

Democrats are avoiding the issues

Amid the brouhaha surrounding Republican Vice Presidential nominee Dan Quayle, one significant event has gone unnoted. Michael Dukakis has remained mum.

Granted, in this particular instance that may be the smartest thing to do. But one gets the unsettling feeling that if fresh-faced Danny Quayle was revealed to be an active member of the KKK, Dukakis's reaction would be, "Well, uhhhhh, I don't know enough about him to comment but, uhhhhhh, my guy's OK, isn't he?"

Truly his campaign is marked not by the 'L' word but by the 'C' word: Cautious. This is the candidate who — according to *The New York Times* — has made it a precondition for almost every print interview that he not be asked *any* questions on foreign policy.

This is the candidate who presided over the formation of an extremely vague, extremely safe Democratic platform — a platform which ABC commentator Jeff Greenfield said could be summed up in one sentence: "Please, *please* vote for the Democrats. We won't bother you very much."

This is the candidate who has turned down repeated offers to appear on an extended, hour-long version of *Nightline* and a separate offer to appear on a regular edition of the show during the Democratic convention.

This is the candidate who made the very safe, very boring choice of Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate.

Michael Giltz

THE DILETTANTE

At the moment, George Bush would give his right arm to have made an equally dull choice. But, ultimately Quayle may serve his purpose.

Assuming this controversy doesn't continue to get reheated by new revelations, Quayle will do what he was meant to do: make Bush look presidential.

Quite a few pundits noted how early setbacks in the primaries brought the fighting spirit out in Bush. And Reagan's recent ride into the sunset left him appearing more relaxed and confident than ever.

Now Danny's phone call to Daddy has unwittingly allowed Bush to continue to talk tough and stand by his man. In Monday's speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bush sounded more emotional than ever. And he even managed to curse convincingly. Those preppy fires are stoked indeed.

So Bush leaves a very successful convention with the expected bounce. He went to New Orleans trailing by 17 points and strolls away with a nine point lead. George Bush continues in the self-designated role of underdog and is beginning to warm up to the part. Michael Dukakis is on the defensive and he doesn't even know it.

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