

CHAPTER 10

AFTER SUPER-DUPER TUESDAY

Once Super-Duper Tuesday was over, it was obvious to many observers that, for the remainder of February, the *calendar* of Democratic Party presidential caucuses and primaries was going to greatly favor U.S. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois.

A pattern had been clearly established by Super-Duper Tuesday of U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton of New York winning primary elections in the most populous states with the most diverse populations, such as New York and California. Obama, on the other hand, was racking up votes and delegates in less populous states, many of which were holding caucuses rather than primaries. The calendar of caucuses and primaries in February, after Super-Tuesday, was mainly composed of these less-populated states, many holding caucuses rather than primaries. These were precisely the kind of states in which Barack Obama had been doing well.

NEBRASKA

Nebraska never had figured prominently in a presidential nomination race, despite the fact that Iowa, one of the most active of the early voting states, was located just east of Nebraska across the Missouri River.

Nebraska's "first-ever" significant presidential caucuses were held in 2008 on the Saturday after Super-Duper Tuesday. As to be expected at caucuses in a relatively underpopulated state, Barack Obama triumphed easily.

WASHINGTON STATE

The state of Washington made some effort in the early 2000s to become a significant player in the presidential caucuses and primaries sweepstakes. The state scheduled an early primary in the Republican Party in 2000. Although Washington is viewed as being one of the more liberal and progressive states, Texas Governor George W. Bush had no trouble defeating Arizona Senator John McCain by a double-digit margin in the 2000 Republican primary. Washington state Republicans thus were a major factor in putting an end to John McCain's ambitions for the Republican nomination in 2000 and giving that prize to George W. Bush, who subsequently was elected president.

The Democrats had an equally exciting contest in Washington state in 2000. U.S. Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, having lost both the

Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary to Vice-President Al Gore, decided to make his “last stand” in Washington state. Bradley concentrated all his money and campaign time in the state. He thereby inspired Al Gore to pay a lengthy visit to the Seattle-Tacoma area, where most of the people live in Washington state, the weekend before primary election day.

Bradley’s “last stand” was to no avail, however, as Al Gore defeated Bradley easily and thereupon sewed up the 2000 Democratic nomination for president once and for all.

Washington state Democrats were equally definite in their 2008 Democratic presidential primary, held on the Saturday after Super-Duper Tuesday. They voted decisively for Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton.

LOUISIANA

There was actually a year, 1996, when Louisiana held the first presidential nominating event in the United States. It was a Republican caucuses. It happened at the instigation of Phil Gramm, a U.S. senator from the neighboring state of Texas, who was running for the Republican nomination for president. Senator Gramm wanted to create an early caucuses or primary, in a state close to Texas, that he could easily win. Gramm settled on caucuses in Louisiana as just the thing to propel him to an early lead in the 1996 race.

Republican Party leaders in Louisiana supported Phil Gramm’s candidacy and his plans for an early caucuses in their state. The 1996 Louisiana Republican caucuses were scheduled one week *earlier* than the Iowa caucuses and two weeks ahead of the New Hampshire primary. The Iowa Republican Party looked askance at upstart Louisiana having the audacity to vote *before* Iowa, so Republican leaders in Iowa made the Republican presidential candidates sign a pledge not to campaign in Louisiana.

Quite naturally Phil Gramm did *not* sign the Iowa pledge, because the Louisiana caucuses had been designed by himself for him to win. A second Republican candidate, conservative commentator Pat Buchanan, decided he would not be browbeaten by Iowa, refused to sign the Iowa pledge, and began actively campaigning in Louisiana.

Louisiana Republicans avidly promoted their super-early caucuses in 1996, drawing invidious comparisons between the harshness of cam-

paingning in Iowa in the winter and the lush and comfortable life of seeking votes in Louisiana at that time of year. Not only was the weather warmer and free of snow in Louisiana, but dining on lobster bisque in New Orleans beat eating corn-on-the-cob in a hash house in Des Moines any day.

Alas for Phil Gramm, the 1996 Louisiana caucuses did not turn out the way he and his supporters planned. Pat Buchanan's brand of strident social conservatism proved much to the liking of Louisiana Republicans, and Buchanan handily won the Louisiana caucuses over Phil Gramm. The loss was a fatal blow to Gramm's candidacy, mainly because he had predicted he would easily win Louisiana. He thereby lost the expectations game as well as the caucuses, and his candidacy was soon over.

In 2008, the Louisiana Democratic primary, held on the Saturday after Super-Duper Tuesday, was a walk in the park for Barack Obama. Louisiana has a large African-American population, and Barack Obama combined the black vote with the votes of upscale liberal white voters, many of them young. As had happened to Hillary Clinton in similar deep South states with significant black populations, such as South Carolina and Georgia and Alabama, Hillary Clinton lost Louisiana to Barack Obama big time.

