

CHAPTER 19

THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY HEATS UP

On Wednesday, June 29, 1994, the El Paso County branch of the Colorado Federation of Republican Women held their "Picnic in the Park" in Acacia Park in downtown Colorado Springs. An annual event, the "Picnic in the Park" is held at lunchtime and offers El Paso County Republicans the opportunity to munch hot dogs and baked beans for a very reasonable price while chatting with their fellow GOP members. Because El Paso County produces the heaviest Republican vote of any county in Colorado, Republican candidates for statewide office would never think of missing the "Picnic in the Park."

Thus it was that both Mike Bird and Bruce Benson were present and campaigning hard in Acacia Park at noon that day. The Benson forces brought a large portable tent from which Benson volunteers were handing out campaign literature. The Bird forces had to make do with a portable table holding a wide variety of Bird pamphlets, position papers, and bumper stickers. Benson also had a professional photographer in tow, and he spent a great deal of time posing for pictures.

Bruce Benson then put on a white apron and went to work handing out bags of potato chips to the Republican party faithful as they came down the food line. One Bird volunteer staff member, who did not know Benson was one of the servers, almost dropped his plate of hot dogs and baked beans when he realized just who it was handing out the chips. Benson saw the Bird volunteer's obvious surprise and quipped: "It's O.K. You can still have lunch here."¹

The Bird campaign staff was upset that Benson showed up at the "Picnic in the Park" and put in a great deal of time meeting and talking with El Paso County Republicans. After all, the Bird campaign was building its attack on Bruce Benson around the theme that Benson was not doing enough personal campaigning. The *less* face-to-face campaigning Benson did, and the more invitations to political events he turned down, the better the Bird for Governor staff liked it.

ENTER THE CHICKEN

The 1994 "Picnic in the Park" would have been just another routine campaign event, not worth noting or remembering, except for one thing. Seemingly out of nowhere, someone appeared dressed in a chicken suit. The "bird" was wearing a Mike Bird for Governor sticker and toting a basket filled with fake eggs and notes. The chicken sidled up to Bruce Benson and then handed him one of the notes. The chicken stared at Benson as he read the note.

The note left no doubt that the chicken was there to symbolize that Bruce Benson was "chicken" for not being willing to debate Mike Bird and Dick Sargent. The note offered Benson the chicken's endorsement, stating it agreed with Benson's decision "to stay in your shell.... After all, debates could be so damaging to you, allowing your issues to be plucked apart."

The note also said the chicken was "proud to stand wing-to-wing with you, birds of a feather." The note was signed "Rubber B. Chicken, President, Colorado Chicken PAC [Political Action Committee]."

Onlookers said Benson smiled wryly as he read the note and then told a campaign worker to stick a "Benson for Governor" sticker over the chicken's "Mike Bird for Governor" sticker.²

Many people at the "Picnic in the Park" saw or talked with the chicken but did not attach very much importance to the incident. Michelle Provaznik, Bird's campaign manager, talked briefly with the chicken but could not recognize the voice of anyone working for the Bird campaign. One unsubstantiated rumor held that Bruce Benson's daughter, Ann Benson, had asked the chicken who it represented and the chicken had squawked "the name [or word] Bird."³ Whatever the chicken's identity or mission in life, the Bird, Benson, and Sargent campaigns all denied having anything to do with the appearance of the chicken.

Eleven days later, on Tuesday, July 12, 1994, a candidate forum was scheduled in the town of Fort Lupton in Weld County north of Denver.

Mike Bird and Dick Sargent routinely agreed to appear. The forum sponsors told the Bird campaign that someone in Bruce Benson's office turned down the invitation to appear with the harsh words: "We are *only* doing radio and television." The forum sponsors were so angry they were thinking of sending a "blistering" public letter to Benson telling him what they thought of him for not showing up. Mike Bird hoped the forum sponsors did not send the letter. Bird did not want Benson to change his mind and actually go to the debate. As ever, the more campaign events Benson avoided, the better Bird liked it.

