

Presidential Also-Rans ☯

Running Mates 2000

PART I: GORE-LIEBERMAN

Leslie H. Southwick

This article is a pocket part of sorts to Judge Southwick's *Presidential Also-Rans ☯ Running Mates, 1788 through 1996* (McFarland 2d ed. 1998), a useful and readable, even browseable, book that should not be permitted to go out of date. This pocket part covers Democratic Party candidates Al Gore and Joe Lieberman. A second part, which will appear in our Spring 2004 issue, covers Green Party candidates Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke.

– The Editors

NOMINATIONS

Green Party Convention (2nd): June 24-25, 2000, at Renaissance Hotel in Denver, Colorado. There were about 300 delegates representing 39 states. *President* – Ralph Nader, nominated on the first ballot with 295 votes. Ten votes were cast for Stephen Gaskin, described as an “aging hippie” who was somewhat prominent in the 1960s counterculture of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district. Gaskin wanted universal health care, campaign finance reform, and to decriminalize marijuana. Ten votes also were received by Jello Biafra. Biafra’s actual name was Eric Boucher. He was the lead performer for a punk rock group called Dead Kennedys. *Vice*

President – Winona LaDuke. This was the same ticket that had been nominated in 1996.

Republican National Convention (37th): July 31-August 3, 2000, at the First Union Center, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *President* – George W. Bush, nominated on the first ballot after a four-day “rolling roll call” of states, with 2,058 votes. Alan Keyes received 6 votes, John McCain 1, and there was 1 abstention. Major GOP candidates during the primaries were Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), Gary Bauer (Va.), Pat Buchanan (D.C.), Elizabeth Dole (N.C.), Steve Forbes (N.J.), Alan Keyes (Md.), Orrin Hatch (Utah), John McCain (Ariz.), Dan Quayle (Ind.), and Bob Smith (N.H.). *Vice President* – Dick Cheney, nominated on the first ballot by acclamation. The four-day

Leslie Southwick is a Presiding Judge on the Mississippi Court of Appeals. Copyright 2004 Leslie H. Southwick.

rolling vote for President had not yet been completed on Wednesday, August 2, when Cheney was nominated. That made the vice presidential nomination final before the presidential nomination was concluded.

Reform Party National Convention (2nd): August 10-13, 2000, at the Long Beach, California, Convention Center. The party was undergoing a public and bitter factional fight. One group, consisting of many of those who had supported Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996, felt that Patrick Buchanan was disqualified because he initially ran as a Republican, then encouraged people who did not support the Reform Party to vote for him in the pre-convention mail balloting. Buchanan received 49,529 (64.4%) of the mail votes cast, and John Hagelin claimed 28,539 votes (36.6%). A two-thirds vote of the convention delegates could reject the mail ballot outcome. In the ensuing parliamentary gridlock, those who would not accept Buchanan left the convention. The remaining delegates formally nominated Patrick Buchanan for president. Buchanan chose Ezola Foster (Cal.) as his running mate.

The bolters met nearby at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center. This group nominated John S. Hagelin (Iowa), who then chose Nat Goldhaber (Cal.) for vice president. Hagelin also ran as the nominee of the Natural Law Party. Hagelin's group filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission, charging that Pat Buchanan "hijacked" the Convention by blatant violation of procedural rules. The FEC declared in September that Buchanan would receive the \$12.6 million in federal campaign money to which the Reform Party was entitled because of the substantial turnout for Ross Perot in 1996. Neither Reform Party ticket drew significant general election support.

Democratic National Convention (43rd): August 14-17, 2000, at the Staples Center, in

Los Angeles, California. *President* – Al Gore, nominated on the first ballot with 4,328 votes; there were 9 abstentions. Bill Bradley (N.J.) was the only serious challenger during the primaries. *Vice President* – Joe Lieberman, nominated by unanimous consent on the first ballot.

GENERAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 7, 2000

Popular Vote

Al Gore-Joe Lieberman 50,996,064
George W. Bush-Dick Cheney 50,456,167
Ralph Nader-Winona LaDuke 2,864,810
Pat Buchanan-Ezola Foster 448,750
Others 615,138

Electoral Vote

Bush-Cheney 271
Gore-Lieberman 266¹

Winners

George W. Bush, 43rd President
Dick Cheney, 46th Vice President

Losers (at least 2% of vote)

Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, Ralph Nader,
Winona LaDuke

2000 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE – DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Al Gore

Full Name: Albert Arnold Gore, Jr.
State Represented: Tennessee.
Birth: March 31, 1948, in Washington, D.C.
Age on Inauguration Day (January 20, 2001): 52 years, 9 1/2 months.
Education: Harvard University (1969 B.A. government); attended Vanderbilt University

1 One D.C. elector chosen for Gore submitted a blank ballot.

Graduate School of Religion (1971-72); attended Vanderbilt Law School (1974-76).

Religion: Baptist.

Ancestry: Scots-Irish in some accounts, Anglo-Irish in others. Distantly related to blind U.S. Senator Thomas Gore of Oklahoma, who was first elected in 1907, and that Senator Gore's grandson, writer Gore Vidal.

Occupation: Reporter (1971-76); in public office continuously (1977-2001).

Public Offices: United States House of Representatives (1977-1985); United States Senator (1985-1992); candidate for Democratic presidential nomination (1988); Vice President (1993-2001); Democratic presidential nominee (2000).

Home: Carthage, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.

Personal Characteristics: A ruggedly handsome, athletic man, with once-thick brown hair thinning in middle age. He can be stiff and boring in public speaking, and awkwardly forced in his efforts to overcome that style. He is said to be engaging and witty in private.

Father: Albert Arnold Gore, Sr. (December 26, 1907-December 5, 1998); United States Representative, 1939-1953; United States Senator, 1953-1971.

Mother: Pauline LaFon (1912-), daughter of Walter and Maude LaFon. Walter was a state highway department worker on occasion, and operated a general store in northwest Tennessee. Pauline first married when she was 17, and divorced after less than a year. Married Gore on May 15, 1937. She graduated from law school but was unable to get a meaningful legal position.

Siblings: Nancy LaFon Gore (January 23, 1938-July 11, 1984). Married attorney Frank Hunger of Greenville, Mississippi. They had no children.

Wife: Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Aitcheson (August 19, 1948-). Her parents were Jack and Margaret Carlson Aitcheson, owners of an Alexandria, Virginia plumbing and heating

supply company. The parents divorced when Tipper was 14 months old; she was raised by her mother and grandmother in Washington, D.C. Tipper Gore is a social activist on mental health and children's issues, also a writer and photographer. The Gores married on May 19, 1970.

Children: Karenna (August 6, 1973-) married Dr. Andrew Schiff in 1997; she is a lawyer. Kristin (June 5, 1977-) is a writer in Los Angeles. Sarah (January 7, 1979-). Albert III (October 19, 1982-).

Historic Sites: Gore family farm lies near Carthage, Tennessee, and is still owned by family and not open to public. Bust of Gore in Capitol along with those of other Vice Presidents.

Movies: *War Room* (1994), a documentary about the 1992 Clinton campaign that also includes scenes involving Al Gore.



In 1970, Democratic United States Senator Al Gore, Sr. of Tennessee narrowly lost reelection to conservative Republican congressman and candy fortune heir Bill Brock. Also in 1970, Republican Congressman George Bush tried to move up to the Senate, but lost narrowly to Democrat Lloyd Bentsen. The senior Gore concluded a long political career with his 1970 defeat for the Senate. The senior Bush was just commencing his own lengthy public service. The namesake son of each of these defeated 1970 Senate candidates would meet in electoral combat thirty years later for the highest office in the country. Al Gore, Jr., and George W. Bush would, like their fathers in 1970, both experience in 2000 the prospect of apparent defeat. Unlike their fathers, each 2000 candidate would be convinced that he had won. Only one took up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. It is the life story of the other that will be examined here.

