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Health Insurance Association of America

May 2, 1991

Michael Sheehan
Sheehan & Associates
1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Michael:

On the behalf of the HIAA, I want to thank you for your contribution to our 1991 Annual Meeting and Insurance Forums. Your participation as a speaker for the session on "The Image of the Health Insurance Industry" is appreciated and your comments helped to improve the understanding of our members on this important subject.

Although the formal evaluations are not complete, feedback from our members indicates that this session was very worthwhile. Thanks for helping to make our first combined meeting a success.

Please send me or Norene Yoch your expense statement and receipts at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harvie E. Raymond".

Harvie E. Raymond, FLMI
Director, Insurance Products

HER/mkk

cc: Pat Schoeni



**DELTA DENTAL
PLANS ASSOCIATION**

211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Phone (312) 337-4707

May 8, 1992

Mr. Michael Sheehan
Sheehan & Associates
1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C.

Dear Michael:

I just wanted to say thank you for our recent media training session. Your technique is very effective and I believe the participants found it very educational and enjoyable. They certainly came away with an appreciation of what it takes to give a good interview. Several people have asked us to offer a follow-up program later this year, and I'll be touch with Joanna if and when we decide to proceed with this.

Mike Grossman and I have been working on our message development and he, too, was very complimentary of you and the training. We've identified our four main points and are working on the emotional or sound byte angle.

Again, thanks for all your help. I look forward to working with you again.

Sincerely,

Kim E. Volk
Assistant Vice President
Communications & Corporate Services

cc: Dom Ruscio

May 12, 1992

Michael Sheehan
Sheehan Associates
1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C. 20036

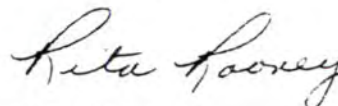
Michael:

Your talk during our conference generated an across-the-board top evaluation by everyone attending. I can't remember when that has happened before.

Of course, having you as our lead speaker caused people to question "How are you going to top this?" Fortunately, the result was a little akin to the biblical story of the wedding feast at Canaan -- in the end everyone appreciated having the best wine served first.

Thank you so much for participating and for giving our members such a really valuable hands-on presentation.

Sincerely,



Rita Rooney
First Vice President

RR/pm



Delaware Valley Hospital Council

February 10, 1992

Michael Sheehan
Sheehan Associates
1901 L Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Michael:

Just a note of thanks on behalf of the council to express our satisfaction with last week's media training session.

The opportunity you provided for discussion of critical issues such as executive salaries and joint ventures was invaluable. Virtually everyone who attended noted on their evaluation that the quality of your presentation was excellent.

My thanks as well to your staff, particularly Debra, for her assistance with coordinating the training and providing materials.

We look forward to working with your team again in the future.

Sincerely,

Jill Hersh
Staff Associate, Public Information
and Government Relations



JOAN BARALOTO
DIRECTOR, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1000 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VA 22209
(703) 276-5320

December 19, 1989

Mr. Michael Sheehan
President
Michael Sheehan Associates, Inc.
1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Michael:

When we began considering people who might be our "top bananas," your name came to mind immediately.

We hope you enjoy being among our champions!

Enjoy.

Sincerely,

Joan Baraloto -- and the
entire CLASSLINE Staff

**DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL
CONVENTION
1992**

PO BOX 1992 NEW YORK NY 10116-1992 PHONE 212 290-1992 FAX 212 290-1988

July 21, 1992

Mr. Michael Sheehan
Sheehan Associates
1901 L Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Michael,

Well, the reviews are in and everything I have read has been very positive concerning the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Probably the most positive review is the tremendous "bounce" in the polls that the Clinton/Gore campaign received. In some small way maybe we all had an effect on history.

I want to thank you for all of the time and hard work you put in on this production. Also, please thank Dan for me-you guys were great. Good luck in all of your future endeavors and hopefully we will get the chance to work together again.

Regards,



Ricky Kirshner
Executive in Charge of Production

Joanna Caplan

Director of Marketing

1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036

202-452-9455

Affiliated with Ogilvy Adams & Rinehart,
an Ogilvy Company





November 10, 1992

Mr. Eli J. Segal
President
Bits & Pieces
The Great International Puzzle Collection
575 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Mr. Segal:

Michael Sheehan very much enjoyed working with you in preparation for the three Clinton-Bush-Perot debates. Once you are back at your desk, he thought you would be interested in looking over the public relations materials of his company, **Sheehan Associates**.