The night of the Fort Lupton candidate forum arrived, and Bruce Benson did not attend. In his customary fashion, Mike Bird placed an empty chair in front of the audience and hung his "Benson" sign on it. As Bird walked back to his own chair, the person in the chicken suit made his or her second appearance of the primary campaign. Seeming to come out of nowhere, the chicken strode into the room, marched right up to the podium area, and plopped him or herself down in the Benson chair.

This particular chicken had many dollar bills glued to its rubber skin, obviously meant to symbolize Bruce Benson's great wealth and heavy spending of personal funds in the election. To make sure everyone knew who the chicken represented, it had the word "Benson" emblazoned on its chest, but over Benson's name was painted the red circle with a diagonal bar across it that means "No," as in "No Parking."

Since neither Bird nor Sargent claimed to have anything to do with this prank, it came as a complete surprise to both of them. As soon as the chicken was settled comfortably in the "Benson" chair, a man thought to be a newspaper photographer from a local newspaper in the Fort Lupton area took a couple of quick flash photographs of the chicken. Just as quickly as they had appeared, both the chicken and the photographer left the meeting without telling anyone who they were or what newspaper the photographer might have represented.

Understandably, the chicken was the main topic of conversation around Bird campaign headquarters in Colorado Springs the next

morning. Who was doing this? And for what purpose were they doing it? One theory was that the chicken was sent by the Democrats, who were trying to discredit Benson on the debate issue in order to make it easier for incumbent Democratic governor Roy Romer to defeat Benson in November. The only other idea was that there were some disgruntled Republicans out there with a real grudge against Bruce Benson.

After much discussion, the Bird campaign staff mutually agreed that, somehow and some way, the existence of the chicken, with all its negative connotations for Bruce Benson, had to be gotten into the news media. Dennis Ritchie, the Mike Bird press assistant, worked very hard at, seemingly casually, getting this event into the Denver newspapers. Luck played a major role the following Thursday, two days after the chicken's appearance at Fort Lupton, when both Fred Brown of the *Denver Post* and Peter Blake of the *Rocky Mountain News* telephoned to ask Ritchie questions about a different subject. Ritchie planted the "chicken" story with each of them, making it very clear the Bird campaign had nothing to do with staging the event but very much wanted to see it mentioned in the news media.

Dennis Ritchie's efforts paid off. Both Fred Brown and Peter Blake made a humorous reference to the chicken, and the fact that it symbolized Bruce Benson's unwillingness to debate, in their regular political columns the next day.⁴

"MR. TV-HEAD" MEETS THE PRESS

With the strong urging of Jim Arnold at Wilson Communications, a press conference was scheduled to introduced the "Mr. TV-Head" ad to the Colorado press corps. The press conference was scheduled the morning of the same day the ad began playing on Denver television. That was also the same day, Monday, July 18, 1994, that "early voting" began for the August 9, 1994, primary election, now just three weeks and one day away.⁵

There had been a small argument in the Bird camp over whether "Mr. TV-Head" himself (an intern with the cardboard TV over his head) should appear with Mike Bird at the press conference. One viewpoint was that it would provide the best "photo op" of the entire primary election campaign and that the press would use it extensively. Others felt it was too "blatant and pushy" to have "Mr. TV-Head" there in person. Mike Bird listened carefully to both sides of the argument and decided to have "Mr. TV-Head" come to the press conference.

A lengthy press release was composed to be distributed at the time "Mr. TV-Head" met the Colorado press corps. The press release purported to include the alleged sayings - the "wit and wisdom" as it were - of "Mr. TV-Head." These sayings expanded on the major theme of the television commercial in a humorous and sarcastic way:

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't have to listen to the voters - they have to listen to you."

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't have to answer embarrassing questions - just run more TV ads."