MAINE

Over the years, Maine periodically flirted with holding an early caucuses. In 1992, Maine held its Democratic caucuses only five days after the New Hampshire primary. Former U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts, the New Hampshire winner in 1992, also was expected to capture the Maine caucuses. The expectations game did Tsongas in, however, when former California Governor Jerry Brown almost tied Tsongas for the lead in Maine. Ironically, the candidate who eventually won the Democratic nomination and the White House in 1992, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, finished a dismal fourth in the Maine caucuses.

In 2008, Maine held its Democratic caucuses on the Sunday after Super-Duper Tuesday. As expected, Barack Obama walked away with an easy victory over Hillary Clinton.

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Incredibly, it took only four decisive wins in four caucuses and primary states for Barack Obama to completely neutralize Hillary Clinton's big victory in heavily-populated states on Super-Duper Tuesday. In just one weekend, only four days after Super-Duper Tuesday, Obama's victories in Nebraska, Washington state, Louisiana, and Maine put most of the momentum on Obama's side. It did not seem to matter that these four states were small and middle-sized in terms of population. The press and the public quickly forgot that Hillary Clinton had won states with blockbuster populations, such as New York and California, on Super-Duper Tuesday.

The message was clear. *Winning* a state is what really matters in the momentum game. The population of the state, and whether it held a primary or a caucuses, seemed to matter little if not at all.

THE POTOMAC PRIMARY

One week after Super-Duper Tuesday, on February 12, 2008, the states of Maryland and Virginia, as well as the national-capital city of Washington, D.C., conducted presidential primaries. Because all three of these entities border on the Potomac River, which forms a major part of the boundary between Maryland and Virginia, these contests were nicknamed the Potomac Primary.

Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., in choosing their presidential primary dates, gambled that the nominating race in both parties would still be going on following Super-Duper Tuesday. In the case of the Republican contest, however, the three entities guessed wrong. John McCain's smashing triumph over Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee on Super-Duper Tuesday resulted in little or no attention being paid to the Potomac Primary where the Republican Party was concerned. As expected, John McCain "confirmed" his Super-Duper Tuesday triumph by sweeping all three Republican primaries.

In the case of the Democratic presidential race, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., lucked into a prized spot on the nominating calendar. Maryland and Virginia were both middle-sized states in terms of population and were holding *primaries*. It was argued that Hillary Clinton should have a chance of beating Barack Obama in one if not both

of those states. The news media therefore took those two primaries seriously and gave them considerable news coverage. Washington, D.C., on the other hand, with a large African-American population, was considered absolutely safe for Barack Obama.

Maryland

Historically, Maryland had long held a presidential primary, traditionally voting on the second Tuesday in May. Back when very few states held presidential primaries, Maryland occasionally found itself in the center of the presidential primary spotlight. In 1960, a young U.S. senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, scored a big win in the Maryland primary and the resulting publicity helped propel Kennedy to the 1960 Democratic nomination and, the following November, to the presidency.

In 1964 Maryland again attracted national attention when Alabama Governor George Wallace ran for the Democratic nomination for president on an anti-civil rights platform. Incumbent Democratic president Lyndon Johnson declined to run in any primaries that year, so a pro-Johnson Marylander, U.S. Senator Daniel B. Brewster, ran in Johnson's place. Many people feared that Wallace, famous for his outspoken support of racial segregation, just might win the primary in a semi-Southern state such as Maryland. As it turned out, Brewster defeated Wallace by 57 percent to 42 percent on Maryland's presidential primary day. The Wallace threat to Lyndon Johnson's renomination quickly evaporated.

Maryland legislators were so embarrassed by the Wallace campaign of 1964 that they abolished the Maryland presidential primary for 1968. It was re-instituted in 1972, but with somewhat meaningless results. Alabama Governor Wallace, again running for the Democratic nomination on a pro-segregation platform, was shot and critically wounded by a would-be assassin (not a Marylander) the day before primary election day. The bullet struck Governor Wallace in the spine and left him paralyzed from the waist down for life. A wave of sympathy for Wallace swept Maryland Democrats, and he easily won the 1972 Maryland primary.

After 1972, Maryland voters began developing a "non-Southern" preference for Democratic presidential candidates. The rest of the nation

was genuinely surprised in 1976 when then California Governor Jerry Brown upset former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter in the Maryland primary voting. In 1984, a majority of Maryland Democrats cast their ballots for Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, and in 1988 they went for Massachusetts Governor Michael S. Dukakis. Maryland Democrats, it appeared, were abandoning their “semi-Southern” past and favoring candidates from north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The Maryland Democratic presidential primary in 1992 further demonstrated the state’s new preference for liberal northerners over moderate southerners. Former U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas of the northern state of Massachusetts easily defeated Governor Bill Clinton of the southern state of Arkansas.

