ask Professor Galbraith to offer some summary comments, and then, we are going to close this seminar in time to get our guest on the twelve o'clock train.

Professor Galbraith: Well, I should do so in the spirit of total detachment. I think my old friend Bill Buckley has defended a position with skill. Particularly when one considers the problems that defense raises.

I also wanted to say a word in praise of the press. We had last year an election in which something slightly less than fifty percent of the eligible voters voted. This was called the Republican revolution.

This is in a society and a world in which the top one percent of the population has been gaining substantially in income, and assets. The top ten percent gaining reasonably well. And then, below that stability or absolute diminution, and that the people of stable incomes, the people's whose income has been low, declining have, I think we can all agree, somewhat less voice and somewhat less political commitment than those which are at the bottom of the income ranks.

And there is a plausible result from this manifested and the strong effort of the majority of this small minority to, on tax matters, on welfare, on a wide range of other matters, not including defense, or what has come to be called corporate welfare, to move in its own interest. I think we all, in some measure, must accept the tendency of people to move in the direction of their own interest.

And the press had been accused today of citing that. And the terrible charge has been made, that in so doing, they show a liberal bias. I would like to applaud the liberal bias, given the underlying circumstances, and say that I hope that there will be a certain powerful tendency of the press to continue to invite the kind of criticism that it had this morning.

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Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, Professor Galbraith.

(Applause)

Mr. Kalb: I think as most of you know, it is the function of all of us associated with the Shorenstein Center to examine just that kind of intersection of press and politics and whether it is labelled as liberal or conservative, our effort at the Center is simply to address it from a detached point of view, and to understand all points of view.

I want to thank the participants of our panel today, but most especially, Professor Galbraith and our speaker Bill Buckley. Thank you very much.

(Applause)