Al Gore, Jr., was born and raised in

Washington, D.C. Considering the nature of politics, and especially Southern politics, Washington roots are less than optimal. Thus Gore's ties to the Tennessee farm of his parents were much more emphasized in political campaigns than his childhood on Embassy Row in the Fairfax Hotel, which in the 1950's advertised itself as "Washington's Family Hotel." It is now the Westin Embassy Row.

The prestigious school for the sons of Washington's elite was St. Albans, adjacent to the then-uncompleted National Cathedral in the northwest part of the District. The school had been started in the late 1800's for the choirboys at the cathedral, but well before Gore's time it had modeled itself after traditional English boarding schools. Gore began there in the fourth grade and remained until he graduated from high school. His I.Q. would eventually be tested at the extraordinary level of 133 or 134, but at St. Albans he did not apply himself sufficiently to be a top student. He graduated at the exact middle of his 51 boy class in 1965.

Harvard was the only school to which he applied. When Gore arrived on campus in the fall of 1965, Harvard was just beginning to develop its image as an antiwar, drug-using, rather radical campus. Gore remained largely but not completely in the more sedate tradition, running for and winning the presidency of the Freshman Council. Gore's friend and future actor Tommy Lee Jones called Gore "high school" for his buttoned-down, serious approach to the mock responsibilities of student government. After his freshman year at Harvard, Gore abandoned campus politics, and he remained on the sidelines of protests on campus against the Vietnam War. While his campus peers scorned those in power, Gore seemed conscious that one day he might join that group. He found a mentor in young, liberal, even dissident professor Marty Peretz. After

marrying a wealthy heiress, Peretz would become the publisher of the *New Republic*. He would assiduously support his former student in its pages.

At Harvard Gore also encountered a tutor named Erich Segal, a classics instructor whose writings about campus life would become the movie *Love Story*. Gore as vice president would stir controversy when he claimed that he and Tipper were the models for the lead characters, portrayed in the movie by Ryan O'Neal and Ali McGraw. Segal said that Gore and Jones were blended to form the male character, while the author did not know Tipper well enough to have borrowed from her background and personality.

With graduation looming and the resulting loss of his student deferment from the military draft, the spring of 1969 was a time of crisis. Gore's opposition to the war caused his mother to offer to help him go to Canada. Gore later said that he never considered it. After months of deliberation, Gore decided to enlist in the Army. Graduation came in June. Army enlistment came two months later, and in late September, Gore received orders to depart for Vietnam on December 26. He became a military journalist.

Other life choices were made at this time. During his senior year at St. Albans, Gore met "Tipper" Aitchison at a party after the school's prom. She was someone else's date that night, but by the next day Gore had her phone number, a promise of a date, and the beginning of a relationship that would last. In Gore's final spring at Harvard, he proposed. Tipper accepted. They would not be married until another year had passed.

Gore's service in Vietnam was in an engineer brigade's public information office based about 30 miles south of Saigon. He does not recount any especially dangerous experiences. Most of what he has said about the time there focused on the boredom. Nothing suggests that either father or son sought special treatment for him.

Nevertheless, after only three months in Vietnam, Gore had an opportunity to seek an early departure because the engineer brigade was being gradually recalled to the United States. Gore applied to graduate school at Vanderbilt University and was accepted for enrollment in either June or August. The Army allowed him to leave Vietnam after only five months, about half the normal tour. He had arrived in Vietnam on January 8, and left on May 22, 1971. But he had served, the only member of a major party presidential ticket to serve in Vietnam.

Upon Gore's return, he was discharged from the Army and became a reporter for the Nashville *Tennessean*, edited by his friend John Seigenthaler – whose namesake son would later be a reporter and anchor for the NBC network. Gore also enrolled at the Vanderbilt Divinity School, to explore the moral questions with which he was left after his service in Vietnam. As some noted later, it was to Gore's credit that he enrolled in divinity school – which might have excused him from military service – only after he had been in Vietnam. After several years of part-time work, Gore left without a degree.

Something else that Gore sampled was Vanderbilt Law School, beginning in the fall of 1974. He lasted two years and did not graduate. By the spring of 1976, something else was on his mind. A potentially winnable seat in Congress opened when the incumbent announced his retirement. Gore's entry into the political world at his first opportunity seemed inevitable to many friends and more distant observers. He was not a natural. As a first-time candidate, Gore appeared wooden, formal, unsure of himself, and constantly in need of affirmation of his progress.

With recollections of his father's political struggles still fresh, Gore ran as a conservative. He promised a defense "second to none," and proposed that federal agencies be abolished unless they could justify themselves

every five years. The August 5 primary would decide the election because the GOP offered no candidate. The speaker of the state house of representatives, Stanley Rogers, was Gore's principal opponent. In the home state of country music, another of his opponents was endorsed by Johnny Cash. Even without the "Man in Black" in his corner, Gore eked out a 3,500-vote victory in an election in which 115,000 votes were cast. He had only 32 percent of the vote to Rogers' 29 percent, but there were no runoffs. By such narrow margins are political careers, even careers that have the potential to reach the Presidency, begun or stillborn. Making the political year even more satisfying, in November, Democrat James Sasser defeated Senator Brock for re-election. It was Brock who had beaten Al Gore, Sr. in 1970.

A self-defined "raging moderate," Gore had a voting record that was fairly liberal for a Southerner, but on key high profile issues such as abortion and gun control, he cast conservative votes. He would abandon those positions as he moved onto a national stage. When Gore sought to become a leader on an issue, it was often a fairly technical and narrow question, such as concerns of satellite-dish owners and possible misdeeds in the contact lens industry. Dan Glickman, a House colleague and later President Clinton's Secretary of Agriculture, said that Gore "had a good knack for finding issues that were not terribly controversial." He would take on meatier matters, though.

Congressman Gore studied with an intensity rarely seen among members of Congress, taking tutorials from experts and surprising them with his dedication to study. Arms control was an early focus. In the early years of the Ronald Reagan presidency, Gore tried to create a middle ground between the proposals of his party for a nuclear weapons freeze and the Administration's policy of a build-up in strategic forces and development

of a new generation of missiles. In March 1982, after 14 months of preparation, Gore introduced a proposal to freeze all new weapons development both in the United States and in the Soviet Union, and then gradually replace multiple-warhead missiles with more geographically dispersed single-warhead ones. The argument was that these scattered weapons would be harder to find and destroy, precluding a successful first strike by either country. The plan was overtaken by the end of the Cold War, but it established Gore as a man who could master a tough, technical subject, and be taken seriously in his proposals.

Gore saw his opportunity to move up to the Senate in 1984. Three-term Republican Senator Howard Baker let it be known in January 1983 that he would not run again. Gore sought to scare off possible opponents with aggressive early fund-raising. Incumbent Republican Governor Lamar Alexander, who would in 2002 be elected to this same Senate seat after a stint in a President's Cabinet and two unsuccessful presidential races, declined national Republican entreaties that he run.

More significant than political opportunity was the serious illness of his only sibling, Nancy Gore Hunger. She and her husband Frank lived in Greenville, Mississippi. A lifetime of smoking cigarettes likely caused her lung cancer, a diagnosis made in 1982. Her decline was steady and painful. She had been close to her brother and was valiant in supporting him in 1984. She got out of her sickbed, put on a wig to hide that her hair had fallen out from chemotherapy, and attended Gore's campaign opening on May 30, 1984. Six weeks later she died. Frank Hunger remained close to Gore and his family. According to the Gores, he had "formed the closest relationship to our

children of anyone outside the immediate family. Or to put it another way, he is part of our immediate family." Hunger would later serve as a trusted adviser in the 2000 campaign, always supportive but also candid with hard truths.²

Nancy Hunger's illness caused her brother to become interested in stronger legislation against tobacco companies. Gore sought to compromise with tobacco interests on what became the Comprehensive Smoking Prevention Education Act of 1984. The final bill mandated new warnings about health hazards of smoking, required tobacco companies to reveal the additives in cigarettes, and set the stage for still stronger measures later. Gore was shabbily treated by some of the tobacco lobbyists with whom he worked, and became an increasingly strident opponent of tobacco in the coming years. He has been accused of rewriting his record of opposition to tobacco. Perhaps, but Gore not long after his sister's death was a tobacco industry foe.