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The shadow of Bill Clinton’s defeat in Maryland in 1992 hung over Hillary Clinton’s prospects for winning the state in 2008. With Barack Obama cast in the role of the northern liberal and Hillary Clinton portrayed as the more moderate and middle-of-the-road candidate, Maryland looked like an easy win for Obama.

There also was a problem with identity voting for Hillary Clinton. Although Maryland was a Border State and had not seceded from the Union during the Civil War, Maryland had been a slave state. It still had a comparatively large African-American population, particularly in center-city Baltimore and in the Prince Georges County suburbs of Washington, D.C. These Maryland black voters, the vast majority of them registered Democrats, could be counted on to cast their ballots for Barack Obama and not for Hillary Clinton.

Maryland also possessed disproportionate numbers of upscale white voters, particularly in the Montgomery County suburbs of Washington, D.C. This group contained the most enthusiastic supporters of Barack Obama. When these well-educated and high-income white voters were allied with the sizeable black vote in Maryland, the two groups formed an electoral colossus that Hillary Clinton had no way of challenging.

The voting in Maryland went as foreordained by the state’s demography. Barack Obama easily defeated Hillary Clinton, thereby adding

immensely to Obama's "After Super-Duper Tuesday" momentum.

Virginia

Over the years, Virginia was not much of a player in the presidential nominating process in the United States. Virginia first held a presidential primary in 1988. That year, Virginia's efforts were buried in a flood of results from 14 southern states that had decided to all vote on the same day. In fact, that big day of southern presidential primaries in 1988 was the original Super Tuesday.

Virginia, along with every other southern state, chose George H. W. Bush, the elder of the two Bush presidents, over Kansas Senator Bob Dole in that 1988 Republican primary. It was that day of big victories, mainly in the South, that cinched the 1988 nomination for the senior George Bush and eventually sent him to the White House.

In 1992 and 1996, Virginia reverted to picking its national convention delegates in party caucuses that attracted no national attention whatsoever. In 2000, however, the Republican leadership in Virginia decided to hold a presidential primary and scheduled it for February 29, 2000. The Democrats in Virginia in 2000 stuck with the party caucuses and held them at a later date.

Coming from seemingly out of nowhere, Virginia suddenly was a major player in the Republican presidential nominating process in 2000. The most important characteristic of Virginia's new Republican primary, though, was that Democrats and independents were invited to vote in it. The press quickly spotted this as the sort of open-voting format that had paid off so handsomely for John McCain in New Hampshire and Michigan in 2000.

As primary election day neared in 2000, John McCain made some appearances in Virginia and began running television advertisements in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. Northern Virginia is the state's most expensive television market, but it was said to be filled with the kind of upscale, independent, moderate, and reformist voters who had supported McCain so strongly in his big wins in New Hampshire and Michigan.

George W. Bush, the younger of the two Bush presidents, was surg-

ing in Virginia in 2000. He had just won the South Carolina Republican primary, proving for all to see his vote-getting ability in the South. Virginia also was filled with religious conservatives, a group of voters who were largely critical of John McCain for being too moderate on social issues such as abortion and gay and lesbian marriage.

Something had to be done to re-ignite the John McCain effort and weaken the George W. Bush campaign in Virginia. It was a moment that called for desperate tactics and a risky maneuver. John McCain launched an all-out attack on the leadership of the “religious right,” the morally conservative Christian groups that strongly opposed abortion and supported a number of other right-wing causes. By attacking the leaders of the religious right, McCain would clearly identify himself as the more moderate and progressive candidate in the race. That might inspire those upscale, well-educated, and more moderate Northern Virginia suburbanites to vote for McCain.

The immediate targets of John McCain’s verbal attack were Pat Robertson, the founder of the Christian Coalition, and the Reverend Jerry Falwell, the founder of the Moral Majority. These two political interest groups had a long record of pushing conservative social causes and expressing that support in religious terms. John McCain called Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell “self-appointed leaders” and intolerant empire builders who “have turned good causes into businesses” while trying to push everyone but “card-carrying Republicans” out of the Republican Party.

John McCain’s speech ignited a major round of commentary in the press. To the McCain forces shock and surprise, however, most of the commentators and pundits found McCain’s charges to be wild and intemperate. *U.S. News* said flatly that the McCain attacks “seem to have backfired profoundly.” Following the speech, political commentator Gloria Borger sarcastically used phrases such as “divisive liberal wacko,” “secretly out to destroy the Republicans,” and “hothead” in reference to McCain. *Washington Post* columnist David Broder, quoting a Republican political consultant, noted that all the uproar over McCain’s charges against religious conservatives had given McCain the “worst days of his

campaign.”

