

Atlanta Trip - October 17-21, 1992

- CJ and Mike were not happy about Wyche's Sunday performance--looked tired, coat bunched up, nothing new, no issues, no vision for the country--and said that only reason it worked is because PC is so weak. "He wasn't strong because he didn't think he had to be strong. The only reason he looked good was that Coverdell is so weak." CJ said some friend of his saw a tape of the Savannah debate and was very critical. Said WF was weak, condescending and that he could not understand the baseball question. So my view of Sunday was at odds with all his aides--CJ, Mike, Fran and Harriet. Mike says that they see him in all his moods and knew when he is at his best and that was not it. I can't quarrel. I agree it was not statesman-like and visionary and striking, and he did not start out attacking PC. In Savannah, he started with education and, in Atlanta, he began with the economy. Maybe these guys have seen him so much that they want to hear some new, invigorating note. But people in Atlanta have not heard any of that. It's all news to them. Mike: "You're in a hot bed of cynicism here."
- At lunch, I asked Norm and Chris for a theme for my study. Norm: "All politics is not local." Chris: "It's being drowned out." Some idea, but the problem is that it takes the attention away from everything I know about WF--his local attachments.
- Chris stressed how much he has done for Georgia "outside the doughnut." And mostly from the App. Committee. (Sanford Bishop wanted Chris for his staff.)
- We talked about timber industry and how 85-90% of it is on privately-owned land. So he can blast Forest Service and not really touch the private timber interests. He can have it both ways. The guys from the western states, however, don't like Wyche because his proposals send the price of western timber up! He gets it both ways--an environmentalist who doesn't hurt 85% of Georgia timber industry and who, by helping to drive up the price of western timber interests--who use public land--actually help the Georgia timber people. (Though, they don't understand that.)
- I asked them what they thought WF was most passionate about. He said foreign relations mostly, "but he's trapped there by Sam Nunn. He can't specialize in it." Next, he said, was environment and third, education. Not health. He concluded that, since WF couldn't do foreign affairs, the environment was probably his biggest interest.
- Re WF's committee assignments.
- WF to Voters Guild in big home in the evening - downstairs: "I have spent my time as a freshman United States Senator keeping promises mainly of accessibility over our state. I've been in all 150 counties holding meetings, where I don't make any prefatory remarks because the only thing I really know you can represent people unless you come home and find out which policies were getting right, and which one we're getting wrong." This favorite formulation admits mistakes in general.

A:\FOWLER DISC #6/ATLANTA TRIP BOOK #2/OCT 17-21, 1992-1

Georgia Trip
October 1992

Channel 36, Sunday News Conference, October 4, 1992: This show was put on at a time when Wyche Fowler was 20 points ahead of Paul Coverdell. And the participants in this Sunday News Conference are Dick Williams (moderator), Bill Shipp, Tom Houck, Jeff Dickerson, and Rick Allen.

These guys sit around and talk about the electoral situation each Sunday.

On October 4, they begin by playing Wyche Fowler's initial ad, the one that has the song "He's Georgia's Man." "He was born and raised in Georgia....Wyche Fowler, raised on Georgia land, Wyche Fowler, he's Georgia's Man." Houck suggests that Greer is not putting a lot into this commercial--"He's not giving Fowler enough attention...if I was Fowler, I would fire him." He says that the advertisement is a "don't rock the boat," "safe," "not doing anything new, breaking new ground."

Bill Shipp says that it's "very much like his 1986 campaign."

Jeff Dickerson says "it shows me the extent to which Democrats have written out black folks." It's "an appeal to the folks in the Georgia hinterland."

Rick Allen says that Wyche Fowler's "greatest fear is that people are going to remember he once was a liberal congressman from Atlanta." "Therefore," says Allen, "the commercial is all symbolism." He also says that the "greatest symbol is Sam Nunn and that they have dragged Sam Nunn kicking and screaming onto the screen."

They then look at the first Coverdell ad. This is the ad that has Margie Lopp, age 73, of Cufcuthbert, Georgia, singing a tune that says "Let's put Paul Coverdell in the Senate, and put Wyche Fowler out." And it ends by saying "We've got to get rid of Wyche Fowler. He's just like Ted Kennedy."

One of the members calls this ad "unconventional," and "a roll of the dice" on the part of Coverdell. Bill Shipp says it is "splendid, catchy." "It goes back to 'Where's the beef?'" He says people will pay attention to it and calls it "a first-rate political commercial." In fact, he calls it "a better commercial than the candidate." (I have a note here about bathtub shower which I don't understand.)

Williams calls it "genius," "it's so bad, it's awful."

