THE MAKING OF THE GOVERNOR 1970

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ABSTRACT

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By

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The Michigan gubernatorial election of 1970 was analyzed in terms of the complex relationships between the candidates--Governor William G. Milliken and State Senator Sander Levin--and the news media. The study considered these major questions: (1) To what extent might an incumbent use his public office to further his tenure? (2) What competition factors exist in gubernatorial press conferences, broadcast versus print media reporters? (3) Does publicity given public opinion poll results introduce a distracting or helpful factor in political contests?

Private interviews were a major resource for the study. Much of this information, mostly unpublished, indicates that Levin was closer to victory than generally conceded. Although Milliken won by a narrow margin, principals involved in the campaign suggest Levin would not have lost had he been able to communicate his views more effectively on Milliken's management of state fiscal affairs.

Content analysis of gubernatorial press conferences indicates that Milliken is generally successful in controlling the flow of discussion, not entirely by design. The conduct of such press conferences has changed enormously, with broadcast media reporters now asking 65 per cent of the questions. The appearance of these newsmen, many new to government reporting, combined with technical considerations print reporters do not face, has resulted in an apparent decline in sustained, penetrating discussion of public issues at press conferences.

During what seemed to many newsmen a lackluster campaign, the publication of opinion polls generated comment, but apparently of a superficial nature. To some it appeared the polling data, while accurate, suffered in interpretation.

The study disclosed that the two candidates for governor were surprisingly evenly matched in terms of opinion poll standing and campaign expenditures. The data suggests that critical differences may have developed from an incumbent's ability to command attention because of the office he holds. The data also indicates that in a contest where spending on television advertising is approximately equal, the balance may be tipped by turning abruptly to another advertising channel. In this case, Milliken apparently achieved success from a well-timed newspaper Sunday supplement promoting his candidacy.

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

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INTRODUCTION

The Michigan gubernatorial campaign of 1970 offered an unusual opportunity to analyze the effects of the news media on a major political contest, and, in turn, the influence of the candidates upon the news media. By candidates is meant the two major party contenders, Governor William G. Milliken, the Republican incumbent, and State Senator Sander Levin, his Democratic opponent.

In many respects the campaign was an evenly-matched contest, with each candidate presenting to the voters similar qualifications in political experience. At the same time each candidate fit into a traditional role as standard-bearer for his party. Milliken, although a moderate, is a successful businessman and hews closely to accepted Republican economic and social philosophies. Senator Levin represented the liberal-labor coalition for which the Democratic party is so well known in Michigan. The two men had approximately equal financial resources available to them.

How each chose to maximize his assets and probe for the weak points of his opponent with the communicative tools at hand is the subject of this study.

An incumbent's approach is different than a challenger's. Milliken sought to capitalize on his past

accomplishments and assert claims to future actions if elected. Levin, of course, had to discredit his opponent's administration and advocate his own. This is the classical political battle between the "ins" and the "outs."

The news media is a part of the election process. Its obligation is to describe the political contest, the candidates and their views. At another level, the news media editorially endorses candidates, not necessarily in harmony with the objective or even opinionated material it also offers. In this study the news media is referred to in its broadest forms, newspapers large and small, television and radio stations. News organizations most frequently mentioned represent the metropolitan Detroit area, wherein reside approximately half the state's 7,800,000 population. But news organizations represented in Lansing, at the state capitol, are also studied because of their proximity to state government.

It is not the purpose of this study to emphasize, or deny, the importance of the news media in influencing public affairs or the outcome of elections. The net effect of this informational activity is beyond the scope of this study. While the study is basically concerned with the interaction of candidates and the news media, of necessity there must be reference to the advertising media. Large sums were spent during the campaign on this controlled

form of communication, and indeed, one must inquire whether merchandising of political candidates has more meaning in an election than news reportage.

The study concentrates on the period between the primary election on August 6, 1970, and the general election of November 3, 1970. Research material is drawn from many sources, including the writer's observations as state capitol bureau correspondent for the Detroit News, and interviews with other newsmen and political figures. News reports and editorials in the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press, largest circulation newspapers in Michigan and various newspapers of regional circulation in Michigan, were also used in the study.[1]

The writer's observations may, in some instances, seem subjective. The nature of the study does not readily lend itself to scientific precision. And it is difficult to adequately tell the whole story of a political campaign even within the length of such a study as this. The writer reminds the reader that the goal is to describe the role of the news media in an election. The process will often be viewed through the eyes of direct participants and observers,

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[1]Ayer Directory of Newspapers, Magazines and Trade Publications. (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Son, 1970). September, 1970. Audit Bureau of Circulation statement lists Detroit News with daily circulation of 609,213, and the Free Press with a daily circulation of 562,005.

whose view is narrow or restricted. Within this framework, however, certain key developments of a political campaign unfold and the democratic process may be viewed at its sensitive points.

CHAPTER I

WATCHING AND WAITING

That Governor William G. Milliken was titular head of the Republican Party in Michigan in 1970 there is no doubt. Whether he in fact was the political leader was a question that bedeviled many Republicans as well as Democrats. The reason was that Milliken did not come to his office through direct means, but succeeded to the position when it was left by his predecessor, George Romney.

The two had been running mates in 1964, when Milliken, a state Senator, fought hard for the nomination as lieutenant governor. Although Milliken publicly prefers to think of his union with Romney as a sharing of power, more often than not it was a one-man show--Romney's. Milliken was eclipsed by Romney, whose dominant personality and political ambitions permitted little latitude to share authority with anyone else. They distrusted each other, but over the years an accommodation was reached.[1]

During 1968 Romney had been preoccupied with seeking the Republican presidential nomination. That failing,

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[1]Dan Angel, William G. Milliken: A Touch of Steel, (Warren, Mich.: Public Affairs Press, 1970) pp. 77-90.

he mended his fences with President-elect Richard M. Nixon, and it came as no surprise when in January, 1969, Romney resigned as governor of Michigan to become Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Nixon cabinet. Thus, Milliken, the lieutenant governor, and leading male member of a Traverse City department store-owning family, became governor for the two years remaining of Romney's unexpired term. Although he had attracted little of the limelight during the Romney years, he was not a political novice and was not without experience. He had served two terms in the state senate, from 1961 through 1964, representing fifteen counties on the west side of the state. He was active in the effort by moderate Republicans to gain control of the GOP caucus in the chamber, and later, as lieutenant governor, had filled Romney's chair and handled the routine flow of official business while his boss was out of the state.

Thus it was a foregone certainty that Milliken would receive his party's support as he sought a term as Governor in his own right in the 1970 election campaign. Filling the rest of the ticket commanded the party's attention. The only other candidate to be selected during the primary election on August 6 was someone to oppose entrenched senior United State Senator from Michigan, Philip A. Hart, a Democrat. The other candidates on the Republican slate would be selected following the primary at a state convention.

A series of so-called "consensus" meetings were held at Milliken's insistence to focus on a Republican challenger to Hart who could command a united partisan front. Quickly it became apparent that the name Romney had not been retired from Michigan politics, that Secretary Romney's wife Lenore wanted the chance to oppose Hart.

The bitterness that prevailed at these "consensus" meetings, the indications that Governor Milliken was being urged by Secretary Romney to advance his wife's name, could be the subject of another study. Governor Milliken insisted to news reporters the selection of Lenore Romney was a decision freely made by party officials. His personal views did not surface until long after the elections were over. "Lenore Romney was a good candidate to face Senator Hart. We expected he could not be beaten, but she ran a good race."[1] Unsuitable alternates, at least to Milliken, were Representative Donald W. Riegle, Jr. of Flint, representing the Seventh Congressional District,

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[1]Gov. Milliken refrained from airing these views during the campaign, and managed to conceal his own distaste for U.S. Rep. Riegle, and his still-strained relations with George Romney, who had worried constantly over his wife's chances of election. Milliken recalled the stresses and strains of the 1970 election campaign in February, 1971, to a group of news reporters in his office at an informal meeting, at which this writer was present.

and arch-conservative State Senator Robert J. Huber, of Troy. Despite strong connotations that he was taking orders from his old boss, Governor Milliken in fact saw Lenore Romney's candidacy as the "best under the circumstances."[1]

Still, Senator Huber sought to make an issue of Mrs. Romney's selection and opposed her in the primary for the Republican nomination. He ran a surprisingly close race and lost, that putting an end to his political career since he could not seek reelection to the legislature. The Republicans completed their slate at the party convention August 29, at Cobo Hall in Detroit. As his running mate Governor Milliken some weeks earlier had said he preferred James H. Brickley, a forty-two year old former Detroit city councilman who was United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, as lieutenant governor. For secretary of state the convention picked Emil S. Lockwood, majority leader of the state senate, and for attorney general William S. Farr, Jr., a Grand Rapids attorney.

Outside of threats from Huber sympathizers who said they would look elsewhere for a conservative harbor if the Michigan Republican party couldn't provide one, the convention was uneventful. Milliken gave the keynote

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[1] Ibid.

speech rallying the party onward to victory in November. He noted with much satisfaction that Michigan Democrats the previous weekend had completed their slate and squabbled among themselves over the party platform, dividing on a draft amnestly plank related to the Vietnam war.[1]

Vietnam was the one intrusion in a show of unity the Democrats had staged in Grand Rapids at their state convention.

While top Democratic officials were busy elsewhere, planning strategy or socializing, rank-and-file delegates that Saturday night, August 22, were debating on the floor of the Grand Rapids Civic Center the various resolutions to become party platform. Such activity at any convention is routine and an exercise in parliamentary procedure, something to keep the delegates occupied. On this occasion, however, a liberal element of the party, calling itself the New Democratic Coalition, saw an opportunity to express its viewpoint and discomfit party leaders at the same time.[2]

Coalition members pushed hard for resolutions calling for amnesty for draft evaders and reparations by the United States to rebuild North and South Vietnam. This was a minority report designed to replace the supposedly

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[1] Detroit News, Aug. 30, 1970.

[2] Detroit News, Aug. 24.

official party position that was a fairly tame recommendation for a troop withdrawal timetable in Vietnam. In effect, the tactics of the New Democratic Coalition repudiated Senator Hart, whose views on troop withdrawal were well known, and left the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, State Senator Sander Levin, with a far-left platform plank to explain to Michigan voters. "We're just trying to keep the pressure on them--and make sure Hart doesn't slip to the right on this issue," explained Al Fishman, a New Democratic Coalition spokesman from Detroit.[1] As word of what had happened reached convention headquarters across the street in the Pantlind Hotel, Senator Levin and others realized something had upset the orderly process of the convention.

Robert L. Pisor, Detroit News politics writer, summed up the situation this way:

> Michigan Democrats left their state convention in Grand Rapids Sunday in the belief they had found a springboard to victory in the 1970 elections. They may, in fact, have walked a plank to defeat. By adoption of a platform plank that calls for amnesty for war protestors--the wording is such it could include either draft dodgers or arrested peace marchers--the Democrats introduced the kind of sour note that can cripple a promising campaign.[2]

At a press conference at the close of the convention, Sunday, August 23, Senator Levin and other chief

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Detroit News, Aug. 27.

Democratic candidates repudiated the controversial plank.[1] Senator Levin admitted he had been away from the convention floor when the amnesty matter had come up, and said that it did not reflect his thinking. What worried Levin was not a resolution drafted by a state political party, which could not have much impact on a matter of national foreign policy; but rather the practical realization passage of such a controversial resolution was a blemish on his leadership of the party. The Republicans were quick to see the same point, and the day had not ended before Mrs. Romney issued a press release condeming the Democrats for their platform gyrations.

> I fail to understand [she said] why those who dodged the draft should receive privileged treatment while our dead, wounded and those held prisoner are ignored.[2]

What she and Governor Milliken and other Republican candidates gleefully pointed out in the ensuing days was that if Democratic leaders could not control their own party, they were not leaders at all.

Yet for the charges and countercharges, the opening days of the 1970 campaign were concerned with issues incidental to state affairs. American diplomacy in faroff Indochina has little to do with being governor of Michigan, and who represents the state in the United State Senate,

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Aug. 24.

[2] Ibid.

while a political plus, likewise has little to do with the day-to-day considerations of a governor. Later events proved these opening-gun issues were just that; they soon faded away. What remained, however, was the question of leadership as reflected in the state convention results. As this study will show, leadership was one of the paramount considerations of the campaign, but was clumsily handled by the two gubernatorial candidates and the press.

Senator Levin, much like Governor Milliken, had in the past often demonstrated his leadership qualities out of the public eye. Where Governor Milliken came to exercise responsibility as executive of the Milliken family's department store in Traverse City, and later was eclipsed by the dynamic George Romney, Levin also had to struggle for recognition. He is one of the younger members of a prominant Jewish legal family. He is the nephew of Theodore Levin of Detroit, a judge of a federal appeals court, a fact he seldom mentions. Senator Levin first became politically active in Oakland County, and was Oakland County Democratic chairman from 1962 to 1964. During 1964 he successfully ran for his first term in the state senate. During his first year there he was voted most effective freshman senator by the capitol press corps in Lansing.

After the trouncing Michigan Democrats had received in 1966 from George Romney, who had defeated Zolton Ferency, the mercurial state Democratic chairman, Senator Levin was

named to succeed Ferency, who was ousted from his post by party officials. Levin continued in the state senate and fulfilled his duties as party chairman at the same time. Although he may occasionally make headlines, a state political chairman is often a colorless person, more involved in organizational matters than public policy. Levin displayed the qualities that made him a gubernatorial candidate during this period as party chairman, until he surrendered the party post several months before the election of 1970. A liberal-labor coalition has traditionally been the foundation of the Democratic party in Michigan. The Ferency campaign against Romney, and Ferency's subsequent disagreement with the policies of the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson had shattered this alliance. Levin's task was to rebuild the party. In recalling his unceasing labors, Levin said,

> We had a station wagon then, and I would pack in my wife Vicki and the kids and off we would go on weekends to visit party officials around the state. If we were near Traverse City we would stop to buy boxes of cherries. That would keep the kids quiet, if we didn't have time to stop for lunch.[1]

Levin drew upon his familiarity with loyal Democrats and his knowledge of the party's strengths and weaknesses when he announced as a candidate for governor in the spring of 1970. He did, however, face opposition in

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[1]Levin interview in Grand Rapids, Aug. 23, 1970.

the August 6 primary from State Representative George F. Montgomery of Detroit, and Macomb County Prosecutor George N. Parris.

The two were not considered formidible opponents, but the fact Levin had to campaign for the gubernatorial nomination while Governor Milliken was assured of his party's backing, was seen as a challenge and an advantage by Senator Levin's supporters. Morgan O'Leary, Senator Levin's press secretary, said the Democrats had a two-party strategy leading up to the primary election and afterward:

> Up to the primary it was a problem of telling who Sandy Levin was in terms of what he stands for and who he is. Our advertising made clear his stand on the economy, Vietnam and pollution. After the primary it was more on what kind of man he is.[1]

Indeed, the Levin forces, to establish his image, outspent Milliken three to one in the primary campaign. Their records of campaign expenditures show approximately $325,000 was spent to ensure Seantor Levin's victory, whereas only $100,000 was allocated for the same purpose during the primary contest by Governor Milliken.[2] These

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[1]Based on remarks to the writer by Levin during the latter part of October, 1970.

[2]As listed on expense reports on file with the Michigan Secretary of State, Elections Division. Although filing of such reports is required by law, the writer cautions readers that such reports may be incomplete. In some cases reports are filed with county election officials, and for various reasons are not forwarded to Lansing. All such gross figures are approximations.

figures will become more important in terms of the general election campaign, as this study will detail later. But at this point, the imbalance in the expenditures shows that Levin had a substantial financial base, which in turn indicates he had the political appeal within Democratic circles to make a serious challenge to Governor Milliken.

If there was a ready-made issue during the 1970 election campaign it was state aid to non-public schools. After a futile attempt in 1969 to pass a bill providing state aid to non-public schools, commonly called parochiaid, the Michigan Legislature did so in the spring of 1970. The bill, actually a section of the annual state public school aid bill, carried with it the concept, its implementation, and a spending authorization set at a maximum of $22,000,000. This legislation had the support of Milliken, who asserted that the financial plight of the non-public schools in the state was related to the stability of the public school system. Parochiaid was a complex issue on legal and religious grounds, but the governor saw necessity in providing minimal state assistance from tax revenues.

