

**Focus Group Guidelines**

**June 24, 2008**

**Roanoke, VA**

8 Kerry, 2 Neither/Can't remember

2 McCain, 2 Obama, 6 Undecided

**I. Introduction (10 minutes)**

- Confidentiality
- Mirrors, audio and videotapes
- Respondent introductions

Karen I'm a school nurse, I have four daughters, raising a grandchild with special needs. Hobbies are not much anymore other than working and taking care of this chil.

Faye, live in Floyd County, am a guidance counselor, have four horses. I have a mtt dog and a mutt cat, most of my time is working on the farm and selling cabbage at the famers market.

Terry, live in Benton, grew up there, and in my spare time I help take care of my 88 year old mother and I like to garden.

Sharon, live in Raifeen, about an hour from here, I have a daughter who lives in Bosotn, we have 3 horses.

Karen, live in Montgomery County, I have a horse and a dog and I garden.

Barbara, I don't garden, I have four children, I work at friendship a retirement community.

Beth, grew up in Roanoke, do consulting work for a health care agency, two step children who are on their own now.

Corryn, married live in Salem area, have two kids, one in Salem, one in Denver, about to be a first time grandparent.

Rebecca, grew up in Roanoke and I have 4 kids, work all day and run a family business at night and go to church.

Linda, born and raised in Roanoke, three step daughters, six grandchildren.

**II. Direction of the Country (15 minutes)**

Let me start by asking you to think about another time – another period in our history. Starting with the fifties.

1. *The fifties – the 1950s* [NOT EXTENSIVE].

- What are the main things you associate with the fifties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Men working, women staying home to raise the family.

Not many automobiles, most families only had one if any cars, you took the bus then.

You couldn't go anywhere to buy anything on Sundays.

Didn't lock your door.

Three digit phone number

Stronger family values and everyone got married, most of that I knew of.

Women didn't wear slacks.

Had to wear dresses or skirts, got in trouble for wearing slacks, one of a childhood friend of mine got in trouble at school for wearing slacks.

I was more isolated, than we are now. I am of Sycilian decent so we were more culturally bound, we were not so assimilated.

More family time, not as much time the games we played were outdoor games, though on Sunday you went to church and to visit family, to an aunts, or grandmas there was more time made for htat.

TV was new and didn't consume your life. Well most people didn't have it.

2. *The sixties – the 1960s* [NOT EXTENSIVE].

- What are the main things you associate with the sixties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Free, Love, rock and roll

The Beatles.

Ed Sullivan.

Long hair

Burn my bra

War.

Vietnam.

Segregation

When JFK was hot, I was really scared, when that happened I thought we were going to have to go hide somewhere. And you couldn't eat the snow they said because there was fallout in it.

And the fallout shelters, and practicing in schools

Yeah the bomb drills underneath the desks and all.

I lost my dad in sixty five, so that changed my life a lot.

Mine was already gone in the fifties for me.

Even though the emerging hippy thing was going on, there was still values that we don't have today.

**3. *The nineties – the 1990s, when Bill Clinton was president.* [MORE EXTENSIVE].**

- What are ere the main things you associate with the nineties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Gas was cheap.

Money, that is how we started our business. Im a photographer and there was just no stopping it back then

The internet was starting to bloom

Graduate school.

IN spite of that, I didn't figure out about the economy until my business went well then I was like Oh My God the economy is really good. I felt embarrassed though, because the president was doing stupid things. That bothered me a lot. That he was (inaudible) getting his hair cut.

Holding positions formerly held by men, moving up in the world for women.

Governmental improprieties.

That was the beginning of it.

I think people started feeling real safe with their finances and was probably freer with not really planning their retirement.

Back in the sixties and fifties you'd do the lay away, you didn't have the credit problems that you do now.

And you'd be embarrassed to have a lot of unnecessary things like boats and several cars, that's not how you were brought up to have that, so you'd be embarrassed.

Declining health care. Realizing that they could make mistakes, that people in higher places could actually make mistakes, they made mistakes that effect peoples lives and it was taken very lightly, like doctors and things, because I didn't have an expectation that a doctor would make a mistake.

I know with my children everything is about me.

I think that's when they started the HMO's

But going back to the sixties, about the health care, I remember the polio when my mom wouldn't take us to the swimming pools or anything because of the polio scare.

House calls too.

4. Now, thinking about *our current times, since 2000 when George Bush* has been president. [EXTENSIVE].

- What are the main things you associate with our current times?
- What things have been going right in the country?
- What things have been going wrong in the country?

War

Untruths.

I think people worry about everything I don't think they have that feeling of security

People losing their homes and really being victimized.

And those that are victimizing see everyone as a mark somehow so that the few benefit.

You look at all those tycoon enron scandals, they could care less what happened to a lot of people, thousands of people, that is just wanton greed.

Even the commercials wwith the guy, and riding around on the lawn mower and he's saying I have all this but I am up to here with the credit problems. That is something with people our age realize that you do have to pay as you go, you do have to keep up with that.

But society did that, my kids have credit cards, and I applied but I didn't have any credit so they wouldn't give us one.

It started in the eighties. Eighties were the years with Reagan in the WH and credit rates went through the roof and we didn't know if we were going to have jobs, and all of those people on the Wall Street were partying and doing drugs and having fun and we were wondering if our paychecks would be good. And I think that's what happened all of these people that were on wall street are now the heads of these companies.

Its all about the dollar.

There is a loss of family and there is no consideration in the world from the use of turn signals to the huge issues, there is no consideration for each other.

There is no respect, and it starts with the schools.

Well that's because they demanded it because they'd beat ya if you didn't.

The kids we work with are really great, but in other schools they are really bad.

**III. Associations** (20 minutes)

Now I'm going to throw out the names of some people from all walks of life that have been in the news lately. For each, please tell me the first thing that comes to mind...

1. George W. Bush

Liar

It's a mass destruction

Self serving.

Dictator almost. He thinks he's above the law, he comes in like a cowboy and he's whatever he says is and that's not democracy.

He said he was proud that he didn't give up his values when they tried to make him

Well nothing from nothing, if you don't start with any you cant lose them

I feel sorry for him, he's just done a lot of bad things to himself. He is naïve too. He wasn't educated enough for the position and not strong enough of a leader.

He thought he was more than he was. And he wouldn't listen to his own dad. He was the rebel, he was impulsive.

TIM KAIN:

I voted for him but I wont again.

He made a lot of promises to education that he didn't keep

I think he's ok.

Typical politician I think.

I voted for him and it would depend on who was against him if I vote for him again.

He tries to not he tries to everything...I cant even say. He does things and doesn't think them through, the laws and the tax things that he starts and he doesn't think them through and then he retracts. He wasn't going to increase taxes but now he's just here and there, and ten dollars more on car registration and this and that.

He is dealing with what was left him I guess. You cant have programs and not pay taxes, that's how it works. You want schools you have to pay taxes and he has to realize, but don't let him waste the money. They wont tax people from out of the states but they will people in the states.

1. Hillary Clinton

She knows a lot of stuff but she comes across as too strong I think because she is so passionate about her issues, like Health care or whatever.

Very bright, brilliant.

Had he done me the way he did her his clothes would have been on the front lawn of the WH on fire.

But she wanted something else.

That wouldn't have mattered to me.

I think it was appropriate. I think she would be a good president.

I liked everything about her except her gun policy.

But she wouldn't have gotten that through

It didn't mean that much to me that she was a women, it was that she was such a bright person and that she sacrificed a lot to almost make her goal. She, whatever those two had going, but shes focused. I do think it was appropriate that she ran whether a man or a woman.

She sincerely cares about the country and about Americans whether or not we agree with her all the time or not.

2. Tiger Woods

Lucky

No its not that, hes a champion, he has worked hard

Integrity

Anyone who can play with a broken leg.

Vick had the talented but not the integrity

But there is an intellect difference too.

And the family element.

Vick only had the mom that was into the Bling Bling.

3. Angelina Jolie

Lucky

Caring

Child collector. I think she's beautiful

She changed though I'd say, she used to wear the blood, but now she because, they don't have to go and take on kids and have their own, and now in my opinion she is family oriented, shes a mom.

JIM WEBB:

Quiet

Young wife.

That tells us one thing. I value his opinion more because he did have a son in Iraq, but he's a military person and that worries me.

He is pro military and pro war in my opinion.

4. Kobe Bryant

2. Michael Vick

Charecterless

Stupid

Sickening.

Waste of talent

Gets caught a lot I'd say, the rest do it but probably don't get caught.

He's hubris, hes got hubris.

**[Written Exercise – Handouts #1 and #2]**

5. Barack Obama

- What good things come to mind when you think of Barack Obama?

Charismatic

Articulate

Good business man

Positive

Family Oriented.

Energetic

Young

Believes in God

Diverse

He wants change. But on the flip side, how are we going to make these changes, that's my doubt about it.

Sincere

He comes across as sincere yeah.

- What doubts do you have? What worries you about him?

He'll go too far in spending, trying to do too much to help the underprivileged. The whole welfare system needs to be revamped

I know that. It needs to be a hand up not a hand out.

It needs to be a temporary thing, not a business. These people are in business.

He chose the name renegade for his secret service name, he chose it and that throws it back out there that you know wonders if he is going to when he gets there he is going to do what he says or go back and do whatever he wants.

I don't know how anyone who serves in Washington can change anything. They are so depended on each other so unless everyone is going to change as well.

I have a question about his commitment to the US and the constitution because he wont say the pledge and with the lapel pin.

He wont say the pledge, he doenst recognize the anthem.

He's a muslim

Really?

He is.

But part of his family is muslim but he goes to a Christian church.

I assume he believes some of both, just like a Catholic and Jewish family

That is why I say it bothers me but its not the religion but it's the time that we're in.

It doesn't bother me that he wasn't born in America,

He was born in Kansas, but lived in Hawaii.

I didn't know he was born here I thought he was born in Africa.

I thought it was because his mother was American

Well to run you have to be born here.

That's why Arnold cant run

Well then I can mark that off my list then

Even Michelle though his wife, wrote those papers on anti white stuff at Harvard.

I know that people can change but you know, you're close to people and married...

You know she made that comment about being proud of America only now and you have to wonder if he feels that way too.

But my opinions have changed a lot from 25 to 30 to now.

And he smoked dope

And he had the connection to the Chicago underground or whatever, and I know, the Kennedy's they were in bed with the mafia too.

And the thing is there are so many emails floating around now, and what do you believe in those and where do you go to find the truth.

Even the NYT or the New Yorker you cant know they will say they have no proof to print things, they just print it.

Our media has gotten into this, the media is driving everything now in our politics.

I don't think that Mr. Obama has a clue about foreign policy in general I think that he is very naïve in how to deal with other countries.

Unlike George (sarcastic) If he is the bar anyone can do it.

What has his job been.

Community activist, senator.....

- If you had to give me three words or phrases to describe Barack Obama, what would they be?

What do you stand for.

Where does your loyalty lie.

Is it all of us or some of us or a few of us.

I would ask him if he would continue the way we have since the seventies and have that same old Ole Boy oil connection that you see it now, everyone who was alive in the seventies when we had the embargo and so why are we doing this now, we had to know back then that this would impact national security, this should have been taken care of a long time ago. I would not allow these people to hold us up the way they are holding us up that would be the last thing over the last twenty five years that iw ould have allowed.

But they are so subservient that they just care about the money that is coming from us to their pockets.

If he doesn't have any of those connections then how is he running, where did this money come from, how did he get elected.

Is it a good thing that he is taking ONLY public money, because then who does he owe?

- What is the biggest question you have about Barack Obama at this point?

**[Written Exercise – Handouts #3 and #4]**

6. John McCain

- What good things come to mind when you think of John McCain?

Patriot

Seems honest

Patriot to the country

More moderate than conservative, more toward the middle

I think he's funny in a good way

More experienced.