Rick Allen calls it "one of the worst ads I've ever seen in my life." "Paul Coverdell says I'm not a serious candidate for the United States Senate. I'm so desperate." Bill Shipp replies that "it is a good commercial because people will remember it." They may remember his name. Allen says to Shipp, "Paul Coverdell needs to do anything and that was anything." Shipp says to Allen, "People remember the Titanic." And then there is great laughter!

Williams puts the next question to the group, "How do they get after Wyche Fowler?"

A:\FOWLER DISC #6, SUNDAY NEWS CONFERENCES, OCT 1992-1

Georgia Trip
October 1992

Voters Guild

I want to thank President Kitchen, thank Marty, of course. He advised me at church the other day that the Voters Guild meeting was tonight. And also I add my thanks, of course, to

Yes, get the Toast Master out if she's lobbying here now (laughter)

I don't know what makes me think of it, but I want to tell you a quick little anecdote. One of my favorite plays is "State of the Nation" that some of you may remember. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1945. In it there is a fictitious President of the United States. He's had a bad day and is trying to go to bed. And as he is trying to retire, suddenly one of his assistants rushes in and says, 'Mr. President, before you go, there's a bunch of southerners who want to see you.' And seeing the scowl on the President's face, the assistant says, 'Please, Mr. President, please see them. They can deliver a lot of votes.' And the wife of the President of the United States turns to her husband and asks, 'How do you deliver the votes of a free people?' To which the President replies, 'My dear, whenever people are ignorant or prejudiced or lazy, they are never free.'

In our country, as you know, or you wouldn't be a part of the Voters Guild, the apathy--I call it laziness--has become absolutely endemic. And it really threatens a free democracy and their people. Because we really get the kind of government we deserve in a country where you the people, we the people, are the government. This fine new Sheriff Jackie Barrett--if you haven't met her, I hope you will--and I are merely your representatives. And if we forget that--Mr. Perot, I'm very proud to say still reminds us of that, that's part of the value of his campaign--because in a free country, we get the kind of government we deserve. You tolerate sorriness, you get sorriness in your elected officials. If you tolerate apathy, you get apathy. If you tolerate corruption, (audience member interjected--you get Republicans!) you get corruption. But I'm not interested really in Democratic solutions or Republican solutions. I'm interested in the best solutions that face our country. It can only be done through an active, educated citizenry who put aside any lethargy; "let the other people do it," if we're going to have the kind of government that you will respect, and then help those of us who represent you, put together the kind of policies that we need.

Hello !

Hey Wyche, how you doing? (laughter)

Anybody who thinks they want to vote against me or believe in that stuff that my opponent is saying on television, I refer you to my Sunday School teacher (laughter)!

So my message is very simple. I'm proud to serve you in the United States Senate. I'm very proud of my record. I have spent my time as a freshman

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Atlanta Trip
October 1992

Atlanta Constitution Editorial Board

F. And about at least 24 months ago the economy and jobs.

Recently, this was, of course, when the President was denying there was a recession. And a year and a half ago conservatives are the people And up until this present moment still, certainly outside of I say a large percent of people still are very worried, because they read it everywhere about lay-offs I was in Upton County two, three days ago six, seven different manufacturing. They got textiles they've got a B.F. Goodrich plant, 5,000 people

Q. They have textiles and they have what else was it?

F. Canning operations. A lot of counties in Georgia they would kill to have any industrial they have five or six. But they all told me they think that B.F. Goodrich has been sold. it's still running I don't know whether it is or not, but they are upset that over 5,000 people

Then what happened about a few months ago, a year ago, people came to understand that, I don't know why I've never thought of it before, that when you lose about 80% of the people who have health insurance get it through their employer. When they lose their job, they lose their health insurance. My office, that was already one or two people basically turned into an employment agency trying to field eight or 10 calls with needs of people who have lost a job Then they started calling us all I lost my health insurance, I lost my job where I live. All of a sudden there was an understanding everywhere--not only for health insurance the fact that we got this one thing that Washington hadn't thought out. Put on health care reform, what we call health care reform. Getting costs down, finding a way of having basic health insurance. So there is this huge arising from the citizens of grass roots. Whoever is elected President. we will have to begin immediately on health insurance. But that's a big issue that's not going to go away.

Q. So what is your health care plan?

F. Well, it's not because Professor Fereno is here from what I've talked about all over the state the last year, that we do have models. Rochester, New York is the primary one, where, without any government, federal government mandates, that community got 10 million societies that pay the community the major players necessary, major employees or the major employer, using Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, Xerox, in the case of Rochester. Got with the insurance companies and doctors and everything and said, 'Look, we've got to get our health care costs down.

