



The KO In Denver

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
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SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Contrary to conventional wisdom that debates are rarely, if ever, game-changers, the first presidential debate was a demolition derby.

And no amount of post-debate fact-checking, spinning or dances of one's choice (Barack Obama has cited Mitt Romney's tap-dancing and soft-shoe) is going to alter the impression of Romney's winning-ness.

It was quite simply a knockout performance by the Republican challenger. Or, as Notre Dame professor and political observer Robert Schmuhl put it, "Romney gets a gold medal and Obama wasn't even in the same competition."

Schmuhl, professor of American studies and author of "Statecraft and Stagecraft: American Political Life in the Age of Personality," told me that on optics alone, the victor was clear.

"All one had to do on Wednesday night is turn down the volume and study the body language of the two figures. After a short period of time, there was no comparison in terms of performance."

As anyone watching the debate couldn't avoid noticing, the president rarely looked at Romney, seemingly riveted by something on his lectern. He may have been taking notes — or studying the wood grain — but the effect was to appear disengaged. Or miffed. Or rude. Refusing to look at people when they're talking, whether a debating partner, a spouse or a colleague, is a blatant act of passive hostility. One need only be human to recognize it.

Obama's performance has been sufficiently critiqued, though one tic seems to have escaped attention. His million-dollar smile, which usually lights up a room, seemed like a flashlight in broad daylight. It appeared to be remembered punctuation, as though thinking to himself, he decided:

"This is not going well. Oh wait, they love it when I smile." Ignition.

Far from being an expression of humor, confidence or even friendliness, the smile seemed false, an imposter at a funeral, a news reader's inappropriate cheerfulness at catastrophic news.

It was, frankly, painful to watch. Optically, the effects were clear — and in the age of media and personality, optics matter. As Schmuhl noted, Romney, despite being 65 and Obama just 51, seemed the much younger man — both youthful and energetic.



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Obama seemed tired, peeved and eager to be anywhere but there.

The morning brought bad reviews, but given Obama's now-legendary isolation from any but his tight circle of confidantes, it isn't clear he is aware of them. Instead, he was out stumping and trumpeting as though he had left the arena victorious. Standing the next day in his comfort zone before 30,000 fans, he wondered who *that* man had been — that Romney guy who showed up at the debate.

In fact, the Romney who appeared in Denver to duke it out with the president is the one supporters once knew. It was the most recent Romney — the awkward, gaffe-prone Romney — who now seemed the stranger. Friends and close associates talking among themselves had been wondering what happened to their Romney — the smart, over-achieving businessman who was never at a loss for solutions.

He's back. The dog is off the roof. Likability is now moot.

And likability, it turns out, isn't about a winning smile or a cross-court shot. It's about competence. Romney may not be able to perform the miracles he promises. Most presidents, once in office, discover that doing is harder than saying. But Wednesday night he conveyed a depth of knowledge as well as a level of confidence that is infectious.

Obama gave rebuttals that failed to convince. Friday's jobs report, putting unemployment below 8 percent for the first time since Obama was inaugurated, no doubt put some spring back in his step and may have stolen some of Romney's fire. But what is clear is the game is by no measure over.

Before the debate Wednesday, Americans by 2-1 believed that Obama would secure a second term. Yet the fact that 67.2 million people tuned in to the debate suggests a higher level of interest than a *fait accompli* would indicate. According to Nielsen, the TV ratings company, Obama vs. Romney viewership was up 28 percent from the first presidential debate four years ago. The largest audience in 2008 came with the second debate at 63.2 million viewers.

At this point, with the new jobs numbers following on the impressions of the first debate, as Schmuhl puts it, "reality and medality converge." Which is to say, anything could happen and all bets are off. Game on.

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Report Card On The First Debate

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creator Syndicate

You know there's trouble on the left when the MSNBC people declare Mitt Romney the winner in the first presidential debate. I mean, there was wailing and gnashing of teeth on the uber-lively cable network: Why, oh, why did our guy look so awkward? Even though we don't believe in God, we'd now like him to help our president if he can.

Gov. Romney won the debate because the economy is bad and the president could not explain how he's going to make it better. The governor kept pounding President Barack Obama in the midsection, pointing out that his vision of a country filled with green energy jobs paying world-class salaries with tremendous benefits for all workers is not happening and is not likely to happen anytime soon. All Obama could say in reply was that he created millions of jobs. Apparently, those are secret jobs, because the unemployment rate hasn't dropped below 8 percent in 40 weeks, which, of course, Romney pointed out.

Obama looked a little tired in Denver. Romney looked energetic, although the hair is close to being out of control. Both men wore nice suits and crisp ties. Both completely ignored moderator Jim Lehrer and said what they wanted to say. Over and over.