Can work both sides of the aisle and can bring people together, really good way with that.

He's been at war and he knows it and respects it and knows what it really is, not what a cowboy thinks it is but what it really is. Because he was there.

He knows what it is to be the child that didn't come home for a long time

He knows what its like to be tortured like others might be tortured.

Respected across the world, more so because of his years in the government, he's dedicated his life to govt.

The media says other countries are leaning toward Obama maybe because they think that it is for their benefit.

Well he wants to meet with that Iranian leader or whatever, have a sit down.

Obama?

Yeah obama.

He (McCain) doesn't get down in the gutter with everyone, he doesn't join in that eating frenzy with everyone, he takes the high road. He is more of a gentleman, more of that classic southern gentlemen.

- What doubts do you have? What worries you about him?

His age.

I don't know the circumstances, but he hasn't been committed to one wife, I just don't know how many he's had but its more than one.

He's been with this one for a long time,

I put temper.

One concern I have is he wants us to stay in Iraq, tied with George on that one, but how long, what is the proposal of bring the troops home and what do we do once we're out.

Is he trying to, is he going to follow the dictates of the Republican party or be more like the moderate.

He is extremely wealthy person, and been in politics so long,

Most republicans are wealthy and out of touch

Most politicians are wealthy

Is his old money, or old political money is what im saying like Bush's.

Well its his wife, its their business, they work for that but...

Im thinking in terms of the Bush legacy all down through the generations, is supposed to be following through. He seems to be first generation politics rather than having this family like the Bush's

Who is VP is, yeah both of them I think that will make a huge difference.

Will he get rid of No Child?

SAME DIRECTION:

That he is a Republican.

That he has said that we should continue on with the war and other wars.

He cant make all the decisions by himself, he's got to have a lot of support from his party to make the changes he wants to make.

In the area of energy, I don't think that he has that many new ideas, he was talking about the new clean coal, but last night they said there is no clean coal unless you put it underground which is too expensive. So they aren't looking at the solar, or the wind or anything else. We haven't learned anything, they are just saying, where can we drill, lets drill in Alaska, we don't keep the oil coming from there anyways.

And they aren't helping the people that do look for energy independence.

He did commit 300 mill to anyone who can come up with an energy efficient car that is better than the current ones on the market, so at least he is doing that, I don't know if its true or not. But at least hes saying something.

CHANGE IN DIRECTION?:

The Republicans are losing their seats which will force him to change some. You always need to have those as the checks and balances if one party has it all they will go too far one way.

I think that hes a moderate, hes a more moderate than Bush.

But just today, his person from his campaign said something about well if we had another attack like nine eleven then that would really help us. But I don't think that he needs to do that, its going back to that fear factor like George Bush.

They were doing that in my church, on easter Sunday they showed a video of Muslims killing people saying you have to give money to stop this and I was like, come on, this is propaganda I'm not going to sit here and listen to this.

- If you had to give me three words or phrases to describe John McCain, what would they be?
- What is the biggest question you have about John McCain at this point?

#### IV. Candidate Grids (20 minutes)

Let's look at these candidates in a different way now. I'd like you to think about them in relation to some other leaders in our country, both past and present, and to use these comparisons to really think about each of these candidates – What kind of a leader is he? What are his strongest qualities? What are his weaknesses? Where will he lead our country as President?

We're going to place each of these candidates relative to other famous leaders on a chart that looks like this... **[Explain grid exercise on easel]**

##### **[Written Exercise – Handout #5]**

1. First, let's talk about Barack Obama. On the axis going up and down, you will see that we have John F. Kennedy at the top and John Kerry at the bottom. On the axis going left and right, you will see that we have Jesse Jackson on the left and Colin Powell on the right. Please mark where in the grid you feel Obama fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders, then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.

- **Discuss extensively**

He is charismatic like JFK but very vocal about change so I put him near Jesse Jackson.

I put him the same place really, he uses the media more like Jackson I think.

Jesse's been quiet for a while though.

I put him there too, kind of like Jesse Jackson so can't trust him on a lot of issues, but young like JFK.

His (Obamas) wife is wealthy

But I thought that they were still paying back law school loans. I thought he wrote that in a book some time.

I put him where you put him, but not that far up, I put him equidistant between JFK and Jackson. I don't have a whole lot of respect for Jesse Jackson.

I put him between JFK and Jackson.

##### **[Written Exercise – Handout #6]**

2. Now, let's look at John McCain. On the axis going up and down, you will see that we have Ronald Reagan at the top and George H. W. Bush, the current President's father, at the bottom. On the axis going left and right, you will see that we have Ross Perot on the left and Dick Cheney on the right. Please mark where in the grid you feel McCain fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders, then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.

- **Discuss extensively**

Oh we don't like any of them, this isn't fair.

I put him little toward Bush and a little toward Perot, he is sensible like Perot and he is more moderate than Reagan or Cheney. More middle of the road.

This George HW, that's the dad? Yeah. I put him right there, sort of a moderate, G. HW Bush was a decent president so that's where I put him

I put him a little toward George and Cheney, b/c I'm not wild about Cheney.

He's smarter than Cheney though.

I put him a little Perot and a little Bush, hes a straight talker like Perot and smart and respected like Bush.

**V. Candidate Bios (20 minutes)**

Let's talk in a little more detail about each of these candidates. This time, we'll start with John McCain...

**[Written exercise – Handout #7]**

1. On Handout #7, you will see a series of statements that represent a brief biography of John McCain and some of the key milestones in his life. Please read through this list and circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about John McCain.
  - a. McCain comes from a family of high-ranking military leaders. Both McCain's father and grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy, and McCain grew up as a military brat, attending nearly 20 schools at various naval postings in the U.S. and the Pacific. He followed in the footsteps of his father and attended the U.S. Naval Academy. His son Jimmy also followed him into the military and served in Iraq until Feb. 2008.
  - b. McCain volunteered for combat duty in Vietnam, shipping out in December 1966 and leaving behind a wife and three small children. He flew missions in Vietnam until he was shot down in October 1967. He spent 5 ½ years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton, where he was viciously tortured but refused an offer to be released by the Vietnamese unless all of his fellow prisoners were also released.
  - c. McCain returned to the U.S. as a war hero and eventually took a position as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate. He met his current wife Cindy, only child of a wealthy beer wholesaler in Arizona, in May 1980. He moved to Arizona, retired from the Navy, and began his political career when he was elected to Congress from Arizona in 1982 and then to the Senate in 1986.
  - d. McCain likes to say he began his political career as "a foot soldier in the Reagan Revolution." But his reformer credentials were damaged early in his career when he was rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for his role in the Keating Five influence peddling scandal.
    - a. McCain has been a vocal critic of wasteful, pork barrel spending by Democrats and Republicans alike throughout his career. He helped pass the Line Item Veto Act of 1996, has won the "Taxpayer's Hero Award" three times for his efforts to fight pork spending and special interests, and claims to have never requested a single earmark.

He wont be wasteful.

We're always giving billions away and when they give out pork barrel again, its self serviing, so this is against being self serving.

Makes me think that maybe he will do something for the economy.

Sounds like there is some change there. Some change in the way we do business.

- b. McCain has a well-established reputation as a political maverick who refuses to tow the partisan line. Praised for his “straight talk” during his 2000 campaign against George W. Bush for the Republican nomination, he spoke out against right-wing “agents of intolerance” and promised to work with members of both parties. In 2002, he led the effort to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform, known as the McCain-Feingold Act to limit the influence of money in politics.

Says he compromises.

Not so pushy

The right kind of change. For the right rather than the big party thing. He will compromise instead of toeing the line.

He'll listen and not worry what party you're in.

Its not just talk,

- g. McCain is uniquely qualified to serve as Commander in Chief. In addition to his military career, he serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee and has played a leading role in virtually every major national security issue since 1983.
- h. McCain has been the leading voice in Congress in support of the Iraq War and President Bush's surge policy in 2007, which he says has reduced violence in Iraq. He's criticized any call for withdrawal or a timeline in Iraq and vowed to never surrender or accept any outcome other than victory. And McCain will refuse to negotiate with the leaders of Iran or other terrorist states unless they make security concessions and agree to U.S. demands.

I think Congress now will do what they're going to do, I don't think that the president is going to have that much influence on them

I think that he knows that we cant just you know say ok, we're changed, we have a new president we're going to just walk off, we all know that we cant just do that. We have to leave the country in a proper way and if we have to continue on.

He could talk to the other countries and invite other leaders to the table to talk about how to do this unlike Bush who just said ok we're going to do this or whatever.

I don't think that we can just walk away now because all of those kids that have been there and died they would have died in vain. And this is the way that they've lived their lives for thousands of years.

How long is it going to take though until its going to be like before we got there.

Or before Sadaam. I worked with a lady that left there...for them to have left when Sadaam came in it must have been pretty bad so maybe we could get back to that level, before Sadaam took over.

I don't know who made us the police of the whole world.

- i. An early favorite to win the Republican nomination, McCain's 2008 presidential campaign almost went bankrupt in 2007, and he was dismissed as finished by virtually every political pundit. But McCain refused to quit; he trimmed down his campaign, flew on commercial flights to save money, and made his case directly to voters, defeating candidates with more money to win the nomination convincingly.

- **Show of hands, discuss**

- Looking back on this list, what does this say to you about John McCain?

He is patriotic, he is a decent man

He sacrificed for his country, he is brave, has values.

He takes the high road, he didn't take the easy road, he has principles.

One thing that sticks out is that he refuses to toe the party line but sometimes I think that he is a little bullheaded. But if its something that's worth fighting for to make our country better then I think it's a good idea.

Could he be any different than President Bush, could he be any worse though?

I always say, be careful what you wish for.

**[Written exercise – Handout #8]**

2. On Handout #8, you will see a similar series of statements that represent a brief biography of Barack Obama and some of the key milestones in his life. Once again, read through this list and circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about Barack Obama.
  - a. Obama’s mother was a white woman from a small town in Kansas who raised him as a single mother from the age of two, sometimes relying on food stamps to make ends meet. His maternal grandfather fought in Patton’s Army in WWII and went to school on the G.I. Bill, while his grandmother worked in a factory to support the war effort. Between the ages of 6 and 10, Obama lived with his mother and stepfather in Indonesia, then returned to Hawaii, where he was raised by his maternal grandparents.
  - b. Obama’s father was a Harvard-educated economist from Kenya who left when he was two years old. Obama met his father only once more before his death in a car crash in 1982. Obama wrote a book about how his father’s absence affected his childhood and recently marked Father’s Day by delivering a speech about the harm caused by absentee fathers, particularly in the African-American community.
  - c. Despite his humble roots, Obama earned academic scholarships that enabled him to attend some of the finest colleges in the country. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in political science and international relations, and later attended Harvard Law School, where he became the first ever African-American to head the prestigious Harvard Law Review.
    - a. After college, Obama turned down the ability to make big money on Wall Street or with a big company. Instead, he became a community organizer in Chicago with a church-based group seeking to help a diverse set of poor neighborhoods – white, black, and Latino – decimated by the closing of local steel plants. He says this experience made him the leader he is today, with a focus on bringing people with varying interests together for a common purpose and trusting ordinary people to get things done rather than relying on politicians and powerful interests.

NINE OUT OF TEN

That isn’t typical of a politician and I think that this country needs a non politician.

Cares more about people than money. Trusting ordinary people to get things done instead of politicians.

I think that that may be ideals he had when he came out of law school but im not sure he still has those ideals now, if that was true then he wouldn’t be going to that church and listening to that preacher.

He didn’t just choose one color, he was working with everyone in different neighborhoods.

He was helping people.

