



GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

### Who said what and how many times

	Sept. 30 Foreign Affairs		Oct. 8 Audience questions		Oct. 13 Domestic Affairs	
	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Kerry
Terror-Kill	22-6	19-7	16-2	8-5	7-2	5-2
Iraq-Saddam-W.M.D	52-16-6	36-12-6	14-13-8	15-4-5	4-2-0	3-2-0
Afgh-bin Laden-A.Q.	9-5-6	5-9-2	5-3-5	2-4-0	3-4-2	2-6-0
Abu Ghraib-Sudan	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0
Korea-Iran	11-9	16-7	6-4	5-3	0-0	0-0
Tax-Economy-Jobs	1-0-0	1-1-0	36-5-14	22-2-11	31-9-8	22-3-15
Health-Medicare-Drug	0-0-0	1-0-0	11-6-12	21-7-8	27-2-3	26-11-11
No C.L.B.-Patriot Act	0-2	0-0	0-5	6-5	7-0	0-0
Gay-Lesbian	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1
God-Love-Family	1-3-0	1-2-0	2-3-0	0-0-1	3-9-9	6-1-8
Abortion-Stem cell	0-0	0-1	6-6	3-4	6-0	0-0
Sci-NASA-Computer	0-0-0	1-0-0	4-0-0	3-0-0	1-0-0	0-0-0
Enviro-Kyoto-AIDS	0-0-0	0-0-0	3-1-0	5-2-1	1-0-0	1-0-0

University of Miami  
Referee: Jim Lehrer  
Attendance: 62.5M

University of Washington  
Referee: C. Gibson

Arizona State University  
Referee: Bob Sheiffer



# Debate as reality TV

## Do Americans relate to their politicians through television?

by Aaron Williams

Twenty questions. The final round. Debate 2004: Go hard or go home.

"New question, Mr. President. We are talking about protecting ourselves from the unexpected, but the flu season is suddenly upon us. Flu kills thousands of people every year. Suddenly we find ourselves with a severe shortage of flu vaccine. How did that happen?"

This is not your great-grandfather's debate of 1858, when Lincoln and Douglas put the audience to sleep with hour-long opening statements. This is the new road to the White House. Today's candidates do not give opening statements, and they hold the floor for no more than two minutes at a time. It is all about performing in crunch time.

"President Bush, it's Colonel Mu'ammarr Gaddafi on the phone. Yeah, the guy from Libya. He says that he's tired of being a second-string terrorist. He's either going to peacefully disarm his weapons of mass destruction or blow them all sky high. You've got 90 seconds to reply, with a possible 30-second extension."

On the other side of the television screen, today's voters prefer to read body language instead of campaign literature. They watch intently for signs of strength or weakness: fist pounding, finger pointing, face scratching and stuttering. It's as if the viewing public would trade the national debates for two handshakes and maybe a quick sniff of the candidates.

With the cameras rolling, the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD)—an undemocratic mouthpiece for the two-party system—brought us the third and final presidential debate Oct. 13 from Arizona.

George W. Bush came out "on fuego." Widely criticized for slouching and scowling during the first debate, Mr. President was expressive and enthusiastic, right from the opening coin flip. Even his aggressive eyebrows were tipping the scales of this dead heat into the favour of the Republicans.

Then suddenly, everything changed. The second question wasn't about Abu Ghraib prison abuse (the CPD seems to have barred any mention of this embarrassing issue); instead, it was a flu vaccination question from out of nowhere. Caught off guard, the president struck out.

During his ill-formed response,

Bush mentioned that half of the vaccination was made in England (outsourcing American jobs is strike one), Canada was attempting to cover the shortage (strike two for relying on unsafe Canadian pharmaceuticals), and healthy citizens should not take their flu shot this year (strike three).

Bush's slump continued with the next question. When asked what he would like to say to unemployed American workers, Bush declared that he is helping to send them back to school. Certainly this is not what victims of downsizing want to hear.

After these blunders, Bush tensed up, and his early enthusiasm was replaced by soft-spoken answers that really said, "Hey coach, I need a breather."

Meanwhile, behind the Democratic podium, Senator John Kerry was "in the zone." The formerly bland and boring Kerry managed to appear stoic and steady. Masterfully shifting eye contact from moderator Bob Schieffer to the studio audience and then directly into the television camera, Kerry punctuated his remarks with "we can do better" and "you decide."

The only turnaround of the evening came when Schieffer asked the two men what they had learned from the strong women in their lives.

Bush responded with his trademark personality and charm, saying, "to listen to them" and then, "to stand up straight and not scowl." Sensing that the American people wanted more even humour, Kerry also tried his hand at a joke. Not having any clue, he borrowed a well-known Bush quip, saying that both candidates had "married up." Somehow, this comment was less warm and fuzzy coming out of the senator's mouth. Perhaps it is due to the fact that Laura Bush is a schoolteacher, while Teresa Heinz Kerry is a billionaire.

In the final analysis, it seems that George W. Bush may agree with his father's views on the presidential debates: "It's too much show business and too much prompting, too much artificiality and not really debate."

Unfortunately for the Bushes, the American people relate, almost exclusively, to their presidents through television.

Here's hoping that the family teaches this lesson to the next in line: Florida governor Jeb Bush. Two single-term presidencies are enough for one family.

**Martlet meetings!** mon & thurs  
11:30 am