The 1984 Senate campaign proved to be an easy one, despite Ronald Reagan's landslide reelection. Denied Governor Alexander, the Republicans turned to underfunded state senator Victor Ashe. Even so, the cautious Gore distanced himself from Democratic presidential nominee Walter Mondale, who was headed for a landslide defeat in Tennessee. In a debate, Ashe offered Gore five dollars to give to charity if he would simply say the name of his party's presidential nominee. Gore declined. Ashe used as his campaign mascot a bulldog in order to demonstrate his tenacity. It was not enough, as Gore won with 61 percent of the vote.

Al Gore, Jr. was seen as a moderate alternative to many of the other Democrats considering the 1988 race to succeed President Reagan. Gore accentuated the differences,

2 Al @ Tipper Gore, *Joined at the Heart: The Transformation of the American Family* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 74. Joe @ Hadassah Lieberman, *An Amazing Adventure* (New York: Simon @ Schuster, 2003), 178.

sounding more like a defense hardliner than any other Democrat. Another issue that gave him a different identity from his party peers came through Tipper Gore. To carve out some role for herself beyond the home, she started a Congressional Wives Task Force. The group provided a forum for wives who wanted to take positions on issues of particular concern to them, usually matters not central to the debates of their husbands. Among the questions examined was violence on television. In time, that focus shifted for Mrs. Gore to abusive and sex-focused lyrics in popular music. She would write a book on these concerns entitled *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society* (1987).

Tipper Gore and Susan Baker, the wife of Republican Treasury Secretary James Baker, formed the Parents Music Resource Center in 1985. The group sought voluntary restraint by the music industry. A compromise of sorts was offered by 19 record companies that represented eighty percent of sales, that a label be attached to problematic products that would state "Parental Guidance – Explicit Lyrics." The Gore-Baker organization rejected the offer.

The Senate Commerce Committee held a five-hour hearing in September 1985, in which some extreme examples of the music and videos that worried the group were played to a packed room. Senator Gore gave an opening statement, criticizing absent industry executives who had been invited to the hearing. He said they should take a hard look at themselves in order to decide if "this is the way they want to earn a living." Performers who were invited responded bitterly to the committee and challenged its motives and those of Tipper Gore.

Censorship was the perceived inevitable result if the concerns raised by both Gores were to be successfully addressed. The entire issue became too controversial. Within a short period the former offer of warning labels on

the more explicit albums was belatedly accepted. Al Gore had created distrust and worse in core Democratic campaign funding sources. The music and movie industries made their fortunes in understanding and catering to the desires of modern American society. They did not want to block trends; they wanted to exploit them.

Senator Gore announced for President on April 10, 1987. He had been in the Senate barely two years. His announcement speech addressed arms control, AIDS, literacy, and men on Mars by 2000. He would have to tighten his message in order for any sense of national priority to become clear. As the campaign progressed and Gore distinguished himself from what at first were seven other major candidates, he sounded increasingly conservative on defense and domestic policy.

An issue that Gore had wanted to avoid arose in November. Only days after being nominated by President Reagan on October 29, 1987 to the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals Judge Douglas Ginsburg admitted to using marijuana while a law professor at Harvard. He withdrew his name. Prior drug use became an issue to be addressed by all major politicians. Gore's initial explanation was that he had not used drugs as an adult, and earlier usage was not a proper issue. That did not suffice, and eventually he said that in the 1960's, his life reflected the times. Implicitly, he had acknowledged using drugs. Other candidates forthrightly admitted to drug use, and the issue died.

As has occurred in other nomination battles, the tone was not always a congenial one. Most memorably, Gore questioned Massachusetts Governor Mike Dukakis about a program that permitted weekend furloughs to state prisoners even if they were serving life sentences. Gore said that two convicted killers had killed again during their furloughs and challenged Dukakis on whether he would favor such a program at

Campaign Poster

the federal level. This was the Willie Horton story, one to be pursued in much greater detail when George Bush and Mike Dukakis gained their parties' nominations.

Gore sought to break out of the crowded Democratic field on "Super Tuesday," March 8, a primary election day with a monstrously large prize of delegates from mostly Southern states. He in fact was one of the big winners, winning seven states. Gore, Sr. told his son's press secretary "That boy is going to be president." In election campaigns, though, perception is power. The story that the media played over the next few days was not Gore's winning where he should have won, but that Jesse Jackson had carried five southern states. What in fact was a big Gore victory was lost in the Jackson news. The campaign limped on for awhile, until only Dukakis, Jackson, and Gore were left. After getting only ten percent of the vote in the New York primary on April 19, Gore withdrew.

After President Bush was inaugurated in January 1989, Senator Gore spent considerable time on issues involving the environment. At times he seemed obsessed, even taking flip charts to a dinner party to explain environmental issues. He explained that he became passionate about the environment after a horrifying experience leaving the Baltimore Orioles baseball stadium in April 1989. As the Gore family walked towards their parking place, six-year-old Albert got separated. The Senator saw his son "get hit by a car, fly thirty feet through the air and scrape along the pavement another twenty feet until he came to rest in a gutter." Gore ran to his son, but the boy was motionless. Two off-duty nurses fortunately came by, and through a long period of surgery and rehabilitation the boy not only survived but nearly fully recovered. Gore said that this experience made him impatient with

the status quo. Losing a presidential race, almost losing his son, and turning 40 years old all gave him an "urgency about those things that I value the most."³

Gore was attracted to the idea of writing a book about the environmental crisis as he saw it. In August 1990, the publisher Houghton-Mifflin accepted his proposal. Gore would later state that he had put "his entire heart and soul into" the enterprise. That appears true.

Before his writing began in earnest, he won re-election in 1990, defeating Republican William Hawkins of Knoxville with 70 percent of the vote. A year and a half later, Gore's book was published, entitled *Earth in the Balance*. That Gore actually wrote the book – a rare feat among modern celebrities of any stripe – is accepted. More disputed is whether the book was a reasoned discussion or instead was an unreasoned polemic. Senator Gore is an intelligent, thoughtful man, and the book exhibits that. He can be passionate, and the book is full of displays of Gore's personal passion about the environment. It is eclectic in its sources and ideas, calling forth the words of Aristotle, Descartes, and Sir Francis Bacon, discussing chaos theory, relativity, psychology, and religion. The western world's use of the environment is likened to the actions of a dysfunctional family. Gore's answer was an ecological Global Marshall Plan. It would create new tax incentives for ecologically sound choices, fund research into new technologies, create training centers around the world so that a "core of environmentally educated planners" would exist, and otherwise organize, regulate, and enforce the new commitment to the environment.⁴

The Democratic National Committee was worried that Gore would be accused of environmental extremism due to the book. A memorandum was prepared detailing possible

3 Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1992), 13-14.

4 *Id* at 320.

attacks on it.⁵ However, the book never became a significant issue in the 1992 campaign.

Bill Clinton, by that time the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, invited several prospective running mates to meet with him individually. His meeting with Gore, which started at 11:00 p.m. and went to 1:40 a.m., appeared at times to be that of two old college friends reuniting after a long absence. Clinton and Gore were comfortable with each other, though that would not always be the case. Clinton offered; Gore accepted. The absence of geographical or even of generational balance was unusual but not unique. In 1948, for example, Missourian Harry Truman tapped Alben Barkley from the contiguous border state of Kentucky and went on to surprising victory over a properly balanced Republican ticket. In 1992, these two candidates from contiguous southern states, aided by an independent Ross Perot candidacy that drained significant votes from both major parties, won a five percent plurality over President Bush and Vice President Quayle.

