



NEWS FROM

H Y P E R I O N

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**NEW BOOK GOES BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE 1992 VOTE -- THE MOST  
SURPRISING AND UNPREDICTABLE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN  
RECENT HISTORY**

**Award-winning media and political correspondent Tom Rosenstiel takes a new  
approach in examining the complex connections between politics and journalism**

"To dismiss this absorbing book as a post-facto account of the '92 campaign would be wrongheaded. Nor does a short description of the premise do it justice. Rosenstiel, media and politics correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, charted the campaign coverage of a single network (ABC) for an entire year. Through *World News*, Rosenstiel paints a group portrait of networks, newspapers, politicians and voters struggling with the profound changes of the past few years. With the incursions into political coverage by such television shows as *Larry King Live* and *Phil Donahue* and by tabloids such as the *Star* (witness Gennifer Flowers), the national press had to re-evaluate its sense of what the voters need to know. Most importantly, with more people getting their headlines from local media, CNN and C-Span, the mainstream national broadcast and print media increasingly saw their function as analyzing, rather than simply reporting the news. If this too often put correspondents in the role of newsmakers, it also made them savvier, even cynical, interpreters of the political manipulation that other less-seasoned media did not always recognize. The good news is: no one is really to blame. The bad news is: no one is really to blame. Rosenstiel offers a few suggestions, but his greatest success is in stripping off layers of spin-doctoring, polling, sound-biting, photo-oping and advertising to let readers determine for themselves the state of the union between press and politics."

-- *Publishers Weekly* (Starred Review)

"Starting from the premise that it's impossible to understand US politics without a grasp of domestic TV, Rosenstiel (a media reporter for *The Los Angeles Times*) turns the tables on ABC's minions, offering an up-close-and-personal take on how they conducted themselves and met their putative responsibilities during a lengthy campaign that started well before the primaries and was far from over on election eve... An absorbing retrospective that raises as many questions as it answers."

-- *Kirkus Reviews*

The 1992 Presidential campaign took us all by surprise. Almost from the very beginning -- and despite promises to provide in-depth coverage and forego prearranged photo-opportunities -- the networks faced criticism that they were not delivering the objective information voters needed to make an informed decision. As the election continued, it became clear that the campaign was being increasingly conducted on the "talk-show" circuit. Massive budget cutbacks at the networks, and an acknowledgment on the part of the candidates that they could reach voters through local news programs and pop-culture "infotainment" outlets -- "Arsenio Hall," "Larry King Live," "Donahue," and MTV -- helped candidates avoid the challenge of an informed, critical national press corps.

-- Over --

Will broadcast journalism ever again be committed to covering a campaign properly? Are the pop-culture venues and the latest satellite technology democratizing politics but lowering journalistic standards? Does the press' cynicism about the public and politics threaten to destroy the mainstream media? In **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: How Television and the Presidential Candidates Changed American Politics, 1992** (Hyperion; July 2, 1993; \$24.95), award-winning media critic and *Los Angeles Times* political correspondent Tom Rosenstiel answers these and many others questions with a first-hand, behind-the-scenes view of the 1992 campaign, from inside a news organization.

For more than a year -- from November 1991 until after the elections -- Rosenstiel received unlimited access to every facet of ABC's network television election coverage. He traveled with correspondents and producers as they followed the candidates; he watched as ABC's nightly newscast was assembled by the senior producers and editors; he had access to budget meetings and internal memos, and saw the struggle over personnel and money. In short, he was granted the opportunity to watch what most can only speculate about: the process by which the press makes its decisions. Now, Rosenstiel offers a unique view of how the media shaped the presidential race from start to finish and why politicians have so much control over the media -- even as the public decries the power of the press.

Here are just some of the highpoints and revelations chronicled in **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS:**

- \* The Clinton campaign's highly successful top secret plan to manipulate the press into discrediting the Bush campaign's television advertisements.
- \* Never before revealed details on a number of Perot outbursts including one at a "get-acquainted" luncheon with top ABC News executives and anchorman Peter Jennings, during which Perot accused the assembled executives of hounding him with unnecessary and repeated questions.
- \* Incidents which led "World News Tonight" anchorman Peter Jennings to suspect that Perot had attempted to infiltrate ABC with a "spy."
- \* Details of the anti-media operation run by the Clinton campaign in Arkansas which left many reporters convinced they were being followed, their phones tapped, and their messages intercepted, and the attempts by *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* reporters to run a "sting" operation -- by staging a phony exchange of documents -- to catch the Clinton campaign spying on them.
- \* The behind-the-scenes story of President Bush's blow-up at Peter Jennings during a sit down interview at the Republican convention.
- \* Details of an analysis conducted by Bush aides which suggested the president could not win re-election by "destroying" Clinton, and their decision to attempt to do so anyway because the only approach that could win -- making people like Bush more -- proved impossible.
- \* Never before released details of the incredible disarray, acrimony, and infighting within the Bush campaign which continued throughout the primary season right up to the elections.
- \* A look at some of the negative advertisements that never ran on television -- including those by the Bush campaign which showed pictures of the names on the Vietnam Veteran's memorial in Washington, D. C. and speculated as to which soldier died because Clinton refused to serve.

\* An analysis of various media polls which suggests they were highly inaccurate, even fraudulent in some cases, and that the supposed "narrowing" of the race between Bush and Clinton as election day approached was mostly a myth.

\* An inside look at how news organizations chose to cover -- and candidates tried to control -- the various election-year "scandal" stories including the Gennifer Flowers "affair," the Jerry Brown "drug-party," the Perot "death threats" story, and the Clinton "draft-dodging" issue.

One of the biggest problems the three major networks faced last year was a lack of funds. In prior elections they had each spent an average of \$20 to \$30 million for up-to-the-minute coverage. In sharp contrast, the 1992 elections saw massive cutbacks on network expenditures. ABC, for example, no longer assigned a correspondent, crew and producer to each candidate; NBC only had cameras with the candidates every fourth day -- just enough to keep their pool privileges; and until H. Ross Perot came on the scene, CBS had seemingly abandoned covering the campaign altogether. These cutbacks opened the door for campaign managers to make use of programs generally reserved for celebrity interviews and sensationalistic tabloid oriented stories. As Rosenstiel points out in **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**, the traditional press has not become irrelevant, but their sins are also greater than they recognize.

From the primaries to the conventions; from the debates, exit polls and advertising strategies to the election night itself, Rosenstiel presents a comprehensive look at the full course of the 1992 Presidential campaign from the other side of the camera.

*"No one can understand American politics without understanding American television first. For all their skill and knowledge, most political writers do not know the medium and too many continue to dismiss it as below their concern."*

#### About the Author

Tom Rosenstiel is a ten year veteran media reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* and was one of the first to cover politics exclusively from a "media coverage" standpoint. Winner of the 1991 Lowell Mellett Award for outstanding media criticism, he is the only national correspondent in the daily press with a specialty in media and politics and now covers both from Washington, D. C.

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**STRANGE BEDFELLOWS:**  
**How Television and the Presidential Candidates**  
**Changed American Politics, 1992**

by Tom Rosenstiel  
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