- e. After law school, Obama returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer and teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He also continued to work in local communities, organizing voter registration drives during the 1992 campaign, and his advocacy work ultimately led him to run for the state legislature in 1996.
- f. Obama was elected to the Illinois state senate in 1996. In the Illinois Senate, he immediately demonstrated an ability to reach across party lines to get things done and led bi-partisan efforts to enact welfare reform, provide health coverage for 154,000 uninsured Illinoisans, pass the state's most sweeping new ethics law in a generation, and expand access to early childhood education programs.

Bi partisan

And for me, welfare reform and health coverage, because the welfare the way it is just populates our prisons. And that's that's the leader that needs to do something for, making family values, to every part of the US, minority, White,

When we were in school, my mother wouldn't let anyone know that we got the free lunch, but now there is no shame on it, and when they drive up in the Lexus and then they get the free lunch and no one checks on it behind the scenes.

And that is not a color issue.

No its not.

My father was in a profession that was very close knit and there was a family and one of them, and one of the parents was very ill so couldn't bring home the pay, so everybody in his profession worked two or three jobs to support their families and everyone gave what they could money and food and then a week later this guy showed up in a brand new station wagon. And he had no shame

It is a very in depth and well researched law on ethics that he was part of in Illinois and it shows that there has been a lot of soul searching to develop it and I think that this man has an understanding of ethics. I'm not sure if he'll do it but he does understand it.

- g. Obama publicly opposed the Iraq war from the very beginning, even when most politicians supported it, and said it would distract from the war in Afghanistan and the effort to stop al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Speaking at a rally in October 2002, he said, "'I know that even a successful war against Iraq will require a U.S. occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences...I know that an invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than best, impulses of the Arab world, and strengthen the recruitment arm of al-Qaeda."

A lot of people didn't go along with him, he must have been a lone voice out there.

Really shows some insight though.

But when you're hearing from the President that they have WMD's and that we need to do something, you believe the president.

But it was a lie.

And it comes back to nine eleven but that wasn't even them either.

And that is the reason that the father didn't complete the war in the nineties because they wanted Hussein to stay there to stabilize the region so that they would fight Iran so we don't have to, and now we are going to have to.

I think that this shows that he does have the judgement.

Well he was right in this issue.

Yeah he has this one down but that doesn't mean that he'll get it all right.

Obama is on the other side of the table saying this, its x doing this and y criticizing. So you look at it and say well what is the motive,

I think they had those packages, so they were getting the votes for their packages so they had to give them too, he wasn't there then with his packages so wasn't dealing with that yet.

They might have believed what the public was told about Iraq's threat to America.

Truth be told can anyone ever really trust what a campaign politician or a newspaper tells us.

- h. While still a candidate for Senate in 2004, Obama was asked to deliver the keynote speech at the Democratic Convention. His speech, emphasizing national unity and attacking partisan division – "We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states...We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, all of us defending the United States of America." – made him an international celebrity before he even took office.
- i. In the U.S. Senate, Obama led the fight for bipartisan ethics reform and introduced major legislation on immigration, reduction of greenhouse gases, and veterans' benefits. On the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he worked with leading Republicans to pass legislation designed to find and secure deadly nuclear materials and traveled to Russia to begin a new generation of non-proliferation efforts.

- **Show of hands, discuss**

- Looking back on this list, what does this say to you about Barack Obama?

He seems honest and is knowledgeable and smart.

But still this, it still comes into play, that as a person, I am still stuck with Wright and still stuck with the twenty years of being there and that isn't addressed here, so he made a lot of good decisions but that is still not addressed.

He wasn't there a lot of Sundays.

Just like what his name didn't inhale.

And then the thing with the underground. So those things are still coming up.

I don't think that you can believe a campaign politician because they are hungry for the position.

It is the electoral College that elects the president, and the Congress that runs the country, we don't have a democracy we have a republic. Not since the civil war have the American people stood up to the government. I don't think we will ever again.

I hate politics.

McCain's first family was outh there and vocal, and then people could see, did they give them the shaft, forget the wife, was he there for the children.

Don't forget her, heck she deserves something.

Well I mean when they divorced did he divorce the children too.

I didn't know that he was married before.

My brother, I look at it a different way, because my brother, is a good husband and a good father, and his wife life him and the kids when they were just three but he raised them and they are good grown kids now.

So its not just a man thing.

If he was there for his children, did he educate them, are they for him.

I have an issue when they drag their families into it, I don't need to see anyone's wife or kids out there, because I know that they are doing it for the bad reason, because you know its just BS.

**VI. Videos (30 minutes)**

Now I want to look at some video on some of the major topics we are likely to see and hear about in this campaign...

**Wright Footage (Group 1) / Pflieger and Ayers (Group 2)**

**WRIGHT**

I was in the first class that was desegregated, and I just don't see race as the same way. We just didn't have a lot of people that had much, we were all pretty much lower middle class, white or black, I didn't see this from them and I didn't feel this toward them

This is highly offensive.

Yeah offensive.

I think that it hurts Obama.

I know that McCain wont go there but the swift boaters will and they've already said that they have something else that they are gong to release in Sept or October about Wright and they will come out with.

The hard part for me is that that was his preacher saying that and if that was me I wouldn't go to that church, I'm sorry I wouldn't go. Yes all of this has happened but we have worked to correct a lot of this. We aren't perfect but I have a problem with someone sitting there for twenty years listening to a racists, he is a black man but he is a racist.

What that preacher is saying is the truth about the US. He is over the top but he is right. The US and the CIA and everyone else is around the world sticking its nose into business that is not ours. I think that in a weird way, black people, regardless of how we feel, but to leave black people alone to collect welfare, to fill the prisons is devastating to black people as a culture and there has been no leader, not jesse Jackson who have gone in there and said no you cant populate, you cant keep having babies, we cant have a father with fatherless families, and I think that is the worst kind of racism. So what he is saying I think is right.

Everybody in this country has the same opportunities. You have to work for what you have. This type of talk just continues allowing people to feel like their owed a living.

If he set there for twenty years and listened to that, he has to have agreed at some point.

Churches preach to the people and they are separate, so he is right in one way but instead of blaming the government why doesn't he come up with solutions as the church to educate the young kids to help replace the fathers and build their self esteem all this guy is doing is blaming instead of trying to change anything and trying to help.

I look at it completely different, if I was in that church and could take his over the topness with a grain of salt and I could listen to him and take it then that would make me a different president than the same old same old.

It takes a lot to change from a church.

I stopped going b/c I don't like my new minister. I liked my old one because he gave you life lessons. Maybe this guy wasn't over the top all the time.

Has he (Obama) denounced him yet?

Yeah but it took him a while to do.

Maybe those were extreme sermons that he had.

I personally think that its got to influence him, but I am not a black person so I have no clue how the other side feels about these things.

But look at Obama, he is both sides. He was raised by the White community.

He was raised poor by a mixed family, he is now wealthy and successful, but on the other side I have to wonder how much after listening to years of this how much has brainwashed him into thinking this.

He seems to be too educated, you can hear people in positions of leadership who are wrong but I don't know how he stayed there twenty years and listened to him.

- Does this raise doubts about Barack Obama?
  - **Probe – Is it about race, patriotism, judgment, what?**

### **Economic Debate**

- After hearing from both sides here, what do you make of this? Who do you think will do a better job of turning our economy around?

I think that neither one of them can do what they're saying that they can pay for the war and the programs we have and cut the taxes still, I don't think that either can do it.

I think that McCains spokesperson is probably closer to the truth. With the raising of taxes that she talked about. If you want to have the programs then you have to pay for them. And I'd like to say that Obama was raised poor by his mother's choice, he went to a prestigious school and his mom was from a wealthy family but she chose to raise him poor.

I wish they would just say what they were going to do, instead of talking about what the other person would do and contrast that, I just want to here specifics about what he wants to do.

That's all I want.

If any of the candidates put more taxes on small businesses then tahts the end, that'll just be it, they just cant take any more.

And capital gains, would effect a portion, a fraction, so that I don't think anyone other than the more wealthy would benefit from that, but to put it back in my pocket I'll just have to pay for it someplace else.

I agree with that, I don't like how he cuts down what McCain is doing but I think that it would be better if he could get the tax cut for the middle class rather than the wealthy.

He'll bump up your food tax and your income tax and gas tax and everything else.

Well they'll all do that anyways.

### Positive Ads

#### [FOR EACH]

- What is your response to this ad?
- Is it believable?
  - [IF NO] What parts are most unbelievable?

#### McCain Ad:

Who is the narrator of that, sounds like a movie trailer.

I liked it. Its strained.

I just distrust it.

Its all fear factor.

Its too sappy and not specific

We're in the throws of a war that few people want.

It gets back to fear, who can protect us.

Like he's trying to sweet talk somebody.

**OBAMA AD:**

It costs half as much as the first one.

I wouldn't mind it if he'd do the pledge, do the pledge.

I didn't get a thing out of it. I couldn't hear it that well.

I thought it made him look more bi partisan

One America, yeah, but I kept thinking, well why don't you say the pledge then

We are not one American.

They should be working together.

It makes a difference to me, I like Obama's a lot better, because its saying what he did, its specific, where the other is just relying on your emotions as an American, and its McCain's way of mind control.

But state actions have very little to do with national actions so it doesn't say much to me at all.

Everyone from my grandfather on down was in the military and I take a great deal of pride in that. I don't wish it on anyone else but do think that counts for something.

**MCCAIN AD: ENERGY**

Its just one issue, they are just trying to win that issue I guess.

They aren't giving you any information about it though.

Its emotions again.

At least Bush didn't get on about the global warming, at least McCain is aware of the problem.

He is showing these things but is he really saying that's what he is for, is he going after this, or is he going after the vote.

Is he really going to try to do alternative energy, is he really going to try to save the energy or is he just having it on there to look Green.

**OBAMA AD: BIO**

It looks very good. It sounds very good.

He is a much better public speaker than John McCain.

It can relate to us, all of us have had college loans.

If he means what he says then he could be the right man.

I think that he showed, he will be criticized for being liberal and they will compare him to Jimmy Carter, nice man but couldn't do anything, but here he is showing he is more of a moderate too. Showing that we need to reach goals.

It's a good ad.

## **VII. Postcards (5 minutes)**

Finally, we've talked a lot tonight about each of the two candidates for President and heard a lot of what they have to say to us as voters. Now, I'd like you to know what you have to say to them. If you flip to Handout #9, you will see two postcards – one to Obama, and one to McCain. Please write down what you would say to them if you had the chance to send each of them a note...

### **[Written Exercise – Handout #9]**

*Postcard exercise – Obama on top, McCain on bottom – address each one as Dear Senator ...*

- **No discussion**

## **Roanoke Rural Women**

*Please write down what good things come to mind when you think about Barack Obama.*

**Rebecca**

Nothing

**Karen**

Charismatic, young, energetic.

**Linda**

Good relationship with wife. Open minded. Good business man.

**Terrie**

Young, positive, change, family oriented, diverse, good speaker.

**Faye**

Person of mixed race to run for President. Talks a good talk about health care. Articulate.

**Corinne**

Democrat or rather not Republican. Smart wife. Articulate, sincere.

**Beth**

Good speaker. Charismatic.

**Sharon**

Young, optimistic, change agent, sincere.

**Karen**

I like the fact that he is so strong in his opinions.

**Barbara**

One wife. Seems very smart. Young man. Believes in God. Cares about the under educated.



*Please write down any doubts you may have about Barack Obama.*

**Rebecca**

Not a patriot. Not sure of his religious ideology. Lies. Clueless about foreign policy.

**Karen**

Inexperienced. Idealistic. Questionable commitment to fundamental constitutional issues. Too young. No pledge.

**Linda**

Young, inexperienced in politics.

**Terrie**

How are we going to make these changes? Youthfulness.

**Faye**

Concerned over relationship with views of Rev. Wright. Chose the word renegade as Secret Service name. Association with extremist in Chicago. Wife made comments against white people. Muslim?