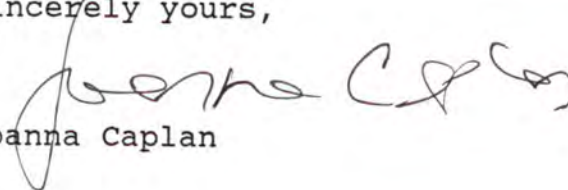
Founded in 1981 by its president and chief trainer, Michael Sheehan, **Sheehan Associates** is a communications training firm specializing in media training, presentation and public speaking training, government testimony preparation, message development and crisis communications work.

We provide individualized programs for major national corporations (American Express, Waste Management, B.F. Goodrich), financial organizations (J.P. Morgan, Oppenheimer Management Corporation), trade associations (Health Insurance Association of America, American Medical Association), public interest groups (Wilderness Society, The Annie E. Casey Foundation), labor unions (four of the AFL-CIO's largest affiliates), utilities (Pepco, Southern Co., Central Maine Power), professional athletes and political candidates.

Our work has been profiled in THE NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, THE HOUSTON POST, PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HOTLINE, CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS, THE NATIONAL JOURNAL, WASHINGTONIAN MAGAZINE, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, NEWSDAY and elsewhere.

I know that Michael would be delighted to hear from you when you are next in Washington, D.C. or before.

Sincerely yours,


Joanna Caplan

202-452-9440

1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C. 20036

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Media Training

Public Speaking

Government Testimony

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SHEEHAN
ASSOCIATES

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*Case Studies &
Special Projects*

sa

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*Message & Soundbite
Development*

sa

SHEEHAN
ASSOCIATES



Michael Sheehan

Michael Sheehan has been a leader in the field of communications consulting for a decade. His firm, Sheehan Associates, specializes in media training, public speaking coaching, and government testimony preparation. Michael is also the Senior Media Consultant and Director of Media Training for Powell Adams & Rinehart an Ogilvy Company.

His client list includes major corporations (American Express, Gillette, Xerox, Weyerhaeuser); trade associations (American Bankers Association, American Medical Association, Association of Trial Lawyers of America); public interest groups (Children's Defense Fund, People For The American Way, March of Dimes); and the Federal Government (Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Navy, Environmental Protection Agency).

Michael has prepared numerous corporate spokespeople for many national interview programs: Nightline, MacNeil/Lehrer, Today Show, Meet the Press, Face the Nation, 20/20, Financial News Network, and others. As a confrontational debate specialist, Michael is one of the most utilized trainers in the country. He prepares representatives to step into the hot media/public affairs spotlight, including national spokespeople for the nuclear, tobacco, medical, and waste management industries.

In addition to serving as media advisor to Presidential Primary candidates Richard Gephardt, Bruce Babbitt, and Albert Gore; Michael was Debate Coach for Senator Lloyd Bentsen's 1988 Vice Presidential debate.

He received his BSFS from Georgetown University and his MFA from the Yale School of Drama. Profiled in national publications from *The New York Times* to *The Washington Post*, *Washingtonian Magazine* named Michael Sheehan "One of Washington's 100 Future Leaders." In 1988 the *Presidential Hotline* honored him as one of the Democratic Party's ten most valuable players.

1992 SHEEHAN ASSOCIATES RATE SCHEDULE

SESSIONS TAUGHT BY MICHAEL SHEEHAN

Individual Class: (full day) - \$2,500

*Individual Class: (one half day) - \$1,600

Group Classes: (one full day)

2-3 Trainees \$3,000

4 Trainees \$3,500

5 Trainees \$3,750

6 Trainees \$4,000

7-12 Trainees \$4,750 (2 Trainers)

SESSIONS TAUGHT BY SENIOR ASSOCIATES

Individual Class: (full day) - \$2,000

Individual Class: (one half day) - \$1,200

2 Trainees \$2,500

3 Trainees \$2,750

4 Trainees \$3,000

5 Trainees \$3,300

6 Trainees \$3,800

7-12 Trainees \$4,300

Half Day Workshops: \$3000; on such topics as:
How to Work Effectively with the Media
Framing Your Message and Making It Work For You
Building Your Organization's Image

Crisis Communications Training - Two trainers and video news
bulletin - \$6,000 - \$10,000 a day - depending on the number of
participants, need for prior research, etc.