However, what Romney highlighted made more sense than what the president put out there. America is not prospering economically. No matter what Obama says he's done, the facts are that personal income is down, good jobs are hard to get, the debt is north of \$16 trillion, and everybody who has health insurance is paying



Bill O'REILLY

higher premiums. And don't even ask about gas prices.

Romney's closing statement at the end was markedly stronger than Obama's. The president basically said that if you vote for him, he will continue to work hard. I believe him; he does work hard. So do the New York Mets. But they are not winning.

The governor wrapped things up by confidently promising that he will create a gazillion jobs and bring back the free market principles that have made the USA great. The president also said he likes the free marketplace, but when a guy like Hugo Chavez endorses you, the capitalism thing gets a bit dicey.

Upcoming polls should bring much better news for Romney, as perception is reality in today's America. Most voters depend on others to tell them what exactly is up, and as mentioned, many left-wing pundits headed for the Valium before the bloviating was even over. There was twittering, tweeting and texting — most of it not good news for Obama. And the right-wing analysts were so giddy that I thought Pat Buchanan was going to do the lambada.

So, the first debate is history, and Gov. Romney is back in the hunt. But there will be a next time, and I expect President Obama will be much more assertive. After all, Barry from Honolulu didn't get to be the most powerful man on Earth by slinking off. Oct. 16 can't come soon enough for him.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

White House and had a majority in the House and Senate with Pelosi and Reid? The GOP was never invited to policy meetings at the White House during that two-year period.

Reich calls the GOP extreme, but how extreme is an administration that apologizes for America to the Muslim world, gives \$1.5 billion in aid to the Egyptians who hate us, refuse to protect international assets in Libya resulting in the death of Chris Stevens, the U.S. ambassador?

How extreme is a plan to redistribute 50 percent of the taxpayer's contribution to society to 50% who pay no taxes?

How extreme is it to take a child from his mother's womb at seven months and put a forceps into his skull to stop his life and claim protection under the law?

I was born and raised in Yankton and it sickens me to think that the local media feeds to this great city content that projects good as bad and evil as acceptable. Yanktonians deserve better than Robert Reich and Leonard Pitts liberalizing your community newspaper. I cannot believe I am the only voice who believes that.

The Press DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

It's A Boom Now, But Later On ..

WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION (Sept. 27): It looks like South Dakota won't become a booming oil producing state like our neighbor to the north.?A study done by the governor's office says the oil boom that hit North Dakota thanks to the Bakken formation in the western part of that state apparently isn't in store for us. The bulk of the Bakken formation lies in Montana, North Dakota and Saskatchewan although some say it stretches into Wyoming and South Dakota.

North Dakota has been enjoying an oil boom for the past few years thanks to that formation and last year it produced 152 million barrels. The boom has brought new people, new jobs, new money and new opportunity to the state and the revenue generated has provided a budget surplus for state government.

South Dakota, however, won't be reaping similar benefits. Our state produces about 1.6 million barrels of oil a year and that figure is not expected to exceed 6.5 million barrels a decade from now. That's a bit of a mixed blessing.

South Dakotans can still make money off the North Dakota boom by providing housing and other services that are in short supply in the western oil fields. And although the profits won't reach the levels they have in North Dakota, there is still money to be made.

There are some things we won't mind missing out on like congestion on roads and highways, a housing crunch that's still a problem, an increasing demand for public programs and services and a rise in crime that parts of North Dakota are coping with thanks to the influx of large amounts of people and money. Some of that could spill across our border but not to the extent North Dakota is experiencing.

One other thing South Dakota will miss out on — and be glad it did — is the crash when the boom ends. Oil production is a cyclical business and when prices and demand are high so is the rush to cash in by working fields like the Bakken formation — where getting the oil is more expensive than traditional fields because of where it is located and what it takes to get it.

North Dakota has been producing oil for more than half a century. When prices are high, so is production. When prices are low, so is production. There have been several boom and bust cycles over the last several decades which aren't uncommon for the oil industry. While oil producing states reap the benefits of the boom years, they also must cope with the problems of the down years. When oil production is reduced, so are the number of available jobs and that inevitably leads to people going elsewhere to seek employment.

It would be nice to be able to enjoy the financial benefits that North Dakota is enjoying because of the Bakken boom. But North Dakotans have been down this road before and know it won't last forever. South Dakota needs to take advantage of what it can while it can and be glad we won't have to deal with the problems the boom has already brought and the ones that will almost certainly come in the future.