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't have to talk about the issues that concern the citizens of Colorado - you just say what your out-of-state consultants tell you to say."

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't have to campaign throughout *all* of Colorado - enough of your ads will filter through to the outlying parts of the state on cable television.

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't want to bother with any of those time-consuming, people-meeting, party-building Colorado campaign techniques such as speaking at Lincoln Day dinners, running at the Republican state [assembly], and attending candidate forums. The kind of hard-working party volunteers who attend those events will see right through you anyway.

"* When you're 'MR. TV-HEAD,' you don't have to recruit any volunteers in Colorado. You just hire out-of-state political management firms to do your polling, answer your 800 number, send out mailings, etc.

"* Most of all, when you're 'MR TV-HEAD,' you can skip more than 30 debates with your opponents. Whatever you do, don't let the voters make a direct comparison between you and the other candidates."

The Bird campaign hoped that this "wit and wisdom" of "Mr. TV-Head" would highlight the fact that Bruce Benson was emphasizing "all electronic" campaign techniques that were "depersonalizing" the political process in Colorado.⁶

The "Mr. TV-Head" press conference was held in the press room at the state Capitol in Denver. Most of the big guns of the Colorado political press corps were there, including Peter Blake and John Sanko from the *Rocky Mountain News*, Jennifer Gavin from the *Denver Post*, Angela Dire from the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, Tom McAvoy from the *Pueblo Chieftain*, and Carl Hilliard from the Associated Press (AP). Hilliard's stories and columns were carried prominently in the *Boulder Daily Camera* and other newspapers in medium-sized cities throughout the state.

Dennis Ritchie, the Bird campaign press assistant, handed out the press release. As the various reporters and columnists read the ad copy (distributed with the press release), they began smiling and joking about it with one another. The mood thus was very upbeat as the "Mr. TV-Head" ad began to play on the VCR and television monitor (lugged up from Colorado Springs by car just for this event).

The reporters also were given their own video tapes of the ad. Some at first disdained accepting a tape. Once the ad was shown, however, they quickly asked the Bird staff for a copy of the tape to "take back to the office" with them.

Mike Bird briefly commented on the television ad. He then introduced "Mr. TV-Head," who walked in from the State Capitol hallway. This particular "Mr. TV-Head" was wearing the same cardboard TV set that had been used when making the television commercial but with a black-and-white blow up of Bruce Benson's face pasted on to where the television screen would ordinarily be. Interestingly, one of the reporters, Carl Hilliard of the AP, stepped out

in the hall to study closely every facet of "Mr. TV-Head's" entrance.

One of the Bird campaign's Denver staffers, Paul Vander Veer, performed extra-admirably as "Mr. TV-Head." When Mike Bird pointed out that "Mr. TV-Head" would not be answering any questions, Vander Veer gave an animated "thumbs down" sign with both his thumbs. The TV camcorders were grinding and the camera flash bulbs were flashing as "Mr. TV-Head" made his grandiose entrance and stood prominently but dumbly next to Mike Bird.

The next morning's *Denver Post* came out with a large color photograph of Mike Bird and "Mr. TV-Head" at the top of the first page of the state-and-local news section. The photo could not have been more prominently played in that particular section of the newspaper. The fact that Mike Bird was in color and Bruce Benson's "television face" was in black-and-white just highlighted the message of the Bird TV ad. An anonymous headline writer at the *Post* put the humorous headline, "Face to Face, In a Way," above the photograph.⁷

That photograph of Mike Bird and "Mr. TV-Head" was the biggest "earned media hit" of the entire Bird for Governor campaign. Mike Bird staff members speculated that, due to the small amount of money the campaign had to spend putting the TV commercial on the air, more people would probably see the photo in the *Denver Post* than would ever see the actual television ad.