Travel time billed for out-of-town work will be assessed as
follows: \$375 for 2-4 hours; \$575 in excess of 4 hours.

*NOTE: All sessions west of the Mississippi will be charged for
a full day.

sa
SHEEHAN
ASSOCIATES

202-452-9440

1901 L Street, N.W.
Suite 320
Washington, D.C. 20036

Stuttering consultant loosens others' tongues

By Siobhan McDonough
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

He's got all the makings of a politician; he's over-scheduled, hard-working, constantly meeting with high-profile people. Most important, Michael Sheehan is a singularly skilled communicator.

Working from dramatic first-hand experience, Mr. Sheehan, a communications professional, advises several of the nation's high-ranking senators, including Lloyd Bentsen, Al Gore and Richard Gephardt on how to overcome barriers in public speaking.

And who better to have as a coach than a person who understands every day what it's like hurdling a communication barrier of his own?

Mr. Sheehan struggles with a speech impediment even as he teaches politicians, office-seekers and corporate executives the art of communication.

"I still stutter pretty frequently,

but not severely," says the 41-year-old president of Sheehan Associates, whose partial triumph over stuttering recently earned him the Council on Communicative Disorders' Individual Achievement Award.

His clients, co-workers and friends all agree that the award for outstanding personal and professional accomplishments by a person with a communication disability was well-deserved by Mr. Sheehan.

"It is unique not only in that he has excelled in the business he is in — the communications industry — but that he excels in the field in which he has a disability," says Tom Smith, spokesman at the National Speech-Hearing-Language Association.

After experiencing serious periods of stuttering during grammar school, the determined Mr. Sheehan discovered "silly tricks" and techniques as a means of controlling it.

During an "artificial new start" in high school he joined the debating team and speech and drama clubs to force himself to face his lifelong communication problem.

"I can remember some horrid tales of my stuttering," Mr. Sheehan says.

One of his worst memories is from grammar-school days. While on an errand for his grandmother to buy cat food at the local store, the fourth-grader, too short to reach the product on the top shelf, went to the store clerk to ask for help. After locking on the letter "c," he says he gave up.

"I got a little disappointed and went back to my grandmother's and said they ran out of [cat food]. I lied to my grandmother," he says, adding, "I was mortified, and I don't think the cat was too thrilled either."

A native of New York City, Mr. Sheehan came here as a student at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. While pursuing an interest in the local theater he interned at Ford's Theatre.

Describing the technique he uses with clients, Mr. Sheehan says today's training technique is the result of yesterday's "intermittent bad periods of stuttering" combined with years of theater training.

"He's got a spectacular talent at telling people what they probably already know but haven't found out yet," says Mike McCurry, a former Sheehan Associates client. "He's the best Democratic media consultant-coach there is."

Capitol Hillers became aware of Mr. Sheehan when he was an associate producer at the Folger Theatre in the late 1970s lobbying for federal money for a theater grant program.

Mr. Sheehan explains: "I got these kinds of calls from secretaries who said, 'My boss has to give a speech next week, and he's not really so good at that; you must know something about this since you do Shakespeare. . . . ' Or, 'My boss has to go on TV and he's nervous about it. Could you help him?' "

The days of coaching politicians as a personal favor to "be nice to some of the Hill contacts" are over.

Established 10 years ago, Sheehan Associates charges \$2,000 to \$4,000 for a day-long session during which clients concentrate on public speaking, media training or preparation for appearing at government hearings.

One of a very few top Democratic media trainers, Mr. Sheehan is a regular speaker at campaign training seminars sponsored by Campaigns and Elections Magazine, according to publisher Scott Berkowitz.

