

PETE DOMENICI

January 9, 1979

Talked with Dennis Howe and Helen Cameron.

I started by reminding Dennis that he had called it a "yawner" when I first spoke with him and asked him what changed. "As far as we were concerned it was a yawner--right down to the end. There was no panic in our campaign. We had no concern. We saw no movement by Araya. We didn't change anything. We knew we wouldn't get an even break with the Spanish group--even if our polls showed otherwise. We ran strong in the South. Ours has always been a southern strategy. That's our area of greatest strength. Our margin there was better than any Republican candidate for the Senate has ever done."

"We did not run as well in Albuquerque as we had hoped."

"Our first poll in 1977 had shown it to be a 7 point race and 14 months later, the election showed it to be a 6 point race."

But in between, they got, they admit, some unreal numbers. Only consolation "We were 17 points off in the polls and our margin was cut to six. Dick Clark was 12 points off and in the polls and he's out of the Senate."

Helen came in at this point and called the outcome "disappointing" and talked about the "apathy" and "lack of interest."

Dennis said "That was part of our strategy. We didn't want a high interest race. Now Domenici didn't necessarily agree. He would have preferred that his race dominate the media. The view of the staff was different."

Helen spoke of "the Heights as 'hard to crack' and as having a lot of apathy.

"The Valley was very disappointing to me personally. I have put a lot of work in there for a long time. Some of the people I talked to thought we would do better. But the Spanish did what they always do when there is a

spanish surname on the ticket. They voted Democratic. They are very strong in their beliefs. They stayed put. Even the Republicans who are Spanish stayed put--they voted for the Spanish surnamed candidate."

✓ ~~Bernalillo~~ "Bernalillo County was a disappointment. We had predicted a statewide turnout of 400,000. Only 340,000 turned out. And a lot of that was Albuquerque."

"A lot of Pete's friends told us they thought he had it made, they didn't care about the governor's race and so they didn't vote. 'If I thought it was going to be close, I'd have voted for you,' they said. Others said 'Pete's going to win. I like Anaya; he's a nice guy.' There was this funny sympathy vote at the end. It's tough to move Democrats under any circumstances. Thinking that Pete had no problems they could give Toney a vote. Anaya had a good image as a crusader. A lot of people gave him credit for his guts in taking on the bad guys. He had more strength than we gave him credit for. The apathy didn't surprise me. But Anaya's strength did."

"In the last ten days organized labor tied Domenici to the right to work dispute--even though Domenici had stayed away from the issue. He opposed the repeal of 14B nationally, but never said what he thought our state should do. They were urging a straight party vote in order to save the governor race. They were afraid people who liked Pete could vote down the line Republican. They had to save the governor's race, and would do anything they could to save it."

They mentioned, fairly early on in the interview that they took a post-election poll "to see what happened." The poll included only people who voted. The Governor's race came out with Skeen winning 41-45, which wasn't bad. But it had PD winning 61-39--which was way off. This has them puzzled. PD's reaction was that it was so far off, it's no use. Dennis thinks he can tease out of it some clues as to what happened. But it's baffling and may incorporate some mistakes as original poll.

"Domenici says we didn't do it right. He wanted to go into Democratic areas with our own staff members. We argued that if he did that, they would organize against us and affect anything we could gain. If it's quiet leave it quiet. Don't stir up the natives--the Democrats, that is."

Would you do anything different? Dennis said "No, I'd do everything just the way we did it. We didn't make any mistakes."

Helen said, "I'd do two things differently. I'd spend more time on election day, misuse, fraud on absentee ballots. I'd do more on getting out the vote. The post-election poll showed that 93% were not contacted by our get out the vote effort. I don't know if I believe anything in that poll. But I still think we could have done better and should have. Everything seemed to be working well, but we didn't contact the voters. I don't understand what happened."

I asked about relations with the Republican party. "We had to run our campaign independent of the party. It was the only way to get Pete elected."

"In 1968 when I ran Lujan's campaign and Helen was the Republican Chairman of Bernalillo County, we used the party. That was due in part to the fact that Helen and I were there. We just went one shot, all out for Lujan. It was the first chance to elect a Republican to that seat in 44 years. But we didn't build an organizational base in the Republican party to leave for Domenici and Schmitt. We didn't build from the ground up."

"This year the Republicans were very successful at the local level, in electing state legislators. They were worried about redistricting after the 1980 census and so it was a matter of survival. The Republican national committee supported them. They put no emphasis or effort into our campaign and were brain-washed on the local level to work for Skeen. That didn't bother us, because we didn't expect anything. But it hurts when you need manpower. Then you turn to the party. That was one of our get out the vote problems."

