

PREFACE

The roots of this work stretch to the 2000 presidential election. Although I was always a political junkie, that election, and all the controversy that came after it, sparked my interest in presidential campaigns. Upon enrolling in my doctoral program at the University of Georgia 9 years later, I was lucky to find my mentor and friend Paul-Henri Gurian, who inspired me to focus my doctoral research on presidential elections. Paul's passion for presidential campaigns led him to host a weekly meeting each election cycle that brought faculty and graduate students together for a nerd fest where we would use our collective knowledge of campaigns and voter behavior to dissect the latest campaign events.

Paul was protective of these meetings, wishing it to remain an academic exercise free of the partisanship and superficiality that governs so much of the so-called analysis of elections. Over the course of the last few decades, the amount of coverage given to presidential elections, particularly presidential nominations, has increased exponentially. Yet what hasn't changed much is the *way* presidential campaigns are analyzed. The focus is always on what happened rather than on why it happened that way. This book endeavors to shed some light on the "why."

This book would not be possible without the support and inspiration I receive from my colleague Quentin Kidd, who is probably the most selfless person I have ever met. Quentin has given me an opportunity of a lifetime by allowing me to join him in the Wason Center for Public Policy here at Christopher Newport University. The Wason Center was established by Judy and Harry Wason to change lives, and it has definitely changed mine.

The creation of this book would not have been possible without my family, some of whom sacrificed a great deal so I could immerse myself in this work. I hope it makes you proud.

At that, I'll leave you with a famous quote from H.L. Mencken. Mencken became famous satirizing the Scopes Trial, dubbing it the Monkey Trial. On democracy, Mencken once said, "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." Indeed good sir. Indeed.

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