Testimony to his effectiveness and increasing popularity in Democratic circles is Sheehan Associates' long list of clients, including politicians — former House Democratic Whip Tony Coelho, Sen. Robert Byrd, former Sen. Jim Wright, Rep. Patricia Schroeder and Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown. Corporate executives from Xerox and American Express as well as trade association and labor group leaders go to Mr. Sheehan to polish their communication skills.

"He is probably one of the best communication advisers I've ever been around," Mr. Smith says. "When you consider that he has a stutter, it's pretty phenomenal what he can do."

Mr. Sheehan is training senatorial and gubernatorial candidates, readying them for the 1992 elections. He is a consultant to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and is already scheduled to work at the Democratic party's 1992 convention.

While he would not talk about any of his current clients, he did make the following observations:

■ Sen. Paul Tsongas: "If you spend an hour in a room with him you'll leave convinced there's nobody smarter in the race. Building up an ability to be a mass communicator may be difficult for him, though."

■ Sen. Jay Rockefeller: He "comes across better on TV than he has in the past. His stump speech is very clear, competent, but you don't see fire in his speech. He needs to inspire and incite in the stump

speech. He's got warmth, ease, but passion is missing."

■ President Bush: He "is always stellar, brilliant in main speeches. The big lie in 20th-century politics is that George Bush is not a great communicator. At every important forum where Bush had to be brilliant he was brilliant. The little stuff in between isn't so stellar, like the individual press conferences and the goofy stuff that people remember."

■ Vice President Dan Quayle: He "is too self-conscious. He's not sure which hand to move forward when he walks, he's so paranoid now. He's more comfortable in the attack mode than in self-promotional role. One story of the 1992 campaign will be the sudden emergence of Quayle as a more credible candidate."

■ Gov. Douglas Wilder and Sen. Charles Robb: "I doubt they will run. There are some things style can't override. Maybe if these two start talking issues, it'll change."

■ Gov. Mario Cuomo: "The reason why everyone wants him to run is not solely based on his record. He's a dynamic speaker, extremely good at media interviews."

Two people in politics whom Mr. Sheehan says are worth keeping an eye on as up and coming are Rep. Mike Espy of Mississippi and Lana Garrello, chairwoman of the Texas Railroad Commission.

Wary of being described as a political image consultant, Mr. Sheehan says he'd be surprised if he spent even four minutes in a session on wardrobe and color recommendations for his clients.

"I'm more concerned with public speaking — what you say and how you say it," he says, adding "I don't do 'Color Me Beautiful.' "



The Washington Times

SEPTEMBER 4, 1991

IN PERSON: MICHAEL SHEEHAN

A KNUTE ROCKNE FOR POLITICAL SPEAKERS

BY AMY D. BURKE

"All the world's a stage," Shakespeare mused, "and all the men and women merely players." But for Michael Sheehan, a Democratic speech coach, politics takes center stage, and politicians have the leading roles. "I could write a book about the similarities between the theater and politics," he said, "both in terms of the dynamics involved and the emotions that come into play."

Sheehan, 40, began his unconventional career in a fairly conventional fashion (by Washington standards, anyway), graduating from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1973. "Having carefully calculated my career track," he said, "I got a fellowship to the Yale School of Drama—the expected line." In 1976, after earning a master's degree in fine arts, he headed back to Washington to become the associate producer at the Folger Theatre. And it was the Folger's proximity to Capitol Hill, as much as anything else, that would transport Sheehan from the world of theater into the world of politics.

"About two or three years into my tenure there, I would start to get occasional calls from a random press secretary or administrative assistant two blocks away," Sheehan recalled during a recent interview. "And the call would always go something like: 'My boss has to give a speech next week, and he's not the best speech giver. You must know something about this. You do Shakespeare.'"

In 1981, after five years in theater, Sheehan said, "I burned out completely and decided to open up my own business." So he began doing such allied work as media training and speech coaching. "About two years into it," he said, "it just took off like a rocket."

Two incidents gave Sheehan the boost he needed to become established as a political speech coach. First, he went to talk to Raymond D. Strother, a Democratic media consultant. "And there's just this long pause, and he looked at me and said, 'Son, you are in the right place at the right time,'" Sheehan recounted, with a good imitation of Strother's Louisiana drawl. Strother then retained Sheehan to work with almost all his clients.