**Corinne**

Flip flopping. Appearing to talk the values of the room not of his. Unsure of true person and what he represents.

**Beth**

Not experienced. Too "rock star" Not enough specifics on his plans. Will he be respected overseas. Can he really get away from the "old" politics.

**Sharon**

Inexperienced. Naïve.

**Karen**

No answer given.

**Barbara**

No experience. Worries he will be too much one way.

*Please write down what good things come to mind when you think about John McCain.*

**Rebecca**

Patriot, knows costs of war. Not afraid to speak his mind. Can work both sides of the aisle.

**Karen**

Experience. War hero.

**Linda**

Loyal to country. Experience.

**Terrie**

Loves America. War hero. Rich wife. Experienced. Respected.

**Faye**

Moderate conservative. Experienced senator. Loyal to US. Military sacrifices. Family oriented.

**Corinne**

Cares for country. POW. Knows military. Maybe more respectful of real war, not cowboy war.

**Beth**

Patriot, smart, negotiator.

**Sharon**

Funny, empathy for him.

**Karen**

He's going to spend too much, they all have. But, he's sincere. Mostly honest. Loyal.

**Barbara**

He served his country in military. Seems honest.

*Please write down any doubts you may have about John McCain.*

**Rebecca**

Temper

**Karen**

Old, moldy politics. Out of touch with social issues. Time in politics, wealth.

**Linda**

Another Republican. Not look out for the little people. Not energetic or enthusiastic.

**Terrie**

Age, how long will we be in Iraq?

**Faye**

Age, even though his mother is in her nineties. Tied somewhat to the old policies of Bush.

**Corinne**

Republican, follows Republican rules.

**Beth**

Age, health. Can he correct Bush's mistakes? End the war? Continue bipartisanship?

**Sharon**

Hawk.

**Karen**

I don't think that he tells the truth sometimes. Bad disposition.

**Barbara**

Hasn't been able to commit to one wife. His age. His temper. That his views are the same as President Bush.

*Please mark where in the grid you feel Barack Obama fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders. Then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.*

**Rebecca: -5, +1**  
Radical upbringing.

**Karen: -2, +2**

Young and charismatic like JFK. Outspoken like Jesse Jackson.

**LINDA: -5, +5**

Obama charismatic, calling for change.

**Terrie: -2, +2**

Young, charismatic.

**Faye: -4, +2**

Young like Kennedy. Liberal like Jesse Jackson, still cant trust him on many issues.

**Corinne: -3, -2**

Liberal

**Beth: -3, +3**

(Like JFK) Young lots of change, good speaker, "rock star" persona. (Like Jesse Jackson)  
Radical tone, media.

**Sharon: -5, -3**

Think he is "light" as a candidate.

**Karen: -5, +5**

(Like Jesse Jackson) Close in opinions. (Like JFK) He is close in opinions with him, he will be a good leader.

**Barbara: -4, +4**

Charismatic, seems Obama uses media to advantage.

*Please mark where in the grid you feel John McCain fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders. Then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.*

**Rebecca: -1, -1**

Sensible, moderate.

**Karen: -1, -1**

Business experience. Wealthy. Out of touch with American people.

**LINDA: 0, 0**

Military experience. Older Republican.

**Terrie: +3, -4**

**Faye: -2, -4**

Same policies, a little conservative, more moderate.

**Corinne: No Answer**

**Beth: -2, -3**

Straight talk, smart and respected.

**Sharon: 0, -3**

**Karen: +5, -5**

I believe he will not be honest. He is honorable.

**Barbara: 0, 0**

Funny, military man.

***Please read the following information about John McCain. Circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about John McCain.***

1	1. McCain comes from a family of high-ranking military leaders. Both McCain's father and grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy, and McCain grew up as a military brat, attending nearly 20 schools at various naval postings in the U.S. and the Pacific. He followed in the footsteps of his father and attended the U.S. Naval Academy. His son Jimmy also followed him into the military and served in Iraq until Feb. 2008.
1	2. McCain volunteered for combat duty in Vietnam, shipping out in December 1966 and leaving behind a wife and three small children. He flew missions in Vietnam until he was shot down in October 1967. He spent 5 ½ years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton, where he was viciously tortured but refused an offer to be released by the Vietnamese unless all of his fellow prisoners were also released.
	3. McCain returned to the U.S. as a war hero and eventually took a position as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate. He met his current wife Cindy, only child of a wealthy beer wholesaler in Arizona, in May 1980. He moved to Arizona, retired from the Navy, and began his political career when he was elected to Congress from Arizona in 1982 and then to the Senate in 1986.
	4. McCain likes to say he began his political career as "a foot soldier in the Reagan Revolution." But his reformer credentials were damaged early in his career when he was rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for his role in the Keating Five influence peddling scandal.
8	5. McCain has been a vocal critic of wasteful, pork barrel spending by Democrats and Republicans alike throughout his career. He helped pass the Line Item Veto Act of 1996, has won the "Taxpayer's Hero Award" three times for his efforts to fight pork spending and special interests, and claims to have never requested a single earmark..
8	6. McCain has a well-established reputation as a political maverick who refuses to tow the partisan line. Praised for his "straight talk" during his 2000 campaign against George W. Bush for the Republican nomination, he spoke out against right-wing "agents of intolerance" and promised to work with members of both parties. In 2002, he led the effort to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform, known as the McCain-Feingold Act to limit the influence of money in politics.
1	7. McCain is uniquely qualified to serve as Commander in Chief. In addition to his military career, he serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee and has played a leading role in virtually every major national security issue since 1983.
	8. McCain has been the leading voice in Congress in support of the Iraq War and President Bush's surge policy in 2007, which he says has reduced violence in Iraq. He's criticized any call for withdrawal or a timeline in Iraq and vowed to never surrender or accept any outcome other than victory. And McCain will refuse to negotiate with the leaders of Iran or other terrorist states unless they make security concessions and agree to U.S. demands.
1	9. An early favorite to win the Republican nomination, McCain's 2008 presidential campaign almost went bankrupt in 2007, and he was dismissed as finished by virtually every political pundit. But McCain refused to quit; he trimmed down his

	campaign, flew on commercial flights to save money, and made his case directly to voters, defeating candidates with more money to win the nomination convincingly.
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***Please read the following information about Barack Obama. Circle the circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about Barack Obama.***

	1. Obama’s mother was a white woman from a small town in Kansas who raised him as a single mother from the age of two, sometimes relying on food stamps to make ends meet. His maternal grandfather fought in Patton’s Army in WWII and went to school on the G.I. Bill, while his grandmother worked in a factory to support the war effort. Between the ages of 6 and 10, Obama lived with his mother and stepfather in Indonesia, then returned to Hawaii, where he was raised by his maternal grandparents.
	2. Obama’s father was a Harvard-educated economist from Kenya who left when he was two years old. Obama met his father only once more before his death in a car crash in 1982. Obama wrote a book about how his father’s absence affected his childhood and recently marked Father’s Day by delivering a speech about the harm caused by absentee fathers, particularly in the African-American community.
1	3. Despite his humble roots, Obama eAnthonyd academic scholarships that enabled him to attend some of the finest colleges in the country. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in political science and international relations, and later attended Harvard Law School, where he became the first ever African-American to head the prestigious Harvard Law Review.
9	4. After college, Obama turned down the ability to make big money on Wall Street or with a big company. Instead, he became a community organizer in Chicago with a church-based group seeking to help a diverse set of poor neighborhoods – white, black, and Latino – decimated by the closing of local steel plants. He says this experience made him the leader he is today, with a focus on bringing people with varying interests together for a common purpose and trusting ordinary people to get things done rather than relying on politicians and powerful interests.
	5. After law school, Obama returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer and teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He also continued to work in local communities, organizing voter registration drives during the 1992 campaign, and his advocacy work ultimately led him to run for the state legislature in 1996.
5	6. Obama was elected to the Illinois state senate in 1996. In the Illinois Senate, he immediately demonstrated an ability to reach across party lines to get things done and led bi-partisan efforts to provide health coverage for 154,000 uninsured Illinoisans, to pass the state’s most sweeping new ethics law in a generation, and to expand access to early childhood education programs.
4	7. Obama publicly opposed the Iraq war from the very beginning, even when most politicians supported it, and said it would distract from the war in Afghanistan and the effort to stop al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Speaking at a rally in October 2002, he said, “I know that even a successful war against Iraq will require a U.S. occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences...I know that an invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than best, impulses of the Arab world, and strengthen the recruitment arm of al-Qaeda.”
1	8. While still a candidate for Senate in 2004, Obama was asked to deliver the

	keynote speech at the Democratic Convention. His speech, emphasizing national unity and attacking partisan division – "We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states...We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, all of us defending the United States of America." – made him an international celebrity before he even took office.
	9. In the U.S. Senate, Obama led the fight for bipartisan ethics reform and introduced major legislation on immigration, reduction of greenhouse gases, and veterans' benefits. On the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he worked with leading Republicans to pass legislation designed to find and secure deadly nuclear materials and traveled to Russia to begin a new generation of non-proliferation efforts.

*Dear Senator Obama,*

**Rebecca**

Stop playing poor boy of a single white mother. Be truthful about your beliefs. If you believe the radical ideas of your prior colleagues and spiritual advisers, be man enough to say so.

**Karen**

Tell me exactly why I should vote for you. The specifics, definite plans, how will you make it happen. Where will we be in four years?

**Linda**

How are you planning on implementing your many programs? How much of an influence has your former pastor had on your life?

**Terrie**

Please be specific in your promises to the voters. Remember those values that you were taught. Continue to work for the "common man" of America. Make the changes for a better America.

**Faye**

I advise you to select a strong VP candidate like Hillary Clinton I like most of your messages however I cant trust that you are sincere in representing the entire population of the United States when you have someone like Hillary backing you up on major decisions like health care, energy and the economy.

**Corinne**

What are you really going to do as President? Can we trust you to tell honestly or just gloss over to look good at the time. Give me some substance. Are you going to be able to pull together the Democratic party to back you? Are you going to be truly bi-partisan.

**Beth**

Our country desperately needs change in leader to regain our standing as a good place to live. We need changes to make sure no one feels left out, hungry scare, or helpless. We need a leader who will set out his agenda for change now so the American people know help is on the way. Please be open about your ideas.

**Sharon**

Please be true to your campaign. We desperately need change. Not naïve change but real change from our very roots.

**Karen**

I like the way you think. Welfare and making the country better. I think you will make a good president.

**Barbara**

I pray if you are elected that you will consider the people and their families. And that you will be able to do what you have aspired to do and what your goals seem to be, not be indebted to people who gave to your campaign. I am talking about wealthy self interested people.

*Dear Senator McCain,*

**Rebecca**

Thank you for your sacrifices and thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of all Americans.

**Karen**

Tell me exactly why I should vote for you. The specifics, definite plans, how will you make it happen. Where will we be in four years?

**Linda**

How are you planning on implementing your many programs? How do you propose extracting our troops? Do you plan on distracting yourself from the ideas of your party and former leaders?

**Terrie**

Thanks for serving our country and your continued service as a senator. Continue to be strong in your beliefs for what is right.

**Faye**

I hope that you can make some change in energy, health care and the war. I also advise you to select a person like Colin Powell as your VP. If you had someone like that as your running mate you would have my vote!

**Corinne**

How much are you going to follow in the Bush Cheney?

**Beth**

We need a leader like you – someone we can depend on to do the right thing.

**Sharon**

Please help us stop the war. I realize you've been there but we're exhausted from this. Look at us and help. Cut our taxes and be on our side.

**Karen**

I think that you are a reasonable honest man and you would make a good president but I think Obama is better.

**Barbara**

I pray that you will be able to consider all the peoples interest. But that you will be able to work for the needs of this country in the health care needs and the rough financial needs in this country. I know that you are a wealthy man.