When the time to vote finally came, Virginia voters held the first significant presidential primary in the state’s history. George W. Bush handily defeated John McCain and won all of Virginia’s delegates to the 2000 Republican National Convention. Garnering strong support from loyal Republican party members as well as the religious right, Bush polled 53 percent of the vote compared to just 44 percent for McCain.

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In 2008, Hillary Clinton faced the same difficult situation in Virginia that she encountered in Maryland. Virginia was a former slave state, so it had a large black population ready to go out and vote for Barack Obama. Also present were all those well-educated, wealthy, and liberal residents of the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. This group, which John McCain had fought so hard to win to his side in 2000, was also believed to be solidly in the Obama camp. The state did not have enough of the downscale, working-class white voters that had tended to prefer Hillary Clinton on Super-Duper Tuesday in the more-populous states.

When the votes were counted in Virginia, Barack Obama had once again easily defeated Hillary Clinton in a state where, as in Maryland, some prognosticators had originally said she could win.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

With its large black population, the District of Columbia, as predicted, went smashingly for Barack Obama.

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Hillary Clinton had lost three more elections, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., and these three were primaries rather than caucuses. Barack Obama scored a triple victory in just one day in the Potomac Primary.

A freezing rain was falling in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia as Hillary Clinton boarded her private jet to leave the electoral disaster she had experienced in the Potomac Primary. Because of the slippery ice forming on the outdoor steps leading up to the aircraft, she appeared awkward and out of control as she climbed the steps. A

burly campaign aide had to help her up the steps and into the plane. Her effort to win the presidency badly needed help as well, and no one had any idea where such help might come from.

WISCONSIN

A sad case is Wisconsin. The state's presidential primary is one of the oldest and most famous in the nation. Back when fewer than ten states held presidential primaries, Wisconsin was one of the high spots on a short but exciting presidential primary trail. The state gained its greatest primary fame in 1960, when Democrat John F. Kennedy defeated Hubert H. Humphrey there. Kennedy won Wisconsin despite the fact he was from faraway Massachusetts and Humphrey was from next-door Minnesota.

Kennedy's upset of Humphrey in Wisconsin in 1960 was the break Kennedy needed to establish his credentials as a national rather than a regional candidate for president. Many Wisconsinites argued their presidential primary was a key factor in John F. Kennedy making it to the White House in 1960.

Wisconsin made the mistake of holding on to its early-April presidential primary date while other states were *front-loading* the process and jumping ahead of Wisconsin. Even when Wisconsin began moving its primary date earlier in the year, it was never early enough to have much effect on the outcome of the nomination races. In 2004, Wisconsin gained a brief moment of significance when former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, having lost both Iowa and New Hampshire to Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, made his "last stand" in Wisconsin. Dean hoped the state's liberal character would give him one last chance of winning a major presidential primary over John Kerry.

As usually happens with a "last stand" in a presidential nominating race, Dean's attempt to win Wisconsin in 2004 failed miserably. Kerry's big victory in Wisconsin simply confirmed what everyone already knew. John Kerry was going to be the 2004 Democratic nominee for president. Kerry subsequently lost the general election to incumbent Republican president George W. Bush.

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In 2008, Hillary Clinton and her advisers took one look at Wisconsin and saw all those upscale, well-educated, liberal white voters just hungering to vote for Barack Obama. The Hillary Clinton forces decided to bypass Wisconsin and go straight to Texas and Ohio, which were scheduled to vote on the first Tuesday in March of 2008. Texas and Ohio were thought to have more of those downscale working-class whites who were the most loyal part of Hillary Clinton's base vote.

The Hillary Clinton forces subsequently decided, however, that they could not let as important a state as Wisconsin go to Barack Obama without a shot being fired. Hillary Clinton began campaigning in the state, but the Clinton campaign made it clear it was in Wisconsin only to keep Barack Obama's margin of victory down rather than score a big win.

Wisconsin voted on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, just two weeks after Super-Duper Tuesday and one week after the Potomac Primary. As it turned out, the Clinton forces should not have bothered with Wisconsin at all. Despite Hillary Clinton making a number of appearances in the state, Barack Obama won it by what were becoming the customary large margins. The fact that Hillary Clinton campaigned in Wisconsin just made Barack Obama's big victory all the more bitter for her.

Worst of all, the exit polls showed erosion in Hillary Clinton's most loyal voter groups. White women, union members, and middle-aged voters were still supporting Clinton, but by ever-narrowing margins. Young white voters continued to strongly be behind Obama. The momentum from Barack Obama's unbroken string of victories following Super-Duper Tuesday was beginning to break Hillary Clinton's electoral back. Incredibly, this had all happened to her in only the brief two weeks since she had carried New York, New Jersey, and California on Super-Duper Tuesday.

Barack Obama, who had already moved on to campaigning in Texas, greeted the news of his giant Wisconsin victory with the space-age comment: "Houston, I think we've achieved liftoff here."