I asked when they started <sup>to</sup> worry about the 1978 campaign. "On November 8th, 1972. He was the first Republican elected from NM in 40 years, and his reelection was never out of our minds. I thought everything we did here meant something could be done for our political situation or our political base. Domenici may not have seen it that way. He's not a political guy. He's the least political Senator around. He's a policy Senator. Most of his friends that come in the door are Democrats. He's not a partisan. He has no interest in the political process other than his own reelection."

Despite the last sentence, the point seemed to be that PD doesn't calculate every move in terms of his reelection. That he's not a partisan person is part of it. But, also, he doesn't think reelection till it's very explicit.

They concluded that the explicit reelection campaign began in late December 1976 or early January 1977. They had a PD Appreciation dinner April 29, 1977 in Albuquerque and first fund raising letter went out in February 1977. Efforts <sup>to get</sup> the fund raising letter under way began in late 76 or, they think better early 1977. Then they had a Washington reception in October of 1977. So, those events of 1977 were milestones.

"Domenici seriously doubted whether we ought to be raising early money. He suggested a 100 limitation. I gulped and marshalled every argument I could think of against it. He wouldn't be in the Senate today if we hadn't seriously raised lots of bucks. Part of our strategy was to hold off anyone else's early decision. Apodaca flirted with it until he saw Domenici had \$250,000 in the bank--mostly in small contributions. Anaya delayed because he couldn't do anything till Apodaca decided. Then, everywhere he went he found that Domenici had been there. He found people committed he didn't think would be. He was late announcing. Anaya still thinks he would have won if he had two more weeks to campaign. And maybe he's right (laugh)."

I asked about idea of the cycle, noting what PD had said about first 2 years being no good. "When he was first elected, he kept wanting to go back to

New Mexico. It was hard to keep him here. He was uncomfortable in the Senate. Then during the next two years he was busy here and he worried that he had gotten out of touch with the people at home. Now he's been back there for the campaign and he's worried already about getting out of touch. ('The job is here,' interjected Dennis.) You can't do both parts of the job at once." She <sup>(Helen)</sup> bought the cycle idea.

Dennis complained about how long it took him to get organized in 1972 and the implication was that that didn't help PD get his bearings. "We had no orientation program and no buddy system of having older members helping new ones. I had to check ten other offices every time I wanted to find out how you did something. It was insane. Everybody operated on the principle that the less you know, the longer it takes you to get organized, the better it is for us. Power is knowledge. It was terrible for a while. When we came in we had stacks of mail. When we called for typewriters they said we don't have any. So we had to go to ten offices to get ten typewriters. This year the young people got together and kicked ass and got themselves an orientation session. We made a mistake in not hiring at least one person who knew the Senate--even if we only kept him for a year."

When I asked him where staff came from, he said almost all from N.M. "You should hire mostly from here. It's easier to fire people if they can't do the job. Home folks have a political sponsor and you feel a moral obligation to keep them on."

I asked him if he had a network of AA's he was in touch with. "Not enough". He said AA's of 5 freshmen met occasionally throughout first year to discuss mutual problems, but that it didn't last beyond the year."

"This year I'm methodically going around to all the offices, getting up

to snuff on office management so that we can bring Domenici's office into the 21st century--with things like computerized mailing lists and micro-filmed files."

I asked about overlap in Schmitt-Domenici constituencies and they said "80-85%." "Pete comes from local government and has good contact with city and county offices. Schmitt has better contact with the scientific academic people. But the real difference is in the Spanish county, in how they perceive the two. They perceive Domenici as much more like them--he's Catholic, has a lot of kids, speaks a little Spanish. That would show up if he ran against a non Spanish surnamed opponent. Domenici would do much better against an anglo opponent than Schmitt. But yet a lot of Spanish went over to Schmitt from Montoya."

I asked about oil men and whether they were still mad. "They are still mad. They held their noses and voted for Pete, as the lesser of two evils. But they will never forget. They will always remember that he didn't come up to their expectations when they wanted him to."

They said that the natural gas bill hurt worse in Bernalillo County, where it was a consumer issue (high prices) and where Anaya "hammered us with it," as the great consumer advocate.

They noted that "Fifteen percent of the people in New Mexico have come to the state since Pete was elected in 1972. A lot of them are in the Heights. They came as Democrats, registered as Democrats and voted Democratic. They were hard to reach. I'll bet the Heights went 60-40 for Anaya,"

They noted that an old timer "said that Domenici gets more media coverage than any one from Washington ever has. But Anaya got more news coverage because what he did had local impact. Domenici doesn't think he gets enough. He's a policy guy, and that makes him a consensus guy. 'Let's

get all this input from everybody.<sup>9</sup> That's what you have to do, but it's not exciting. With Anaya, everything is moral and it's more exciting to read about his attacks on this person or that business. He used the Attorney General's Office to get more publicity than anyone I've ever know."