Vice President Gore had what is most important in the White House, access to the President. A pre-inauguration written agreement between the two men provided that Gore would have areas of near-autonomy, such as the environment, scientific or technical matters, space exploration, and, in time, "reinventing" government.

Highlights of his service included the televised debate in the fall of 1993 with Ross Perot concerning the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. The often wooden and overly serious Vice President was thought to be no match for the always folksy Perot. Perot was unprepared to debate NAFTA in any detail, and Gore made him look both uninformed and loony. The debate occurred on the *Larry King Live* show on CNN, and had a large audience. Gore's performance

helped change the public attitude about NAFTA and somewhat marginalized Perot.

The Clinton-Gore team had another plurality victory in 1996. Gore was the heir-presumptive to the 2000 nomination. Among the controversies he faced was that he raised money for the 1996 campaign by making telephone calls from the White House. That arguably violated restrictions on seeking political contributions while on governmental property. More troubling was an event at a Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles in April 1996. About \$140,000 was raised there for the Clinton-Gore campaign, which violated federal laws on raising money at tax-exempt institutions. Some of the Buddhist monks and nuns were conduits for individual \$5,000 donations, given them by a Chinese fundraiser named John Huang. No significant news coverage of the event occurred until 1997, when *Washington Post* writer Bob Woodward broke the story. The controversy led eventually to the most damaging press conference in which Gore ever participated. Seven times he used a phrase that a lawyer had used in front of him in preparing for the conference, that there was "no controlling legal authority" that what had occurred violated the law.

On June 15, 1999, from the steps of the courthouse in Carthage, Tennessee, Gore announced for the 2000 Democratic presidential nomination. He and George W. Bush were seen as the likely nominees of their respective parties. The public opinion polls at that early stage indicated that Bush was starting ahead. Clinton scandals made the advantage of Gore's closeness to Clinton also one of his biggest disadvantages. On December 19, 1998, in the depths of a scandal regarding Clinton's sexual relations with an intern, Gore had told a crowd on the White House lawn that Clinton would emerge as "one of our greatest Presidents." Six months

⁵ John Leo, "Al Gore's global vision," *U.S. News & World Report* (August 24, 1992), at 20.

later when Gore announced his presidential run, he said that he found Clinton's conduct to have been "inexcusable." He promised to take his own "values of faith and family to the White House."

Despite these hurdles, Gore did not draw a large field of challengers. Only former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley contested for the nomination. In contrast, in 1988 Vice-President George Bush, whose President was also suffering the effects of a controversy in the form of the Iran-Contra affair, had six significant Republican challengers. Bradley raised money and showed an appealing personal style. His campaign featured a calculated absence of polish and seeming lack of attention to normal political considerations. It was the Democratic version of the temporarily successful John McCain Straight Talk Express on the Republican side. Gore did not seem so inevitable.

Gore got advice on how to put more excitement and focus into his standard stump speech. He began wearing what were seen as more attractive earth-tone clothes. In October 1999 Gore moved his campaign headquarters out of Washington to Nashville, Tennessee, as a sign of a new beginning. Gore added more frequent fighting words to his vocabulary, tried to become more animated, and did his best to reinvent himself into what the public seemed to want in its candidates. The Gore campaign righted itself. Bradley lost the Iowa caucuses and then the New Hampshire primary. He in fact won no primary, and his financial resources dried up. Bradley withdrew in March 2000.

With the Democratic race over, Gore started his preparations early for the fall campaign. Even so, by the time of the August Democratic convention, Gore was trailing badly in the polls. In one poll conducted just after the GOP convention, George W. Bush led with 49 percent to Gore's 32 percent. Just a week before the GOP convention, though,

the same poll showed Bush leading only by 42 to 38 percent. An effective Democratic convention might return the race to a narrow margin. Actor Tommy Lee Jones, Gore's college friend, gave the nomination speech. Gore's acceptance was carefully balanced. He mentioned his President just once, then said, "Now we turn the page, and write a new chapter." In the ensuing campaign, Clinton was not called upon by his Vice President for assistance. Apparently it was decided that the safer course was to leave Clinton off the stage on which Gore was trying to star.

One of the most memorable, and remarked on, events was Gore's lengthy embrace and kiss of his wife Tipper on the stage on the final night. The conservative *National Review* labeled its cover story that depicted the scene, "Gross-Out," because of the view that it was a manufactured display of affection meant to loosen up Gore's image. A large group of voters, though, must have been favorably impressed by the entirety of the Democratic convention extravaganza. In a poll taken two weeks after the convention, the Gore ticket had gained a ten percent lead.

This was a fall campaign in which neither candidate could grab victory securely. Three nationally televised debates made Gore appear forced in his manner, goofy, even mean-spirited at times, and anything but natural. In the last debate Gore strode purposefully across the stage to where Bush was answering a question, which gave to many the sense that Gore was trying to intimidate him. Bush handled the scene well. He nodded towards Gore and gave him a bemused slight grin. Many in the audience laughed. Bush had delivered the nonverbal equivalent of Ronald Reagan's masterful 1980 debate line to Jimmy Carter, "there you go again."

With a week to go before the election, it appeared that Bush had a lead. Then on the Thursday before the election, a story broke that in 1976, a thirty-year-old George W. Bush

had been arrested and pled guilty to driving under the influence while in Maine. The information came from a former Democratic candidate for Maine governor and a 2000 Gore delegate. The story dominated the news during the last weekend of the campaign. Perhaps that last-minute proof of long-ago misconduct shifted a few Bush voters who had not been quite convinced. Something caused comfortable Bush margins in many states to evaporate. A few significant states that were thought safely in Bush's column went for Gore. The key proved to be Florida. On election night Gore was declared by some television networks to have won there even though polls were still open. The Bush team argued that this kept thousands of their voters home. Later that night the state was declared for Bush, then for no one.

Beginning immediately after the November 7 election, both camps sent teams of lawyers to Florida. The number of lawsuits grew. Issues of confusing butterfly ballots, punch-card ballots with hanging chads, and contested absentee and overseas ballots became common conversation for citizens across the country. Recounts and the possibility of new elections in selected precincts were among the remedies being pursued. The Florida Supreme Court ordered that a manual recount of selected precincts be undertaken, a ruling favorable to Gore. The uncertainty ended with a ruling by the United States Supreme Court released at 10:00 p.m., December 12, 2000. By a 7-2 vote, the Court held that the varying methods used among Florida counties to determine what was a proper vote violated the equal protection rights of voters. By a 5-4 vote, the Court found that the results that the state had already certified, declaring Bush as the winner, were

essentially final.

Gore conceded the next day. Campaigning for fellow Democrats in 2002, he would ask "do you remember where you were when they stopped counting the vote in 2000; do you remember how you felt?"⁶ It is most human that Gore, his ambitions cruelly crushed, would place the moment that the votes were no longer being counted into the same pantheon with a presidential assassination, or a terrorist attack on this country. It would not be surprising if most voters do not.

Both Al and Tipper Gore have been encouraged to run for office since 2000. She rejected the possibility of running in 2002 for the United States Senate seat held by Fred Thompson, who had announced his retirement. On December 15, 2002, Gore said that he would not challenge President Bush in the 2004 election. A year later he endorsed former Vermont Governor Howard Dean's candidacy. Gore said that even though there were other issues, it was Dean's being "the only major candidate who was right" about the war in Iraq that was the principal consideration.⁷ Ironically, four days later Saddam Hussein was captured in his "spider hole" in Iraq, an American success that at least temporarily altered the politics of zealous criticisms of the war.

For now, Al Gore is retired from elective politics. He teaches, is associated with an asset management firm, and campaigns actively for other Democrats.

