

re. Culver

Mike Naylor

March 10, 1981

At lunch with Chris Briand, ^{JM} he made a couple of comments about Culver.

"The metaphor I use is that we spent so much time dodging all the little bullets that came our way that we missed the great big one labelled "to whom it may concern."

"I'm sure that all the little things--abortion, gun control, the moral majority had something to do with it--but the main thing was that people wanted a change. I don't think there's any way we could have won it. After all, the difference was 100,000 votes and eight percentage points."

"Most people believe we lost it in the last week of the campaign. There was Reagan's question in the debate. 'Are you better off than you were four years ago?' There was the frustration over the hostage situation. We were ahead before that. But Peter Hart disagrees. He says we lost it in the first 3 1/2 years--that Culver failed to make an impression. The Iowa polls on job performance ~~constantly~~ said something like 40% good job, 12% poor job and 48% no opinion. I don't know what we could--or better, would--have done about that."

"Grassley had better media than we did. I was one of those who said we should have hit hard with negative media--that people are so against everything, that we should give them something to be against. But we used only soft positive ^{stuff} because we were ahead. Grassley kept hitting us, hitting us, hitting us hard. Roger Ailes did a great job with his commercials."

Said I might look into the fact that all liberals thought they were much better off--according to their polls--than it turned out they were.