**Focus Group Guidelines**  
**June 24, 2008**  
**Roanoke, VA**

3 Bush, 4 Kerry, 3 Cant remember/Neither  
2 McCain, 2 Obama, 6 Undecided  
5 Dem, 2 Rep, 3 Independent

**I. Introduction** (10 minutes)

- Confidentiality
- Mirrors, audio and videotapes
- Respondent introductions

Phillip, work for Lowes, married have one daughter, past time is music.

Jeff, unemployed, owned a small company and sold it so semi retired. Lived in DE before I moved here.

Glen, work at new millennium steel, live in Craig County, past time is hunting and fishing.

Mike, am semi retired, favorite pastime is motorcycle riding.

Cliff. Retired from company and deal with class muscle cars on the side.

Greg, work for Wachovia and like to go kayaking and camping.

Gary, married, seventeen year old and eleven year old.

Doug, teacher in Roanoke County, three boys. Great kids, recently divorced and now have all three kids. Have my hands full.

Chaz, live on a river, work for hope tree family services, mainly with disabled adults, like to garden and fish and canoe.

Dennis, married, have two kids, two 22 and one is 20, like to ride my motorcycle.

**II. Direction of the Country** (15 minutes)

Let me start by asking you to think about another time – another period in our history. Starting with the fifties.

1. *The fifties – the 1950s* [NOT EXTENSIVE].

- What are the main things you associate with the fifties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Lot of growth from the men returning from the war, prosperity.

Simpler times.

Ozzie and Harriet.

Elvis.

Sock Hops

Innocence.

Rock and Roll

Buddy Holly.

Just simpler time

Lack of information, today you have everything in your face and you can scan anything you want, back then it might take two weeks before the news gets to a thousand people.

Not as many choices.

**2. *The sixties – the 1960s* [NOT EXTENSIVE].**

- What are the main things you associate with the sixties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Far out man.

Smoking

Free love

That was a wakening period, hippies.

Vietnam war.

Social unrest.

JFK.

Tons of turmoil

Between Vietnam and new president and civil rights...

Bay of pigs.

Civil union

Cold war.

Apollo, the space program

Man walked on the moon then

Backyard bomb shelters.

It'd interesting how you learned all about the atomic bomb and all this but now who knows what will happen

Played sports for the love of the game not for the money.

**3. *The nineties – the 1990s, when Bill Clinton was president.* [MORE EXTENSIVE].**

- What are ere the main things you associate with the nineties?
- What things were going right in the country then?
- What things were going wrong in the country then?

Pollution

Life in the fast lane.

High tech industries

Dot coms

Stock market boom.

People lost some money.

The Clintons.

MTV

Different types of music. Rock and Roll branched out a lot.

Choices...

Birth of reality TV.

There you go.

I think that's good, it can be.

Globalization.

Monica. I think about our economy though, yeah I do.

I think he did a lot of things right,

The stock market, and having a surplus, for maybe the only time in history, or the one time in the last century, pretty rare.

4. Now, thinking about *our current times, since 2000 when George Bush* has been president. [EXTENSIVE].

- What are the main things you associate with our current times?
- What things have been going right in the country?
- What things have been going wrong in the country?

Cell phones

Inflation

Gas prices

Unemployment

First time the US has ever been an aggressor.

Borrowing money from China to pay for everything.

Globalization, we're selling off the country in huge chunks while all these other countries, how can the one largest industrialized countries in the world owe others. So now the big thing is why aren't we drilling for oil here than buying it from the Saudis. One of the problems is because we cant order new rigs and they're all on their last legs but now all of our steel mills are done so you cant order anything any of these rigs.

Steel work is boomin where I am.

The price of steel has gone outrageous.

The price of all metal is outrageous. Ten to twenty percent increase in copper lately. And that's because China is buying the raw metal, where I deal with electrical and plumbing, now you cant plumb a house with Copper because its outrageous, you have to use plastic.

Foreclosures, banking problems.

The economy

Gas prices, wall street. Companies like Enron folding because the officers not managing the company like they should have. They were greedy.

And the tech stocks and the stock market, they were valueing those more than they should have and it has to give sometime.

Emerging economies, China, Russia.

Large companies getting larger.

Almost all business, one or two companies are buying all of the other companies, and that is in everything. The less companies you got the less competition you got, so it gets down to a monopoly in everything.

I don't see my kisd as being able to get their own homes.

I don't ever see being able to retire. Especially with inflation, and everything is getting out of control and peoples wages are just not keeping up.

And one thing I think about more than anything is these oil companies having their record profits. And it has such an impact on everything, grain, steel all this, and its not right. And Im not against anyone making a profit but its just not fair to us for them to be getting these tax breaks while we are paying more and they are getting record profits.

Now it's a great time to be a farmer again, because of the ethanol.

But if you're not a corn farmer, my brother in law deals with cattle, and he has to put up hay and grow hay, and the gas prices to run the tractor is just outrageous.

Global warming, green house gases. You never heard about that in the nineties, but now its pretty evident that something needs to be done.

Health care.

So many people that are retiring....

Insurance companies have too much leeway, when I quite the full time job I had to go into contracting I couldn't get insurance, I was denied.

**III. Associations** (20 minutes)

Now I'm going to throw out the names of some people from all walks of life that have been in the news lately. For each, please tell me the first thing that comes to mind...

1. George W. Bush  
Worst president ever

Greed

Dumbest president ever

Lowest IQ

I think history remains to be seen how he will be written on. I think that in fifty years the situation in Iraq and Iran will look totally different. No president has ever had their legacy written when they were in office still

Arrogance.

Pompous.

Arrogant.

MICHAEL VICK

Stupid

Greed

Very stupid.

Gifted, talented.

But yeah very stupid.

TIM Kaine:

Smart

Progressive

Gets stuff done

Energetic

I think he's good but he's had a tough act to follow with Mark Warner. Mark Warner set the bar high. Warner did such an exceptional job.

He's done some good things but he's lacked some judgement on others.

The use of driver thing....

Unfortunately the things they do that you disagree with are the things that stick out in your mind.

2. Hillary Clinton  
Sharp

Heck of a woman

Tenacious

Admirable

Just everything she's been through, she just keeps chugging, she's a fighter.

I believe she had the ability to bring sides together to solve something, I think that she could work with Republicans enough to get something done. That is one of her talents.

I think that she wants to be VP.

Lot of good stuff came out of Bill's time in the WH and she was a big part of that, so she's got that behind her.

3. Tiger Woods  
Hard worker.

Not a huge fan but after the US Open you cant not be a big fan

Its amazing the impact he's had.

4. Angelina Jolie  
HOT

Best looking woman on the planet

Lips

Botox

HOT

tattoos

She's pretty admirable, I don't know any scandal that shes been in. She's got a good heart and is good looking.

JIM WEBB

Tough

Real tough

A lot of people were down on him for that comment that he made to the president about his son but you know these guys are human, they're not, they're seen as just politicians but they're people

He's part of the worst Congress we've ever had, as far as results, they've done nothing.

Hes diverse, he was in the Reagan administration and is now a Democratic senator.

5. Kobe Bryant

6. Michael Nutter

**[Written Exercise – Handouts #1 and #2]**

7. Barack Obama

- What good things come to mind when you think of Barack Obama?

Raises a lot of money.

Wants to go against the status quo

Wants change

Is a good motivator

Well spoken

Educated

Appears to be honest. He has, you know, he has a thoughtful speech process and it puts a lot of, his responses are measured and come across as honest and sincere.

Young man. Has a knack to teach our young people.

Has the support of his party behind him it appears.

Willing to pull together the smartest people in this country to solve the problems, a team builder along the motivational lines.

He understands the poor and the middle class. I believe he listens to people, when he's out and people tell him what they're going through he takes it in he doesn't just nod his head, he actually absorbs it.

He was raised by a single mother, didn't have money, comes from a humble background.

- What doubts do you have? What worries you about him?

Lack of experience.

Does he know how to get things done in Washington DC

Short congressional record.

People in his past seem to be a little bit outspoken

The preacher, Rezco, that land deal and everything.

Its better than having a hooker in your past.

Oh I don't know...

I'm not convinced a black man can get elected in this country.

I didn't want to say it but in this election race will be the focus for a lot of people.

Its society. Its becoming more and more out there in the news.

As of last night in the news he threw out the race card, threw it out there. He was talking about running against McCain and the Republicans and how they would portray him as a Democrat and how that he wouldn't be an electable person. I don't know whether he know that someone was recording the conversation, or what....

He's from mixed marriage, his mother is white and his father is African.

Well it changed the mood, he will say he's interracial sometimes and other times he'll say he's black, it depends on who he is talking to. When he is talking to black people he says he's black but they don't really put out there that his mother was white.

The Democrats always try to appeal to the minority voters anyways

Well poor people, yeah the middle class.

Ability to bring sides together, I don't know his record in the Senate, I just don't know.

I am concerned that he is running for president just to be the first black running for president and doesn't care if he gets it or not.

You cant think he'd do that and not want to win or not care, I wouldn't want to do that with all that you have to go through you cant think that.

His, he doesn't really say how he will bring about these changes, he seems like he wants to overthrow the capitalist system and our system and give a lot more to the under developed countries and you know he's a greata speaker but he doesn't really say how he's going to fix the economy or how he's going to fix the debt or do anything.

He says the main points but there aint not points behind them

Well if you think about this country and with the economy, if he comes out and hits the hot buttons and says we need change of course everyone is going to like that, Change, Change, but how is he going to do it. I don't know if he doesn't have the plan through the end or what but...

I think that he is riding the heels of the Democratic congress, we brought them in and we've been saying that we want change we gave them both houses of Congress and said that we want change and they haven't done nothing.

They have a lower approval rating than the president.

Foreign Policy

His wife, I think that she just recently said that she just realized what this country is about and what it stands for and all that, it was in the news. I don't know

I heard that she came out with some race remarks, there have been a lot of rumors about her saying Whiteys or whatever I don't know. I'm a Honkey so I don't care.

As long as they get the job done I don't care if they're purple or yellow or anything, if they do the job.

Well it bothered me that he said his grandma was a "typical white person" because what if we went out there and said he was a "typical black person" you know, what would have happened there.

I think its time to cut through some of this polical correctness though and just cut through it and if it's a duck call it a duck.

- If you had to give me three words or phrases to describe Barack Obama, what would they be?
- What is the biggest question you have about Barack Obama at this point?

**[Written Exercise – Handouts #3 and #4]**

8. John McCain

- What good things come to mind when you think of John McCain?

Experience

Married well. Money.

Experience with foreign policy probably.

Willing to speak his mind, whether that's good or bad.

Willing to do it at least.

Intelligent. He's a POW patriotic American and a little more moderate than others.

For his age, he's more, willing to go to the cutting edge to do whats better.

But the thing he did the other day offering 300 million to someone to come up with a better car battery but where is that money coming from? Outta his pocket? That technology is there and someone will take him up on it. That told me that he had no background on the subject, he had no background about what he was talking about.

Moderate, can appeal to the moderate voters more than Obama, he will paint Obama as the left wing and by doing so appeal to the middle of the road. He's distanced him from the religious right, because he knows that those people are going to vote Republican anyways, so he is trying to appeal to the undecideds or the middle voters.

He's willing to change the way that these earmarks are slipped into these bills.

Like the bridge to nowhere.

- What doubts do you have? What worries you about him?

Too old

His age

His mental capacity, I mean he's got age, he could be in that range of Alxheimers or dementia.

It makes me wonder. Poor orator. He doesn't speak well. He's everything that Obama's not. Obama is dynamic and can deliver a speech and really whip a crowd up but McCain just cant do that. I think if he is elected he'll be a one timer.

He stood by Bush so much you kind of get the feeling that it would just be more of the same.