Sheehan's second stroke of good luck came when Rep. Tony Coelho of Califor-



nia, then the chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, wanted someone to help prepare candidates to meet with the news media. After he conducted a half-day training session, Sheehan was put on retainer with the committee. "It just exploded after that," Sheehan said.

"I started looking around as to who I felt not only had the knowledge but had the personality" to do the job, Coelho recalled, which led him to Sheehan, whom he calls "one of the premier coaches in the business."

Coelho also arranged for Sheehan to coach speakers at the 1984 and 1988 Democratic National Conventions. Sheehan did the same this year in New York City.

Although Sheehan was available to all the speakers at this year's convention, some of them—Gov. Mario M. Cuomo of New York, for example—didn't need any coaching. "All we had to do was open the door and let him in," Sheehan said.

Others, however, needed some help mastering the split-screen teleprompter. "You have nothing in front of you," Sheehan explained, so the trick is to "not look like you're watching a tennis match at Wimbledon." One speaker who needed some help adjusting to the dual teleprompters was Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa who, after getting the hang of the split screens, proceeded to give what Sheehan described as "a wonderful, brilliant, personal speech."

Sheehan also coached Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia, who delivered a rousing keynote address. "He took this little mountain boy from Georgia and helped him deliver a good speech," Miller said.

As a speech coach, Sheehan concentrates mainly on preparing candidates for press interviews and working with them to hone their stump speeches, but he also helps edit their speeches and makes suggestions for punch lines and the like. "Anyone can give one brilliant speech," he said. "It's the matter of being able to give it three times a day, six days a week, which is really what I try to work with people on, because that's the tough one."

Only about 15-20 per cent of his work is for politicians; the rest is for corporate, trade and public-interest groups. Sheehan would like to work even less with politicians because, as he put it, "it can eat you up, in terms of the time and the attention that it demands."

Fortunately, coaching speakers appears to spark the same level of excitement as opening night. "There's something that once the curtain goes up or once the debate starts or once the speech begins, that's it—off it goes."

After having what he calls the earliest mid-life career crisis ever, Sheehan seems to have found his niche in the world of politics. Even though he produced 42 theatrical productions, including one on Broadway, he has no plans to return to the stage. "This drama," he said, "is a lot more interesting."

Houston Chronicle

Tuesday July 14, 1992

Game gives Guerrero a run for fans

Texas rising star's first pitch clashes with sports telecast

By CINDY RUGELEY
Houston Chronicle

NEW YORK — When Lena Guerrero makes her first pitch to a national television audience tonight, she'll be facing baseball's finest.

Guerrero, chairwoman of the Texas Railroad Commission, takes the podium to talk to the Democratic National Convention about jobs as the elite of America's national pastime — the American and National League All Stars — take the field in San Diego.



Guerrero

It will be the most challenging game yet for Texas' fastest-rising political star. "I think it's going to be tough," said Guerrero. "Fortunately, the game will only be on one channel."

Guerrero is one of six women selected to give speeches tonight, an evening dubbed "girls night" by some Democrats as a response to the "boys of summer" in the midsummer baseball classic.

The other speakers are Colorado Rep. Pat Schroeder, California Treasurer Kathleen Brown, Oregon Gov. Barbara Roberts, Washington, D.C., Mayor Sharon P. Kelly and Elizabeth Glaser, who carries the AIDS virus.

The women and a number of male luminaries will address issues that Democrats believe will be critical to the fall campaign. Jesse Jackson will discuss education; Sen. Jay Rockefeller, health care; and Sen. Tom Harkin, the economy.

Jimmy Carter, the last Democrat to win the White House, also will speak tonight.

"I feel really privileged to have



Knight-Ridder / Tribune

Podium coach Michael Sheehan, center, gives the convention tonight. Guerrero's image is on tips to Lena Guerrero, seated, who will speak at the television screen.

been included in that lineup," said Guerrero.

Guerrero, the fifth of nine children from a Mission migrant farm family, said she wants to talk about disappearing job opportunities.

"People have given up. I'm very worried about whether opportunities will be there for my 4-year-old son (Leo)," she said. "People are being robbed of their dignity."

"I want to say that we've got to stop agonizing over how bad things are and start working on how to fix them," she said.