THE VIEWS PAGE

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Oct. 8, the 282nd day of 2012. There are 84 days left in the year. This is the Columbus Day observance in the United States, as well as Thanksgiving Day in Canada.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire erupted; fires also broke out in Peshtigo, Wis., and in several communities in Michigan.

On this date: In 1869, the 14th president of the United States, Franklin Pierce, died in Concord, N.H.

In 1918, U.S. Army Cpl. Alvin C. York led an attack that killed 25 German soldiers and captured 132 others in the Argonne Forest in France.

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was indicted by a grand jury in New Jersey for murder in the death of the son of Charles A. Lindbergh.

In 1944, "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," starring Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, made its debut on CBS Radio.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced that the secret of the atomic bomb would be shared only with Britain and Canada.

In 1956, Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in a World Series to date as the New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in Game 5, 2-0.

In 1957, the Brooklyn Baseball Club announced it was accepting an offer to move the Dodgers from New York to Los Angeles.

In 1962, Chuck Hiller of the San Francisco Giants became the first National League to hit a World Series grand slam; the shot came in Game 4 against New York Yankees pitcher Marshall Bridges. (The final score of the game was Giants 7, Yankees 3.)

In 1967, former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee died in London at age 84.

In 1970, Soviet author Alexander Solzhenitsyn was named winner of the Nobel Prize for literature.

In 1982, all labor organizations in Poland, including Solidarity, were banned.

In 1992, former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt died in Unkel, Germany, at age 78.

Ten years ago: A federal judge approved President George W. Bush's request to reopen West Coast ports, ending a 10-day labor lockout that was costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$1 to \$2 billion a day. Two Kuwaiti gunmen attacked U.S. forces during war games on a Persian Gulf island, killing one Marine and wounding another before they were shot to death. Raymond Davis Jr. and Riccardo Giacomoni of the U.S. and Masatoshi Koshiba of Japan won the Nobel Prize in physics.

Five years ago: British Prime Minister

Gordon Brown announced his country would halve its remaining troop contingent in Iraq in the spring of 2008. (Britain ended up postponing the withdrawal amid a spike in militia violence.) Michael Devlin was sentenced to life in prison for kidnapping one of two boys he'd held captive in his suburban St. Louis apartment. (Devlin pleaded guilty the next day to dozens of other counts, resulting in a total of 74 life sentences.) Americans Mario R. Capecchi, Oliver Smithies and Briton Martin J. Evans won the 2007 Nobel Prize in medicine. Racing great John Henry, the thoroughbred who'd earned more than \$6.5 million before retiring as a gelding, was euthanized at the Kentucky Horse Park at age 32.

One year ago: Scott Anderson became the Presbyterian Church's first openly gay ordained minister during a ceremony at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Madison, Wis. In a rain-interrupted game that ended a few minutes past midnight, the Texas Rangers defeated the Detroit Tigers 3-2 in Game 1 of the AL championship series. Al Davis, the Hall of Fame owner of the Oakland Raiders, died at age 82.

Today's Birthdays: Entertainment reporter Rona Barrett is 76. Actor Paul Hogan is 73. Rhythm-and-blues singer Fred Cash (The Impressions) is 72. Civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson is 71. Comedian Chevy Chase is 69. Author R.L. Stine is 69. Actor Dale Dye is 68. Country singer Susan Raye is 68. TV personality Sarah Purcell is 64. Actress Sigourney Weaver is 63. Rhythm-and-blues singer Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & the Gang) is 62. Producer-director Edward Zwick is 60. Country singer-musician Ricky Lee Phelps is 59. Actor Michael Dudikoff is 58. Comedian Darrell Hammond is 57. Actress Stephanie Zimbalist is 56. Rock musician Mitch Marine is 51. Actress Kim Wayans is 51. Rock singer Steve Perry (Cherry Poppin' Daddies) is 49. Actor Ian Hart is 48. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer CeCe Winans is 48. Rock musician C.J. Ramone (The Ramones) is 47. Actress-producer Karyn Parsons is 46. Singer-producer Teddy Riley is 46. Actress Emily Procter is 44. Actor Dylan Neal is 43. Actor-screenwriter Matt Damon is 42. Actress Kristanna Loken is 33. Rhythm-and-blues singer Byron Reeder (Mista) is 33. Actor Nick Cannon is 32. Actor Max Crumm is 27. Singer-songwriter-producer Bruno Mars is 27. Actor Angus T. Jones is 19. Actress Molly Quinn is 19.

Thought for Today: "There is an abiding beauty which may be appreciated by those who will see things as they are and who will ask for no reward except to see." — Vera Brittain, British author (1893-1970).

FROM THE BIBLE

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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