MORE OF THE SAME:

Off shore drilling.

Foreign Policy

I think that he is a bit of a war mongerer. He had a career fighting so I just think that is what he knows.

His lack of experience on the economy, he doesn't know anything about it and he even said that.

He's wishy washy too, he is trying to appeal to everyone the moderates, the liberals and the conservatives so who is he.

Well one thing that both parties need to look at is who is the running mate. With Obama and the race thing and the McCain with the age thing.

There is a chance that neither of them will make a full term. There is McCain's age and Obama's race. Whoever we vote for it will probably be more for the running mate.

- If you had to give me three words or phrases to describe John McCain, what would they be?

Weak

Just I he is just weak

Patriot

Inexperienced.

Over age

- What is the biggest question you have about John McCain at this point?

#### IV. Candidate Grids (20 minutes)

Let's look at these candidates in a different way now. I'd like you to think about them in relation to some other leaders in our country, both past and present, and to use these comparisons to really think about each of these candidates – What kind of a leader is he? What are his strongest qualities? What are his weaknesses? Where will he lead our country as President?

We're going to place each of these candidates relative to other famous leaders on a chart that looks like this... **[Explain grid exercise on easel]**

##### **[Written Exercise – Handout #5]**

1. First, let's talk about Barack Obama. On the axis going up and down, you will see that we have John F. Kennedy at the top and John Kerry at the bottom. On the axis going left and right, you will see that we have Jesse Jackson on the left and Colin Powell on the right. Please mark where in the grid you feel Obama fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders, then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.

To me he is way over toward Jesse Jackson, he is not JFK to me, he doesn't have the background or the knowledge that JFK did. And with Colin Powell he doesn't have the military. With John Kerry I don't know, I just feel that he is closer to Jackson than anyone.

They both speak very good.

Motivator.

I put him on the JFK, Colin Powell side. Even without the military background he comes across as intelligent, and articulated so that's what I associate with Colin Powell and so Obama more with that. And with JFK it's not exactly the same but it's the way he motivates young people like JFK could, and so that is the thing.

I put him with Colin Powell and JFK. JFK had some legislative experience but he didn't have the presidential experience. Had he not been killed this country would be totally different than it is now. And Colin Powell I think that of anyone in this country he is probably one of the most trusted people in the countries, and I think that Obama has those qualities too.

I put him down between Jesse Jackson and Kerry. He has the oratorical ability to whip the crowd into a frenzy but I have some questions about some of these situations he's been involved with and relationships with different people, like the real estate developer and then of course this pastor. And I understand that he doesn't have to agree with that pastor but why did he sit there for twenty years and listen to this guy say that America is terrible, why would he just sit there for that long and listen to that. I don't see him like Colin Powell and all and not like JFK either. JFK had the experience of being a Kennedy that was experience, Obama is kind of a rookie.

I put him in the JFK/ Jackson quadrant. The dream would be JFK and Colin Powell but I don't think he is like Colin Powell. The reason I compare him to JFK is because he was very popular

and obama is becoming very popular right now. I don't think he was like Kerry, Kerry was weaker and Obama is stronger than that.

The verbage he used to describe common people that one time that reminded me of Kerry and how he was.

- **Discuss extensively**

**[Written Exercise – Handout #6]**

2. Now, let's look at John McCain. On the axis going up and down, you will see that we have Ronald Reagan at the top and George H. W. Bush, the current President's father, at the bottom. On the axis going left and right, you will see that we have Ross Perot on the left and Dick Cheney on the right. Please mark where in the grid you feel McCain fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders, then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.

Well he's definitely not Cheney. He doesn't have any resemblance in my mind to the type of person Cheney is. The elder Bush was much more reserved than a lot of people and Perot was too, like that only kind of weak. Reagan was an actor, he was like Obama, he could get up there to speak and people would listen. McCain doesn't command that type of attention so I put him by Bush and Perot.

I put him there too. A little closer to Bush than Perot. Perot could have done something good not as president but maybe as FED chair or something like that.

I was closer to Bush. More so, of course they're both veterans, but just their mannerisms, their speeches, that was the first thing that struck me, definitely not Reagan.

I put him between Reagan Bush and Perot, definitely not Cheney, but he is strong on defense, strong on foreign policy, but he is a little more middle of the road like Perot on the social issues but he is also a little close to Bush also.

I put him in the center because I don't know that much about him really, he's not, he doesn't have the speech, he cant bring across his philosophies or anything, hes not charismatic.

That is basically what I was thinking when Hillary and Obama were fighting you never heard anything from him, he was just hoping they would cut each others throat I guess. I like the man but I don't know why, there is just something about him that appeals to me I guess.

- **Discuss extensively**

**V. Candidate Bios (20 minutes)**

Let's talk in a little more detail about each of these candidates. This time, we'll start with John McCain...

**[Written exercise – Handout #7]**

1. On Handout #7, you will see a series of statements that represent a brief biography of John McCain and some of the key milestones in his life. Please read through this list and circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about John McCain.
  - a. McCain comes from a family of high-ranking military leaders. Both McCain's father and grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy, and McCain grew up as a military brat, attending nearly 20 schools at various naval postings in the U.S. and the Pacific. He followed in the footsteps of his father and attended the U.S. Naval Academy. His son Jimmy also followed him into the military and served in Iraq until Feb. 2008.
  - b. McCain volunteered for combat duty in Vietnam, shipping out in December 1966 and leaving behind a wife and three small children. He flew missions in Vietnam until he was shot down in October 1967. He spent 5 ½ years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton, where he was viciously tortured but refused an offer to be released by the Vietnamese unless all of his fellow prisoners were also released.
  - c. McCain returned to the U.S. as a war hero and eventually took a position as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate. He met his current wife Cindy, only child of a wealthy beer wholesaler in Arizona, in May 1980. He moved to Arizona, retired from the Navy, and began his political career when he was elected to Congress from Arizona in 1982 and then to the Senate in 1986.
  - d. McCain likes to say he began his political career as "a foot soldier in the Reagan Revolution." But his reformer credentials were damaged early in his career when he was rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for his role in the Keating Five influence peddling scandal.
  - e. McCain has been a vocal critic of wasteful, pork barrel spending by Democrats and Republicans alike throughout his career. He helped pass the Line Item Veto Act of 1996, has won the "Taxpayer's Hero Award" three times for his efforts to fight pork spending and special interests, and claims to have never requested a single earmark..

ALL TEN PEOPLE CHOSE

I think that this is how he will distance himself from Bush, if he is going to distance himself from Bush then I think he needs to hit on both E and F. He has to talk about how he toured with HRC to tout his economic plan and that he isn't a conservative Republican.

The American people are fed of with wasteful spending and I think that we've gotten ourselves in such a pickle that something has got to give at this point.

- f. McCain has a well-established reputation as a political maverick who refuses to tow the partisan line. Praised for his "straight talk" during his 2000 campaign against George W. Bush for the Republican nomination, he spoke out against right-wing "agents of intolerance" and promised to work with members of both parties. In 2002, he led the effort to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform, known as the McCain-Feingold Act to limit the influence of money in politics.

#### SIX PEOPLE CHOSE

Everyone is tired of partisan politics and just toeing the line, so this appeals to me.

He speaks a little more economic common sense. He just says don't be borrowing money if you cant pay it back, what if China came over and said that they wanted their money back, we've got nothing for them and no defense to fight them

He says what he believes I think

He's been criticized for doing jus this. And he's smart enough to not have Bush going around with him with those low approval ratings and I think he's sincere about doing all of these. I think that you know you have these bills and they get weighed down with all of this baggage with other spending so that by the end they are useless. So if he did win this award which I didn't know about then this is a good thing.

He claims to never have requested any porkbarrel money so if that's true that's a good thing.

- g. McCain is uniquely qualified to serve as Commander in Chief. In addition to his military career, he serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee and has played a leading role in virtually every major national security issue since 1983.
- h. McCain has been the leading voice in Congress in support of the Iraq War and President Bush's surge policy in 2007, which he says has reduced violence in Iraq. He's criticized any call for withdrawal or a timeline in Iraq and vowed to never surrender or accept any outcome other than victory. And McCain will refuse to negotiate with the leaders of Iran or other terrorist states unless they make security concessions and agree to U.S. demands.
- i. An early favorite to win the Republican nomination, McCain's 2008 presidential campaign almost went bankrupt in 2007, and he was dismissed as finished by virtually every political pundit. But McCain refused to quit; he trimmed down his campaign, flew on commercial flights to save money, and made his case directly to voters, defeating candidates with more money to win the nomination convincingly.

- **Show of hands, discuss**

- Looking back on this list, what does this say to you about John McCain?

I think that he'd be very stable. I think that he is very stable and he smiles but at the same time there is an edge behind him. Of course after being tortured in that camp he probably is a lot more mellow about some stuff that would drive us freaky.

He's not going to be easily manipulated by special interests and people trying to get him to look their way so to speak. He's straightforward.

I think that he'd be cordial to Congress but would be tough with them too. He'd tell them like it is and if they didn't do it then he'd say who's to blame whether its on both sides of the aisle or just one or the other.

I know he's been real reserved or controlled in the way he does not criticize his opponent and he goes through great length to make sure he doesn't say things that are taken the wrong way or said the wrong way and I think that works to his advantage.

Yeah but that will probably change now.

It'd be to his advantage not to change that.

**[Written exercise – Handout #8]**

2. On Handout #8, you will see a similar series of statements that represent a brief biography of Barack Obama and some of the key milestones in his life. Once again, read through this list and circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about Barack Obama.
  - a. Obama’s mother was a white woman from a small town in Kansas who raised him as a single mother from the age of two, sometimes relying on food stamps to make ends meet. His maternal grandfather fought in Patton’s Army in WWII and went to school on the G.I. Bill, while his grandmother worked in a factory to support the war effort. Between the ages of 6 and 10, Obama lived with his mother and stepfather in Indonesia, then returned to Hawaii, where he was raised by his maternal grandparents.

**THREE PEOPLE**

Shows that he comes from a lower class background and knows what the lower class has to deal with because he dealt with it himself. He knows that those people are struggling worse than the middle class to make ends meet because he has done it himself.

- b. Obama’s father was a Harvard-educated economist from Kenya who left when he was two years old. Obama met his father only once more before his death in a car crash in 1982. Obama wrote a book about how his father’s absence affected his childhood and recently marked Father’s Day by delivering a speech about the harm caused by absentee fathers, particularly in the African-American community.
- c. Despite his humble roots, Obama earned academic scholarships that enabled him to attend some of the finest colleges in the country. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in political science and international relations, and later attended Harvard Law School, where he became the first ever African-American to head the prestigious Harvard Law Review.
- d. After college, Obama turned down the ability to make big money on Wall Street or with a big company. Instead, he became a community organizer in Chicago with a church-based group seeking to help a diverse set of poor neighborhoods – white, black, and Latino – decimated by the closing of local steel plants. He says this experience made him the leader he is today, with a focus on bringing people with varying interests together for a common purpose and trusting ordinary people to get things done rather than relying on politicians and powerful interests.

**FOUR PEOPLE CHOSE:**

I put him in their with JFK because they both had the same kind of heart.

Even more so than JFK because JFK had money and he didn’t and he still went to do this.

I think that he was smart, because he was honing his craft in Chicago and Chicago has always been a pretty strong Democratic politics place so that's what he was doing and it worked well when he achieved results.

When they say common purpose and ordinary people those are his voters right now. I am one of those and this is something that I'd like to hear about.

- e. After law school, Obama returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer and teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He also continued to work in local communities, organizing voter registration drives during the 1992 campaign, and his advocacy work ultimately led him to run for the state legislature in 1996.
- f. Obama was elected to the Illinois state senate in 1996. In the Illinois Senate, he immediately demonstrated an ability to reach across party lines to get things done and led bi-partisan efforts to enact welfare reform, provide health coverage for 154,000 uninsured Illinoisans, pass the state's most sweeping new ethics law in a generation, and expand access to early childhood education programs.