"As mayor, Pete would always take a lot of people and bring 'em all in to consider a problem. That's why he was such a good mayor. He's continued the same style as a legislator. Once your style is successful you continue it wherever you go. It's the best legislative style."

"The day after the election in 1972, the boss said "OK, let's take a swing around the state and find out how we can tie people's problems into the Senate."

There was quite a bit of talk, near the end of the interview about how they had scheduled PD "everywhere there was to go in the state. There isn't anyplace he hasn't been before--usually more than once--every senior citizen home, every CAP, from the rigid right to the *bomb throwing* left. It will tax our imagination to know what to do with him this next six years. We don't want people to get sick of him. I'd like to do more with the younger people--more commencements." There was talk about different events that they recall--guys in Artesia with oil on hands, People's tour to small towns (one where guy turned over Restaurant at lunch time to the town, commencements, crowds and microphone breaking down, etc., etc.

"Pete is a great one on one campaigner."

"Our basic strategy for the campaign grew out of the first survey concerning what New Mexicans felt about their future. The person who took the poll said he had never seen anything like it anywhere. New Mexicans had a very positive attitude about their state and their future. So our television was designed to be optimistic and upbeat. That early survey set the tone of the

campaign--very very positive. In our TV we tried to make people feel warm about Pete and about the state."

There was desultory talk about Schmitt. They find him puzzling. "We want to like him, because he's a Republican." But they can't figure him out. He's a maverick. He's far right, except that he's pro abortion, pro ERA-- a kind of upper class liberalism. If I knew them better, they'd say what they really felt.

Dennis: "The political operators back home say he can be beaten. But I don't think so." They think Apodaca will try.

Can you tell who might run 6 years from now? "We would never have guessed Anaya (and they ticked off his liabilities). "But people come up awfully <sup>fast</sup> ~~lost~~ in our state. Get yourself in a little bit of trouble and run for office." Idea was one of great fluidity.

Runnels wants to be governor, Lujan wanted to be governor because his father ~~tired~~ and failed; but he's given up idea now. They like Manuel-- very steady and reassuring.

"Pete is the liberal of the delegation--no doubt about that." Which proves how relative it all is.

Are you staying in this office? "We're changing. Two hundred fifty square feet of space makes it all worth it. Besides, I think we should change every two years. It cleans out the files and cleans out the cob webs. The staff looks forward to it."

His office has signs of New Mexico--a number of beautiful photographs, a ~~ka~~ china like doll, pottery, and lots of plaques and awards.

Peter Wellish memo based on the post election poll--which shows 63-29% for Domenici: Also showed that 25% made up minds last week. Also showed party ID as 27% Republican, 56% Democrat, rest independent.

As a designation "tied to special interests" 48% saw it as a PD characteristic and 16% Anaya not tied to special interests and 3% because PD was influenced by special interests. Wellish points out that there was, therefore a 13% anti-Domenici vote on matters of financing and special interests. (That was Anaya's theme.)

"As the survey results seem to show, Anaya's message did hit home. Particularly, it hit home in Los Alamos, Albuquerque, NE Heights and, even surprisingly, it had measurable impact on some of our strongest areas, the west and the southwest."

PW also cites "Fact: a large number of PVD political contributions come from oil and gas political action committees. As a result Domenici became tied to oil and gas special interests, big business, etc.

84% saw PD as more experienced in national politics, but 43% said it was more important that Senator be independent of special interests than experienced.

"While Anaya was picking up support for his allegations that Domenici <sup>was</sup> owned, we were saying his lack of advertising money in the closing days of the campaign would considerably lessen the impact of the Anaya charges and reduce their credibility. But such was not the case. While we spent substantially more on television advertising than Anaya, 65% remember seeing the Anaya TV ads while 84% recalled seeing PVD's."

70% recall D. newspaper ads, 70% recall Anayas's "The fact is that with fewer adversiting dollars to spend, Anaya did a remarkably effective job of spending that money.

Why vote for Anaya?

He's a Democrat	15%
Record as A.G.	13
Fought corruption	13
concern for people	9

Why vote for Domenici?

greater experience	26%
past performance	17
concern for people	9

PW concludes that their emphasis on "experience-performance" plus "concern for people" was "correct."

But he also concludes "We were often far too cautious during this campaign. We opted instead for a lower key approach. While A. was out blasting our contributions, we issued a white paper on the economy. It is not that the white paper is a bad idea, but that A. got more publicity with his charges than we ever got with the paper. A. managed to effectively manipulate the media not only in the course of the evening news, but also in his ads."