Analysis of Qualifications

Children of famous people have extra motivations and extra challenges. Moving quickly out of his senatorial father's shadow was one of Al Gore, Jr.'s motivations. The younger Gore was a congressman by the age of

6 Noemie Emery, "Al Gore's Scarred Psyche," *Weekly Standard* (December 16, 2002).

7 "Tipper Gore will not seek Senate," *Washington Times* (March 18, 2002), at A9. Dan Balz, "Gore Stuns Many by Choosing Not to Run in '04," *Washington Post* (December 16, 2002), at A1. Jodi Wilgoren, "Iowa @ Harlem Rallies Set Scene for Gore's Endorsement," *New York Times* (December 10, 2003), at A20.

28, a senator by age 36, and vice president at age 44.

Gore throughout his career has proven his intelligence and his work ethic. He is not naturally gifted in the skills of a modern politician. He can appear out of place on stage. His overly choreographed debate performances against George W. Bush in 2000 were just some, but perhaps the most important, of the situations in which Gore tried to be something that he was not. He is naturally stiff. His attempts to be otherwise come across as artificial.

Gore can overreach. Along the way he has claimed to have been the creator of the internet, the discoverer of environmental problems at Love Canal, and the model for the Oliver character in Erich Segal's *Love Story*. Each of these claims had some truth in it. With each, Gore inflated his version beyond a reasonable facsimile of the truth. He can express himself with messianic zeal. This appeared most clearly in *Earth in the Balance*. The dangers we face are like the Holocaust or Armageddon. Good and evil are the choices, with his opponents representing evil. His success on a policy issue such as the environment or his victory in a contest such as the 2000 election, took on a significance that was strikingly self-absorbed. He was quoted as telling aides, "I'm not like George Bush. If he wins or loses, life goes on. I'll do anything to win."⁸ This is the quintessential example of the importance Gore placed on his own success.

Amateur psychoanalysis is the bane of modern public figures. With that caveat, what

has often been said about Gore is at least superficially persuasive, that he is one of the most noticeably insecure people to have risen to such a high level in politics. He does not seem comfortable with who he is or how he is performing, and is constantly trying to change. Gore frequently appeared to reinvent himself, alternating between the stiff and overly serious policy wonk and the overly aggressive debater, or acting out the part of the passionate husband on the stage of the national convention.

Some opponents used various peculiar Gore moments and personality quirks as a basis to label him a "head case."⁹ When the artificiality is removed, though, Al Gore is a serious, thoughtful, amazingly hard-working individual. Ambition drove him to conduct himself in ways that did not always serve him well.

Gore is unlikely to inspire, but he is likely to succeed with whatever task is at hand. Considering Gore as President brings to mind the statement allegedly made by movie producer Jack Warner when he heard that Ronald Reagan was considering running for governor of California in 1966. "Reagan for Governor?" Warner said. "No, Jimmy Stewart for Governor, Ronnie Reagan for best man."¹⁰ Gore does seem better suited for a supporting role. A senator, a Cabinet secretary, a person who can imaginatively, energetically, but more narrowly manage a particular part of government without having to be the leader of an entire people – that seems Gore's forte.

8 Bill Sammon, *At Any Cost* (Washington: Regnery, 2001), 92.

9 Richard Brookhiser, "Weird Al," *National Review* (November 22, 1999), at 32. The same magazine, no fan of Gore, also tried out "Apocalypse Gore" because of his views about looming environmental disaster (cover story, March 8, 1999), and used other unaffectionate descriptors.

10 Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment* (Free Press: New York, 2000), 174. There was a similarly rich comment made when another actor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, announced for governor in 2003. The former body-builder Republican is the husband of Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy's niece, Maria Shriver. Kennedy said, "Listen, Arnold is great. And I never argue with Arnold, particularly when he's holding me by my ankles upside down." Gayle Fee @ Laura Raposa, "Inside Track: Ted K won't back the Govern-ator," *Boston Herald* (June 26, 2003), at 18.

On the central issue of the early twenty-first century, America's role and methods in fighting terrorism, Al Gore has been an increasingly stinging critic of President Bush's policies. He has called the invasion of Iraq the worst foreign policy mistake in American history. He accused the President of using the war to exploit public fears for political gain. The passage of time will help judge the wisdom of the President's approach as compared to the validity of Gore's criticisms. It can be said now, though, that Gore's public statements that the President is not only wrong but is also unprincipled signify that the former vice president embraces fully the politics of challenging the integrity and motives of opponents, not just their policies.

Rating the potential of an also-ran should not rely on policies, since what a candidate says he would do may well not have been factual once in office. What is the right approach to terrorism, and what would a President Gore actually have done, cannot be reliable measures in this rating of presidential prospects. On balance, it appears that Gore would have been a solid, diligent, useful, but at times shrill and rancorous President. The doubts do not place him in the lower rankings of potential presidents. Yet they keep him from rising to the level of a great prospect for the highest office. An Al Gore Presidency likely would have been an average one.

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2000 VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE – DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Joe Lieberman

Full Name: Joseph Isadore Lieberman.

State Represented: Connecticut.

Birth: February 24, 1942, in Stamford, Connecticut.

Age on Inauguration Day (January 20, 2001): 58 years, 11 months.

Education: Stamford public schools; Yale University (1964 B.A.); Yale Law School (1967 J.D.).

Religion: Orthodox Jew, first to be named to a major party presidential ticket.

Ancestry: Lieberman's maternal grandparents were born in Austria, and Yiddish was their native language.

Occupation: Attorney.

Public Offices: Connecticut state senator (1971-1981), majority leader (1975-1981); candidate for Lieutenant Governor (1978), and for United States House of Representatives (1980); state attorney general (1983-1989); United State Senator (1989-); Democratic vice-presidential nominee (2000); candidate for 2004 Democratic presidential nomination.

Home: Stamford, Connecticut.

Personal Characteristics: Described as a "short man with the soft mouth and loosening jowls of a friendly basset hound. He has what must be one of the least compelling voices in the Senate, a whiny, crumbling textured, old-Jewish man voice." (Traub, "Mildly Ambitious.") He has blond hair that was graying by the time of his vice-presidential nomination. Discipline, patience, and serenity are his trademarks.

Father: Henry Lieberman (April 3, 1915-January 3, 1986). Drove a bakery truck, then owned a liquor store in Stamford, Connecticut.

Mother: Marcia Manger Lieberman (November 1, 1914-), daughter of Joe and Minnie Manger, both Austrian natives who emigrated in 1890 and 1912, respectively.

Siblings: Rietta (born 1945), married Gary Miller; she is a hospital social worker in Norman, Oklahoma. Ellen (born 1950), married Bertram Garskof; she is artistic director for a theater company in Bridgeport, Conn., while her husband is a playwright, radio producer, and actor, and also a professor of

psychology at Quinnipiac College.

First Wife: Elizabeth (Betty) Haas. Married in 1965, divorced 1981. She was working in Senator Abraham Ribicoff's office when Lieberman met her. She became a psychiatric social worker.

Children: Matthew (August 16, 1967-) teaches English in New Haven, Connecticut. Rebecca (February 25, 1969-) is a lawyer, and in 2000 had been working for the Children's Aid Society in New York.

Second Wife: Hadassah Freilich (March 28, 1948-). She was born in Prague. Her parents, Samuel Freilich and Ella Wieder, were both Nazi concentration camp survivors. Mr. Freilich was a lawyer and rabbi in Prague. Her family moved to Massachusetts in 1949. She married Lieberman on March 20, 1983, the second marriage for each of them. The name "Hadassah," meaning myrtle, is the Hebrew version of "Esther."

Children: Mrs. Lieberman had a child from her first marriage, Ethan Tucker (December 1, 1975-), who graduated from Harvard in 1997 and in 2000 was doing rabbinical and graduate work at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Ethan married his wife Ariela in 1999. Hana (March 15, 1988-).