NINE OF TEN CHOSE

That he crosses party lines.

That he actually accomplished something.

Bi partisan

Says most important things to know about, they might not be reasons that you'd vote for him. Obama wants nationalized health care, now he wants to spend fifty million dollars on it, and he doesn't know where that money is going to come from, so that might not be something I'd vote for, but that is something that stands out.

What he did in the neighborhoods.

Shows his compassion, that compassion might get him some votes.

And the welfare reform. I don't think that anyone in this room wants to pay for someone to not work but that stands out. I don't know what the reform is but that stands out.

- g. Obama publicly opposed the Iraq war from the very beginning, even when most politicians supported it, and said it would distract from the war in Afghanistan and the effort to stop al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Speaking at a rally in October 2002, he said, "I know that even a successful war against Iraq will require a U.S. occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences...I know that an invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support

will only fan the flames of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than best, impulses of the Arab world, and strengthen the recruitment arm of al-Qaeda."

TWO PEOPLE

We took our eye off the ball and now look where it is. We had misinformation. And I don't know, I think that he was focused on it and was keen to it and its easy to look back but that he saw it then I think that he was right.

He could really portray Obama as weak for this, because when our country was attacked he didn't want to do anything about it. He wasn't a supporter of the war so he wasn't reacting appropriately to what was going on.

He didn't flip flop, he opposed from the start and still does.

He does support the war in Afghanistan and did. He knew that Iraq was going to be another quagmire like Vietnam, you get in but you cant get out. I think that he knew that.

We've almost had a skirmish with N. Korea and Iran as well,

You have to look at it like how is Obama as president goingn to react to something happening to the US>

Yeah what happens if something were to happen tomorrow.

I agree with Obama, I opposed it because after nine eleven, we said we wanted Bin Laden, he was in Afghanistan so we should have been there going after him because he was placing the threat on us, we went to Iraq, where Sadaam was saying there was WMD's but that was false, the government know it, they know it. But they did it anyways.

You cant stop UN inspectors from coming in to your country, and that's what they were doing. So I picture myself as the president of the US and the CIA which is the most trained and best intelligence in the world and they were saying that we didn't know, so we didn't know what they had there if they had WMD's or not. So we had to do something.

A positive role needs to be taken to end it and get our troops out of there. If Obama was against it from the get go then he might just pull our troops out and make it worse than it was from the beginning.

McCain might stay there forever. Didn't he say 100 years.

Yeah but we're still in Korea. Its not occupational but we're still there.

We have troops all over the world so it seems to me that we need a military base there.

- h. While still a candidate for Senate in 2004, Obama was asked to deliver the keynote speech at the Democratic Convention. His speech, emphasizing national unity and attacking partisan division – "We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states... We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, all of us defending the United States of America." – made him an international celebrity before he even took office.
- i. In the U.S. Senate, Obama led the fight for bipartisan ethics reform and introduced major legislation on immigration, reduction of greenhouse gases, and veterans' benefits. On the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he worked with leading Republicans to pass legislation designed to find and secure deadly nuclear materials and traveled to Russia to begin a new generation of non-proliferation efforts.

- **Show of hands, discuss**

- Looking back on this list, what does this say to you about Barack Obama?

Well he has persevered to get to where he wants to be, he didn't let himself his start as a poor child with no dad keep him down, he focused on what he wanted and achieved a lot.

You can somewhat compare him to Lincoln because he came up the same way and from the same state.

He's going to grow a beard too

He's honorable and an achiever of course

Well educated.

**VI. Videos** (30 minutes)

Now I want to look at some video on some of the major topics we are likely to see and hear about in this campaign...

**Wright Footage (Group 1) / Pflieger and Ayers (Group 2)**

- Does this raise doubts about Barack Obama?
  - **Probe – Is it about race, patriotism, judgment, what?**

**WRIGHT CLIPS**

Who would go to his church

Have you ever watched on TV any number of black preachers, when they get in the word, anything will come out. I don't agree with his God Damn America but he was a Marine.

I've watched a lot of black pastors and seen them live but I haven't ever heard someone say that (conservative guy)

Me neither

Ignorant

Yeah and with someone that ignorant I wouldn't let him be my pastor.

They never asked Oprah why she left there two years ago, why didn't he.

Yeah well its like that crazy old uncle that every once and a while goes nuts and you just don't pay him any mind.

But if he doesn't agree with him then he should have left anyways.

Im surprised this has never come up before.

He set there for twenty years, listening to that, he claims that he didn't hear it, but I heard on the news that before all this came out that you could get on Trinity and order all the sermons and get on there and look through them and some of these groups did and for twenty years everything was there, they were in all of these sermons.

If you have a crazy old uncle you either get up and leave or you say, well this guy is crazy. You don't sit there for twenty years and listen to that I go to my church because I agree with what my pastor says. You don't call your crazy old uncle your spiritual mentor. Or have him baptize your children.

You don't go to church if you're not listening, why go to church if you're not going to listen.

I don't believe he's been saying that for twenty years, you don't know that, pull one out from twenty years ago and show me. He might not have been talking that for the last twenty years.

Well he was talking that for the last seven years, that one was from 2001.

To me its irrelevant whether he was there for 20 years or 5, I don't care. And Obama tries to tie McCain to Hagee but theres no comparison, Hagee wasn't McCain's spiritual mentor.

Obama didn't leave him until he was really under the gun and so because of that I lost a lot of respect for him

To me what his preacher says doesn't have anything to do with how good of a president he'd be, not a thing. Not one thing.

The only question I have about that is if they share that philosophy about America and why we've done the things we've done. Why did we bomb Nagasaki, because we needed to end the war, not to be the aggressor.

**AYERS CLIP:**

I don't think that that's the same as the deal with his preacher. Whats his name said he did and he didn't get caught and he's all bragging about it and what not. Being on a board for an organization is not like sharing a philosophy that that guy had when he bombed everything.

There is too much we don't know about Obama for a lot of people to vote for him to be president. He's very vague, hes a great orator but he's very vague, he doesn't have a clear voting record so we can see what he really believes in.

He said they had a friendly philosophy so does that mean that they agreed with the philosophy that that Ayers guy had when he was bombing those places or were they just friends.

Ayers when through what he was over the course of time to being a professor so he came away from those sins I guess, but as far as I know he never served time.

He did serve time

Oh really, how much?

I don't know.

The media is going to put their own slant on it regardless of what is actually there.

The fact that you played those two clips shows me that the Republicans are looking for there new swift boat campaign so they can have a bunch of lies to spin around that aren't true that they can show people.

### **Economic Debate**

- After hearing from both sides here, what do you make of this? Who do you think will do a better job of turning our economy around?

Like he was saying, the first clip, McCain was saying this is what I am going to do, the lady said you know, Obama said that he will do this but what are the specifics and you see that there with Obama's clip.

To me it's the same the Republicans have always done. The trickle down economy, give the tax breaks to the rich and let it trickle down the rest of us but that doesn't happen, now they are moving jobs to do the other countries.

Everyone criticizes the trickle down economics but I just read an article in the WSJ that said that the boom of the nineties are a direct result of the trickle down economics of Reagan, everyone criticized that but that is what that boom came from.

She made reference to the tax and spend liberals, and you know when you tax and spend, well when these contracts go out it puts people to work, my brother is in construction. You know my problem with the Conservatives is just that they won't spend.

Well we've had a free ride for so many years with these sub prime mortgages and people buy these huge houses, and these cars, buy now and you can pay it back in five years, well in five years that thing is going to be worn out.

Well on the tax and spend thing, if you want the lesser of two evils who do you want, the war mongerer or the tax and spender? The senators voted themselves and they even voted Obama as the most liberal senator in the whole senate and I think that that is pretty extreme for him to be more liberal than Clinton, or anyone I think that is pretty extreme to try to make people vote for you for president..

Back in the older days people rallied around their jobs during a war but now all of the jobs are being shipped overseas so how can you rally around them?

Our country is in pretty bad shape right now, I'm not that old but this is as bad as I've ever seen it, so I'd say that we need someone pretty liberal to fix this.

Talking about the stimulus, where is this money coming from, we're borrowing money from the Chinese so that we can give it to the taxpayers to buy oil and gas.

### **Positive Ads**

#### **[FOR EACH]**

- What is your response to this ad?

- Is it believable?
  - [IF NO] What parts are most unbelievable?

**OBAMA AD:**

Genuine

Gets the point across, that he is humble and comes from that background and that if he makes it there then he is going to work hard for the lower class

He has the work ethic of the heartland and that is what makes this country great. He is talking about the country that he loves right there. Its just right there.

I agree with that.

I feel like its, if you win the lottery how many poor friends are you going to have after that. If he's the president they might remember him but he might not remember them

He tries to go out there and tell a little about his background but still there isn't enough information there. There just isn't enough about his politics.

I like the part there at the end that he says he loves America, maybe trying to fix up some of the stuff that his pastor was saying.

**McCAIN AD:**

He doesn't do a lot of the speaking himself in there.

Yeah not as strong.

America is hurting right now and he is talking about war, and stay strong and not surrender, I don't know.

Well if we're comparing the two, Obama's ad about patriotism and McCain's about patriotism well if you think which one is willing to preserve Americans way of life and free enterprise, I'd say McCain's sure he doesn't sound as good because he is just not as good as Obama at talking I'd say so it seems insincere.

I preferred hearing from Obama. Obama is out there presenting himself.

When you asked us about Obamas the first thing we all said was genuine, true, believable, and I don't get that impression or feeling about McCain's. That is one thing that you have to look at about McCains.

McCain representing war and being strong and that is important but the whole military system needs a rest. There are bigger problems coming. China with the billions of people they have

could take over the world possibly. I think that we need to rest our military and bank accounts for whats coming.

**VII. Postcards (5 minutes)**

Finally, we've talked a lot tonight about each of the two candidates for President and heard a lot of what they have to say to us as voters. Now, I'd like you to know what you have to say to them. If you flip to Handout #9, you will see two postcards – one to Obama, and one to McCain. Please write down what you would say to them if you had the chance to send each of them a note...

**[Written Exercise – Handout #9]**

*Postcard exercise – Obama on top, McCain on bottom – address each one as Dear Senator ...*

- **No discussion**

## **Roanoke Rural Men**

*Please write down what good things come to mind when you think about Barack Obama.*

### **Dennis**

Excellent Orator – ability to elicit enthusiasm. Not afraid to challenge the status quo of political correctness. Greatest virtue/greatest vice – “youth”/”inexperience” Loyal to his supporters.

### **Chas**

Appears to be honest. Energetic. Thoughtful speech process. Ability to bring sides together? Has party behind him – support.

### **Doug**

Intelligent, well spoken, mediator, educated, can easily persuade.

### **Gary**

Bring people together. Wanting a change. Raise a lot of money for campaign.

### **Greg**

A good orator, good public speaker. Inspires a new direction. Gives hope to Americans that things can change. Give the Democratic Party a new face and new outlook.

### **Phillip**

Wants change. Young man, health. Well liked among peers. People person. Mature.

### **Jeff**

Young, progressive, willing to go against the status quo. Articulates well. Intelligent. Willing to pull together the smartest team to solve problems in this country, good team builder. Speaks to our young people. Thinks outside the box. Sincere.

### **Glen**

Smart, creative, driven

### **Mike**

Nothing good comes to mind.

## **Cliff**

Good motivator, caring, understanding poor and middle class.

*Please write down any doubts you may have about Barack Obama.*

**Dennis**

Reluctance to clearly define the change he promotes. Vacillates on the issues. "Sans Teleprompter" he flounders in responding to questions. Loyalty/associations with questionable people.

**Chas**

Inexperience in global politics. Ability to bring sides together.