The *Post* article accompanying the photograph ran the complete text of the "Mr. TV-Head" ad, as did a similar article in the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*. The *Denver Post* article began by referring to "Mr. TV-Head" as "the TV political ad to end all TV political ads." The article in the *Rocky Mountain News* had a particularly expressive headline: "Bird pecks away at Benson with 'Mr. TV-Head' ad."⁸ The heavy media coverage of the Bird campaign's one-and-only TV ad greatly lifted spirits in the Bird camp. The message appeared to be getting out that Bruce Benson was a millionaire running lots of television ads and doing very little else.

Sadly for the Bird campaign, not one newspaper mentioned or

quoted any of the "wit and wisdom" of "Mr. TV-Head." An idea that had seemed very appealing to the campaign staff at the time the press release was being written turned out to have no appeal whatsoever to the Colorado news media - or at least not enough appeal to get into any of the reporters' stories. On second thought, the Bird staff realized that the press probably would never quote a fictional character from a campaign TV ad.

The only big "downer" concerning the "Mr. TV-Head" ad occurred two days after it was introduced to the Colorado press corps. Peter Blake, the political writer for the *Rocky Mountain News*, began his triweekly political column by speculating that the Bird TV ad, by mentioning Benson's name so frequently, might be helping Benson rather than hurting him. Blake concluded, however, by providing his own explanation of why Mike Bird was following such a risky advertising strategy: "But political rules are made to be broken. Bird obviously feels he's so far behind he has nothing to lose by ridiculing Benson. Give him credit for at least trying to introduce some humor into a race that's been getting...dry...."

Blake also noted that "Benson staffers won't admit there's a connection, but just as Mr. TV-Head hit the airwaves, Benson agreed to two more joint appearances with Bird and third GOP candidate Dick Sargent."⁹

TIME-OUT

Sherman Griffin, the deputy campaign manager and the person in charge of the Mike Bird satellite campaign office in Denver, ran into Bruce Benson's daughter, Ann Benson, at a political event in Denver and had a conversation with her. Despite the highly competitive nature of the Bird-Benson confrontation in the 1994 Republican gubernatorial primary, Sherman Griffin and Ann Benson talked pleasantly and even joked with each other and traded some "inside gossip" about the two candidates, their families, and their campaign staffs.

EARLY POLL RESULTS

There is nothing to quite match the up-and-down effect of working in a political campaign. This so-called "roller-coaster effect" was particularly true of the Bird for Governor campaign. Following the successful "Mr. TV-Head" press conference, which created high euphoria and great confidence of victory among the Bird campaign staff, the *Rocky Mountain News* ran a particularly damaging story for the Bird campaign. The Denver newspaper reported the results of a voter poll that showed Benson with 28 percent support among Colorado Republicans compared to 11 percent for Dick Sargent and only 7 percent for Mike Bird.¹⁰ Quite naturally, these disastrous-sounding poll results plunged the Bird campaigners down into despair.

The Bird campaign staff provided "damage control" on the *Rocky* poll as quickly as possible. If one read the newspaper article about the poll carefully, the Bird workers pointed out, one discovered that the poll was conducted only in the Denver metropolitan area where both Benson and Sargent lived. Colorado Springs and southern and eastern Colorado, where Mike Bird was said to have strong support, were all left out of the poll.

There was another problem with the poll from the Bird campaign point of view. The poll had been conducted three weeks previously - around July 1, 1994 - which was long before the "Mr. TV-Head" ad had begun playing on Denver television. The Bird staff argued that Mike Bird's percentage of support in the Denver area was much higher now that there was a Bird television ad on the air.

The newspaper article was fair and accurate if the reader read it all. The big problem for the Bird campaign was the radio stations, which described the poll as if it were statewide rather than just Denver metro. Many Bird supporters heard the poll results reported on radio and, not realizing it was just Denver being polled, became very depressed and disheartened. The Bird for Governor staff spent a great deal of time on the telephone explaining the flaws in the poll to concerned Bird

supporters and rebuilding their confidence that Mike Bird still had a chance to win the Republican nomination.