After the bill became law with Milliken's signature, it remained a volatile political issue. A number of organizations opposed to parochiaid, among them the various professional education groups, circulated petitions--Proposition C--to place before the voters in

November a proposed state constitutional amendment against aid to non-public schools. This caused both gubernatorial candidates to restate their positions since, in effect, the debate was being carried to the polls at the same time as their candidacies. From the outset, Governor Milliken had less difficulty with the issue than did Senator Levin.

Governor Milliken sought to delineate a consistency on the issue. He insisted that the appearance of the question in referendum form had not changed his thinking.

> My position on this issue is clear and consistent. I favor limited assistance to non-public schools because I believe educational choice can contribute to educational quality, because I believe that pressures on public schools will be greatly increased if non-public schools continue to close, and--most importantly--because I believe the public benefits when a child receives a good education regardless of where he receives it.
>
> Quite apart from my personal beliefs on this issue, I believe it is imperative that we understand the full implications of the proposed constitutional amendment as it will appear on the ballot. I therefore, asked Dr. John W. Porter, Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, to determine what, if any, existing services would be affected if the proposed constitutional amendment should be enacted.[1]

At various times during the ensuing campaign Milliken was involved in the aspects of clarifying the amendment, but otherwise he had an established position on the issue. Levin, however, became caught in the concerns expressed by his opponent over the ramifications of

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[1]Milliken press release from the Executive Office, Lansing, Michigan, Sept. 21, 1970, p. 2.

the amendment. After the primary, and the Democratic state convention, he was frequently asked by reporters to clarify his stand. Obviously, newsmen were trying to draw a distinction between the two candidates on a controversial issue.

Previously, Senator Levin had been one of the chief opponents of parochiaid. He voted against the non-public school aid in the senate, but thereafter his view blurred.

As the debate grew over the meaning of the amendment, Senator Levin called a press conference at his old senate office. He tried to explain that he had been consistent on the issue all along.

> I have opposed direct grants to private schools, [he said] and I continue to do so. I have since 1965 supported auxiliary services and shared-time programs. That continues to be my position.
>
> The Governor knows this. More important, I believe the people of Michigan know this.
>
> I opposed parochiaid, meaning direct grants to non-public schools, and I continue to do so. I cannot support Proposition C because it goes beyond prohibiting parochiaid. Proposition C would end most auxiliary services at non-public schools including visiting teacher services, teacher consultant services for mentally handicapped and emotionally disturbed children, teaching counselor services for physically handicapped children, remedial reading services and health and nursing services.[1]

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[1]Levin's prepared statement, distributed to the press and read by him, September 21, 1970.

Senator Levin at the same time accused Governor Milliken of "trying to use this nonpartisan issue for his own political gain." Evidently that remark was in response to a comment made earlier in the day by Governor Milliken who had accused Senator Levin of "fence-straddling" on parochiaid. While this seemed to put the leadership question in focus, the potential for political clash slipped away because of the complexities of the parochiaid issue. At that point, not even Dr. Porter, Attorney General Frank J. Kelley, and other officials were certain how inclusive and restrictive the amendment would be if adoped by the voters. The net effect of this uncertainty was that the two candidates sought to neutralize parochiaid as a political issue because neither could speak with certainty over what it really meant.

An underlying factor in this indecisive jockeying by the candidates concerned the traditionally Democratic vote by Roman Catholics. Of the estimated 287,000 non-public school students in Michigan, fully 235,000 were Catholic. The rest attended private, nondemoninational schools, or were enrolled in those operated by the conservative Christian Reformed, Lutheran or Jewish Reformed education arms.[1] If Levin expressed himself without reservation in support of the anti-parochiaid amendment, he

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[1]Detroit News, Dec. 17, 1969.

ran the risk of alienating thousands of potential Democratic voters. Milliken, on the other hand, by supporting parochiaid might expect to get support from some Roman Catholics while endangering his backing from a much smaller group of those opposed to the concept. Yet both candidates, at least in their campaign advertising, tried to skirt the issue or comment on it only when asked. Without elaborating, each candidate tried to assert consistency on the topic. "We tried to capitalize on it whenever the issue came up, to show the governor was consistent," said Jack X. Burdock, Milliken's campaign press secretary.[1]

Still, some Democrats worried that Levin had been made to dance to the governor's tune; that he had been placed on the defensive on a touchy issue when he should have simply tossed the whole subject back to Milliken for clarification. One who thought so was Senator Coleman Young, of Detroit, Levin's aisle mate in the chamber.

> Damn, he didn't need to equivocate about it. All he had to do was say he was sorry, but that he had to endorse the amendment because it went too far the other way; if the voters didn't pass it non-public schools would get too much. Then he could have told Milliken to figure some way out of the mess. That's not what Levin did, and I'm afraid we've lost some votes because nobody can figure out what the hell he is trying to say.[2]

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[1]Jack Burdock, interview in Lansing, May, 15, 1971.

[2]Young interview in Lansing, Sept. 30, 1970.

In any case, the parochiaid controversy took on a life almost independent of the central political contest. Whether Roman Catholics were so engrossed in defeating the amendment that they had little time or money left to apply to the partisan campaign is a question beyond this study. What is clear is that an issue that could have given emphasis to the political contest was lost in a sea of conflicting legal claims.

If parochiaid was neutralized, there was still much life in the Democratic ranks and a corresponding listlessness among the Republicans. The reasons for this lay in the strengths of the opposing slates. While the gubernatorial candidates were, so to say, team captains, the potential batting order on the Democratic side seemed preponderant.

During the 1970 campaign the Democrats offered perhaps the most formidible lineup in modern Michigan political history. While Senator Levin may have irked Catholics with his parochiaid stand, they could not quarrel with his choice for a running mate for lieutenant governor, Edward H. McNamara, an Irish Catholic who was mayor of the Detroit suburb of Livonia. Indeed, McNamara, almost a political unknown who did support parochiaid, offered little else.

During the course of the campaign McNamara remained in the background. Far more frequently did Levin make

public appearances with Democratic luminaries such as Senator Hart, who Milliken already considered unbeatable by Mrs. Romney,[1] and the state's popular Democratic Attorney General, Kelley. And Richard A. Austin, the Democratic choice for Secretary of state, was a black and a proven vote-getter in the city of Detroit where he had given Mayor Roman S. Gribbs a close race for the mayoralty. Thus the slate was a Democratic dream of ethnic balance. Senator Levin, a Jew, Kelley and McNamara both Irish Catholics, and Austin.

But the nonpartisan side of the Democratic slate also had considerable weight. The party's convention nominees as candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court were two former Michigan governors, G. Mennen Williams and John B. Swainson. Williams gained broader governmental experience after leaving Lansing as an Under Secretary of State for African Affairs and later ambassador to the Philippines. Swainson was currently serving as a Wayne County Circuit judge.

Against this array of Democratic power, Milliken was linked with Mrs. Romney, Senator Lockwood, Farr, and on the nonpartisan side incumbent Supreme Court Justice

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[1]Milliken, at the informal meeting with reporters in Feb. 1971, said he doubted Mrs. Romney's ability to win before the campaign began.

John B. Dethmers, and Wayne County Circuit Judge Edward S. Piggins, who hoped to join the elderly Dethmers on the high court.

And there was James Brickley for lieutenant governor. Whether the Democrats realized it or not, Brickley was to prove more an asset to Governor Milliken than all the other Republican office-seekers combined. But that was weeks into the future, and during the lull after the conventions as political machinery began to hum, the Democrats basked in the glow of unity and inevitable victory.

One newspaper account of the Democratic convention caught the mood of those heady days, when Williams addressed the Grand Rapids convention, a figure from the past caught in the glare of the floodlights again as an active participant.

> Then, as 3,000 Democrats watched, he made a fist with his right hand and punched the air in front of him. The crowd came to its feet with a rising cheer as Williams praised the "mighty Democratic ticket" and predicted victory over the Republicans in November. "We're going to roll together," the former Governor roared and the crowd roared back its approval. The Democrats' hunger for victory was almost palpable in that great hall.[1]

A week later, the Republicans, meeting in Cobo Hall, cheered their favorites too, more politely, and against the sober reflection they faced heavy competition.

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[1] Detroit News, Aug. 24, 1970.

George Romney was not there to lead them this time; it was untried William Milliken who had to run on a record that was only partly his and try to convince the voters he could do even better.

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS

If there is a single issue during the campaign that both Governor Milliken and Senator Levin clung to it was leadership. Indeed, this may be one of the most common issues in any political contest. But it contained special meaning for each man in 1970. As noted earlier in this study, Milliken had to establish his image with the public as a leader in his own right, not just that he was the follower of George Romney. He had to convince the voters he had accomplished much during his tenure since January, 1969, and sought to do more. Levin had to outdo Milliken so far as convincing the electorate he could do even better than his opponent, while discrediting Milliken at the same time.

Both men in fact suffered many handicaps. Under close examination neither could boast strong records of legislative accomplishment nor prove he could do better in the future. Yet these facts were often ignored, or brushed aside, as each man tried to rally voters to his cause.

Consistent with their plan to exhault Levin's views on certain key issues, after successfully establishing his image during the primary, his advisers suggested a frontal assault on Milliken's leadership ability. "Fire Your Local Governor," the theme of newspaper and billboard advertisements placed by the Levin people demanded of the voters.

Following this appeal in large, black letters, the smaller text of the advertisements went on to explain that 245,000 persons were out of work in Michigan, that 40 per cent of the state's crime was being committed in Detroit, but that only 18 per cent of the state's anti-crime money from federal programs was being spent there and that little was being done to meet the state's housing and drug abuse problems.

Firing a governor is strong talk, and, as it turned out, unsuited to a campaign against Milliken whose sense of decorum was acknowledged even by some of Levin's advisers. Morgan O'Leary, Levin's campaign press adviser, said that the "Fire Your Local Governor" ploy was a product of the W. B. Doner advertising agency, which has offices in Detroit and Baltimore. "There was conflict over that theme, and we dropped it later," O'Leary said. It failed to meet a tactical problem during the campaign, which O'Leary explained

this way: "what kept coming up were questions as to what was the difference between the two candidates."[1]

Levin himself admitted he had a problem establishing a positive position favorable to himself. As but one member of the senate, while Milliken was already chief executive of the state, how could he sing his praises to the voters? Levin's view is that senate Republicans had pulled the rug from beneath him.

> I introduced bills which would never get out of committees that were chaired by Republicans. They knew I would be a candidate for governor, so they saw to it I wouldn't get any attention. How do you get bills out of a committee run by the opposition party?[2]

A campaign press release entitled, "Levin Material," distributed to reporters covering the gubernatorial campaign by Milliken's press aides raised the leadership issue and found Levin wanting. "The question of leadership could be a real issue, and not the way Levin anticipates," said the opening sentence of the statement. It went on to credit Levin as a "fairly effective" state party chairman in unifying the Democrats and winning a victory for presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey over Richard Nixon in Michigan in 1968, but said he had done nothing since.

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[1]Morgan O'Leary, interview held in Livonia, Mich., May 3, 1971.

[2]Sander Levin, interview held at the State Capitol, Sept. 30, 1970.

> Levin consistently ridicules the Governor's legislative program. On many occasions, he has charged that the Legislature has been ineffective because the Governor did not know how to apply pressure or did not know what to do. Actually, the Governor has achieved two-thirds of his priority legislative objectives even before the September session. Meanwhile, Sander Levin introduced 44 bills in the Senate. Only one was ever reported out of committee.[1]

The "Levin Material" also noted that Levin altered his personal appearance during the spring of 1970. Where he previously wore hornrimmed eye glasses and dressed indifferently, he corrected his vision with contact lenses, wore his hair longer, and changed his wardrobe to youthfully tailored suits.

Presumably, Milliken's personal appearance needed no alteration. He was already outfitted in suits from his own department store, required eye glasses only when reading, and wore his hair neatly trimmed. Rather, he needed to perfect his administrative image. This became a dominate theme in his campaign, almost monotonously so according to Jack Burdock.

> Milliken saw himself in a tight situation. He believed his main strength was to run on a record of administrative accomplishment. He had a good record on the appointment of blacks to posts in his administration, and on housing, for example. Essentially, he had to say he had done things during a short period of time and wanted to finish them. He did that unwaveringly.[2]

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[1] Milliken campaign material, issued during September, 1970.

[2] Jack Burdock, interview in Lansing, May 15, 1971.

Among several programs for which Milliken claimed credit were use of state recreation and water pollution abatement funds, and education reform. Reform of the state-supported public school system occasioned a call for a special session of the legislature in October, 1969. Milliken offered an ambitious twelve-point program, ranging from removing the property tax as the chief local school revenue producer, to creating new performance tests of educational proficiency, such as standard tests of pupil performance.

Parochiaid, as referred to earlier in this study, came to dominate the fall, 1969, session. It was reported, however, that Milliken's legislative liaison men were not even present on the floor of the house when a crucial vote came up, ending hopes for parochiaid that year. It was also evident Milliken had little influence over the Republican minority leader in the house, Representative Robert Waldron, of Grosse Pointe, who helped defeat Milliken's proposal for aid to non-public schools.[1] Later, one of Milliken's education advisers, Richard Greenleaf, admitted the whole reform plan achieved legislative approval for only six of its short term goals.[2]

Two other major programs, expansion of the state's recreation facilities, and financial encouragement to local

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[1] Detroit News, Dec. 22, 1969.

[2] Ibid., March 17, 1970.

communities to improve sewer systems, could not be credited directly to Milliken. Both were placed on the ballot in 1968, while Romney was governor. Voters approved them because of the strong endorsement these bonding measures received from Romney, legislative leaders, and conservation groups. What remained for Milliken was to assist in the preparation of a formula for spending the recreation and pollution control monies.

Many conservation groups insisted that the $100 million for recreation improvements was to be spent 70 per cent on state lands by the department of natural resources, and the remaining 30 per cent to be allocated to communities on a population basis. Milliken, to the surprise of many, claimed that his predecessor had made no such committment. He suggested that the distribution should be 40 per cent to natural resources, 30 per cent to local communities, and another 30 per cent to the state agency that would allocate the sum to state facilities in urban areas. Outdoorsmen attacked Milliken for reneging on the promise made to voters who had approved a bond issue in the first place.

The facts are still shrouded. There are conflicting claims as to whether Romney ever advocated a distribution formula. On the other hand, this writer has not been able to locate a reliable source who would admit that Milliken had altered the previous understanding to funnel

more money in urban areas in order to curry favor with the voters. But one person close to the legislative action in drawing up the formulas for both recreation outlays, and distribution of the $228 million water pollution control funds, insisted Milliken sought and gained undue credit.

He is Representative Thomas J. Anderson, a Democrat from the Detroit suburb of Southgate, who is a co-chairman of the House Conservation and Recreation Committee.

This is Anderson's version of the legislative formula battle, which applied (he says) equally to both programs, and what he believes to be Milliken's role:

> The real debate was whether the legislature would allow pork-barreling of these funds. That is, whether we would allow the state agencies involved in recreation and pollution controls to objectively select local projects deserving of funds, or allow legislators to promote projects for their districts. We didn't have much help from the governor's office. And what was really odd, after we decided that the project lists could only be added to or cut at that bottom by the legislature, to prevent singling out pet projects, the governor flew back from a conference somewhere. He was sitting in the gallery the night we passed it. All the newsmen went up to talk to him, and their stories the next day said that it was Milliken's sudden appearance that turned the trick. He didn't show up until we reached the compromise.[1]

The crucial part of Anderson's narrative is that the news media representatives were so willing to accept Milliken's position. Yet this was a pattern that shows up time and again in interviews with reporters. They assert

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[1]Rep. Thomas J. Anderson, interview in Lansing, April 12, 1971.

that management of the news occurred in the Milliken administration, that the public had not been given an accurate appraisal of his relationship to events of public importance. Moreover, most reporters interviewed willingly accept responsibility for their involvement, but divide on the question as to how it happened, or whether reporters for the print media or electronics media were at fault.

For the most part, all reporters regretted the demise of sustained questioning, which they said was essential to defining Milliken's response to matters of public importance. A separate study was undertaken to gauge this effect. The study deals with exchanges between Milliken and reporters during thirteen press conferences called by the governor during the period of August 5 through November 5, 1970. This also spans the weeks between the primary and general elections. Official transcripts of the press conferences made available by Milliken's office, and interviews with participating newsmen, were used in this study.[1]

What emerges is the conclusion that the relationship between Michigan's chief executive and newsmen, at least those who regularly cover the capitol, have greatly changed in the past few years. Moreover, either because of Milliken's personality or the altered press setup, Michigan

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[1]Allen W. Phillips, "The Gubernatorial Press Conference in Michigan--1970," a term paper for Michigan State University, School of Journalism, March, 1971.

voters did not have the same access to information they may have had in the past. The situation was ideal for a candidate such as Milliken who sought to maximize his leadership abilities while at the same time denying his opponent, Levin, an opening he so badly needed to establish his own contrary views on state government.