**Doug**

Inexperience with international affairs. Race hate to say, will be a part of his presidency. Will be focused on more often.

**Gary**

Religious people in his life. Wife not pleased with being part of the country until lately. For the top class of people.

**Greg**

I believe he thinks he will change America from the capitalistic true enterprise system. Does not represent the change he claims to envision. He does not expound on any other ideas than change. Seems to not favor the traditional American way of life. Wants to overthrow the government.

**Phillip**

Number of years in office, lack of experience.

**Jeff**

Foreign policy knowledge. Can a black man get elected in this country?

**Glen**

Being president just to be president.

**Mike**

Loyalty. Compassion for lower and middle class. Whether he is truthful. His involvement with Rezco. His involvement and philosophy with being in trinity for 20 years and not knowing what Wright preached about. His short congressional record. His background and what his ideals are.

## **Cliff**

Can he get a consensus to get things done. Does he know enough about how Washington works?

*Please write down what good things come to mind when you think about John McCain.*

**Dennis**

War vet – commands respect for his courage. Married well. Probably more experienced with foreign policy.

**Chas**

Experience. POW/Patriotic American. Moderately Conservative.

**Doug**

Cutting edge. Independent. Speaks his mind (good/bad). Experience. Truly believes in what he says.

**Gary**

Experience in country.

**Greg**

Honesty, patriotic. He's very "American" traditional and will appeal to people based on that.

**Phillip**

Experience, Veteran, Stands his ground.

**Jeff**

Veteran, intelligent, well spoken, caring, experience.

**Glen**

Religious, honest.

**Mike**

Veteran. Politician for many years, background in defense and international affairs, Mostly conservative, many times confronting when he did not believe in something, wanting to change the way earmarks included in bills, not afraid to change his opinion when it becomes necessary.

**Cliff**

Patriot, honest, not as much owned by big business as George Bush.

*Please write down any doubts you may have about John McCain.*

**Dennis**

Age, physical stamina, mental capacity.

**Chas**

War monger, age/health, more of the same.

**Doug**

Speaks his mind. Age/health. Buck the system..

**Gary**

Age, another Bush, no change, not worried about country, will he make the whole term?

**Greg**

Poor campaign. Not speak well. Cannot give specific examples of what he's done in Congress to improve the lifestyle of the middle class. Wishy Washy – not conservative and not liberal. Not tough enough with the presidency or to be president.

**Phillip**

More of the same. Age

**Jeff**

Age – he's too old. Too closely associated with Bush and his policies. Lacks knowledge of our economy and how to solve the problems. Part of Congress inactivity over last eight years.

**Glen**

Wants to raise taxes. Working Democrat Party.

**Mike**

Age, economy.

**Cliff**

He better have a great VP candidate. More of the same.

*Please mark where in the grid you feel Barack Obama fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders. Then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.*

**DENNIS: -3, -1**

**Chas: -1, +1**

**Doug: -3, -1**

**GARY: -5, -1.**

**GREG: +1, +3**  
Youth

**PHILLIP +4, -4**

**Jeff: +5, +5**

**Glen: -5, -1**

**Mike: -4, -1**

**Cliff: +5, +4**

*Please mark where in the grid you feel John McCain fits as a leader relative to each of these leaders. Then briefly write why you put him there in the blank space below.*

**DENNIS: -5, -5**

**Chas: -1, -1**

**Doug: +1, -3**

**GARY: 0, +1**

**GREG: -1, +1**

**PHILLIP: NA**

**Jeff: -3, -5**

**Glen: -3, +2**

**Mike: 0, +1**

**Cliff: 0, -5**

***Please read the following information about John McCain. Circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about John McCain.***

2	1. McCain comes from a family of high-ranking military leaders. Both McCain's father and grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy, and McCain grew up as a military brat, attending nearly 20 schools at various naval postings in the U.S. and the Pacific. He followed in the footsteps of his father and attended the U.S. Naval Academy. His son Jimmy also followed him into the military and served in Iraq until Feb. 2008.
2	2. McCain volunteered for combat duty in Vietnam, shipping out in December 1966 and leaving behind a wife and three small children. He flew missions in Vietnam until he was shot down in October 1967. He spent 5 ½ years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton, where he was viciously tortured but refused an offer to be released by the Vietnamese unless all of his fellow prisoners were also released.
	3. McCain returned to the U.S. as a war hero and eventually took a position as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate. He met his current wife Cindy, only child of a wealthy beer wholesaler in Arizona, in May 1980. He moved to Arizona, retired from the Navy, and began his political career when he was elected to Congress from Arizona in 1982 and then to the Senate in 1986.
	4. McCain likes to say he began his political career as "a foot soldier in the Reagan Revolution." But his reformer credentials were damaged early in his career when he was rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for his role in the Keating Five influence peddling scandal.
8	5. McCain has been a vocal critic of wasteful, pork barrel spending by Democrats and Republicans alike throughout his career. He helped pass the Line Item Veto Act of 1996, has won the "Taxpayer's Hero Award" three times for his efforts to fight pork spending and special interests, and claims to have never requested a single earmark..
6	6. McCain has a well-established reputation as a political maverick who refuses to tow the partisan line. Praised for his "straight talk" during his 2000 campaign against George W. Bush for the Republican nomination, he spoke out against right-wing "agents of intolerance" and promised to work with members of both parties. In 2002, he led the effort to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform, known as the McCain-Feingold Act to limit the influence of money in politics.
	7. McCain is uniquely qualified to serve as Commander in Chief. In addition to his military career, he serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee and has played a leading role in virtually every major national security issue since 1983.
1	8. McCain has been the leading voice in Congress in support of the Iraq War and President Bush's surge policy in 2007, which he says has reduced violence in Iraq. He's criticized any call for withdrawal or a timeline in Iraq and vowed to never surrender or accept any outcome other than victory. And McCain will refuse to negotiate with the leaders of Iran or other terrorist states unless they make security concessions and agree to U.S. demands.
	9. An early favorite to win the Republican nomination, McCain's 2008 presidential campaign almost went bankrupt in 2007, and he was dismissed as finished by virtually every political pundit. But McCain refused to quit; he trimmed down his

	campaign, flew on commercial flights to save money, and made his case directly to voters, defeating candidates with more money to win the nomination convincingly.
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***Please read the following information about Barack Obama. Circle the circle the two statements that really stand out to you as the most important things to know about Barack Obama.***

3	1. Obama’s mother was a white woman from a small town in Kansas who raised him as a single mother from the age of two, sometimes relying on food stamps to make ends meet. His maternal grandfather fought in Patton’s Army in WWII and went to school on the G.I. Bill, while his grandmother worked in a factory to support the war effort. Between the ages of 6 and 10, Obama lived with his mother and stepfather in Indonesia, then returned to Hawaii, where he was raised by his maternal grandparents.
	2. Obama’s father was a Harvard-educated economist from Kenya who left when he was two years old. Obama met his father only once more before his death in a car crash in 1982. Obama wrote a book about how his father’s absence affected his childhood and recently marked Father’s Day by delivering a speech about the harm caused by absentee fathers, particularly in the African-American community.
	3. Despite his humble roots, Obama eAnthonyd academic scholarships that enabled him to attend some of the finest colleges in the country. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in political science and international relations, and later attended Harvard Law School, where he became the first ever African-American to head the prestigious Harvard Law Review.
5	4. After college, Obama turned down the ability to make big money on Wall Street or with a big company. Instead, he became a community organizer in Chicago with a church-based group seeking to help a diverse set of poor neighborhoods – white, black, and Latino – decimated by the closing of local steel plants. He says this experience made him the leader he is today, with a focus on bringing people with varying interests together for a common purpose and trusting ordinary people to get things done rather than relying on politicians and powerful interests.
	5. After law school, Obama returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer and teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He also continued to work in local communities, organizing voter registration drives during the 1992 campaign, and his advocacy work ultimately led him to run for the state legislature in 1996.
9	6. Obama was elected to the Illinois state senate in 1996. In the Illinois Senate, he immediately demonstrated an ability to reach across party lines to get things done and led bi-partisan efforts to provide health coverage for 154,000 uninsured Illinoisans, to pass the state’s most sweeping new ethics law in a generation, and to expand access to early childhood education programs.
3	7. Obama publicly opposed the Iraq war from the very beginning, even when most politicians supported it, and said it would distract from the war in Afghanistan and the effort to stop al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Speaking at a rally in October 2002, he said, “I know that even a successful war against Iraq will require a U.S. occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences...I know that an invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than best, impulses of the Arab world, and strengthen the recruitment arm of al-Qaeda.”
	8. While still a candidate for Senate in 2004, Obama was asked to deliver the

	keynote speech at the Democratic Convention. His speech, emphasizing national unity and attacking partisan division – "We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states...We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, all of us defending the United States of America." – made him an international celebrity before he even took office.
	9. In the U.S. Senate, Obama led the fight for bipartisan ethics reform and introduced major legislation on immigration, reduction of greenhouse gases, and veterans' benefits. On the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he worked with leading Republicans to pass legislation designed to find and secure deadly nuclear materials and traveled to Russia to begin a new generation of non-proliferation efforts.

*Dear Senator Obama,*

**Dennis**

Please post your defined Changes on your website. Think through questions and give the same answer each time you are asked.

**Chas**

Your heart seems genuine and your message is strong. But I need to hear details of the completion of your plans for our country.

**Doug**

I hope you talk the talk. We need a leader for the common people one who listens to our concerns. The country needs reform and I think you have the capability to do that.

**Gary**

What could you do to protect this country and help this country to economically grow? Instead of helping foreign lands with food, education, protections. How can you put these things into our own country?

**Greg**

To win this election you must try and distance yourself from the harsh rhetoric of your (illegible) and your colleagues. You must appear more moderate and less extreme.

**Phillip**

What would you do if we had another 9/11 terror attack. What are your plans to bring this country back together? What about health care? Employment?

**Jeff**

Explain in detail your exit strategy to get our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Explain in detail how you would reestablish positive relationships with our world allies. Explain in detail how you would approach world problem/hot spot areas.

**Glen**

What will you do about the war and our troops.

**Mike**

Please start elaborating on your plans and proposals. You talk very well but all your change has no substance at this point. If you want the job of president your charismatic way will only get you so far. Thanks.

**Cliff**

Try some high speed intra city rail. Tax excel oil profits to pay for it.

*Dear Senator McCain,*

**Dennis**

Please provide your plans for our economic resurgence.

**Chas**

I appreciate your bipartisan and moderate views and actions. However the war in Iraq must end so that we may be stronger for more formidable foes.

**Doug**

We need to focus more on the country's issues, economy, health care, the infrastructure in general. I believe too much spending is apportioned to the military. Too much of this spending in my opinion is wasteful.

**Gary**

How can you start helping this country the low and middle class are the ones that help the economy grow by spending. Could you support this country with food, education?

**Greg**

Why has the GOP historically conducted very bad campaigns. GW Bush should have won a huge majority over John Kerry. The GOP has lost two important elections in VA and is now in danger of losing VA in the presidential race. Please infuse your campaign with more energy and sharper criticism of the Democratic party and Congress and practice your public speaking and take a cue from the passionate spectacle of the Clintons, Obama and other Dems.

**Phillip**

What are your plans to bring this country back together? Health care? Employment?

**Jeff**

Explain in detail your problem solving thoughts and solutions to the key economic issues facing this country ie. the loss of jobs to overseas, budget deficit in the trillions, lack of health care for all Americans.

**Glen**

What will you do about our borders and illegals?

**Mike**

I would like to see you speaking more on issues and not narrations. You have a decorated record but your age is an issue to me. I would like for you to emphasize more what you will bring to the table and do to help families and future generations. Thanks.

**Cliff**

Help the country move away from oil transportation. Give your troops some rest.