The politics of vice presidential nominations often focus more on electoral calculations than on nominee qualifications. A balanced ticket geographically and even philosophically is frequently a party's goal. Other factors also can take precedence. At least once, the fact that the presidential nominee was viewed as having widely suspected character flaws led to the selection of someone who could offset that. In 1844, the Whig Party nominated Henry Clay for president. He was a man of great passions and great abilities. The rumors, probably not true at that stage of Clay's life, were that the passions included too much wine and too

many women. This caused the Whigs to add to the ticket the "Christian statesman," Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey. Frelinghuysen was a man of obvious public and private virtue. The ticket did not quite succeed.

In 2000, the morality burden for the Democrats was not their presidential nominee but their presidential incumbent. Among the means by which Vice President Al Gore could address the controversial legacy of President Bill Clinton was with his vice presidential selection. He chose the "conscience of the Senate," the openly and sincerely religious Senator Joseph Lieberman who had been the first prominent Democrat to state the obvious – Clinton's affair with a White House intern was appalling. That Lieberman's religion was the Jewish faith made the selection historic.

Joe Lieberman grew up in a middle class, ethnically diverse neighborhood in Stamford, Connecticut. His house until he was eight years old was a block from the railroad depot, with a junk yard on one side and a six-family walk-up on the other, where the local bookie lived. Joe's father was a World War II veteran who owned a package liquor store where the radio was always tuned to a classical station. He retired shortly after being robbed for the third time. The parents took their Jewish faith seriously and instilled that in their children. The Liebermans seemed to be an archetypical immigrant family, where the virtues of faith, patriotism, and self-help were lived.

Another virtue learned was respect. The Lieberman parents were staunch Democrats, but as their most famous son recalled years later, the successful Republicans of his early years, such as President Dwight Eisenhower and Connecticut Senator Prescott Bush, were considered in their family to be honorable men deserving of the respect even of opponents.

Lieberman's political campaigning started at least in high school. He was elected president of his ninth and tenth grade classes, sat out the

next year to prevent his classmates from getting tired of him, then won the presidency of his senior class. He matriculated at Yale University in 1960. The presidential election that fall ended happily for him, as he had been inspired by John F. Kennedy. Lieberman would later write that Kennedy's inaugural call to "ask what you can do for your country" became a life-long motivator. There was no student government at Yale, but there were alternative outlets for a person of a political bent. The *Yale Daily News* was the student-run newspaper. Through its articles and opinions, the staff could write on politics. He became chairman of the *News* in 1962, a position that helped gain him the attention of a former Yale newspaper editor, the conservative *National Review* editor William F. Buckley, Jr. That connection helped form the foundation for an odd collection of supporters when Lieberman ran for the Senate 25 years later.

In the summer of 1963, Lieberman interned in the Washington office of Connecticut Senator Abraham Ribicoff. Lieberman's long-time support of civil rights is exemplified by his participation in the 1963 March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when King gave the "I Have a Dream" speech.

Lieberman's fairness was tested in the fall of 1963, when a student group invited an opponent of civil rights to speak at Yale, Alabama Governor George Wallace. Lieberman wrote an editorial for the *News* defending the invitation and Wallace's right to appear and be heard. Lieberman journeyed to Mississippi that fall in order to help in a project to register black voters for a mock election. Since official registrations were largely being refused by state authorities, this was a prelude to a more intense effort in the summer of 1964 to force actual registrations.

Lieberman wrote a senior thesis on long-time Connecticut Democratic leader John Bailey. During Lieberman's Yale years, Bailey

Campaign Poster

was chairman both of the Democratic National Committee and of the state party. Lieberman spent hours interviewing Bailey, and called it his own private course on political science. Lieberman's thesis on Bailey was published in 1966 as *The Power Broker*. In the summer of 1964, Lieberman interned at the Democratic National Committee with Bailey and attended the party's national convention in Atlantic City.

Lieberman received his undergraduate degree in 1964 and continued at Yale Law School. No sooner had he completed the three years for his law degree than he announced his candidacy for the New Haven Board of Aldermen. He withdrew because of doubts that he met the residency requirement for office. Lieberman began to practice law with a firm in New Haven and was active in local politics. In 1968, Lieberman supported Robert Kennedy and, after Kennedy's assassination in early June, switched to working for Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy.

Thwarted in his 1967 campaign for municipal office, in 1970 the young lawyer determined to run for the state senate. The seat was held by the leader of the Connecticut senate, Ed Marcus, who initially sought the 1970 party nomination for the United States Senate. He made it clear that if his U.S. Senate bid failed, he would run for re-election. Lieberman did not defer. As Marcus pursued his federal ambitions, Lieberman pursued the state senate seat. The incumbent Democrat U.S. Senator, Thomas J. Dodd, had been censured by his colleagues in 1967 for official misconduct. Senator Dodd ran for reelection but was faced with strong opposition from the party leadership. Dodd withdrew as a Democrat and ran instead as an independent. An anti-war activist and minister, Joseph D. Duffey, bested Marcus to become the Democratic nominee. Marcus now shifted to seeking re-election to the state senate.

Lieberman had a well-organized campaign with many volunteers. Some Yale students assisted in door-to-door canvassing, including a politically ambitious student from Arkansas named Bill Clinton. The two would become friends and political allies. Lieberman also had the significant support of New Haven's Democratic mayor and of U.S. Senator Abe Ribicoff, both of whom had difficulties working with Marcus in the past. The challenger declared that he would be a "Strong New Voice for a Better New Haven." Lieberman won the Democratic primary by 240 votes, and the general election in November. He was on his way. In time he would engage in political battle with the person who won the 1970 U.S. Senate race, Republican Lowell Weicker.

To supplement his low pay as a senator, Lieberman became counsel to the New Haven Equal Opportunity Commission and an assistant dean at Yale. He would serve ten years in the senate, the last six as majority leader. Among his greatest interests was criminal justice. He said that the liberal theories he had gained at Yale had to yield to reality. If a liberal is a conservative who had not yet been mugged, Lieberman was at least burglarized – twice. Real people suffering real crime made him propose stiffer criminal statutes than his former ideology would have permitted.

In 1974 Lieberman was a significant policy adviser in the campaign of Ella Grasso for governor. She became that year the first woman elected governor of any state without having been preceded by her husband. At the next session Lieberman was elected senate majority leader.

Lieberman in one of his autobiographical works wrote openly about political ambition.

As the years passed in the state senate, I began to think about what my next political opportunity might be. In politics, you start with a commitment to public service and then try to find a good place to carry out that commitment. But there are far too many

variables for you to plot out a rigid career path. Naturally, you will have goals, but you also have to keep your options open about where you will be able to achieve those goals. I dreamed of being governor and, if I was lucky, ending up in the U.S. Senate someday.¹¹

One of the opportunities was his effort to be nominated as lieutenant governor in 1978, but he lost at the state party convention. He continued as senate majority leader. In 1980, another potential opportunity was a race for the United States House of Representatives. Lieberman became the Democratic nominee and had a 19 percent lead in polls three weeks before the November election. His GOP opponent, Larry DeNardis, whom Lieberman described as a moderate college professor, charged that Lieberman was a high-tax, profligate spending Democrat. With Ronald Reagan at the head of the ticket that year, there was a rising tide that raised many Republican boats. DeNardis reached victory, with 52 percent to Lieberman's 46 percent. Even though Lieberman "was considered a comer in state politics . . . , the reason for the result lies in the ethnic heritage that is so important in this area and the Republican leanings of so many Italian-American voters."¹²

Besides electoral defeat, Lieberman was undergoing marital crisis. He and his wife Betty Haas had careers that Lieberman would later describe as going in different directions. No one in his family had been divorced, and he saw it as a sign of failure. Divorce did come, in 1981, but the two remain more than civil. Betty Haas was asked in 2000 whether she had known her former husband to use drugs. She jokingly replied, "I tried to get him to try

marijuana, but the square just wouldn't."¹³

The just-defeated congressional candidate announced in December 1981 for state attorney general. He was elected to what he would call the best job that he ever had. During the campaign a mutual friend connected him with the woman who would soon become his second wife. His initial telephone call to her in New York City was nontraditional: "I'm running for attorney general, and because it is Easter Sunday, I have no political schedule. I'd love to meet you, but if I can't do it today, I won't be able to come to New York until after election day in November." Hadassah Freilich Turner, also recently divorced, was intrigued. They were married in 1983.