At the time Governor Romney left office, the press conference, the most common meeting between governor and reporters, took place in his working office. He sat at the executive desk, the reporters around him. Reporters from the print media, various newspapers and including the wire services with bureaus at the capitol, the Associated Press and United Press International, outnumbered reporters from television or radio stations. Very quickly the pattern changed when Milliken came into office, not perhaps because of any conscious plan on his part. An influx of electronic newsmen received accreditation, consequently requiring that press conferences be held in a larger room, the reception area outside the executive office. Instead of appearing at his desk, as Romney used to do, Milliken stood at a podium.

A study of the press conference transcripts shows that of 525 questions asked by all persons present, 343, or 65 per cent came from reporters identified as members of the broadcast media. Print media reporters, for purposes of this inquiry, including those who worked for wire

services, asked 136 questions, or 25 per cent. (See Table 1.) An additional 46 questions were asked by persons unidentified in the transcripts, or 8 per cent of the total.

These statistics indicate that quantitatively, members of the broadcasting media dominated gubernatorial press conferences.

Robert Longstaff, a capitol reporter for Booth Newspapers, said domination of the press conferences by broadcast media reporters caused problems in homing in on issue areas and maintaining sustained questioning.

> Press conferences now are not good. What seems to have developed is a case of the electronics media moving in and staging the thing. They are concerned with their own name or question. It has become a personalized thing to promote the electronics media reporter. There really isn't an opportunity to ask a question anymore.[1]

Longstaff concluded that press conferences are less informative for newsmen, and through them the public, than under prior governors. They evolved, he says, into "non-questions and non-answers," which permitted Milliken to "only allow out the news he wants out."

This suggests that if there was not news management, then at least there was direction of the news in a way most favorable to Milliken. Such a situation would have particular importance during an election year,

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[1] Ibid.

Table 1. Frequency of Questions by Media in Gubernatorial Press Conferences.

Conference	Electronic	Print	Unidentified	Total
Aug. 5	23	1	4	28
Aug. 13	35	12	4	51
Aug. 19	33	16	1	50
Aug. 25	53	10	1	64
Sept. 2	31	14	2	47
Sept. 15	29	11	9	49
Sept. 21	29	15	1	45
Sept. 30	25	17	3	45
Oct. 8	26	7	3	36
Oct. 13	24	8	6	38
Oct. 30	9	14	1	24
Nov. 2	16	8	2	26
Nov. 5	10	3	9	22
	343(65.33%)	136(25.91%)	46(8.76%)	525

Source: Transcripts of Governor Milliken's press conferences prepared by the governor's office.

especially where an opponent like Levin was trying desperately to develop areas of difference between himself and the governor.

Robert Berg, capitol bureau chief for United Press International, in the main agreed with Longstaff's assessment but did not particularize blame among the press corps in Lansing.

> What should be a cooperative effort (by all reporters) to gather news becomes competitive effort to get a question in. If you get a question in and want to pursue it, it becomes too big of a hassle. Some guys come in and ask a question which should never be asked.[1]

The end result, Berg believes, is that the public gets more of what Milliken wants it to know. "The situation helps Milliken. If I were George Weeks (the governor's press secretary) I wouldn't change a thing."

Tom Greene, news correspondent for WJBK-TV, a Detroit station, the first television newsman assigned to the capitol on a regular basis, sees other aspects of the competitive press conference atmosphere.

> I don't feel competitive between myself and other members of the capitol press corps. But I do think guys in my media are younger and more aggressive. Most newspaper reporters I see write down answers to questions we ask. As far as I'm concerned, there are no

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[1]Phillips, "The Gubernatorial Press Conference in Michigan--1970," p. 8.

> rules of Hoyle in that setting. Maybe print reporters are complacent. For so many years they've had things their own way.[1]

As a matter of courtesy, Green insists that he does not interrupt another reporter's questions. Yet, he concedes, the aims of the electronic media in a press conference setting are much different from those of print media reporters. Electronic reporters have a problem, he says, obtaining from the governor the kinds of responses that are most visual, or suitable for audio reproduction.

In fact, says Greene, the necessities of technical reproduction, with the least amount of editing of tape or film, may account for decreased interest in sustained questioning on the part of electronic reporters. "I try to get away from a talking format. I try to get a sharp response," he says. Therefore some electronic reporters may very well, he concedes, appear to try to dominate a press conference with questions that interfere with sustained questioning. He also notes that some electronic newsmen unfamiliar with capitol affairs must also ask questions prepared in advance by their station assignment editors. Often such questions relate to topics of interest to the listening or viewing audience in one locale, and have little relevance to statewide matters, he said.

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[1] Ibid.

Is inter-media competition, camera and tape recorder versus notebook, the nub of the problem? Or is it more a question of competition reporter versus reporter? Evaluation of the transcripts suggests the latter is also responsible. A possible measure for this competitive factor may occur when a press conference topic is spread over several pages of the transcript, with intervening subjects introduced by other questions.

In the transcript for Milliken's press conference of September, 1970, a number of obvious topic changes appear.

In this example the matter of what effect a prolonged strike by the United Automobile Workers strike against General Motors appears several times. The issue was of some gravity, beyond the impact of the strike on the corporation and its employees, because of implications for state tax revenues lost during the corporation's idle period and also possible state welfare cost increases in benefits for workers who would exhaust their savings.

A television reporter asked the governor about the strike's effect on the state's financial position. A second television newsman followed this with a question asking what Milliken could or would do to involve his office in the negotiations. After the governor's response, a third television reporter asked Milliken to comment on a public opinion poll showing Levin was only a few points

behind in popularity. Next, a radio newsman asked Milliken to return to a discussion of the auto strike. After giving a reply to that question, Milliken again was asked a question about the public opinion poll. Several miscellaneous questions later, a newspaper reporter returned to the subject of the strike.[1]

This byplay illustrates that questions pertaining to a topic of some interest must be pursued in various ways and over a length of time to develop replies satisfactory to many in the group. The transcript in this case does not indicate Milliken was evasive; rather, that opposing newsmen do not permit their colleagues to complete an interrogation on a single subject.

The foregoing example also indicates that it seems to make little difference which media the competing newsmen represent, since an electronic reporter may be just as apt to interfere with the questioning of a fellow electronic newsman. Overall this interruption factor would be greater for electronic than print media reporters anyway, however, on the basis of their questioning numerical superiority noted in Table 1.

If the lack of common purpose in these press conferences was not a conspiracy of one media against another,

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Sept. 14, 1970, pp. 1-6

what was it? Some explanations have already been suggested in that television and radio newsmen strive for short, sharp replies, may be obligated to put forth questions prepared in advance, and may pose questions on topics of local audience interest.

The three capitol correspondents referred to earlier all had additional thoughts about this matter that might be summed up in that vague concept, professionalism. Longstaff put it this way:

> It is difficult if not impossible to reach an understanding between electronic and print reporters in how to ask a question. The print reporters hang back. What we need is a little more intelligence and professionalism in how we ask our questions. We need to eliminate some jealousy.[1]

Greene seemed equally concerned that newsmen covering the Milliken press conferences were in disarray and all could have done a better job in confronting him.

> We should ourselves find a better way to control the press conference. Maybe we should restrict them to members of the Capitol press corps. If we did our job, and we did it right, forgetting this media stuff, we would get factual answers. In effect he (the Governor) is challenging us. He stands up there, he gives us the chance at him. We're not insistent enough on a particular point.[2]

Berg, who formerly covered politics at the Iowa state capitol while a member of the United Press International

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[1]Phillips, "The Gubernatorial Press Conference in Michigan--1970," p. 12.

[2]Ibid., p. 13.

staff in Des Moines, said covering the press conferences of former Iowa governor Harold Hughes was much different from those conducted in Lansing and generally were more informative. "There you had a chance to throw ideas around," he said. "That's the difference."[1]

How then, does this situation, in which newsmen themselves are concerned about their performance, profit Milliken? Is this a plus factor for him? Does he make an obvious use of the press conferences to serve his own ends? Does he manage the news? These are significant questions that apply not only to Milliken as a chief executive, but also as a candidate as well. It must be kept in mind that the statements taken and documents used in this regard relate to the period of the campaign. It goes without saying that many questions and replies during these press conferences could have a positive or negative effect on the formulation of voter attitudes.

The following exchange, taken from the October 8, 1970, demonstrates both the attempts of newsmen to stimulate controversy and Milliken's efforts to dodge questions he chooses not to honor with direct reply.

> Sorg: Who do you think should be elected in New York?
> Governor: I'm not going to make a judgment about the elections in other states nor inject myself at this point in that political picture. I've got a

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[1] Ibid., p. 12.

good political campaign going here and I'm going to confine my interests and my comments to this campaign.

Skubick: Do you feel that Vice-President Agnew is doing more harm to the party than good?

Governor: I'm not going to make any judgment about that. You'd have to see what the reading of the election results is nation-wide as the result of his activity.

Skubick: Well, what is the reading you get right now?

Governor: What's your reading? I'm not going to comment.[1]

That Governor Milliken was unwilling to answer some questions is not an indictment of him as a political figure. It is natural to assume he is reluctant to respond to embarrasing questions or to those which for public policy reasons would be unwise. What the transcripts fail to disclose, however, is valuable in terms of evaluating his conduct with the news media in general. There does not appear to be a single time Milliken permitted any question to obtain other than a measured response. Nor does he appear at any time to be angry, nor does he make an apparent misstatement to be seized upon by the press. In short, the record of these press conferences indicates he practices considerable restraint in his press dealings.

Even more crucial to this study are the indications in the transcripts that Milliken consciously attempts to create the most favorable impression of himself and his

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Oct. 8, 1970, p. 5. Speakers other than Milliken are Walter Sorge, reporter for Michigan Broadcast Network, and Tim Skubick, WMSB-TV, Michigan State University.

administration. During the thirteen press conferences examined, Milliken opened seven of them with statements or pronouncements reflecting credit on his administration. Such statements appear with greater frequency with the approaching November 3 election. For example, as he began the August 19, 1970, press conference he announced he was creating by executive order a special commission to study the problems of young people who have not reached the age of majority. At the September 15 conference Milliken announced the appointment of an environmental coordinator.

And also as the election neared the tenor of such announcements appeared to bear more resemblance to his own campaign program. He issued a cautionary statement on campus disorders at the September 21 press conference. Little more than a week later, at the September 30 press conference, he introduced to newsmen Mrs. Virginia Knauer, President Nixon's consumer affairs spokesman, and he issued his own appointment of a consumer affairs coordinator at the state level. Milliken used the October 13 conference as an occasion to display his running mate, James Brickley, the nominee for lieutenant governor. The two discussed at length an anti-crime program and the method of distributing federal funds for Michigan law enforcement agencies.

Clearly, such use of the press conference can serve many purposes. The public was informed of state

programs, but also Milliken could identify himself with them and project an image of activity, concern, and authority. And he chose to do so at the opening of the press conferences, the prime time so to speak, and fully expected to take the initiative in providing the topic that elicits the first questions from newsmen. This happened in every one of the press conferences he began with a formal statement. This study will show later that the press conference became an important campaign forum for the governor.

And of course, press conference time is free. While Levin could, and did, call similar meetings with reporters, Milliken could rely on regularly scheduled events that would produce a maximum turnout, since all key members of the capitol press corps attend them, not just political reporters assigned to campaign coverage. Moreover, the setting was most favorable to the incumbent. He stood beneath the Great Seal of Michigan on the wall behind him, beneath positioned spotlights. He could summon to the podium to help with questions some of his key advisers. As Douglass Cater, a former editor of The Reporter has observed, the press conference in Washington can often be setup affairs programmed largely by those who call them. This writer believes the same can be said of state news coverage.

In his comparison of the American press conference and the British Parliamentary Inquiry, Cater asserts that while perceptive journalists ably pursue truth, they face many handicaps. The discussion in this study of the governor's press conference is meant to demonstrate the same problem. When reporters, for whatever reason, fail to do their job, or the government figure is not candid or given to manipulation, the press conference is a mockery.

> At other times the press bungles its job badly. Foolish or irresponsible reporters dominate the conferences. The equating of news with sensationalism distracts attention from grave problems at hand. The press rushes hell-bent after the trivial and the fleeting, ruled more by a compulsion to make headlines than it exercises its serious calling. Government leaders are capable at times of evasions and even downright deceptions without being clearly exposed.[1]

Was Milliken capable of evasions or deceptions? That is indeed a subjective question. To determine some kind of reasonable answer, the governor's use of the news media in a variety of situations must be anaylzed. The matter of press conferences already has been introduced, but there were other occasions when Milliken sought a public hearing for his views and, as it turned out, for topical issues.

One such occasion was the rock music festival held at Goose Lake Park, near Jackson, Michigan, the first

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[1]Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 154.

weekend of August. This was the first such event to occur in the state on the order of Woodstock and similar outdoor rock music festivals for youth and young adults. The facts, basically, are that tens of thousands of people, many of them teenagers and young adults, flocked to the park grounds. Use of drugs was said to be widespread, and nearby residents were alarmed by nude bathers in the lake and a general air of permissiveness. The interesting point is that on Sunday, August 12, Milliken requested television and radio time to address the citizenry of Michigan. This was believed to be an unprecedented occurrence, and according to one estimate, involved production costs of at least $10,000 not to mention advertising lost to television and radio stations during the time of the half-four speech.[1]

It was a one-subject talk, dealing entirely with the problems of Goose Lake as Milliken saw them, and his proposed solutions. He briefly outlined events leading up to the rock music festival, and then listed a seven-point state program to prevent future such occurrences.

> I do not oppose rock festivals. I'm not trying to repress rock. But I firmly and unequivocally oppose and intend to repress the illegal use of dangerous drugs. If we can't have festivals without drug abuse, we will not have rock festivals at all."[2]

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[1]Tom Greene, private interview at the capitol, Aug. 12, 1971.

[2]Gov. Milliken's address to the citizens of Michigan, WJBK-TV telecast, Aug. 12, 1970.

Milliken promised rock festival drug offenders would be dealt with by the police and courts, and that his legal staff was drafting a model ordinance governing the conduct of outdoor gatherings. But his direct appeal to the public, and of course voters, was unusual. Milliken's explanation for giving the Sunday address was somewhat vague, since he could have just as well made drugs and rock festivals the subject of a regular, or even special news conference later that week.

> One of the reasons I am taking this unprecedented action of speaking to you tonight directly from the Governor's office is that in many homes, Sunday night is a family night.
>
> A major share of the responsibility for teaching the dangers of drug use rests squarely and heavily upon the shoulders of parents.[1]

As vital as his concern and desire to communicate with parents, one must ask whether the broadcast was also calculated in terms of political potential. Burdock, in reviewing the campaign months later, admits this was not overlooked. "In terms of the presentation this was a plus campaign issue. Milliken's was a fatherly-like reaction." Asked directly whether the event was planned to curry favor with voters, Burdock smiled, and said, "He's a politician."[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Burdock interview, May 15, 1971.

The problem of drug abuse in general and who had the best ideas for coping with it came up from time to time during the campaign. But it was made an issue in no more peculiar way than at a later Milliken press conference.

An unusual introduction of the drug topic occurred on September 15, and caused speculation a particular question was planted and that Milliken's response was carefully prepared. In the transcript the questioner is not identified by name.[1] He asked whether Milliken would update the newsmen on his attitude and proposals for dealing with drug abuse. This question caused Milliken to launch into a detailed reply, one of the lengthiest in response to any question contained in the thirteen press conference transcripts studied. The three newsmen interviewed for the press conference phase of this study--Longstaff, Berg and Greene--each said they suspect the questioner was a "ringer," put there by someone to ask that question, since he was not known to them or to other newsmen present and had attended no previous press conferences. Both Longstaff and Greene said it appeared to them that Milliken had his reply typed out on a sheet of paper.

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Sept. 15, 1970, p. 7.

Asked for their overall impressions of Milliken's facility in press relations, each also used the same work: "smooth."

A view from within the governor's office was obtained in a separate interview with George Weeks, Milliken's press secretary. He expressed his concern about the format of the press conferences much as the newsmen did, and said he was in agreement that as presently constituted they did not serve the needs of the public, or even the governor.