Gov. Ann Richards appointed Guerrero to the Texas Railroad Commission last year. She is the first Hispanic to serve on the three-person panel.

Tonight's speech could invigorate Guerrero's young political career in much the same way that a convention address drew Richards into the national spotlight four years ago.

"It's good for her politically," said Texan George Christian, who served as press secretary to President Lyndon Johnson. "Even if it's just on CNN, it's good mileage. It's free, and

you get attention."

That attention hasn't always provided a catalyst. Former Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower was a popular Democratic convention speaker and was still defeated in his bid for re-election in 1990.

"I think there are so many speakers it is difficult to stand out. It helps your visibility in your party, it gets the party faithful behind you and that helps fund raising," said Karen Hughes, director of the Texas Republican Party. "I don't know how it translates into votes at home."



Tip to speakers: 'Don't scream'



PD photos MIKE LEVY

Michael Sheehan coaches Lena Guerrero, Texas railroad commissioner, back to camera. Her face is on the video screen.

Media coach tries to keep convention orators from bombing

By THOMAS J. BRAZAITIS
PLAIN DEALER CONVENTION BUREAU

NEW YORK

Where was Michael Sheehan when John Glenn needed him?

That is to say in 1976, when Glenn's keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in Madison Square Garden bombed, ending any hope of Glenn being chosen as Jimmy Carter's running mate.

It was not until 12 years later, at the party's 1988 convention, that Sheehan, a professional media coach, worked with Glenn on Glenn's nominating speech for vice-presidential candidate Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas. This time, the audience loved it.

In fairness, many think the rude reaction Glenn got at the 1976 convention was instigated by labor delegates who wanted the vice-presidential nomination to go to Walter F. Mondale, which is the way it turned out.

Even so, speakers from smalltown mayors to wisened senators will testify that a few minutes of coaching from Sheehan — better yet, a few hours — goes a long way toward ensuring a polished performance before one of the toughest audiences a politician can face: 18,500 people in the hall and millions watching on television.

Since most politicians are, or think they are, accomplished speakers, one might suppose they wouldn't want Sheehan's advice.

"I have never had that problem at the convention," Sheehan said. "They know the stakes. They've seen enough people catapult to glory and they've seen some get mud on their pants by how well or poorly they did. I have never had a problem filling my schedule."

Sheehan began several days ago tutoring speakers for the four-day convention opening today. He holds forth in a backstage rehearsal room equipped with an exact replica of the lectern the speakers will use, plus a dual screen teleprompter.

Based on his own experience when he walked on stage with Sen. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas for the vice-presidential acceptance speech in 1988, Sheehan advises first-time speakers that it is "very scary out there."

When the time comes, Sheehan likes to get the speakers on stage 10 minutes early to get the "Oh, my God, what am I doing here?" reaction out of the way early as they squint into the bright lights at thousands of people, huge television anchor booths and a three-story scaffold for a dozen TV camera operators and dozens more still photographers.

"It's huge, it's loud, it's overwhelming," said Sheehan.

After that kind of warning, Sheehan's pupils pay close attention to the "Do's" and "Don'ts" he offers to help them survive and, if they are lucky, make a good



New York City Mayor David Dinkins checks stage directions with coach Michael Sheehan.

impression.

The most important is getting comfortable with the dual teleprompters — one to the speaker's left and one to the right. Used correctly, the teleprompters make the speech look as if it is being delivered without notes. Used clumsily, the speaker looks like a spectator at Wimbledon, shifting his gaze annoyingly from one side to the other.

The second basic rule is, "Don't scream." Because of the noise in the Garden, the tendency is to try to shout out the audience, Sheehan said. This conveys a kind of manic intensity to the TV audience, which can't hear much of the background noise.

The third rule is, "Slow it down." The pace of speeches has increased measurably over the last 30 years in response to the hurry-up demands of television, Sheehan said. Better to cut the number of words and speak more slowly than to accelerate to finish a long speech on time.

Finally, Sheehan works on the fine points of timing, such as knowing when to start talking again after the audience interrupts with applause. Sheehan can tell you the average applause break is 9.3 seconds. And it is important to start up again before the applause dies down completely because the TV audience can't hear the faint final seconds of applause and wonders why the speaker is just standing there.