The Bird campaign did not issue a press release to correct the misimpressions created by the *Rocky Mountain News* poll. Radio news, with its emphasis on brevity, probably would have inadvertently misreported, or underreported, the poll results a second time. It was decided to "take the hit" and hope the story would die after the usual one-day run. It did.

Three days after the *Rocky Mountain News* poll was released, the *Denver Post* published the results of its preprimary poll. There was more bad news for the Mike Bird campaign. Bruce Benson was favored by 38 percent of the Republicans interviewed compared to 18 percent supporting Mike Bird and 17 percent for Dick Sargent. Benson was ahead of Bird by a two-to-one margin and Bird was only a hair's breadth ahead of Dick Sargent.

The *Post* poll was more comprehensive than the *Rocky* poll, having been conducted statewide rather than only in the Denver metro area. The voters had been polled in late June and early July, however, well before the Bird campaign had put its "Mr. TV- Head" ads on Denver television.

Prior to printing the poll results in his newspaper, *Denver Post* political columnist Fred Brown telephoned to get the Bird campaign reaction to the poll results. Brown made it clear he would print the Bird campaign's reaction in the same newspaper story announcing the poll results.

The Bird campaign press secretary, Dennis Ritchie, leapt at this opportunity to put out the Bird "spin" on what was "wrong" with all the recent polls. "We're definitely losing on name familiarity," Ritchie told Brown, "but our ads did not start until four days after" the *Post* poll ended. In what could be counted as a great piece of "earned media" for the Bird campaign, Fred Brown took the cue from Ritchie and worked a description of the "Mr. TV-Head" television ad - and its message that Bruce Benson was overemphasizing television ads and cutting out

candidate debates - into his poll results story.¹¹

The *Rocky Mountain News* and *Denver Post* polls had been published about two weeks before primary election day. Both polls showed Bruce Benson well ahead of Mike Bird and Dick Sargent. Sherman Griffin, the deputy campaign manager based in Denver, regarded these polls as devastating to the Bird for Governor campaign. He explained:

"The polls. Ah yes, those harmful polls. They were a real bummer. First, they hindered our ability to raise funds. The Bird campaign lost out on some potentially big donors. Second, they hurt Mike Bird's grass roots support. Some of Mike's most enthusiastic supporters around the state lost faith because of those polls. I believe that, no matter how hard we tried to explain and rationalize them to people, those polls did real damage to the Mike Bird campaign."¹²

The *Rocky Mountain News* and *Denver Post* polls changed the entire atmosphere of the 1994 Republican gubernatorial primary election in Colorado. From the perspective of the Bird for Governor forces, this was now an election that had to be turned around in the last two weeks before election day. It was a situation that called for an aggressive, rather than passive, campaign posture.

DIRTY TRICKS?

At the same time the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Post* were releasing their poll results, the telephones at Bird for Governor headquarters started to ring frequently with calls from loyal Bird supporters. The callers were furious over a telephone poll being conducted in El Paso County (Colorado Springs). Apparently the poll takers were saying something like this:

"Hi. I'm calling from county headquarters. Which of our Republican candidates are you planning to vote for at the primary on August 9?"

If the person being polled said "Mike Bird," the poll taker replied: "Well, did you know that Mike Bird voted to increase your taxes in

1992?"

If the person being polled said "Dick Sargent," the poll taker mentioned something derogatory about Dick Sargent's voting record when he was on the City Council in Golden, Colorado.

But if the person being polled said he or she was going to vote for "Bruce Benson," the poll taker gave enthusiastic support for the idea and even suggested the person being polled take advantage of Colorado's "early voting" law.¹³

The people calling Bird headquarters were particularly upset that the poll was clearly supporting Bruce Benson's candidacy for the Republican nomination for governor but was being presented as coming from county Republican headquarters. The Bird campaign suggested the callers telephone their complaint to Bob Gardner, the El Paso County Republican chairman. Gardner subsequently described county Republican headquarters as "flooded" with angry and irate calls.