> In the past the media did a much better job. If you look at how the governor comes out now, he's able to make his points with less danger of penetrating questioning on a given issue. You no longer have in a gubernatorial or a presidential press conference sustained questioning which is so vital and serves the public interest.[1]

Weeks saw several reasons for this. Print media newsmen feel uncomfortable with the advent of so many cameras and microphones at capitol news conferences. Weeks said he agrees with Greene that some reporters are "programmed" to ask particular questions, and also that an increasing number of reporters in attendance has a limiting effect on sustained questioning.

Weeks said Milliken is aware of these shortcomings, that the governor believes it lessens the value of press conferences, and has attempted to make himself available to

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[1]Phillips, "The Gubernatorial Press Conference in Michigan--1970," p. 18.

individual newsmen for private interviews. Another technique Milliken uses is the mobile press conference, said Weeks, such as three held in the governor's Detroit office during the time of this study. These were on topics of interest to Detroit area residents, on such topics as federal-state crime control programs, and the need for a new Detroit sports stadium. These Detroit conferences were tailored to the needs of local reporters who do not ordinarily meet the governor, Weeks said.

As for Milliken's seeming ability to survive rough questioning, Weeks insists this is part of the governor's style, not a product of staff coaching or attempts at news management. Weeks rejects the suggestion, however, that opening a press conference with a planned statement is news management. He calls it "news presentation."

> I have an unfavorable view of news management. I prefer to call it news presentation. Any news maker tries to put a good foot forward, and certainly this is better done in a press conference setting than in a canned release. The reporters have every opportunity to ask him questions directly, which they can't do with a release. If they are getting unsatisfactory answers, it's a matter of the press asking the question again. That's where the problem is. Individuals don't have a chance to follow through.[1]

Admittedly, it is far easier for the researcher to investigate the press relations of an incumbent than those of a challenger, since the documents and relationships exist

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[1] Ibid., p. 19.

in greater volume and detail. But to ignore this fact is to overlook that a public official, in this case Milliken, also has a much greater impact on the public consciousness with the tools, and regular procedures, available to him. He is one leg up on the man who seeks his job. This does not detract from his opportunity, even his obligation, to inform the public of his policies and attitudes. What must concern the reporter, and the public audience he serves, is that channels of communications be clear and unobstructed, that information be transmitted in appropriate quantity and quality.

Among other goals this study seeks to gauge the inter-relationships of a public official and the news media. There was an underlying, and possibly biased, assumption that press conferences were more orderly, more penetrating on public issues and more productive at some earlier time before the intrusion of electronic media reporters. The conclusion drawn lends only partial support to this proposition. Within the scope of this study, it cannot be concluded that if only print media reporters attended press conferences a more satisfactory situation than now exists would prevail. How penetrating a question is, is a subjective matter. No inferences can be drawn from this study that reporters from one segment of the media have a monopoly on penetrating questions, which elicit clear answers.

Observers of Michigan gubernatorial press conferences bemoan the lack of sustained questioning. The swelling number of reporters attending press conferences, some unfamiliar with the capitol scene, and others with limited fact-seeking goals, may be the most disruptive factor. Whether Milliken turns this to his advantage by evading questions he does not care to answer is an open question. That he tries to put across a favorable view of his administration to reporters representing news outlets in many parts of the state, is obvious. The opening statements he uses in press conferences demonstrates this.

One goal of this paper is to ascertain the public information value of press conferences and similar contacts within the setting in which they take place. Also, another goal is to determine the inherent advantage an incumbent may have in utilizing the public information avenues open to him.

Based on reporter-participant interviews and the comments of an executive office staff member who reflects Milliken's own thinking, press conferences do not have as high an information value as they should. There also exists ample latitude for a public figure, such as Milliken, to try to maximize his performance.

Viewed as a prelude to the campaign itself these are unsettling facts. If, at a time voters must make intelligent decisions the system does not provide the necessary degree of enlightment for those decisions, the public is the ultimate loser.

CHAPTER III

BANDWAGONS ARE ROLLING

October first is the traditional date gubernatorial campaigns get into full swing prior to a general election in Michigan. There is nothing magical about the date, but it seems to fit nicely with the end of summer and give candidates a respite after the party conventions. By then the legislature is in recess, to campaign for itself, and political affairs are more or less settled in the capitol.

In most years, when the air turns nippy, the attention of voters is also supposed to be on the rise. Vacations are over, children have returned to school, and presumably voters are again firmly planted in easy chairs before their television sets, or intently reading their newspapers. It should be a good time for a Democrat or a Republican to begin simmering the ingredients for a victory banquet come November. In 1970, however, the political feast started out as a stew, with a number of leftovers from previous months. Parochiaid refused to be a neutralized issue, and the United Automobile Workers strike against General Motors assumed ominous proportions.

Both these issues, in a way, came to symbolize the promise and failure of the campaign of 1970 to squarely confront matters of major public interest. Parochiaid, complex and controversial as it was, did not deserve to become a political football but was worthy of interpretation and clarification that Milliken and Levin could give. The UAW strike, really a matter of state-wide importance for its effects on a sizeable number of workers and one of the state's biggest corporate taxpayers, had a direct relationship to the state's economy that was only dimly perceived.

Perhaps parochiaid would have been a non-topic were it not for the fact that the State Court of Appeals in August had ruled that a referendum petition drive to put the issue on the November 3 ballot was legal. The referendum called for a state constitutional amendment barring state support for non-public schools, directly or indirectly.

On September 21 Milliken recommended a "no" vote on the proposal, to defeat it and erect no constitutional barrier against the aid to non-public school bills passed by the legislature. To support his view he produced a lengthy analysis of what the amendment would do to private schools in the state. The report was prepared by Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. John W. Porter. Porter's report raised the possibility that non-public schools might lose their tax exemption, could not receive police and fire

services, and that public schools could not allow athletic teams from private schools on their playing fields.

In effect, Porter warned the amendment would not only prohibit new forms of aid to non-public schools, but also would roll back the clock and take away constitutional rights and customary privileges they had long enjoyed. Milliken's use of this report, which had weak legal underpinnings at best, was to buttress his position without shedding much light.

> In view of Dr. Porter's analysis, I believe the proposed amendment goes too far and its implications are too great. I intend to vote against the amendment. This question is one of the most important before voters concerning education. It should not become a political issue. It should be decided on its merits.[1]

Notwithstanding that the merits only could be judged in a court of law, the proper repository of vital constitutional questions, Milliken presumed to align himself with one side of the question, and helped to make it a political issue. All this was dutifully reported by the capitol press corps, in terms that the questions raised by Porter were given credence by Milliken. Still, some newsmen tried to penetrate this hazy realm of speculation, but without much success. Reporters at the September 21 press conference attempted to

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Sept. 21, 1970, pp. 1-5.

pin the governor down. They had to contend with intervening questions about campus disorders, thermal pollution, and nursing homes. For example:

> Engle [Detroit News]: Governor, . . . who is Dr. Porter's legal expert in this case, who comes up with these conclusions?
>
> Governor: I think he has a legal adviser on his staff and I also think, I know, he has a legal adviser assigned by the attorney general's office. Precisely who the legal advisers are by name, I cannot tell you.

This reporter was persistent, and managed several minutes later to complete his line of questioning.

> Engle: Do your legal advisers agree with Dr. Porter's advisers on the matter of the property tax?
>
> Governor: I think there is some question we're going to still want legal interpretation, but, in the main, we agree with the conclusions reached by Dr. Porter and his legal advisers.

After stating that somebody, he didn't know who, was the source of a legal interpretation with which he agreed, Milliken then admitted he did not know exactly what the implication was for private or parochial schools losing their freedom from property taxes.

> Phillips [Detroit News]: The reported findings here are that parochial schools would lose their property tax exemption. Isn't that contradictory? If they would be paying taxes, then how could they be denied local government services?
>
> Governor: I don't know; there are problems to be resolved and questions to be answered.[1]

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[1] Ibid.

These exchanges are offered to illustrate that Milliken was ready to endorse far-ranging views, but was not sure just what was involved. Rather than leading the public to a clearer understanding, he preferred to muddy the situation and use it to reiterate his previously held support for parochiaid. While Milliken was bemusing the press, and alarming and befuddling the voters, Levin was having little better luck.

Levin was in a difficult situation. He had opposed parochiaid during its debate in the legislature but now he was concerned that the amendment to prohibit it went too far. Perhaps Levin subscribed to the analysis of Dr. Porter. He may have believed that to persist in opposition to parochiaid by endorsing the amendment would have alienated many Michigan Catholic voters. His reasoning, aside from his statements to the press, was not available from other sources. Levin could have chosen to make the distinction between himself and Milliken on the issue. He did not, and tended to align himself with the governor, which only added to the confusion. He was immediately placed on the defensive by Milliken, who found an opportunity to demonstrate what he considers vacillation by Levin.

Reporters were still seeking answers to what the referendum would mean at Milliken's press conference of September 30. Content analysis here discloses that Milliken himself was showing signs of doubt about what he had said a week earlier.

Lyle [WWJ-TV, Detroit]: Governor, Sandy Levin said that while he takes the same position, he thinks you are being silly to suggest that the police and sewer services would be withheld. The ACLU was a little harsher on you for saying those things. Do you still stand behind the possibility that police or fire protection could be withheld?[1]

Governor: Let me first comment that I'm glad that Senator Levin's long silence on the question has ended because you can't play leader sitting on the fence. Further, I'm not sure I would agree or disagree with the contents of Dr. Porter's letter. I never made a claim that I agreed with every detail.[1]

Despite his own wavering on facts concerning a vital state issue, Milliken was able to make accusations about Levin. He said in response to a later question, "I think Mr. Levin is trying to have the best of two worlds; I think he's going to end up having neither."[2]

Levin already had lost the support, if not directly political then moral, of the Michigan Education Association when he said on September 28 that he would vote against the amendment. Mrs. Harriet Phillips, chairman of the Council Against Parochiaid; Erwin Ellmann, chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan; and Terry Herndon, executive director of the Michigan Education Association, called their own press conference the following day to accuse Levin of "treachery." Mrs. Phillips said the only difference she could see between the candidates on the

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[1]Press Conference transcript, p. 6.

[2]Ibid.

parochiaid issue was that Milliken was "consistently dishonest in his appraisal," while Levin "hasn't been consistent at all." Ellmann said he thought both Milliken and Levin were politically motivated. Herndon said the teacher organization would likely withdraw its previous endorsement of Levin's candidacy.[1]

Levin, mindful of Milliken's attack upon him, and the displeasure of the anti-parochiaid forces, called his own press conference during the afternoon of September 30. He met reporters in his old ground-floor office in the capitol, that he had once occupied as senate minority leader.

It was attended by newspaper and wire service reporters. Some of them remarked afterwards it was refreshing to hold a conference without the ever-present television cameras, and that they enjoyed the exchange with Levin. Levin said simply he was against parochiaid in principle, but by the same set of principles thought it unfair if the constitutional amendment would strip private and parochial schools of benefits they already enjoyed. The real issues in the campaign, he insisted, were drug abuse, unemployment, taxes.

> These issues will be the real test. Not parochiaid. The real test is to show what the governor has accomplished in two years. The governor's reputation as a non-producer is the best known issue in this campaign.[2]

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Sept. 29.

[2] Based on notes taken by the writer at the press conference.

The reporters took little note of his concluding remark, and went off to file overnight copy based on Levin's response to the governor's remarks earlier in the day. If parochiaid was a complex issue, leadership was nebulous. But Levin may have correctly pinpointed what the campaign was really about. Could he make it stick?

Automobile workers had struck the giant General Motors Corporation in August. There had been little progress in the negotiations by the end of September.

At his regular news conferences Milliken was invariably asked by newsmen whether he would intervene in the strike. Michigan law, or for that matter federal legislation, does not give a governor that power. Milliken said he would offer his good offices to the opposing sides, but said he could do little more.

By mid-September, however, the strike was more ominous in its implications. At his press conferences on September 15 and September 30, Milliken said the state was in a "tight budgetary situation." In part, he said, this was due to the national economic downturn having its effects in Michigan. As a direct result of the General Motors strike, he said revenues from employee paychecks for income tax withholding, along with corporate income tax payments, would raise expenditures as striking workers filed for benefits. Milliken said he could not give specific answers to what the net effect of these trends would be.

During the September 30 press conference Milliken was asked specifically whether he had instructed his budget director, Glenn S. Allen, and other department heads, to prepare for budget cuts in the event the strike lasted another thirty days. That thirty-day period would end just prior to the election. Milliken's response was vague and guarded. He tried to express both concern about the state's fiscal situation without saying what he would do about it.

> We have simply been considering alternatives which are available to us based upon the revenue picture and the spending pattern in the state. The strike, if of a protractive nature, will clearly have serious implications to the revenue picture of the state.

Beyond that, Milliken said he and his advisers were prepared to take any number of actions then under review. Although the strike had been on for several weeks already, it seemed too soon to tell what damage it would cause. And, perhaps mindful he had no real power to do anything about it, Milliken avoided injecting himself into the situation. For a Republican governor to do so anyway may have presented further problems. Could he afford to antagonize management, and appear supportive of union members who largely voted Democratic? Could he be critical of either side in the labor dispute? At this point there were no clear indications Milliken could do either, for his own political gain or to the benefit of management and labor.

Public opinion was expressing itself on the campaign and some of the issues, however. Most notably this was reflected in the Market Opinion Research findings carried in the Detroit News under the byline of Frederick P. Currier. The Detroit-based polling firm has been employed by the News in several previous elections, and Currier, one of the firm's founders, is a former newspaperman. As the campaign progressed, the News almost daily carried the findings of one poll or another on the various candidates and issues.

One of the first polls in the series appearing in the period between the primary and general elections dealt with the parochiaid issue. The findings were that 51 per cent of Michigan voters were against providing public funds to help private schools. This poll, reported September 15, may well help explain the respective positions of Milliken and Levin, each of whom expressed some reservations about parochiaid. With Michigan voters so narrowly split on the issue, it would have been dangerous for either candidate to project beyond a centrist position.

The poll claimed 42 per cent of the voters approved state assistance to non-public schools, and 7 per cent of the voters undecided on the issue. It found greatest support for parochiaid among Catholic voters, with 72 per cent of them favoring the plan. According to Currier, Democrats and ticket-splitters were nearly evenly for and against parochiaid, although 67 per cent of Republicans were in opposition. It

would seem that Milliken and Levin, if aware of these trends, might have good reason to "neutralize" the issue. Currier viewed that aspect of the poll results this way:

> Whom the voters support for governor or senator is not significant; more are against parochiaid than are for it.[1]

While voters were evenly matched, it seemed, on parochiaid, they were also decidedly even on their choice for governor, a major factor in the campaign.

If there was a single factor that caused Milliken and fellow Republicans dismay during the campaign, and at the same time elates Levin and the Democrats, it was the series of Market Opinion gubernatorial preference polls published in the Detroit News.

Results of the first poll, published September 13, showed Milliken with only a narrow lead of 42 per cent over Levin's 40 per cent. Milliken's slight lead and Levin's surprising strength was something that, as each poll was published, changed hardly at all. (See Table 2.) But the polls were not just a mirror of voter thinking. They came to have an existence of their own, creating discussion and thought and having a strong bearing on the conduct of the campaign. Not only were they published in the state's largest-circulation newspaper, but also they were summarized in wire service stories, and given a wide audience

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[1] Detroit News, Sept. 15, 1971.

Table 2. Market Opinion Research Polls Published by the Detroit News on the Gubernatorial Candidates During 1970 Campaign.

	Sept 13	Oct 4	Oct 18	Nov 1	Nov 2
Milliken	42	44	47	48[a] (45)[b]	47[a] (42)[b]
Levin	40	42	43	45 (48)	46 (49)
Undecided	18	14	10	6 (6)	5 (7)
Other Candidates				1 (1)	2 (2)

[a]Indicates average voter turnout.

[b]Indicates high voter turnout.

through many Michigan newspapers, radio, and television stations. The impact of the polls on the candidates was pronounced. The first poll jarred Milliken and made him aware that losing the contest was a real possibility. He was no longer the companion of popular George Romney on a ticket headed for victory. He was alone, standing by himself and on his record, and the results did not appear encouraging.

The reverse was true for Levin. His campaign plan to achieve an image, to win recognition, had worked with greater success than even he had hoped for. He was very much in the race. What began for him as an uphill fight had become an even contest.