Sheehan and his partner, Dan Buck, an aide to Rep. Patricia Schroeder of Colorado, stand ready to edit or "punch up" any speech that needs it. Sheehan and Rep. Dennis Eckart, D-11, of Mentor, helped craft Bentsen's "you're no Jack Kennedy" response to Dan

Quayle in the memorable vice-presidential debate of 1988. Buck is credited with coining Schroeder's description of Ronald Reagan as "the Teflon president."

Asked who among the Democrats is the best "natural speaker," Sheehan named New York Gov. Mario Cuomo. But he said calling Cuomo a natural speaker is like calling John McEnroe a natural tennis player. In both cases their talent was honed by years of practice. Sheehan said Cuomo worked 12 days on the 1984 keynote speech in San Francisco that is rated one of the best in modern times.

Between conventions and campaigns, Sheehan's clients are corporate types, who need tips on how to deal with hostile audiences, what to say in a crisis situation, how to handle the press and how to prepare and deliver testimony before Congress.

Last December, in his annual list of best and worst speakers of the year, Sheehan's pick for best corporate communicator was Ross Perot, the Texas billionaire, who a few months later turned the presidential campaign into a three-man race.

"He's got the down-home, folksy, Farmer's Almanac wisdom down pat," Sheehan said of Perot. And Perot's got the persuasive powers of a door-to-door salesman, Sheehan added.

"Listen to the way he answers questions and you'll hear the same pattern over and over," Sheehan said. "First he identifies the problem. Then he commiserates with you about the problem. Then he says we can do something about it."

The 1992 Campaign

Media

Sound Bites Become Smaller Mouthfuls

By JOHN TIERNEY

Tom Brokaw of NBC News recently bemoaned "the cancer of the sound bite" afflicting Presidential campaigning, a description that accurately summarized the prevailing contempt toward those snippets of speech on the evening news. But it may not have been the best metaphor. Cancer tumors are invidious because they keep growing. Sound bites seem only to shrink.

In 1968, which was about when television producers began using the term "sound bite," a Presidential candidate spoke for 43 uninterrupted seconds in the average appearance on the evening news. With each subsequent campaign the bites got shorter, and by 1988 the average was a mere 9.8 seconds.

If that decline — 34 seconds in two decades, or 1.7 seconds per year — were to continue at a linear rate, the average sound bite in 1992 would be 2 seconds long, perhaps something along the lines of "Me President, you voter." A more conservative extrapolation would be in the range of 6.5 to 8.5 seconds, which could be enough for a complete clause.

Critics have complained about this trend ever since it began, but never as much as today. In fact, there has been so much criticism of sound-bite news, and so many network promises of reform this year, that already a revisionist school is arising to defend the beleaguered bites.

The debate was set off by two independent studies since the 1988 election. Kiku Adatto, a sociologist at

Harvard University, and Daniel C. Hallin, a political scientist at the University of California at San Diego, each showed that sound bites of Presidential candidates on the network evening news had shrunk by more than 75 percent from 1968 to 1988. The data were based on broadcasts taken from September and October of each campaign.

There are several reasons for the shrinking bites. The replacement of film with videotape makes it easier to chop up speeches in time for the news. Reporters are encouraged to substitute their own analysis for candidates' oratory. Producers in search of higher ratings insist on shorter, faster-moving pieces — not always a

bad idea, according to Dr. Hallin, who was not impressed with some of the "leisurely sound bites in the old days."

"It is hard to see what viewers gained by hearing Richard Nixon ramble in 1968 for 43 seconds about his Aunt Olive," Dr. Hallin said. "But often it was extremely interesting — or so it seems to me, with 20 years' hindsight — to hear a politician, or occasionally a community leader or ordinary voter, utter an entire paragraph. One gained an understanding of the person's character and the logic of his or her argument that a 10-second sound bite could never provide."

The statistics on shrinkage have prompted a glut of complaints and recommendations from politicians, academics and journalists. "Naturally, nothing of any significance is going to be said in 9.8 seconds," said Walter Cronkite of CBS. Other network executives vowed that the 1992 campaign would be different.