Lieberman as attorney general "took action against fake charities, crooked car dealers and gouging merchants."¹⁴ On November 7, 1984, he was one of two advocates before the United States Supreme Court defending a Connecticut statute that gave an absolute right for workers not to work on their Sabbath. A third attorney sought to sustain the Connecticut Supreme Court's striking down the statute. The U.S. Supreme Court, through Chief Justice Warren Burger, found the statute unconstitutional as constituting an establishment of religion.¹⁵

Lieberman was re-elected in a landslide in 1986. In 1988, after six years as attorney general, he decided to take on the daunting task of challenging three-term Senator Lowell Weicker. The incumbent was a Republican maverick, whose national fame arose from the 1974 Senate Watergate Committee on which Weicker had proved to be one of President Nixon's harshest and earliest Republican

11 Joseph I. Lieberman, *In Praise of Public Life* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), 58.

12 Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa, *The Almanac of American Politics 1982* (Washington: Barone @ Co., 1981), 190.

13 Joe and Hadassah Lieberman, *An Amazing Adventure* (New York: Simon @ Schuster, 2003), 10.

14 Stephen Singular, *Joe Lieberman: The Historic Choice* (New York: Kensington, 2000), 35, quoting *Almanac of American Politics* (2000).

15 *Estate of Thornton v. Caldor, Inc.*, 472 U.S. 703 (1985).

critics. This independence made him popular across party lines, but he had often been elected by quite narrow margins. Lieberman was encouraged by Democratic leaders, including Massachusetts Senator (and future rival for the 2004 presidential nomination) John Kerry, who was chairman of the Democrats' senatorial campaign committee.

Lieberman trailed badly in polling against Weicker until just weeks before the election. The Democrat had climbed from a 25 percent deficit in the polls taken when he was first matched in polling against Weicker in late 1987, to 16 percent behind early in the fall of 1988, to a tie in a poll released in mid-October 1988. A television ad that began running in October is remembered as a key factor. It used a cartoon of Weicker as a hibernating bear, stirring and growling only as elections approached. This put a visual image to what many voters may already have believed, that the incumbent was self-satisfied and self-absorbed.¹⁶

Of some significance in Lieberman's climb was the growing conservative Republican opposition to Weicker. It was led in part by William F. Buckley, Jr. of the *National Review*. Buckley and other conservatives had long despaired about Weicker, whose liberal votes made him their least favorite Republican. The GOP had lost its Senate majority in 1986 and did not appear likely to regain it in 1988. Therefore Weicker's importance in the control of the Senate appeared minimal. Lieberman won the race by a 10,000-vote margin, which was less than one percent of the votes cast. It was enough.

During the campaign, Lieberman's compliance with orthodox Jewish practices became public in a dramatic way. Jewish observance of Sabbath is to withdraw from usual activities from sundown on Friday until sundown on

Saturday. It is a day in which the observant Jew is insulated from the world in order to contemplate and pray but not to work. The Democratic state convention was during daylight hours on a Saturday. Lieberman did not attend, but his prerecorded convention speech did. Comparisons to Eric Liddell, the Scottish Christian portrayed in the 1981 movie *Chariots of Fire*, were obvious. Liddell was an Olympic runner, but his best event was held on a Sunday at the 1924 Paris Olympics. He refused to run, entreaties from the Prince of Wales notwithstanding. He never compromised, but an alternative event was found, which he won.

Lieberman's religious observances are from all indications sincere, deeply felt, and by the standards of the modern culture, quite strict. Lieberman will not drive or be driven during the Sabbath, and will instead walk. He will even walk the four miles between home and the Senate. But on important Saturday votes, rare as they are, he will not abstain from attending but will appear and cast his vote. Lieberman believes that he should, like doctors, ignore strict rules of observance when necessary for the community's health and safety. In his first 11 years as a senator, he attended Saturday crisis meetings at the White House, and Senate sessions perhaps 30 times. During his first Saturday Senate session in 1989, fellow Senator Al Gore asked about his plans. Lieberman said that he would clean up in the Senate gym and sleep on a cot in his office. Instead, Gore took him to his parents' rooms in the Methodist Apartments across the street from the Capitol.

Even if Liddell as portrayed in the movie is too high a standard, Senator Lieberman does strive mightily and exceptionally to practice his religion. Few are the politicians or lay people of any faith who work as hard as Lieberman to be 24/6 people in a 24/7 culture.¹⁷

¹⁶ Singular, *Joe Lieberman*, at 42-43.

¹⁷ John McCormick, "Joe Lieberman: A 24/6 Guy," *Chicago Tribune* (November 28, 2003), Section 2, p. 1.

In the Senate, Lieberman joined the moderate Democratic Leadership Council, formed in 1985 as an alternative to Democrats who appeared too liberal domestically and too weak and isolationist in international affairs. Lieberman said that the DLC was formed from a "realization of how far [the Democratic Party] had strayed from the heart of America"; he felt a new direction was needed from the "old ideas that no longer worked." Bill Clinton had chaired the DLC prior to his 1992 election, and Al Gore had been a founding member. Lieberman would become chairman as well. In his 1999 book, Lieberman declared that his own party's single issue constituencies as well as the Republican ones have distorted the political process and made it more confrontational.

Lieberman in his first two terms in the Senate was more conservative than a majority of his party colleagues. The first-year senator was one of only six Democrats to support the Republican plan to cut the capital gains tax rate. He was one of only ten Democratic senators to support the first President Bush in the resolution authorizing the use of force to evict Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in 1991. He also supported the President's decision to send forces to topple Manuel Noriega of Panama. On the other hand, Lieberman opposed the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court after initially supporting him. The allegations raised by a former Thomas staffer, Anita Hill, changed Lieberman's mind. He thought President Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding gays in the military was not sufficiently supportive of the interests of homosexual soldiers.

In 1994 Lieberman won re-election with 67 percent of the vote over Dr. Jerry Labriola, a Republican state senator. It was a strongly Republican year. The GOP won its first

majorities in both houses of Congress since 1952, and in 1996 would secure majorities in consecutive elections for the first time since 1928. Lieberman easily won in a year for historic Democratic defeats.

When California considered a popular initiative in 1995 to ban affirmative action, Lieberman declared that "if you discriminate in favor of one group on the basis of race, you thereby discriminate against another group on the basis of race." He appeared shocked by the tempest this caused among civil rights groups. Lieberman said this was "the first time in my public life that I was not on the civil rights side." In 1998, Lieberman supported limited air strikes against Iraq. The senator said that Iraq's failure to permit United Nations inspectors to perform their job required what he called decisive action. He said "we've got to draw a line and send a larger message to other countries around the world that we're not going to tolerate rogue nations developing chemical and biological weapons capacity with which they can damage or blackmail a lot of the rest of the world."¹⁸

It was not the everyday senatorial concerns of war, peace, and prosperity that gave Lieberman national prominence. Instead, controversies surrounding the Democratic president, Bill Clinton, brought him attention. When the president had a sexual tryst with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, and then arguably lied about it under oath in a deposition, many Democrats were either silent or supportive. "It is just about sex," defenders stated. Even at that level, Lieberman lamented that the affair "is the most vivid example of the virus of lost standards being passed back and forth among the entertainment culture, the news media, and government, making each more ill."¹⁹

¹⁸ Singular, *Lieberman*, at 55-56.

¹⁹ Lieberman, *In Praise of Public Life*, at 151.