Jack Burdock, Milliken's campaign aide, saw an immediate impact on Milliken, causing the governor to display to intimate campaign workers personal concern they had not seen before. No longer was he aloof, above the struggle for votes he thought he had anyway. He worried, showed signs of dejection, and eagerly read each new poll as it was published. The News polls had a definite place in the campaign, Burdock believes.

> They were a very powerful influence on the campaign. Milliken reacted strongly to the polls; he was delighted if they were in his favor, or dejected if they weren't. They were important barometers in his mind, and the minds of his staff.[1]

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[1]Burdock, interview, May 15, 1971.

What Milliken told his staff, and the grimness he began to display behind the scenes was seldom apparent externally. Only two days after the first poll showed the narrow gap between himself and Levin, Milliken was in full control of his emotions at the September 15 press conference. The exchange between him and reporters went like this:

> Wright [WJIM-TV, Lansing]: Some pollsters say that you're behind in the race for the election. What is your comment?
>
> Governor: What pollsters are you referring to?
>
> Wright: The ones that say you are two points behind Senator Levin.
>
> Governor: I think the poll is the other way around. I have said right from the beginning that this race is going to be a good one, it's going to be a close one, it's going to be a tough one and, hopefully, it'll be one fought on the issues. And I'm pleased in noting the results of that poll that there is considerable Democratic support for me and independent support and, of course, I'm grateful for that. And I remain very confident about the outcome of this race.
>
> Lyle [WWJ-TV, Detroit]: The incumbent, that's not an enviable position to be in, only 2 per cent.
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> Governor: It depends at which point that position is announced. This is early in the campaign.[1]

It may have been early in the campaign, but Milliken in later dealings with the press would say little more about

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Sept. 15, 1970, p. 3.

the polls than he did at this time. Occasionally, he would say, "The only poll that matters is the one taken on November 3," but publicly he would not show great concern. To do so would have been to acknowledge that Levin was, in the eyes of voters, as politically acceptable as he. It is, of course, standard practice in politics to ignore unfavorable signs and emphasize the positive. That practice became the pattern of the Milliken campaign from which the governor deviated rarely. Conversely, Levin as an aspirant, could discuss the negative as often as he did the positive.

The press conference discussion about the first News poll, while abrupt, is helpful in other ways. Market Opinion found that Milliken was running a strong second among normally Democratic voters. Among Catholics, Milliken had 41 per cent support of the electorate, to Levin's 44 per cent. Currier thought this was because of the governor's support of parochiaid.[1] Even in heavily Democratic Wayne County, the poll showed Milliken running 30 per cent to Levin's 49 per cent. And while Levin took 52 per cent support among union members, 33 per cent preferred Milliken.[2]

Unfortunately, not more was said about the poll at the September 15 press conference. The previously-noted interruption factor appeared as Milliken displayed

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[1] Detroit News, Sept. 13, 1970.

[2] Ibid.

reluctance to talk further on the subject, and subsequent questions dealt with the auto strike.

But numerous problems were becoming apparent, as the poll reflected, beyond simply who was ahead of the other candidate. While Milliken had fairly solid backing from Republicans, he held only a slight edge over Levin among ticket-splitters, and captured only 60 per cent of the voters who had helped Romney to a record victory margin in the 1966 election. Not all states permit voters to split their tickets in general elections, yet this practice is a political reality in Michigan.

In 1962 Romney, with Milliken as his running mate, had scored a plurality of 80,573 votes over incumbent Governor John B. Swainson. Romney did much better against Democratic challenger Neil Staebler in 1964, with a plurality of 382,913. Romney's high water mark with Michigan voters came in 1966, when he defeated Zolton Ferency by 527,047 votes. At the same time, Michigan went for Democrats Lyndon B. Johnson for President in 1964, and Hubert Humphrey in 1968.[1] Aside from Romney's showing as governor, Michigan always placed its electoral votes in the Democratic column for President, and most state high offices, such as attorney general and secretary of state. It is necessary

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[1]Michigan Department of State, The Michigan Manual 1969-70, p. 862.

for a Republican to capture wavering Democrats, and independents to win, a feat only Romney had performed in recent years.

The early polls also disclosed that Milliken had little strength on his ticket. Lenore Romney, wife of the former governor, was trailing far behind incumbent Senator Philip A. Hart; Emil Lockwood was well behind Richard A. Austin for secretary of state, and Attorney General Frank J. Kelley faced no threat from Republican William Farr.

And for the State Supreme Court races, the Democrats had two former governors, Swainson, and G. Mennen Williams outdistancing incumbent Justice John B. Dethmers and Wayne County Circuit Judge Edward S. Piggins. It looked like a Democratic walk-away, with only the gubernatorial contest much in doubt. Currier attributed Democratic strength to recreation of a coalition of labor union members, blacks, and Catholics who gave Democrats winning margins up to 1962. The problems, as Currier saw them, were to keep the coalition components working together for victory even though they were closely allied idealogically in the 1950's and now were representative of the opposite ends of the spectrum on many issues.

> That means pulling the coalition together is more difficult. Another obstacle is that Republicans, during the 1960's, built their base primarily with

> middle-of-the-road ticket-splitters. These swing voters determine the results of most races in Michigan.[1]

The first Market Opinion poll on the gubernatorial campaign also indicated Levin had achieved his immediate goal of voter recognition. The poll, taken in late August, involved interviews with 800 voters. Currier said he believed Levin's convincing win over his primary challengers was helpful.[2]

Yet the poll was taken before the Democrats at their state convention approved the controversial amnesty resolution. Clearly the amnesty resolution, while it made headlines, had little to do with the campaign after all. The second News poll, published October 18, found both candidates gaining 2 percentage points apiece. (See Table 2.)

What remained in the weeks before the election was Milliken's strength with Catholic voters, and his ability to convince voters nothing of consequence had occurred during his two years in office to justify discontinuing the Republican administrations they had voted for previously. Levin had to not further alienate his coalition components, while trying to find a vulnerable spot in Milliken's armor.

To Morgan O'Leary, Levin's press secretary, the polls were a large plus factor, and substantiation of Democratic strategy.

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[1] Detroit News, Oct. 8, 1970.

[2] Ibid., Sept. 13, 1970.

> We always seemed to improve in every poll. It was a big psychological boost to everybody involved in the campaign. The biggest single question we had (until the first poll) was how well people knew Sandy. The polls made people see him more seriously.[1]

The News poll was even better, in results, than one the Democrats had commissioned for themselves. It was completed by Marketing Strategy, Inc., a Detroit firm. It had indicated Milliken was in front of Levin by some 5 percentage points, 45 to 40, with 14 per cent of the voters undecided. Results of the poll were announced by Jack Casey, of MG and Casey, Inc., consultants to Levin.

Casey said there were indications Levin would pull the undecided vote, that all other Democrats running for state office would win handily. Undecided voters also preferred Levin's stand on six of seven major issues, which Casey declined to define. "They should be obvious," and will be dealt with later in the campaign, Casey said.[2] And a key finding, he explained, was that 92 per cent of all voters want to see the two gubernatorial candidates engage in televised debates.

The proposal to debate became a persistent Levin issue. Levin's advisers believed they had hit on a technique with which they could not lose. Before their eyes danced the 1960 debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard

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[1] O'Leary, interview May 3, 1971.

[2] Detroit News, Oct. 1.

M. Nixon in the campaign for the U. S. presidency. Only in a debate forum could Milliken be forced to admit the state had problems, and his calm, controlled style be punctured. Levin, on the other hand, with the alterations in his physical appearance, and confidence gained from the polling results, would not appear as a Johnny-come-lately but a serious contender. And, after their heavy expenditures in the primary campaign to establish Levin's image, the prospect of free or low cost televised debates as a public service of television and radio stations would be a boon for the Levin campaign treasury.

Quick to press the debate offer, James M. McNeely, State Democratic chairman, only two days after Casey's poll announcement, said Milliken's office was avoiding the whole question of debates.

McNeely said Democrats offered to share the costs of a debate and had been told Milliken was considering the offer. Even if they had to pay half, an estimated $5,000, Democrats reasoned.that was a small sum for the television and general publicity exposure they could get.

If anything, Levin suffered from overconfidence, as the first debate between himself and Milliken became a reality on October 5 before the Economic Club in Detroit. Levin simply was not able to apply the sort of "Let's-get-America-moving-again" type of approach Kennedy had found so fruitful in 1960. He talked about Milliken's complacency,

the rise in state expenditures under Romney-Milliken, and his own concern for social issues. Milliken opened with a prepared speech defending his own record in office and stressing the limits of government's power to solve state problems.

Clark Hoyt, Detroit Free Press politics writer, called it a "polite and predictable" debate without much heat until the closing moments.[1] Milliken, waiting until the final rebuttal period when Levin would have no chance to reply, accused Levin of being an ineffective leader in the legislature. This had to do with the number of bills Levin had introduced in the session that had begun in January. Only one of Levin's bills got out of committee and it was not enacted.

This caught Levin at a disadvantage, and he issued a press release later saying the governor was in error. It was not for lack of effort, but rather because Republicans controlled the chamber that none of his bills got anywhere, he said.

The problem at this debate, and other encounters between the candidates, was that state issues were not juicy enough to be exciting. Or, if there was something Levin could chew on, he could not serve it up in the fashion he would have liked.

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[1]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 6, 1970.

Debates, at least to some observers, were a phony issue. Donald Hoenshell, capitol correspondent for the Panax chain of small daily and weekly newspapers, insists the debate issue had little relevance to Michigan politics. "An attractive incumbent never debates a challenger if he can avoid it; the challenger has nothing to lose," says Hoenshell.[1] The Democrats were to consume much energy in promoting debates, or calling attention to Milliken's disinterest in them, during the campaign.

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[1]Donald Hoenshell interview in Lansing, May 13, 1971.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN

It is popularly believed that a political campaign begins when the candidates get out among voters and start shaking hands and giving speeches. The campaign trail is an endless round of trying to communicate with the electorate. It is activity guided not so much by issues as by timetable. Appearance schedules are prepared days, sometimes weeks in advance. Local politicians are alerted to have supporters on hand when the candidate's car pulls up, or the organizers of a nonpartisan rally to escort the candidate to the platform.

Behind this are schedules, official drivers, escorts, boxes full of buttons and bumper stickers. Milliken toured the state with a somewhat larger retinue than did Levin because he had an ever-present state police guard, and actually two staffs: one as governor, and one as campaigner. One group of escorts is paid for by the public, the other from campaign contributions. During the first two weeks of October the handshaking-speech route was begun by Levin and Milliken without particular distinction. Polls aside, Milliken had but to continue his momentum to win.

Even the polls, Milliken told newsmen at a press conference in Detroit, on October 7, left him "quite pleased." Although both he and Levin each picked up two points in the News poll published October 4, Milliken explained that such figures could not be viewed in terms of a 100 per cent turnout on election day. Milliken ended the day campaigning in the Bay City-Saginaw area, addressing a gathering at Delta College and telling pickets outside a struck General Motors plant that he joined them in wishing the strike would be over soon.

Levin, too, was in the Detroit area the same day. He told members of the Michigan State Building and Construction Trades Council that Milliken had a weak record both as a state senator and as governor in improving unemployment benefits for laidoff workers. Later he spoke to small student groups at Eastern Michigan University and at the University of Michigan, and discussed with them the need to make narcotics and drug laws realistic. He also talked about the war in Vietnam, and civil disobedience. And he got involved in one of those little incidents that make plans go awry. To demonstrate his concern over DDT and other harmful pesticides Levin tried to purchase some in Ann Arbor, to show reporters that such substances were obtainable despite actions by the state to limit their availability. The first hardware store he stopped at refused to sell him any, and he had to try elsewhere. It

would not be the first time Levin, trying to use the dramatic example technique to embarrass Milliken, came off looking a little silly.

Several days later Levin cautiously clambered down the bank of the Rouge River in the Detroit suburb of Westland. He was out to prove that the state's waterways were polluted, and that officials in Lansing did not seem concerned. As a group of suburban mayors watched, along with newsmen, Levin turned up the cuffs of his pinstriped suit, removed his shoes and socks, and tried to scoop up a jar of river water, which had a surface coating of industrial oil and discard. Levin's purpose was to call attention to his plan to create an environmental protection agency with new anti-pollution powers. He was also critical of Milliken's claiming credit for passage of the bill allowing citizens to start lawsuits against polluters. Somehow that charge failed to come across as well as the spectacle of the candidate playing on the riverbank. Levin, in his zeal to pump some life into the campaign, was not above showmanship.

Away from suburban shopping centers, riverbanks, or campuses, both candidates were applying pressure to what they knew to be the weak points for each: commanding the support of loyal party members on election day, and appealing to independent or undecided voters. Levin visited union halls in the Detroit area to preach the message that

labor must get out the votes if Democrats were to win. Too often the voters who stay home on election days are Democrats, he said. He wanted assurance he would not lose through lack of motivation what was rightfully his.[1]

Milliken, meanwhile, was summoning Republican and district county chairmen to a closed-door meeting in a Lansing motel. He was concerned that the party was lethargic and complacent in the face of opinion polls indicating he was in a tough race and the other state-wide GOP candidates were in deep trouble. Party leaders were told to shape up or expect to be disciplined. "I have a memory like an elephant, and I will remember those who helped and those who did not," Milliken said bluntly.[2]

Actually, Milliken may have decided in his own mind by this point what the polls simply confirmed: only he and Brickley, who counted as one vote on the ballot, had much chance of victory. All the others--Mrs. Romney, Lockwood, and Farr--were doomed to defeat. He could not be dragged down with them; somehow he had to act as party leader, ballot leader, and secure his own victory without appearing to abandon the others.

At a press conference on October 13 at the capitol, Milliken was asked specifically whether he would campaign

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 15, 1970.

[2] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 16, 1970.

"shoulder-to-shoulder" with Mrs. Romney. His reply was revealing.

> If our schedules work out that way. I'm not sure that from her standpoint or mine that that's a particularly effective thing. Our problem, and the problem of every party and, I think, every candidate, is to see that the party's candidates are spread all over the state and that you have as little duplication as possible of the major candidates. But, on a number of occasions, our paths have crossed in the campaign and they will continue to.[1]

Beyond their staffs discussing strategy, Milliken conceded, he had no plans to campaign with her.

Burdock and other campaign aides were well aware of what was happening. There would be the appearance of a unified effort, but that was all. "When the opportunity presented itself, he (Milliken) would say something nice about the others. But there was no GOP ticket in the accepted use of that term," Burdock said.[2]

Levin, on the other hand, made himself very much a part of the Democratic ticket, of which by all indications he was the weakest link. During the first ten days of October Hart's endorsement of him was the main thrust of Levin's television campaign. This particular commercial opened with a black-and-white still shot of the bespectacled Hart, then dissolved into color pictures of

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Oct. 13, p. 4.

[2]Burdock interview, May 15, 1971.

Levin. The audio portion was Hart's voice intoning, "I'm proud as a Democrat and happy as a citizen to have a man like Sander Levin as my leader." It was the coattail effect that both Hart, but most especially Levin wanted this television spot to produce. If such an alliance was worth only a single percentage point of voter change, it would be worthwhile to the Democrats, observed Clark Hoyt, the Free Press politics writer.[1]

On its face, the assertion by Hart was ludicrous. A governor and a United States Senator do not have a working relationship. Hart in any case was already senior senator from Michigan, and a national figure. He needed no help from Levin, and to suggest the younger Levin was his "leader" sounded patronizing.

Yet clearly, Levin had nothing to lose and much to gain through voter identification with the other Democratic candidates. During a four-day period early in October, the News polls gave convincing evidence that public opinion, if close on the Levin-Milliken contest, was lopsided against the Republicans in all other major races. Kelley led Republican Farr 61 percentage points to 21; Austin was comfortably ahead of Lockwood 46 per cent to 33 per cent; and Swainson led the Supreme Court candidate preference poll with 61 per cent. Williams was next with 53 per cent,

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[1]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 20, 1970.

while Dethmers, the closest Republican, had only 23 per cent. Hart, according to the polls, had a 63 per cent preference with voters, or an incredible 39 percentage point lead over Mrs. Romney.[1]

In the last weeks of the campaign, the Hart endorsement commercial was replaced with another in which all the leading Democrats were shown together. Its slogan, "The Democrats Are Coming," was meant to hammer home the theme of Democratic unity and that a straight-party vote should require no voter hesitation.

For all of this, there were indications that the narrow edge Milliken was maintaining over Levin was that Levin had not found a position from which to press his attack, or that voters looked on the contest as a mild fight between approximate equals that failed to generate enthusiasm.