"All the networks are beating their

breasts," said Jeff Greenfield, the media and political analyst at ABC News. "Those sound-bite statistics threw into very bold relief what's happened, and I think there'll be an effort this year to make sure the candidates are heard at greater length."

Already in this campaign some newscasts have shown candidates speaking for a full minute, which is longer than any of the sound bites in the surveys of the 1988 campaign. Michael Sheehan, a media coach who helped prepare Lloyd Bentsen for the 1988 Vice-Presidential debate with Dan Quayle that produced the memorable "Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy" sound bite, said he wondered how long this trend would last.

Some Signs of Guilt

"We're seeing signs of guilt by the media, but I think it'll be like people who are out of shape and force themselves to go to the health club once a month," Mr. Sheehan said. "Every once in a while the media will force themselves to put something a little longer on the air, but the rest of the time they'll revert to their old ways."

The conventional wisdom is that the public's attention span is inexorably shrinking in the age of MTV, which forces anyone in search of an audience — television producers, newspaper reporters, politicians — to deliver shorter, punchier quotes. The defeat of Michael S. Dukakis, the 1988 Democratic nominee, was attributed partly to the "zap gap," his failure to match lines like "Read my lips: No new taxes," George Bush's declaration at the Republican National Convention that became the campaign's most famous sound bite.

But Peggy Noonan, who wrote that speech (and who had to fight off an editor's attempt to delete the read-my-lips line), thinks this year's campaign may be the beginning of a new era for sound bites. She sees a post-modernist sensibility taking shape.

"Sound bites are less relevant this year than anybody knows yet, because the American people have become so sophisticated in the ways of politics and the media," she said. "When Harold and Mary sit back watching the Democrats debate and one of them says something short and pithy and strong, Harold will not say

to Mary, 'What a great leader he'll make.' He'll say, 'What a great sound bite.' They'll be impressed by the candidate's technique, that's all. And that's not enough."

Others, however, insist that a good, short sound bite never really goes out of style. They point to the continuing appeal of classic sound bites, from "Let there be light" to "Give me liberty or give me death" and "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." If most of today's sound bites do not seem destined for Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, the fault does not lie in their brevity.

"It's quite possible to state a coherent position in a few seconds," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. "'I favor Roe v. Wade' is short and tells a lot more than some of the vacuous long sound bites from 20 years ago. Some of the most important statements of our life are short: 'I love you' and 'Will you marry me?' The problem with sound bites is that the ones chosen for the news often don't have any substance."

Although it is now more fashionable than ever to decry the debasing of political discourse by television, a few people hold a contrary view, and think the critics' timing could not be worse. James Pinkerton, deputy assistant to the President for policy planning, believes it is silly to blame the medium for the message, since the medium has become much more than the three major television networks, ABC, CBS and NBC.

"Just at the moment when all the do-gooders and professional tut-tutters are telling us we need to take our longer sound bites like we need to take our medicine or our vegetables, the market came along with a much better solution: freedom of choice," he said. "The invisible media hand has given cable viewers a range of MTV to network news to CNN to C-Span. They can watch one-and-a-half-second sound bites or entire speeches."

A C-Span Experience

Even viewers without cable television have the option of the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour on PBS, which runs longer sound bites and is planning to broadcast five to 10 minutes of each candidate's stump speech in early February. But there is nothing like C-Span, the cable public-affairs channel, which regularly broadcasts the unedited wisdom of all the candidates.

Recently, for instance, one could watch not only an entire speech by Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas and the question-and-answer period afterwards, but also the small talk that the candidate made with a few people near the camera as the crowd left the hall. And then a viewer could stay tuned for a 25-minute sound bite from Lenora Fulani, the Presidential candidate for the New Alliance Party.

In some ways it was a refreshing change from the nightly news programs, but in other ways it was a reminder of why the nightly news programs evolved. There could be worse fates than modern sound-bite news. There could be the variety of sound-bite cancer that Thomas Jefferson detected in the politics of 1824.

"Amplification is the vice of modern oratory," Jefferson complained. "It is an insult to an assembly of reasonable men, disgusting and revolting instead of persuading." And he preciently summed up his thought in the next sentence with a wrap-up sound bite that could fit in anyone's newscast today: "Speeches measured by the hour, die by the hour."

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