Lieberman had been assisted in his first political race, one for the state senate in 1970, by the youthful Yale student Clinton. Thus it was from a long friendship that Lieberman agonized and then finally decided to speak about how this conduct had fallen woefully short. On September 3, 1998, Lieberman from the floor of the Senate condemned the president. He said that Clinton's lying about the relationship made him disappointed and angry. He felt a great sense of loss to the country from the damage that had been inflicted on "the proud legacy of his presidency," for which an accounting was needed. The senator said that we are all sinners, but that Clinton's office made it necessary for him to be held to a higher standard. In the immediate aftermath of The Speech, however, Lieberman also said that he felt Clinton had the morality and integrity to be president. When the Senate voted on the impeachment charges, Lieberman voted to acquit.

President Clinton would be able to finish his term after all. By the spring of 2000, Al Gore became his party's certain choice to succeed him. For a running mate, he considered House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt, and Senators Evan Bayh of Indiana, John Edwards of North Carolina, Bob Graham of Florida, Tom Harkin of Iowa, and John Kerry of Massachusetts. On the day that Lieberman had been told that the choice would become known, a reporter informed his press secretary that it would be Senator Edwards. It was fairly late in the day and nothing official had been stated by the Gore campaign. Lieberman woke up the next day, flipped on the television, and heard a homestate television reporter state that "our very own Senator Lieberman" would be Gore's running mate. And so he was.

The 2000 campaign was closely fought and some of the ballots endlessly counted. In the

ensuing years, the outcome would be as bitterly debated as any in history. What is beyond debate is that Lieberman gained a favorable national reputation, broke one more barrier of participation by the various components of our diverse society, and appeared thoughtful, moderate, and virtuous. In his book on the 2000 campaign, he is almost always generous to his Republican opponents. He said that he was the "hawk" in the post-election strategy sessions about litigation: give no quarter, avoid no avenue of possible litigation, he counseled. On Friday, December 8, when a majority on the Florida Supreme Court ordered a recount in the Democrats' favored precincts, victory seemed thrillingly close. The Gores and Liebermans met for a celebratory gathering at the Vice President's house. When they finished, the Jewish Sabbath had begun. The happy foursome ended their evening together by walking down Wisconsin Avenue the two miles back to the Liebermans' home, Secret Service vehicles discreetly shadowing them.

Four days later when the United States Supreme Court settled the exhausting matter, Lieberman felt the extreme swing in emotion to agonizing defeat. He agreed with dissenting Justice John Paul Stevens that the Court's majority would cause cynicism about the judicial function:

Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the Nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law.²⁰

Reactions to *Bush v. Gore* are a litmus test of political views. Informed analyses of the decision of course arise from more than whether the outcome favored or blocked the

20 Joe and Hadassah Lieberman, *Amazing Adventure*, at 261, quoting *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98, 123, 128-29 (2000) (Stevens, J., dissenting).

commentator's preferred presidential candidate. Still, like only a very few other Supreme Court decisions in history, *Bush v. Gore* stirred the passions more than the intellects. Perhaps the invested emotional capital that built up over the 35 days after the election became too large for those who lost their investment, and too precious to those who saw it rewarded, for entirely dispassionate commentary.

Senator Lieberman endured criticism for simultaneously running for re-election to the Senate in 2000, but state law allowed the dual races. Senator Lieberman became the third vice presidential nominee to be re-elected to the Senate at the same election. Only Lyndon Johnson in 1960 won both races; Lloyd Bentsen in 1988 and Lieberman both lost the vice presidency but were returned to the Senate. Lieberman beat Waterbury Republican Mayor Phil Giordano with 64 percent of the vote.

Early in 2001 Senator Lieberman joined Herbert Kohl of Wisconsin and Hillary Clinton of New York in introducing the Media Marketing Accountability Act. It provided that the marketing of violent or sexual material to children would be a form of deceptive advertising. It was the continuation of a cause that Lieberman and Al Gore had both supported in previous years, namely, condemning the coarseness and depravity of many aspects of commercial entertainment.

Lieberman was a leader in 2002 in promoting the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. He also supported the resolution authorizing President Bush to use force against Saddam Hussein. Lieberman publicly stated on several occasions in 2001-2002 that he would not run for his party's presidential nomination in 2004 if his benefactor, Al Gore, decided to make his own race. Gore took himself out of contention in December 2002. Within a month, on January 13, 2003, Lieberman announced that he was a

candidate. He said that he would be a "different kind of Democrat," one who sought to eschew excessive partisanship.

When he announced, Lieberman's name identification and favorable impression left from the 2000 election made him the frontrunner in polling. By the end of 2003, though, he was lagging behind. He seemed unable and unwilling to tap into the anger and even hatred expressed by many Democrats for the policies and personality of President Bush.

On such matters as the filibuster of judicial nominees, raised and pursued by Senate Democrats as Lieberman and others campaigned for the Democratic nomination, the Connecticut senator has joined with his almost unanimous party in support. On other issues, he has remained true to his moderate instincts. At a debate held on the day that Lieberman's 2000 teammate, Al Gore, endorsed another contender, former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, he proved himself a lone voice in a vigorously anti-war party. He referred to Saddam Hussein as "a homicidal dictator, [who] killed hundreds of thousands of his people, invaded two of his neighbors, used chemical weapons, supported terrorism and suppressed the rights of his people. He was a danger to us, a ticking time bomb. I'm glad that he is gone."

Lieberman indicated that Al Gore had not called him after deciding to endorse Dean, and that the decision caught him "completely off guard." The senator accused Gore of leading the Party back to when it had "too often been in the political wilderness" by "supporting a candidate who is so fundamentally opposed to the basic transformation that Bill Clinton brought to the Democratic Party in 1992." He described that transformation as one that "reassured people we were strong on defense, we were fiscally responsible, we cared about values, we were interested in cutting taxes for the middle class and working with business to

create jobs.”²¹ The senator appeared genuinely concerned that the Democratic Party was shifting to a direction that would only lead to failure.

Analysis of Qualifications

Joe Lieberman has been called the Republicans’ favorite Democrat. When he was chosen for vice president in 2000, prominent Republican and former Cabinet secretary Bill Bennett stated that Lieberman was “a man of principle, intelligence, and civility.” He is said to occupy the “conservative wing of his party on issues such as defense spending, tax cuts, school vouchers and, notoriously, the entertainment industry.”²² His favor with both parties is in part the result of his style. Many modern candidates display the excessive partisanship, harsh language, and assumption of opponents’ iniquity that occurs in popular if rarely profound cross-fire television political commentary. Not Lieberman.

One author said that Lieberman is a “stern moralist with a gooey center.”²³ The senator sees the best in everyone, friend and opponent. Any criticism is likely to be mixed with praise, as demonstrated in his 1998 speech against Clinton; the President of course was both friend and party leader. Lieberman indicated philosophical agreement with limitations on affirmative action in 1995, but after being placed on the national ticket in 2000, he endorsed the more traditional party view. He was, of course, only number two on the ticket. Yet the idea has been expressed that he is such a “nice fellow” that he cannot make and stick with a tough and controversial decision.

It is difficult to criticize the rare politician

in the twenty-first century who is a centrist, is cerebral, is a compromiser who seeks to blend divergent concerns. With those qualities, though, also needs to come some basic conviction. What many saw as Lieberman’s great triumph when he gave his 1998 speech of despair about President Clinton’s actions, might also be seen as a symbol of his most worrisome weakness. Would he have the fortitude to lead when the difficult, not fully compromisable decisions had to be made?

Senator and Mrs. Lieberman wrote a joint book on the vice presidential campaign. It chronicles their balancing of faith, marriage, children and campaigning. Balance is one of the best words to describe Senator Lieberman. This orthodox Jewish politician may have adopted Ben Franklin’s venerable adage – “all things in moderation.” In an age of excess, Lieberman is consistently mild. For him, extremism in the defense of any issue is a vice; moderation in the pursuit of a worthy goal is a virtue. That may explain why he was chosen by Al Gore in 2000. It is also part of the reason that he likely will not be nominated for President in 2004.

On balance, Joe Lieberman would have been a good but not likely a great president.

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