Tom DeLisle, a Free Press staff reporter assigned to campaign coverage, termed the gubernatorial contest a ho-hum affair with a comparative lack of controversy, hot debates and firery oratory. Each candidate was relying on what he saw as certain strengths to achieve victory. His appraisal of the style of each man was interesting, and remarkably similar. Of Milliken, he found that

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[1]The polls appeared in the News from the period Oct. 5-8, and to an extent summarized previous polling data.

> As Governor, Milliken has aroused neither fierce loyalty nor great distress among voters. He has a "nice guy" image that appears during his campaign travels to have persuaded many voters that he carries the mantle of the governorship well.[1]

Milliken looked for votes in the fact that he was the incumbent, said DeLisle. Levin, however, was first and foremost a campaigner who banked on organization and solid tactical planning. Levin, like Milliken, tried to be warm and sincere as he moved among the voters.

> Levin is likeable and quietly intense. He probes people he meets with his eyes. His personal touch is less automatic than Milliken's but also appears genuine.[2]

The week beginning October 18 seemed to Levin supporters a time to begin demonstrating to voters there was more than a little difference between the two men, and were some issues in the campaign after all. Yet the day's campaigning began in desultory fashion, with Levin by minutes following Milliken onto the stage of University of Michigan's Rackham Auditorium to talk about the evils of pollution, to a sparsely-filled room. It was still early morning, a delightful sunny day outside. Each candidate spoke without much enthusiasm, unraveling statistics and boring facts.

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 19.

[2] Ibid.

With a full day ahead, each candidate left the hall as soon as his speech was over, without acknowledging the presence of the other. Two vehicles attached to the Levin mobile campaign, a late model Chevrolet sedan, in which Levin and his intimates rode, and a Dodge station-wagon for transporting the press were parked at the auditorium steps. As the two-vehicle caravan left Ann Arbor, traveling down a sidestreet paved with red bricks, Levin took little notice of a sign on the lawn outside a Catholic school. The sign was painted in the same style of red, white, and blue used to signify federal public works projects. Its message, an expression against the anti-parochiaid amendment, explained that operation of the Catholic school represented a saving to taxpayers.[1]

The campaign cars moved on to U.S. 23 northbound, and at speeds up to eighty-five miles an hour eastward on Interstate 96 toward Detroit. The destination was the Royal Oak Township hall, administrative center for a predominantly black community across Detroit's northern city limits. Levin went there to mix with members of a club for the elderly, for the moment transformed into Democratic boosters. The elderly persons pushed powdered donuts and coffee in the direction of Levin and assorted newsmen who trailed in behind him, while he began his talk.

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[1]Based on notes taken by the writer.

Levin's preliminary remarks dealt with the problems of old people in general, such as lack of housing available for them in public projects. Having found an audience receptive to his view of social problems, Levin raised the question of Milliken's concern.[1]

"Where is the property tax relief the governor was talking about?" Levin asked the elderly audience, who looked back in bewilderment. It may not have been clear to them, but Levin was talking about the Milliken education reform package introduced a year earlier. A broad aim of that plan was to shift the burden of school financial support from local property taxes to another revenue source, such as increased state income taxes. A short-range goal was partial elimination of the credit income taxpayers had been receiving from the state on their annual income tax filings. This facet, enacted by the legislature, was not tax reform as such, but a quick way to raise additional funds for education during the 1970-1971 fiscal year by disallowing a credit permitting wage earners to get a writeoff on their property taxes. Since most income tax filings would not be made until early in 1971, precisely what the legislature had done at Milliken's urging was still misunderstood by many outside Lansing. Levin was determined they should know about it, and this took on the glimmering of a real campaign

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[1] Ibid.

issue. It would bear fruit in the days ahead, as Levin expanded on the state fiscal theme. But today, his claim that "Milliken had raised taxes by dropping the property tax exemption" fell on largely deaf ears. A few reporters made notes, but the comment was pushed aside by more scribbled words as the day wore on.

There was a lull during the next hour, as Levin made a walking tour around the corner of a small shopping center, whose businesses are operated mostly by black merchants.

He chatted with a few deliverymen, and talked earnestly with the attractive woman-owner of a party store about rising crime. She pointed out that the adjoining store was closed on account of the death of the proprietor, who was shot a few days earlier by a holdup man. A reporter from the Royal Oak Tribune appeared to chat with Levin about nothing in particular. Perhaps like DeLisle, the Free Press reporter, he wondered what was the difference between Levin and Milliken, and asked if Levin could tell him. "He sees how it (government) can be limited. I think about the potential," says Levin, with is eye-fixing sincere look.[1]

Lunch time approached, and the campaigners and newsmen, there were four this day, the writer, Hoyt of the Free Press, Jacqueline Korona of the Associated Press Lansing

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[1]Based on notes taken by the writer.

bureau, and Robert Lewis of Booth Newspapers Washington Bureau, hopped into the press car. After a stopover at the Levin state campaign headquarters on Woodward Avenue just south of Eight Mile Road, the entourage was on the road again, heading for Macomb County.

The main objective was a tour of the Macomb County government office building, in downtown Mount Clemens. Among the official greeters were Macomb County Prosecutor, George Parris, who was an opponent of Levin in the gubernatorial primary, and Gene Kolb, chairman of the state party's resolutions committee. Parris, asked whether he was jealous of Levin, told a reporter, "There's no hard feelings at all." Kolb, a chain-smoker, was still worrying about the draft amnesty resolution that caused so much trouble at the state convention.[1]

"I just don't know what the hell happened up their on the platform," said the bemused Kolb. "I just say it happened when we weren't looking." Still, he didn't think the amnesty issue would cause much trouble during the campaign, he said, but as he talked he fitfully lighted another cigarette.

This was a typically long day during the campaign. And it comprised one of those curious deadspots that campaign advisers to Levin or Milliken seemed to have a knack

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[1]Based on notes taken by the writer.

for getting their man into. In this case, the visit to Macomb was not complete without a bumpy journey to a marina on Lake St. Clair, to chat with the owner about water pollution. Levin and the rest spent most of their time standing on the causeway along a finger of land poking into the Lake, with few potential voters in sight. This sidetrip, it turned out, was made at the insistance of two loyal Democratic legislators from the area, Representatives Joseph Snyder and Warren Goemaere. As the sun set over the water, someone finally called a halt, and all piled back into the cars.

There followed one of those rare interludes, when a candidate unwinds, and newsmen observed him closeup. Levin was scheduled to appear at the Eighteenth Congressional District Democratic Committee annual dinner that evening, at Northwood Inn in Berkley, not far from his home. He wanted time to freshen up, and invited reporters to his home. Sander Levin and his wife, Victoria, nicknamed Vicki, and their four children live in an unpretentious two-story brick colonial on a quiet, tree-shaded residential street. In the twilight it could be seen that the white trim was peeling in places and no one had made a serious effort to rake the leaves.

Clawing for him as he went through the front door was his three-year old, blond-haired son Matthew. "'Crat, 'Crat, Governor daddy," squealed Matthew, to Levin's

delight and the smiles of reporters. Levin bid his aides and the reporters to relax in the living room. Mrs. Levin appeared wearing a black dress, not quite a mini, and long patent leather boots. She could be described as a talkative, but friendly Jewish housewife whose husband happened to be running for governor. The fact the Levins are Jews was, to this writer's knowledge, never mentioned publicly during the campaign. Levin made no effort to hide the fact, said he practices his religion more or less regularly, and believes it is of no importance that a Jew never before sought election as Michigan governor. The writer mentions this not to make a point other than to indicate there was no evidence of anti-semitism he could detect during the campaign. However, occasionally another newsman covering the campaign would privately allude to this, and suggest that Levin had a certain look of "Jewishness" about him that might have an undetermined effect on the voters.

But for a short time, Levin, in his own home, was simply both a family man and a politician. He rose to mix the drinks reporters asked for, and made sure everyone had a helping of crackers and cheese. Sitting on a hassock near Levin's chair, O'Leary commented on what was the key political event of the day. This was release of a copy of a letter the Democrats had obtained written by John H. Stahlin, chairman of the Citizens for Milliken Committee.

The committee was one of the chief fund raising units of the Milliken campaign, and Stahlin's letter was a bare-faced appeal for money under threatening conditions.

MacManus, John & Adams, Inc., the wellknown advertising agency holding the Milliken campaign account, was requesting immediate payment of $34,202.11, Stahlin wrote. The money will pay for "emergency broadcast payments" from the period of October 28 through election day. Stahlin said the situation was desperate, that the advertising was absolutely essential. "Our latest polls show Governor Milliken less than 2 per cent ahead of Sander Levin with undecided votes making the difference. The only way we will win," Stahlin wrote, "is to reach those voters with the T.V. advertising we've scheduled."[1]

Levin leaned forward on the edge of his chair, pleased to discuss the letter and what it indicated. At the least, he said, it showed Republicans were worried that he could win. O'Leary chimed in, "It's not news when Democrats need campaign money. But when it happens to the Republican Party under Milliken, it is news, and shows how far they've slipped since Romney." Levin nodded his head in assent. He smiled, and seemed rejuvenated after the wearying day. The living room meeting ended, and all departed for the Democratic dinner, spirits bouyed.

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[1]According to notes in the writer's possession.

Contacted by newsmen, Stahlin acknowledged the letter. The poll referred to was a private one commissioned by Republicans, he said. "But we're not taking any of those polls seriously; we're just working hard," he added, trying to brush off the letter's implications, which Levin and O'Leary were quick to interpret.[1]

Next morning, Tuesday, started early for Levin with a six o'clock plant gate appearance in Ecorse. He was back at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Detroit by nine o'clock for a breakfast press conference with several local Democrats, and Iowa Senator Harold Hughes, in town to lend his support. That evening, Levin was driven to the Pick-Fort Shelby Hotel for a meet-the-candidate session sponsored by the 5 o'clock Forum. The Forum is an informal, politically aware group of young adults in their twenties and thirties. As Levin walked down the two flights of stairs to the basement meeting room where he was to appear, there was no sign he would get an unusual reception. Milliken had addressed the Forum the previous week, and was "politely applauded" by some two hundred in attendance. The audience was at least twice that size for Levin, and as he warmed up on several questions of particular interest to young people, the war, abortion reform, and drugs, he managed to keep steering the subject back to the main topic of

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[1]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 20, 1970.

his address: taxes. Milliken had not been on the level, he had "sneaked through" a tax increase, Levin said. And perhaps for the first time, Levin successfully tied the governor's juggling of property and income taxes into an indictment of his budget methods.

> I know taxes aren't popular; so does anyone in politics. But that doesn't mean we should try to deceive people with hidden tax increases that don't reveal themselves until after the election. We shouldn't deceive people with vague talk of "revenue gaps" when what we mean is that the state is broke.[1]

Under further questioning, Levin admitted his alternative would be to raise taxes anyway, but through income taxes based on a graduated scale, rather than the flat rate method embodied in the Michigan Constitution. And to make the switch from flat rate to graduated could only be achieved with a constitutional amendment, approved by voters sometime in the future, which his election would not immediately produce. Be that as it may, somehow, Levin had made the transition from talking about unfair taxes to the state's being financially bankrupt. This was to become one of the most significant issues in the campaign.

The origin of the term "revenue gap" is unclear, but relates to Milliken's concern expressed in the past few days on the state's tax losses because of the General Motors strike. On October 17 he issued a statement saying the state was losing $4,000,000 a week in revenue it should

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[1]Text of Levin speech, p. 3.

be receiving from sales tax and other tax receipts. Levin's broadening of this point, extending it beyond the auto strike and into the realm of state budgeting, was perceptive. The generally warm response from the Forum audience left him pleased, and convinced he was on the right track. One of his advisers put it this way, "It's a clear-cut situation, where Sandy's position is opposite Milliken's."[1]

Just what kind of issue they had even the Democrats weren't sure, it turned out. At a press conference in Grand Rapids the following day, Levin attacked what he called Milliken's deception on the property tax credit, in more or less the same way he had begun the week in talking with elderly citizens in Royal Oak Township.

Some reporters treated the issue in that fashion, that it was something they had already heard. The Associated Press overnight wrap-up of the Levin campaign simply noted that Levin, besides visiting a United Automobile Workers local hall for a beer feast and political rally, was continuing to talk about property tax equity.[2] There was more than that involved, but perhaps even Levin didn't know how much. He did remark during the Grand Rapids press conference that the state budget picture has long been "shrouded in secrecy," adding that "I don't have the remotest idea of where we

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[1] Detroit News, Oct. 21, 1970.

[2] Lansing State Journal, Oct. 22, 1970.

are."[1] That there was something wrong with the rosy picture Milliken was giving of state finances, Levin was convinced, but just what it was he didn't really know.

It had been a peculiar week for Milliken. He made a few appearances away from the capitol, but tended to stay close to his office. He received a delegation of black clergymen there, and assured them he had done more than any previous governor to find salaried and non-paying positions for blacks in state government. The previous weekend, in addition to the gloomy report he issued regarding the automobile strike, there was an improvement in his public opinion standing over Levin. The third News poll, published on October 18, showed Milliken widening his lead from 2 per cent over Levin earlier to 4 per cent. The poll gave him a 47 per cent lead, to Levin's 43 per cent. (See Table 2.)

With the Democrats believing they had the kind of issue Levin might sink his teeth into, and Milliken increasingly preoccupied with the effects of the auto strike, it would seem the stage was set for something dramatic. What happened was one of the most comical, and at the same time unfortunate events of the campaign. It was a semi-debate at Dwight Rich Junior High School in Lansing, the evening of October 22. Co-sponsors were WMSB Television, the Michigan State University station, and the Lansing League of

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[1] Detroit News, Oct. 22, 1970.

Woman Voters. Over a period of weeks McNeely, the Democratic state chairman, had been insisting that arrangements be made for televised debates between Levin and Milliken. Milliken, at his October 8 news conference, had accused McNeely of "misrepresentation" on the matter, and with that indicated he had no desire to participate in such a forum. The subject came up again in connection with the WMSB show, designed to be a video taping of the candidates for later airing. Senator Hart and Mrs. Romney agreed to turn their appearance into a debate. Levin and McNeely insisted that Milliken do the same. This he refused.

Thus it was on the appointed night all four principals would be at the same location, but only two of them engaging in debate. Yet all would be responding to many of the same questions. This was because of prior arrangement by the producers, one of whom, Tim Skubick, was both a WMSB employee and an accredited capitol correspondent. His was but one involvement in a tangled situation reflecting little credit on newsmen.

Instead of clarifying whether the debate request from the Democrats was fairly considered, Skubick only would say, "My understanding was that they went along with it." To Democrats there seemed something odd about an employee of a facility operated by a state university, which is obligated to the state for operating funds, being so ready to agree with the governor. From the standpoint of newsmen covering

the event, there were several objections to the setup. Although the visual and audio recordings would be released for use by seventeen television and radio stations across the state, whose audiences saw the meeting as one of considerable public interest, the panel of interviewers were not drawn from the standpoint of professionalism. It was largely a student project. Skubick, besides being producer, was on the panel, with another WMSB reporter, and one from the WKAR radio station, also owned by the university. The only newsman appearing from a private news organization was William Kulsea, Booth Newspapers capitol bureau chief. Within the press corps Kulsea is known for his dislike of the television medium, but has other distinctions; he was an intimate of Milliken's predecessor, Romney, and has free access to Milliken for personal interviews. The session suffered from other defects in advance; all questions were carefully screened for "relevancy" and, as it turned out, virtually all questions were put forth during the time period allotted the candidates even when they showed a willingness to ad-lib, or other possibilities for topics appeared.

Compared to the rigid rules laid down for the on-stage segment, it became clear Levin, at least, had other ideas off-stage.

Levin arrived first at the school building, with his wife and O'Leary. They were shown to a side room from which they could walk down a hallway leading to a stage

door. Not long afterward, Milliken arrived with his wife, his son Bill Junior, Weeks, his press secretary, and a plain-clothes state police guard. They went into a room across the hall from Levin.

Newsmen waiting in the corridor outside were abuzz with rumors that Levin would confront the governor in the hallway.

That appeared to be his design as he came into the corridor and looked around, apprehensively. O'Leary, at his elbow, confirmed the rumor newsmen heard. Levin paced back and forth, and then the door to the governor's room opened and he stepped out. Milliken quickly covered the fifteen paces toward the knot of newsmen and Levin, and stretched out his hand to Robert Longstaff, a Booth Newspaper reporter. "Good to see you here, Bob," said Milliken, in what only could have been a conscious effort to ignore Levin.