Gardner telephoned the Benson campaign to see what was going on, but "Benson campaign manager Katy Atkinson did not own up to the fact that the Benson campaign was conducting the polls."¹⁴ For the next 24 hours Bruce Benson and his campaign spokespeople steadfastly denied that they had anything to do with the anti-Bird and anti-Sargent polling. Then, when confronted by the *Denver Post*, Benson press assistant Greg Sparrow finally "'fessed up" and admitted the Benson campaign did the polling.¹⁵

The *Denver Post* broke the story of Bruce Benson's unorthodox polling techniques on Friday, July 22, 1994, but the story was not played in a big way. In fact, it was somewhat buried, being placed toward the end of Fred Brown's regular Friday political column. The story only vaguely made the point that the Benson campaign had taken its time before it "owned up to having made the calls."¹⁶

The more aggressive and confrontational voices on the Bird campaign staff immediately recommended that Mike Bird issue a press release charging Bruce Benson with conducting "phony polls," indulging in "dirty tricks," and then "telling lies" by pretending not to

have conducted the polls. The ultimate goal would be for Bird to establish the idea that "Bruce Benson lacked the honesty and integrity to be governor of Colorado." This was a case where fast action on the part of a political candidate might take a small item buried at the bottom of a newspaper column and inflate it into a major campaign issue. And if there was one thing the Bird campaign needed at just that moment, it was a major campaign issue to use against Bruce Benson.

The press release was written and distributed to the major news media in Colorado late that Friday afternoon. Bird's strident charges against Benson played in all the major papers in the state throughout the weekend and on into early the following week. The print media particularly liked the following quote from Bird's all-out attack: "That obviously wasn't a poll. It was a sham, a lie, and an accurate symbol of the Benson candidacy."¹⁷

It is one of the great cliches of American politics that the members of the press are "fight promoters." This is the idea that there is nothing the news media likes more than to get two political candidates engaged in a public "war of words" over a political issue or an alleged political scandal. The Colorado political press corps demonstrated its fight promoting ability with Mike Bird's "phony polling" charge against Bruce Benson. The 1994 Republican gubernatorial primary, which had been languishing in the media doldrums as long as the candidates talked only about issues, blossomed into a major news story once Bird and Benson were viewed as "fighting" over the dirty tricks issue.

All of these events were something of a disaster for the Bruce Benson forces. The Benson strategy called for defeating Mike Bird and Dick Sargent with paid television commercials and direct mail. The last thing the Benson camp wanted was for the campaign to become a big story in the newspapers. That was the one place where good publicity for Mike Bird and bad publicity for Bruce Benson just might undo the favorable effects of all those TV commercials and glossy mailings.

The Benson campaign quickly developed and began spinning an explanation of how its El Paso County polling had been so badly

misinterpreted. Katy Atkinson, the Benson campaign manager, said the poll takers identified themselves as being from "Colorado Pulse," not from county GOP headquarters. Colorado Pulse was a mythical name designed to hide the fact the calls were coming from Benson headquarters, Atkinson explained. She claimed the Benson pollsters could not get accurate poll data if they used Benson's own name because those called would tend to speak more kindly of him than they would if they thought the poll was from an objective source.

Atkinson even denied that it was the complaints from the Bird campaign and El Paso County Republican Headquarters that had forced the Benson campaign to stop the phony polling. She said the poll was stopped only because "we had completed our sample and had the data we needed."¹⁸

Although it was more-or-less standard practice in the Benson camp to let campaign manager Katy Atkinson or press assistant Greg Sparrow do most of the talking to the news media, Bruce Benson himself commented directly on the "phony polling" and "dirty tricks" charges. "If anybody [conducting the poll] said they were from county headquarters then that person needs to be fired," Benson told the *Colorado Springs Independent*, a weekly newspaper distributed in Colorado Springs along with the Thursday morning *Denver Post*. Benson said "he doesn't believe the callers who were conducting the poll ever said they [were] Republican headquarters volunteers, and [he] challenged anybody who was told that to come forward."¹⁹