Why did A. do well? "The only obvious answer is the fact that he was tough and forceful as an A.G., and from the election results, New Mexicans would not have any objection to such a man in the U.S. Senate. In view of this, it seems to me that Domenici will in the course of the next 6 years have to be tougher on the issues and more forceful. This does not mean that he cannot at the same time be a sensitive and concerned individual."

17% made up *minds* one week before election; 8% on election day. "It is very probable that many of these votes went to Anaya."

He notes that early surveys missed the size of the undecideds by a big margin.

"A logical question is why were we unable to capture a larger percentage of this already large undecided vote?"... "I sense...some miscalculations. ...I am not so sure the ad buys were very effective.

"In reviewing placement of the TV ads, Anaya <sup>*Pam*</sup> ~~saw~~ fewer ads in local TV newscasts, but ran a much heavier schedule in prime time A+1 shows."

Radio ads 51% heard them (D's), 49% not; Anaya 48% heard, 52% did not.

"In view of the fact that we purchased vast amounts of radio time, in all probability spending better than twice as much as Anaya, this showing is very poor."

Re where people get most *information* about candidates, 34% from TV, 38% newspapers, 9% friends, 3% radio.

Only 19% of sample was Spanish surnamed - he wonders about this. A lot of this analysis worries the problem of the survey's credibility versus his own instincts about what happened.

18% cited right to work as an issue in the campaign, whereas it was not--D & A never mentioned it. "We were the victims of the right to work fall out from the gubernatorial campaign."

"As far as dealing with the future, it seems Domenici definitely made the correct decision to remain on the Budget Committee" and he cites people who say major issues of concern to them are taxes 19%, inflation 8%, unemployment 13%, gov't spending 5%. "Energy is also a major concern of the respondents and D. is very wise to play an active role in this field."

Finally--last sentence--and note the date on this is January 10, 1979--  
"a review of the entire election is needed, so planners for Domenici's reelection campaign will have a sound basis from which to work and can avoid errors of the past."

One other item from DW memo was ERA. PVD voted vs. extension?--15% of voters said ERA helped determine candidate preference, "I would surmise, and it really is nothing more than a calculated guess, that his vote was a negative factor."

Torrance Poll

	<u>Domenici</u>	<u>Anaya</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Bernalillo	60	26	13
Heights-LosAl	62	34	11
W/SW	65	27	5
N	45	21	4
E/SE	<u>43</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>11</u>
N =	314	146	41
N's are small here		total = 503	

Very <sup>Cons.</sup> Low	84	9	5
SomewhatCons	70	22	6
Moderate	54	26	16
SomewhatLib	42	48	8
VeryLiberal	39	51	9

White	67	26	5
Black	40	20	40 ?
MexAm	43	43	13
Indian	85	15	

What was main factor in helping you determine who to vote for?

Issue stands	47%
Pers.Charac.	30
Both	12
Other	9

Abstract characteristic best for Senator

tough and forceful	22%
sensitivity&concern about people	69%

Peter Wellish and I talked a long time. At one point he said "the reason we lost the elections was"--this was a measure of their disappointment.

He said "We were all very depressed after the election. We thought we would win by a much larger margin."

They didn't think Anaya would do as well as he did and they are still a little baffled as to why he did so well. Peter thinks that PD should have gone on the offensive. "He had us on the defensive the whole time except once in Santa Fe when we hit back." "We had a pile of documents to use on him that we never used. We didn't want to get down in the gutter." The one course open to them was to paint Anaya as a liberal, too liberal for the state, but they didn't even do that.

Wellish is afraid that in 6 years, PD will lose if he isn't more forceful on the issues. He says PD agrees that he'll have to take tougher stands on issues. Wellish thinks PD doesn't really like to come down hard on issues.

Another thing Wellish says is that PD "Won't read anything. He hates to read. He doesn't read books. He likes memos but he won't read them."

Said Domenici thought about going on Appropriations Committee this time, but Bellmon says he'll let Domenici run the Budget Committee in effect. Wellish thinks Budget is good committee to demonstrate budget cutting from and that's what people want. Not just pork barrel--which is what Appropriations Committee is. Budget, says Wellish, is real place to draw line in cutting spending. PD likes that area, too.

He said they argued "for hours and hours, all the time" as to whether PD should be more aggressive, and they decided not to be. I think they just stuck with their strategy from beginning. And they seem to forget that it worked!

He talked about Anaya and his future. Anaya asked King for job and King said no, so he may be deprived of base.

He says he's trying to get better payoff from media efforts. He thinks PD had a lot of PR, but he wasn't getting a payoff. He talked about a chatty column that would be written for the weeklies. He's trying to get together a TV show of the entire delegation.