"I want to restate my offer that we appear jointly," Levin began. As if expecting this, Milliken's reply came instantly."An agreement was made by you and me in August. I intend to maintain that agreement. Let's get on with it," he said, referring to the evening program in which he would be the first to meet the panel.

Levin insisted they hold a debate. "Governor, I just wanted to make it clear while we're here under the same roof . . .," Levin continued lamely. Milliken assured him

it was all perfectly clear, and as far as he was concerned he wanted no part. He turned on his heel and stalked off.[1]

It was a put-down. Although he continued to strut in the corridor, telling anyone who would listen that he was ready to debate and Milliken was afraid, Levin was shaken. Milliken called his bluff, faced him down, and to an extent, humiliated him. It was an undignified scene. And it was caused, in a way, by the presence of the reporters who wanted to see what would happen. If they hadn't been there it is doubtful Levin would have bothered. The debate over debates was the top story the next day of their appearances. Levin had trouble with his composure, and seemed worried, not so confident, when it was his turn before the panel. The encounter was uncharacteristic for Milliken, who was visibly upset, and angry. A television newsman who followed the governor backstage, heard him mutter, "That little son-of-a-bitch."[2] From that and similar remarks overheard by several persons, it was clear Milliken had a personal dislike for Levin, not just a politican's opposition.

The hallway debate was more exciting than the separate appearances of the candidates in the auditorium. Each discussed a range of topics, answered a few questions, and said nothing startling.

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[1] Detroit News, Oct. 23, 1970.

[2] Based on remarks to the writer made by several newsmen, Oct. 22-23, 1971.

The schedules given reporters for the last week of the campaign reflected the respective strategies of Levin and Milliken. The day after the face-to-face meeting with Milliken in Lansing, Levin announced a flying tour of five cities in the final days of the campaign.

It would be team campaigning, he said, with the theme, "The Democrats Are Coming," on which television spots would be based. On one day the Democratic team would blitz five cities, Detroit, Flint, Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo. Actually, they would spend little time at any of these stops, mostly conducting press conferences at the local airport. The Friday before the election the Democrats would campaign together in the three-county Detroit area. With Levin as he reeled off these plans were Hart, Austin, and Kelley. Edward McNamara, candidate for lieutenant governor, was elsewhere that day but would join the others the next week. Principal issues to be hit in the team campaigning would be the economy, taxes, crime, drugs, and pollution.

While Levin and his cohorts were ready to take to the air, Milliken was preparing for ground maneuvers. His would be a four-day tour of Lower Michigan, beginning in Detroit, traveling to Ann Arbor, Jackson, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Muskegon, back across the state to Midland, Saginaw, and finally return to Lansing on Thursday. He would spend Friday at his capitol office, and the weekend prior to the election in the Detroit area.

In many ways this would be the most significant period of the campaign. Democratic spirit was high, and Republican morale barely visible. And the week would give Levin what he had so long sought--an issue that would put Milliken on the defensive. All this was not so apparent as the candidates dutifully opened the week following the schedules prepared for them.

It began, for Milliken, in an auspicious way. Monday morning was cool and cloudy as he arrived in Detroit at a parking lot near the intersection of McNichols and Schafer Road, on the city's northwest side. Several school buses appeared to unload high school bandsmen. At a signal, Milliken, followed by three high school bands, set off at a brisk pace on McNichols. It might seem silly, or egotistical, that one man leads a parade that consists only of himself and three bands. But two of the bands were from Catholic high schools, and when the parade marched a few blocks to its destination, a Milliken campaign office, the composition and not the size of the gathering was significant.

A large number of those awaiting Milliken at the campaign office, besides adult workers, were students and nuns from nearby Catholic high schools. It seemed Milliken was collecting credits from his parochiaid stand. On large tables at the rear of the storefront office were envelopes addressed to every registered voter in the vicinity. A campaign worker explained that the mailing would be sent out

in a few days, and that every voter who could be reached by telephone would be called from the office and urged to vote for Milliken. Although Milliken, like Levin, had poured most of his resources into television ads, he had held something in reserve. Like the parade, which is faintly obsolete in a time of instant communication, the campaign mailing and telephone lists showed thought had been given other means.

From that point on the Milliken tour took on a dull sameness it never managed to shake. Reporters, amply provided for in a chartered Greyhound bus, seldom saw the sun break through gray clouds as the campaign moved on its fixed path. Every stop was meant to call attention to Milliken's accomplishments in a quiet, dignified way. That afternoon in Ann Arbor he dedicated 192 new housing units built through State Housing Development Authority revenue bonds.

For the most part, it was a soft sell. Milliken did not wear political buttons and, in fact, in his hand-shaking appearances he did not even urge a Republican vote. Invariably, he wished the voters well, saying he appreciated their interest. There were few spontaneous meetings with citizens. More often than not Milliken would be invited to talk to workers at their jobs in small manufacturing plants, or at student assemblies in high schools or colleges. Occasionally the tedium would be broken by a stop at a shopping

center. And in every town the governor's car, a dirty new Buick, trailed by the Greyhound, would stop at the local Milliken-for-Governor campaign office. The response was polite, but hardly enthusiastic; it was more like the governor's own behavior--dutiful.

The forced smiles, relentless schedule, and overcast sky all seemed to be weighing Milliken down on October 28, when he consented to a press conference at the Midland GOP office. He looked and was weary, and was confronted with a grave situation.

Milliken told reporters he was on the verge of drafting an austerity budget, a development he attributed to the General Motors strike. Milliken said the state faced a "very lethal" fiscal situation because it was losing $4,000,000 a week in revenues because of the auto strike. He did not expound on his possible efforts to deal with the situation, which translated as a deficit and would be interpreted by Levin as mismanagement on his part. Cumulative effect of the week was to tire Milliken with stops in out-of-the-way places. There was an added disappointment in Milliken's effort to rebut Levin's constant sniping at his record. It produced a tactical error, in the form of a "truth tally," a press release response Milliken's staff had begun issuing in refutation of specific points raised by Levin. One such tally dealt with a claim by Levin that Michigan's economy was an undiversified as it was eight years

previously. In the press release, statements attributed to Milliken assert that Michigan had made major industrial changes.

Reporters noted that the "truth tally" referred to the period from 1960 to 1970, yet Democrats controlled the governor's office until 1962, when Romney was elected. Milliken could not explain the statistics, since he hadn't seen them, and angrily turned on Burdock for answers. When corrections were made to the press release statement that night, it marked the end of "truth tally" during the campaign.

It was not the governor's attempt to counter truth, but his efforts to face up to and at the same time avert a mounting budget crisis that provided the real meat of the campaign now.

Levin, sensing the importance of Milliken's candor in Midland, and the release in Lansing of a report showing the budget snagged by falling revenues and rising expenditures, combined his arguments into one aimed at a single target.

At the end of his aerial tour of Michigan, on October 29, Levin accused Milliken of "mismanagement" of the fiscal program. That, coming at the end of a day of triumph, with the Democratic team being cheered at every stop, made it seem Levin had at last struck paydirt. Release of the report on state finances, by Milliken's budget director,

Glenn Allen, appeared ill-timed, unless meant to head off any eleventh hour attacks by Levin, with a careful presentation of fact according to the Milliken staff. Essentially, Allen was giving a preliminary account of the books from fiscal year 1969-1970, already nearly four months ended. Not a masterpiece of clarity, what Allen's report said was that the surplus for the prior fiscal year had turned out to be less than expected. Because the legislature, for the 1970-1971 budget year, exceeded Milliken's proposed level of spending, a deficit of $11,600,000 might be expected by June, 1971. And if the auto strike went on another few weeks, the state could lose $16,000,000 in anticipated revenue. What all this might add up to, Allen said he wasn't sure. He said an end to the strike, or general economic turnaround, would change the whole picture and could substitute black ink for red. Allen hedged on possibilities, but his report recommended that Milliken invoke an emergency provision of the state constitution to ask the legislature for help.

With the stage set for a clash between the candidates on a matter of great importance, the reporters had difficulty understanding what was being said. Allen's warning that unless action was taken by Milliken and legislators to cut back expenditures a $12,000,000 or so deficit would result in eight months, was immediately misread by some. The Free Press incorrectly reported that this was the sum of the deficit as the state began the 1970-1971 fiscal year

three months earlier.[1] Allen's report was not easy to decipher in any event. It was liberally sprinkled with references to Milliken's efforts to hold down spending, and taken together amounts to an official, "I told you so." This writer did not undertake an exhaustive search of Milliken's comments going back several months on the state budget, but at least during the campaign the governor had said nothing about the likelihood of a deficit. Further, Allen's report was filled with accounting terms and had no summary in lay terminology.

Milliken, back at the capitol only a few hours since the end of his outstate campaign swing, called a press conference. He read, in front of microphones and cameras, a strongly-worded statement condeming Levin.

> Senator Levin is doing a great disservice to the people of Michigan when he raises, as he has, in the eleventh hour of this campaign, the absolutely unfounded charge that Michigan is in a financial mess. This is totally political and totally untrue.[2]

As of the moment, Milliken added, the state was operating in the black. Yet because of the impact of the auto strike, Milliken said he was fully prepared to discuss with legislative leaders possible budget cuts to avert a real deficit later on.

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 30, 1970.

[2] Detroit News, Oct. 31, 1970.

Milliken had adroitly shifted blame to Levin for calling attention to the fiscal problem. He said Levin was hurting the state's image. To Michigan voters with a memory going back a decade, the question of the state's solvency had strong political overtones. G. Mennen Williams, Democratic governor during the 1950's, earned an apparent undying reputation as author of "payless paydays" when there was a possibility state employees might not receive a paycheck during a squabble between Williams and a Republican-controlled legislature. Romney, Milliken's predecessor, took much credit for reforming state taxation and spending and restoring economic reason. Now, Milliken was suggesting Levin would tear all that down and plunge the state into the turmoil of years past. Milliken said he even worried that Levin's gripes might hurt the state's credit rating.

Levin may have perceived the potential in the fiscal picture, but had trouble transmitting his thoughts. For some time Levin had been lumping Milliken with President Nixon as practitioners of "GOP economics": unemployment, inflation, rising welfare. This may have sounded good in noisy union halls, but this time it didn't seem to fit. Was Milliken responsible for state finances, without any help from Washington? If so, did it have anything to do with Republican economic policies?

Levin seemed to think so, and after the Governor's sharp attack on him October 30, the next day was content to

comingle federal and state policies. Levin complained of the "sorry record" of Milliken by remaining silent on Nixon economic policies.

Up to the election Levin never seemed to be able to capitalize on his single best issue. And by not specifying what was wrong, perhaps to many he appeared to be simply picking on Milliken and hurting the state's image in the process. Levin had no economic advisers, no budget office as Milliken had, and so perhaps was trapped in generalizations.

As previously noted, the gubernatorial press conference can be an important vehicle for transmitting a viewpoint. Milliken devoted a second special press conference, the day before the election, to another recitation of the state budget problems as he viewed them. This time Allen was the source of another report not minimizing the state budget deficit, but totaling what the cost to the state would be if Levin's spending programs were followed. Milliken, using this report, said spending proposals outlined by Levin as far back as the spring would add $500,000,000 if enacted. Other than reviewing his arguments of two days earlier, the sole purpose of this meeting was to attack Levin, or in some way turn the press conference to some advantage the day before the election. By this point, newsmen seemed uncertain who was right or wrong about what the budget figures and implications were. But they could

tell when the press conference was being used to a candidate's advantage. Milliken was asked whether this was so, and he vigorously denied it.

> First of all, I'm not initiating charges. I am responding to charges which were made about fiscal mismanagement of this state. I have submitted budget proposals through this office officially, and this budget is under attack, and I regret to say that it's under political attack.[1]

That evening, during a debate with Milliken televised at WKBD-TV in Detroit, Levin denounced his opponent for planting a "red herring." Levin complained that Milliken was trying to divert attention from real state budget problems to imaginary situations of what the cost might be if some programs he proposed were funded.[2]

Looming more important at this final phase of the campaign than state budgets was the probable turnout of voters. The Detroit News published two somewhat contradictory polls. The more important of which, appearing November 1, declared that a "normal" turnout for an off-presidential year should elect Milliken. This despite the fact the poll showed a 1 per cent loss for Milliken and a like gain for Levin since the previous poll October 23. The new poll gave a 48 per cent preference to Milliken, and 45 per cent to Levin. Because of certain shifts in voter sentiment, the poll added

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[1]Transcript of Gov. Milliken's News Conference, Nov. 2, 1970, p. 2.

[2]Detroit News, Nov. 2.

a further confusing note, in saying Levin would win if the turnout in the Detroit metropolitan area was unusually heavy. Levin was showing across the board gains among all voter groups, from young voters to core Republicans. Market Opinion Research attributed Levin gains to his approach to taxes, unemployment, and parochiaid.

The poll report concluded this way:

> The final factors in a race like this will turn on the undecided votes, shifts from one candidate to another, and turnout. Neither campaign appears to have caught the imagination or enthusiasm of the Michigan voters to date.[1]

The variables cited in the November 1 poll produced yet another, unplanned poll, on November 2. Currier, writing under the Market Opinion Research byline in the News, said a special recheck of voters in the Detroit metropolitan area was made the weekend when the November 1 poll was rolling off newspaper presses. This poll showed Levin gaining, and only 1 percentage point away from Milliken, in a "close" race. If the turnout was high, Levin would win handily, but depending on the strength of the trend to Levin, the poll indicated either candidate could win on an average turnout basis. Without stating it quite this way, Currier seemed to be saying the election was too close to call. Interestingly the headline over the front-page poll story, the final poll

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[1] Ibid.

report, read, "The Trend to Levin Is Continuing."[1] Yet just the day before, the headline above the poll story dealing with the weather variables and possible turnout, said, "Levin Needs Big Turnout, Poll Shows."[2] One implies Levin lacking strength, the other gaining.

The News did not have a monopoly on polls. The Booth Newspapers conducted one of its own, based not on random sampling techniques, but man-on-the-street interviews. The Booth poll, which the newspaper chain said was based on interviews with 1,000 registered voters, gave Milliken 51 per cent of the vote and Levin 38 per cent, with the remainder undecided.[3]

In any case, the state's two leading newspapers and virtually all the others editorially endorsed Milliken's election. The Free Press reasoned that Milliken would not have had much of a contest at all, if he did not have to carry the burden of a weak Republican ticket of state-wide office seekers and Mrs. Romney. The newspaper credited Milliken with bridging the gap between outstate and urban voters as a sign of his willingness and ability to bring the diverse problems of the state to objective consideration. The editorial minimized the role of the governor in state

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[1] Detroit News, Nov. 1, 1970.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Muskegon Chronicle, Oct. 20, 1970.

economic problems, merely suggesting they and the budget deficit would have to be confronted after the election. Levin, the editorial conceded, could also do well in the job, but said simply that Milliken would do better.[1]

The Free Press position was half-hearted, but optimistic. The News credited Milliken with restoring "civility" to state government as one reason for its editorial support. The newspaper expressed the belief that Milliken had concentrated his efforts in office and during the campaign on those governmental areas within the responsibilities of his office. It was for Levin's failure to confine himself to relevant state issues that the newspaper found major fault in him. The News also chastised Levin for his parochiaid position. The News was editorially opposed to parochiaid and Levin's lack of consistency on the issue, it said, was a serious objection to his being elected governor.

> Senator Levin's was the leading legislative voice against parochiaid and, going in, he raised the anti-parochiaid banner to symbolize his differences with the governor. But now he suddenly is ubiquitous; while still being against parochiaid he says he will also vote against the proposed constitutional amendment to outlaw it.[2]

The real choice belonged to the voters, and on November 3, under overcast skies in many sections of the state,

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Nov. 1, 1970.

[2] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 18, 1970.

and in the pivotal Detroit area rain, the voters elected Milliken. Because of tabulating problems in Detroit, where voters and election officials had trouble counting results from a punchcard-computer counting system, the outcome was not certain until the night of November 5. Milliken won by one of the narrowest margins in recent years, barely 50,000 votes, hardly a mandate, but a victory nonetheless. All others on the Republican state slate lost, giving the Democrats the satisfaction of sweeping everything but the governor's office.[1] It only remained for the candidates to shake hands and talk briefly with each other at the capitol, and hold press conferences during which they paid their respects to each other and thanked their supporters. The election was over, and the polls, the editorials, all that had been written somehow seemed right. Or was it?

