



To: The GOP Candidates

From: Campaign strategist Mark McKinnon

Subject: **How to Win the Nomination**

I've worked on the presidential campaigns for John McCain and George W. Bush (twice), and along the way, I've learned what works and what doesn't. Here are the must-dos:

1. Observe the incumbent, then be the opposite. The more different you can seem from the guy currently in office, the better. Americans craved honesty after Richard Nixon; strength after Jimmy Carter; and moral integrity after Bill Clinton. Today voters are questioning President Obama's economic leadership, so governors Mitt Romney and Rick Perry are both extolling their ability to help create jobs.

2. Deliver your message in seven seconds. That's the average sound bite today. Businessman Herman Cain has boiled down his economic plan to "9-9-9"—shorthand for a 9 percent corporate tax, a 9 percent individual income tax, and a 9 percent national sales tax.

3. Show some humanity. Voters are rabidly skeptical of anything that political candidates say, so it's more important to be human than perfect. Governor Perry may have stumbled in some debates, but many voters like his brash, unvarnished style. As one of President Obama's key advisers, David Axelrod, said of Perry, "He looks comfortable in his own skin." That matters.

4. Be bold. People often don't vote on the issues; they vote on attributes, and the most important one is strength. Rep. Michele Bachmann was at her most popular in the debates when she loudly declared that Obama would be "a one-term president" and that she would not rest until "Obamacare" was repealed.

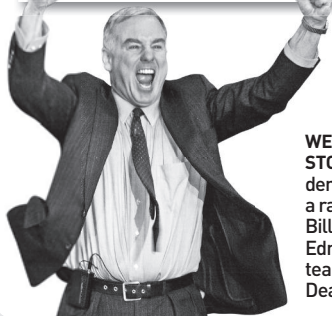
5. Prepare for the big moments. You have three major occasions to move public opinion and to rise in the polls in a substantial way: your announcement; your nomination speech and choice of VP; and the debates. Last month, we



saw Perry sink and former House speaker Newt Gingrich and Herman Cain rise based solely on debate performances.

6. Always be a happy warrior. Running for president is brutal—it's like running naked through a cactus patch on fire. The process is designed to crush you and see what you're made of, but you can never show the pain. In 2004, Howard Dean screamed. In 1972, Edmund Muskie cried. And, in

1992, despite his considerable public humiliations (see: Gennifer Flowers), Bill Clinton just kept on smiling all the way to the big chair.



WEATHERING THE STORM A candidate's demeanor can alter a race. From top: Bill Clinton's grin, Edmund Muskie's tears, Howard Dean's scream.

Rick Perry | *continued from page 12*

when you're not busy campaigning?

Prior to having my back fixed [on July 1], my perfect Sunday was to get up, go running, have a cup of coffee, go to Lake Hills Church for a 9:30 service, and then take a nap. [laughs] Those days are over—well, the running part is. Now I swim.

What denomination is your church?

It's loosely affiliated with the Baptist Church. It's evangelical and hip. When you start your service with Lynyrd Skynyrd, you know it's nontraditional.

I hear that you're also a real

Beethoven fan.

I played piano for seven years. But I broke my arm really bad unloading horses when I was 16, so I had to stop. Had it not been for the accident, I'd probably be playing piano in a little bar here in New York.

At the Sept. 12 debate, you described your wife as "beautiful, thoughtful, incredible."

Tell me what she's like as a person. She's very smart and loyal. She's not predisposed to be a public figure since she saw how her father, a small-town doctor, had to be shared with all these other people. She's also a great patriot.

What do you feel is most misunderstood about you?

That everyone from Texas is alike. **Not true?**

[laughs] Not at all. We're an incredibly diverse state. **Tell me the differences between you and George W. Bush.**

You don't have enough pages. We grew up differently. We

have different value sets.

You were once a Democrat, correct?

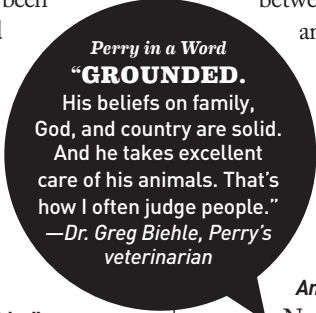
Right. I never met a Republican until I was 25.

Have you ever voted for a Democratic candidate for president?

Yes, ma'am. In 1976, I voted for Jimmy Carter, because I was in the air force, and I came from an agricultural family. A peanut farmer from Georgia had to be better than anyone else on the Democrats' side. He was the last Democrat I voted for for president—in fact the only Democratic president I ever voted for. Holy mackerel, what a mistake.

In 1988, you supported Al Gore's presidential campaign. Why?

In that group, he was by far the most conservative Democrat. But between Ronald Reagan and seeing what the



Perry in a Word

"GROUNDED.

His beliefs on family, God, and country are solid. And he takes excellent care of his animals. That's how I often judge people."

—Dr. Greg Biehle, Perry's veterinarian

Democrat Party was becoming, I came to the conclusion in 1989 that I needed to become a Republican.

Have you seen the film

An Inconvenient Truth? No, ma'am.

Have you read the book?

No. I generally don't watch or read a lot of fiction.

Many believe global warming caused the wildfires in your state.

What do you think?

Historically in Texas, we've always had substantial periods of drought. World temperatures have also been changing for millennia. I truly believe the science is not settled on the issue of man-made global warming.

I find it interesting that you went to college to be a veterinarian.

And organic chemistry made a pilot out of me. [laughs] After ➔