A short time later, the Bird campaign heard some unsubstantiated rumors about what they called the Benson campaign's "phony polling." A confidential source at state Republican headquarters reportedly said that: (1) Bruce Benson was seen in the telephoning room urging his callers on, and (2) the callers knew they were not identifying themselves properly.²⁰

Notes To Chapter 19:

1. Personal recollection of the author.
2. This account of the chicken incident in Acacia Park in Colorado Springs did not appear in print until a month later. See Jennifer Gavin, "Fowl words ruffle candidates' feathers," *Denver Post*, 28 July 1994, 3B.
3. Here again the chicken incident was not covered by the press until sometime later. See Leslie Jorgensen, "Republican roosters Bird and Benson scratch and scrap!" *Colorado Statesman*, 29 July 1994, 7.
4. Fred Brown, "Depressing: Political ads start before back-to-school ads," *Denver Post*, July 15, 1994, B1. Peter Blake, "Gubernatorial race still humming along," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 15, 1994, 5A.
5. The Colorado state legislature had recently enacted a law providing for "early voting." For a three week period prior to both the primary and the general election, Colorado voters could go to their county court house or election office and cast their ballot early. The Mike Bird for Governor campaign developed and used a slogan to draw attention to early voting: "Be an early bird! Cast an early vote for Mike Bird!"
6. Mike Bird for Governor campaign press release, 18 July 1994.
7. Jennifer Gavin, "Governor hopeful unveils ads," *Denver Post*, 19 July 1994, 1B.
8. Angela Dire, "New Bird ads call Benson 'Mr. TV-Head,'" *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, 19 July 1994, B1. John Sanko, "Bird pecks away at Benson with 'Mr. TV-Head' ad," *Rocky Mountain News*, 19 July 1994, 5A. See also Carl Hilliard (Associated Press), "GOP gubernatorial hopeful unveils new TV ad," *Boulder Daily Camera*, 19 July 1994, 3A.
9. Peter Blake, "Bird's TV attack may help Benson," *Rocky Mountain News*, 20 July 94, 5A.

10. Brian Weber, "Governor's race tightens," Rocky Mountain News, 21 July 1994, 5A
11. Fred Brown, "Benson gaining on Romer, poll says," Denver Post, 24 July 1994, 1C.
12. Sherman Griffin, deputy campaign manager, Mike Bird for Governor, written comments to the author, May 7, 1995.
13. There was much arguing over exactly what the poll-takers said. This particular version, which became widely accepted in the news media, is from Fred Brown, "See no evil, hear no evil, but maybe speak just a little evil," Denver Post, 22 July 1994, 1B.
14. Author's notes, telephone interview with Bob Gardner, El Paso County Republican chairman, 22 July 1994.
15. Leslie Jorgensen, "Republican roosters Bird and Benson scratch and scrap!" Colorado Statesman, 29 July 1994, 7.
16. Fred Brown, "See no evil, hear no evil, but maybe speak just a little evil," Denver Post, 22 July 1994, 1B.
17. "Bird says Benson 'survey' is just a dirty political trick," Rocky Mountain News, 23 July 1994, 8A. Jennifer Gavin, "GOP primary opponents blast Benson," Denver Post, 26 July 1994, 3B. See also a small item in Peter Blake's political column, "No room for liberals in politics of crime," Rocky Mountain News, 27 July 1994, 5A.
18. "Bird says Benson 'survey' is just a dirty political trick," Rocky Mountain News, 23 July 1994, 8A.
19. Cara DeGette, "Benson disputes telephone poll," Colorado Springs Independent, 27 July 1994, 5.
20. Sherman Griffin, deputy campaign manager, Mike Bird for Governor, written comments to the author, May 7, 1995.