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[1] Detroit News, Oct. 18, 1970.

CHAPTER V

THE ELECTION IN PERSPECTIVE

Why Milliken won the election and Levin did not could be the subject for endless discussion, but for purposes of this study an appraisal will be made of those factors concerning news coverage and use of advertising. In modern political campaigns each must be considered part of the information distribution system necessary to educate and motivate the electorate. In analyzing the gubernatorial campaign in Michigan in 1970 the writer must first isolate these factors, in order to turn to other variables and conditions. This is because research strongly indicates the two candidates were very evenly matched in terms of news coverage and campaign expenditure, and that a simple quantitative comparison does not explain why one candidate had a leading edge over the other. At the same time, however, these factors provide some clue as to why the election outcome was so close.

Turning first to the question of news coverage, the writer relies upon a study completed in November, 1970, at the University of Michigan Dearborn branch.

This study was a content analysis of some of the media which covered the 1970 campaign, and was undertaken

by a seminar under the direction of Walter De Vries, professor of political science. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the amount of coverage for each candidate was "balanced." During two periods, from October 18 through October 24, and again from October 29 through November 2, participants in the study monitored four television channels and five newspapers. Regarding the newspaper coverage, the study found that Milliken received substantially better coverage in the Free Press and Grand Rapids Press, with the exception of space in the Free Press, than did Levin. Levin, however, received better coverage in the Detroit News and the Macomb Daily. Although the Michigan Daily[1] was included in the study, its infrequent coverage of the campaign made monitoring difficult. The seminar detected a slight Levin bias. (See Table 3.) Interpreting these results, it appears the candidates did about equally well, since each had one of the major Detroit newspapers giving slightly better coverage. A weakness of the study, which applies to its observations of television coverage, is that it concerns news outlets primarily in the Detroit metropolitan area and outstate is insufficiently represented. Content analysis, averaging out the coverage on television stations, showed Milliken received about 52 per cent of the news coverage versus 48 per cent for Levin. (See Table 4.)

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[1]The Michigan Daily is a newspaper semi-independent of University of Michigan control, edited by students and written for the university community.

Table 3. Quantitative Content Analysis of Gubernatorial Campaign: Michigan Newspapers[1]

Variables--Coverage	Detroit Free Press		Detroit News		Grand Rapids Press		Michigan Daily		Macomb Daily	
	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin
Position	55%	46%	34%	66%	64%	36%	50%	50%	40%	60%
Presentation	57	43	46	54	63	37	50	50	26	74
Space	49	51	34	66	76	24	50	50	39	61
Banner	62	38	42	58	80	20	50	50	39	61
Reference	52	48	55	45	63	37	40	60	38	62

[1]The points received by these newspapers in the scoring system were translated into percentages for purposes of analysis.

Source: A political science student seminar at University of Michigan Dearborn Branch, under direction of Prof. Walter De Vries. The study was made of selected newspapers during October, 1970.

Table 4. Quantitative Content Analysis of Gubernatorial Campaign: Detroit Television Channels.[1]

Variables--Coverage	WJBK (2)		WWJ (4)		WXYZ (7)		WKBD (50)[2]	
	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin	Milliken	Levin
Position	54%	46%	50%	50%	42%	58%	62%	38%
Presentation	53	47	67	33	45	55	64	36
Time	57	43	75	25	42	58	72	28
Banner	50	50	-	-	-	-	100	-
Reference	53	47	60	40	56	44	69	31

[1]The points received by these channels in the scoring system were translated into percentages for purposes of analysis.

[2]Channel 50's results are based on only one newscast about the election during the period under study.

Source: A political science student seminar at University of Michigan Dearborn Branch, under direction of Prof. Walter De. Vries. The study was made of selected television stations during October, 1970.

If Milliken and Levin were about equally treated, on balance, in coverage by a major segment of the news media in Michigan, it is also clear the candidates devoted almost the same resources to their campaigns. Election expense data obtained from the office of Bernard Apol, elections director, Michigan Secretary of State Department, show that campaign fund allocations were in many ways remarkably similar. Analyzing their expenses for the primary and general election campaigns, it seems Milliken and Levin each spent approximately $800,000 total, of which each spent approximately $500,000 for advertising.

Milliken, or rather his campaign apparatus, did spend slightly more than Levin, but that is not enough to explain his margin of votes. It must be noted that Levin allocated significantly more of his resources to the primary election. He did have three primary opponents, although none was really any more serious a threat than Milliken's primary opponent. The reason for his allocation of larger sums to the primary contest were, as O'Leary, his press secretary and others suggest, to decisively establish the Levin image as a vital prelude. In that sense, for Levin the primary was an integral part of his overall strategy. While that was successful, as the News public opinion polls were to confirm, it also left Levin in a comparatively weaker spending position, in terms of total resources, than Milliken, in the main contest. Given roughly the same treasury as Milliken, Levin used his up sooner.

Even the data from the secretary of state may be suspect, however. Apol concedes that although state law requires that campaign expenses be filed, often the diverse campaign fund committees do so with their local county clerks, who in turn may be lax in forwarding the reports to Lansing. It would be possible to conceal expenditures under such a system. Likewise, there was a noticeable cross-over effect to some of the Democratic campaign spending. Senator Hart, recall, linked his name with Levin's in some television and radio commercials. It is difficult, if not impossible, to tell from the expense reports whether this endorsement kind of advertisement was paid for from Hart funds, or from Levin's.

The context of commercials has changed enormously over the years. Often the message is subtle, as in a particular Milliken advertisement the Free Press found objectionable. This depicted a little old lady easing her way down a shadowy street, fearful of footsteps behind her, with an off-camera voice explaining Milliken's desire to combat crime. The solution to crime, said the Free Press editorially and in reference to this advertisement, "will not yield to cheap sloganeering . . . What we see on the TV commercials and in the ads is not really the relevant political commentary."[1] Levin's advertisements, for example,

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[1]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 29, 1970.

relied heavily on the unity theme and coattail effect of his Democratic colleagues and often said little about him.

Sloganeering, and packaging of candidates does exist. A Columbia Broadcasting System documentary, aired nationally just two weeks prior to the Michigan election, suggests selling a candidate to the electorate today is not much different from selling toothpaste. Once television campaigning was an extension of old-style campaigning, principally speeches. Now the spot commercial, a thirty or sixty second blast during prime time, is dominant. They are used not so much to explore issues or explain the candidate's stand, as pound his name or image into the public consciousness. Mike Wallace, the documentary's chief reporter, said this isn't likely to change, "unless the American voter feels he's being had and tells the politicians so."[1]

The cost of television advertising is not cheap. A spot survey of political contests around the nation in the fall of 1970 found the cost average of reaching every one thousand viewing households varied from just over three dollars to fourteen dollars or more.[2]

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[1] "Television and Politics," C.B.S. telecast, Oct. 20, 1970.

[2] New York Times, Oct. 15, 1970.

With that kind of expense, even with the proved results of television advertising, new doubts have been raised about effectiveness. What happens in a campaign where the candidates have similar amounts to spend? Does the television advertising by one candidate tend to cancel out the other's, while giving no certain gain to himself? That was, indeed, a question that came up during the Michigan gubernatorial campaign. And, in the Milliken camp, at least, caused a turn to other forms of advertising.

Frederick P. Currier, the pollster, said he believes a change of emphasis in political advertising is occurring. "There will be less TV, more mail and telephone work,"[1] he told an informal gathering of newsmen three weeks after the Michigan election. Currier has more than the pollster's insight in this regard; the Milliken expense reports show that Market Opinion Research conducted $14,000 worth of work for the Milliken campaign organization. Currier himself insists that these projects were farmed out to others within his organization, and in no way interfered with Market Opinion's work for the News. That feeling is not shared by James McNeeley, State Democratic Chairman.

> All the way through the campaign the polls were favorable to us (Levin). They showed the other Dems way the hell out in front, and showed Sandy closer to Milliken than people thought he would be. But that

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[1]Remarks by Currier before Midwest Michigan Sigma Delta Chi Chapter, Nov. 23, 1970.

> writeup on the last (actually second to last News poll) writeup was questionable. Instead of saying it was a dead heat, he talked about the weather and its effect on the turnout. Until then, none of us questioned Currier's professionalism. But, after all, he was on the Milliken payroll.[1]

Aside from ethical questions, another point which could be raised about the News continuous publication of polling results is whether such repetition and publicity itself becomes a determinant of the election. Jack Burdock, Milliken's press relations man, expressed the belief the polls became a powerful influence on the conduct of the campaign. Currier believes polls are nothing more or less than a measuring device, not a stimulant: "More information may affect behavior, but you don't change peoples' minds."

Unfortunately, no poll was taken showing to what extent political preference polls influence such preference. But polls do influence campaign strategies. Currier, participating in a colloquium at Michigan State University a month after the campaign, said the Milliken strategy during the last two weeks of the campaign was to concentrate on three issues: taxes, unemployment, and the parochiaid controversy. He said the state-wide Republican effort was geared to appeal to middle-of-the road voters and those who lean to the left, while the national strategy (concerning

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[1]James McNeeley, private interview in Lansing, May 20, 1971.

senatorial and congressional races) was concentrated on the middle voters and those leaning to the right.[1]

Participating in the same colloquium was Professor DeVries. He had more than an academic interest in the Republican campaign, since he was also an adviser to Milliken. DeVries said the main problem in the Milliken campaign was how to convert the undecided 12 per cent of Michigan voters who were believed to approve of Milliken's actions (presumably discovered through polling, probably Currier's) to swing to the Republican party. Television, radio, and newspaper advertising along with personal letters were employed to cultivate the most favorable image of the governor.

> We emphasized his experience, showing how he is solving problems such as crime, drug addiction and pollution, presented him as a "warm and human" person, and used the slogan "Milliken--a leader you can trust."[2]

The Democrats were well aware of the Milliken media strategy, but somehow overlooked the fact his advisers in the closing days of the campaign were not devoting all their resources there, but shifting to other techniques.

Robert Berg, United Press International bureau chief at the capitol, noted this shift. He reported that Milliken was turning to newspapers and the mails to deliever his

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[1] State News (Michigan State University student newspaper), Dec. 4, 1970.

[2] Ibid.

message to a vital segment of voters.[1] The newspaper punch was delivered with more than 2,000,000 copies of a full color supplement. The supplement, scheduled for daily newspapers, mostly the Sunday, November 1, editions, traced Milliken's career and narrated his accomplishments and views. Some of the photographs showed Milliken with Detroit Mayor Roman S. Gribbs, a Democrat, and Democratic legislative leaders. The only other Republican candidate shown was James Brickley, his running mate. The direct mail campaign was linked to this supplement. It is a low-key recommendation to vote for Milliken, suggesting the voter study his record and the way he performs. If further information was needed, the letter suggested referring to the newspaper supplement, entitled, "The Governor." These letters, on what appears to be official type stationery, with the state seal, have the name of the voter-recipient typed in at the top. In combination, these campaign materials must have had some impact. Berg noticed later that the supplement, apparently to preserve its secrecy until distributed, was printed in Ohio, although the union "bug" or imprint on it was faint and indistinct.[2]

Whether the Democrats were aware of the paper bullets heading their way or not is unclear. After Berg and

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[1]Lansing State Journal, Oct. 22, 1970.

[2]Robert Berg, private interview, Nov. 15, 1970.

some other newsmen were calling attention to the projected Milliken newspaper and mail push, Levin himself was dismissing the effectiveness of what he was calling an "all-media" campaign.

> They're putting all their chips on the media, and ignoring local organization. If a person-to-person type of campaign matters anymore, we've got 'em. Our media plans are being concentrated on the last two or three weeks (of the campaign). It will hit at Milliken and his failures, where the problems have been tough and he's been weak.[1]

Evidently Levin believed media--in the sense of usual political advertising--would not make much difference. As the expense figures show, he was not able to commit the kind of resources to these vehicles as was Milliken, but still put up a respectable effort. Perhaps Milliken, through use of the newspaper supplement and personal letters to voters, conducted a different kind of "person-to-person" campaign than Levin thought possible. Certainly there is a difference in terminology. Levin considered the personal campaign as just that, meeting a lot of people. Milliken, however, developed an aloof style, as if grasping for votes were beneath him. As direct as a newspaper supplement and a letter may be, they are still only a representation of a candidate, not the candidate in person.

Since much of the advertising by either candidate tended to be subtle, and not as issue oriented as some of

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[1]Levin, interview, Oct. 23, 1970.

their statements to newsmen, it may be assumed that was the arena where the real rather than superficial action was taking place.

Perhaps Levin was counting on the news media to convey and interpret his statements, particularly his hard-hitting criticism of Milliken's budget handling. He may have come much nearer than he thought in untracking the predictable, planned Milliken campaign.

Burdock insists the tax and budget issues were "Levin's only real breakthrough." The audit report from Allen, Milliken's budget director, added enough fuel to the Levin assault that Milliken advisers were deeply concerned. In the final days of the campaign, MacManus, John & Adams were alerted to prepare a series of radio spots to respond to Levin's talk about the fiscal problems being the fault of the governor. Since there was no provision for this in the advertising scheme, an expert copywriter employed by the advertising agency on vacation in Ireland was nearly called back to Michigan.[1]

As it turned out, Milliken, during the final press conferences at the capitol in which he directly responded to the Levin criticism were deemed sufficient. This view is shared by McNeeley, who said he believed newsmen were unable to extract enough meaningful information from what Levin was suggesting to place the issue in focus.

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[1]Burdock interview, May 15, 1971.

> We got relatively little mileage out of a significant issue in the campaign. Perhaps it was too complicated for reporters to write, and editors keyholed their stories. I think editors assumed the national economy was more at fault than the GM strike.

O'Leary is also doubtful Levin was able to get his points across. He suggests Milliken "muddied the waters, especially when he talked about damage to the state image."[1]

If Milliken did so, he had the cooperation, although unintended, of newsmen who accepted what he was saying without benefit of their own audit. This problem finds the observer returning to the objective and conduct of participants in gubernatorial press conferences. Is there real opportunity in such settings to gather the information which, when disseminated, provides a sound basis for public decisions?

Hoenshell, the Panax publications capitol correspondent, believes the opposite occurs.

> Levin scored ninty-nine percent credibility, and Milliken zero, on the state's financial crisis. The week before the election Levin said the state was in desperate trouble, that unemployment would rise, that we would need an income tax increase, and better management in state government. The next day, Milliken [at a press conference] said Levin was inaccurate and doing the state a disservice. In retrospect, Levin was right and Milliken was absolutely wrong.[2]

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[1] O'Leary interview, May 3, 1971.

[2] Hoenshell interview, May 13, 1971.

It is not necessary in this study to evaluate conduct of the campaign by the political professionals, nor to conjecture how Levin might have won had he employed other techniques. It is interesting to speculate that he would have received more votes had he clearly marked his position on parochiaid and not equivocated about the constitutional amendment against it, which, incidentally, was approved by the voters. Rather, this study must call attention again to the issue of state finances, which as has already been indicated, was not well understood by newsmen and the public.

One example of interpretation placed on this issue during the campaign will suffice. The Detroit News condemned Levin for raising the subject at all.

> Levin hammers away at a theme of economic distress. Not the distress of the auto strike, which worries us all, but the distress of a state strangling in the grip of one industry and shaken by the whipcrack of national recession.
>
> The state's economy is not a political plaything. Economic progress should be bipartisan. And it is, until a detractor comes along to reinforce mistaken images and exaggerated stereotypes.[1]

Perhaps Levin could have said it better. It can be argued that if a candidate cannot persuasively present his point of view, then he does not deserve election to a public office where more than verbalization, but leadership

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[1]Detroit News, Oct. 25, 1970.

is required. Certainly it was not the job of the news media to flesh out vague notions put forth by a politician, to improve his stature. Yet a nagging doubt remains: was Levin correct, and issues he raised reported the wrong way? The Citizens Research Council of Michigan cautiously dealt with this question eight months after the election, in a report explaining tax increases proposed to the legislature, and sharp cutbacks in state spending. That report says in part:

> Almost from the beginning--in late July, 1970--when the governor signed the last money bills for FY [fiscal year] 1971, there were nagging premonitions in Lansing that general fund operations would be in trouble. The only question was how much the deficit would be at year-end.[1]

It would seem that "nagging doubts" can be swept away in a press conference by denying their existence, or suggesting someone else is at fault.

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[1]Citizens Research Council of Michigan, "1970-71 General Fund Operations," No. 842, June 14, 1971, p. 1 (mimeographed).

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