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Atlanta Trip - October 17-21, 1992

Bill Johnstone - October 19, 1992

- I talked to Bill on Monday. His first question to me was: "What did you think of this morning's story?" I said it was one of the worst jobs of reporting I'd seen, that it didn't bear any relation to what I saw. He nodded and said that was the trouble they were having with Sherman--that he and Wyche really did not get along or words to that effect.
- Dennis suggested that the tone of Sherman's articles changed after the great blow-up, and that Sherman is angry because he did not get credit for the story--even though he did not deserve the credit, since it was a tipster that gave it to him. Dennis also says he is certain that Sherman is "sitting on an anti-Coverdell story and has been sitting on it for weeks." The idea is he won't release it to help Fowler. I think the Fowler people believe that the editor squashed the original Sherman story or someone did, since it appeared in the gossip column and didn't surface till a week after I left. The bank issue is one of PC's best issues, however, and has tried hard to keep it alive.
- When I went into Bill's office, he was printing out the poll results and the advertising buys for me; and he gave me a lot of data--including a focus group summary involving several ads.
- I asked him just what it was that worried him at this point in the campaign. He pointed to the decline in favorability numbers in their most recent polls--that is, the decline between October 5 and October 11. Those numbers in the last two columns worry me (job approval). "There is no real reason, no apparent reason, in the light of what has been happening, why those numbers should have declined. It's the trend that bothers me, because there is no obvious explanation for such a significant decline. Not all of it is statistically significant, but some of it is. As you can see, during that same period, we have been on TV twice as much or more than he has. We have double the number of gross rating points. And the ad he has been playing for most of that time has been the old lady ad, which our focus group tell us is just not appealing to people. Clinton's polls taken during the same week, show the same trend for us from plus five to plus 13, our head-to-head numbers have been going down from 25-21, and job performance down by nine. I don't understand why it should be happening."
- "Right now, I'm waiting for our new poll numbers. Secrest will give us some idea in a couple of hours. I expect them to decline, but I hope not by much. If they show a 10 point spread, I will be very perturbed. If they are in the high teens, I'll be relieved."
- "Wyche was very reluctant to go negative with the Peace Corps ad. For five weeks, we had been going only with positive ads. But they had produced no real gain. So I concluded we had gone about as far as we could go in making people like Wyche. Coverdell has never had a negative spot run against him. There were none in the Republican primary. We finally persuaded Wyche that he had gone as far as he could

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Norm Kurz, Marty Smith, Tricia (Chris' girlfriend), Chris Schepis, Mark Wetherhorn

- I flew to Atlanta, met Donna Fowler and flew to Savannah for Wyche's 5:00 schoolhouse debate with Coverdell. Wyche met us in Savannah. We went back to Atlanta after the debate and Norm and I went to the World's Series (3 rows behind home plate - Braves 3/Toronto 1). I went to Penta Hotel by cab with Norm, who went on to Buckhead. I shifted to Wyndham the next day. Wyche and Coverdell had second debate on Sunday at WSB-TV, Channel 2, Atlanta at 1:30.
- For most of the first day, with his mind on the debate, WF fretted about the media and Mark Sherman, the Atlanta Constitution reporter.
- When I got in car, Wyche talked about how inappropriately Coverdell was dressed for a meeting in the country that AM, mimicked him with his "docksiders and his madras shirt and cotton tie." Then he launched into criticism of the paper.
- "After Coverdell had spent \$500,000 on a two-week barrage of negative ads, the paper blasted me for finally going negative. No more warm and fuzzy Fowler." Our ad quoted from the Inspector General's report on the mismanagement of the Peace Corps, the relatives he put on the payroll at twice their previous salaries--to show that he's not the great manager he claims to be. Sherman called Johnstone and says, "If you're 20 points ahead, how come you are putting on this negative ad?" Johnstone told him that "our 'internals' tell us we're only 10 points ahead. That's pretty close to the truth. We went down eight points last week under that barrage of negative ads."
- Marty said, "I was surprised the Senator went negative. He must think he needs to."
- Later, Norm told me, "There are so many things we can use against Coverdell. The problem is timing. When do you use them. For some of them, the time is not yet. We have ads ready to go that we haven't used --and may not use."
- In the car, WF showed me the morning's endorsement of the Savannah paper. "How's this for timing. It's a right wing newspaper, but its under new ownership and someone there likes me." It was OK based on constituency service. As Marty said, "There was this feeling that a senator from Atlanta would not pay attention to us down here. But Wyche has done everything a person could do to help us."
- As we rode from the airport, the high and rather majestic-looking Talmadge Bridge connecting Georgia and South Carolina loomed over the horizon and WF said, "I got them the money to build that bridge. They had a Senator from this very area, Mark Mattingly, on the Appropriations Committee and he couldn't get them the money for this bridge. The only promise I made to the people in this area in 1986 was that I would get

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