

All of that aside, all the history aside, it really is a place, and I'm going to say something that's going to sound a little bit supercilious, and that is, it's like Comic-Con, and for those of you out there, students who know what Comic-Con is, it's just the same thing. It's a bunch of people, instead of comic books and action figures and movies, it's politics. It is a massive love, of the process. It's meeting people who you haven't seen sometimes in 4, 8, and 12 years. The 1992 Clinton, New York convention, there was a huge party for those of us who worked on Bobby Kennedy's campaign in '68, I hadn't seen some of those people in 20 years. And both parties, it is an opportunity for people who are in the business of politics in 50 individual states to find one moment in time when they can all come together and basically say, "aren't we lucky we chose the best business in the world to be in?" People don't think of conventions as being internal, they think of conventions as being external, because they are external in the sense of sending a message. But they're also internal, Republicans find other Republicans and they say, "Oh my god, I am right. Look at all the people who agree with me." Democrats do the same thing. So, there's a lot of subset things that are going on at these conventions, that aren't going to be picked up by television and aren't going to be taught by the teachers. Not unimportant, in terms of the process of how do we, how do we convince people at home that we understand them, that we care about them, and that we can do something for them. That's the job that Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, that's what they have to say to the American people at the convention, that's what they have to convince the people who are there at the convention, that they need to sell to the people back home. If they, if they do it successfully then one or the other will obviously be the next President of the United States.

I would argue that it's not a bad thing to have people, in this case the television industry back then when you only had 4 channels, essentially 3 channels and a public channel, once every 4 years to give up some time since they had exclusive rights to the airwaves for democracy. Essentially give up those nights of, of corporate profit-making television. Now as you'll see in the week that is upcoming, in the two conventions you'll see that the, the stations don't feel they have an obligation anymore to do anything but give minimum coverage. If you want to watch it you've got MSNBC, you've got CNN, you've got Fox, you've got all those other kinds of places. You can tweet it and you can, you can, there are enough subset universes so that the people who are interested in it can view it, and the people who have no interest in it, which are a lot of people, can go on with their lives.

That didn't exist back in 1960, '64, '68, television was a much different kind of force in the life of, political life and cultural life of, of our nation. So, for this particular process, particularly when you take a look at the Republican convention which is really the more important of the two in this cycle, Mitt Romney needs to come out of that convention with people believing that he is ready for primetime. Every insurgent, Republican or Democrat, whomever the insurgent is, Bill Clinton in 1992 running against an incumbent President, in this case George Bush the first, needed to do that and sometimes they succeed and sometimes they fail.

People ask why you know, I think that this convention is so important to Mitt Romney, and I, I think the answer to the question is, he is the empty vessel of this race. That's what's important to understand about conventions. Michael Dukakis went to that convention an empty vessel, we thought we had filled that vessel during the convention. The Republicans emptied the glass on him and refilled it with their vision of Michael Dukakis. And we never got the upper hand. Similarly with, with John Kerry, extraordinary. John Kerry, assuming that no one could assail his greatest strength, and that is that as a, one of the few people of his class, meaning educated, white, Ivy-League, individuals who chose to go to Vietnam. When most people, middle class, certainly upper middle class and wealthy people avoided the war, it was a poor people's war. He went there, not only did he go there, but he won more medals in a war that had over 600,000 soldiers in the life of the war in Vietnam. He won more medals than .0035% of the people who fought. That's how extraordinary his success in winning a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and 3 Purple Hearts was. And yet, the candidate who never went to war became the war candidate. And the candidate who came out of the war a, an unpopular war, a war hero, had his whole record undercut with people who genuinely thought that he'd barely been in Vietnam. And the convention played an enormous part in Kerry trying to establish who he was, as a matter of fact he started out that convention by coming out, saluting, and saying "John Kerry here to, you know, ready for service, reporting for duty." And, but the Republicans understood that people come to, to elections with predisposed biases about Republicans and Democrats. Democrats don't go to war, aren't war heroes, and they play to that prejudice.

Talking earlier about 1972, and the process of, and the '68, when in 1968 when there were so few primaries, '60 when there were so few. To '72 when suddenly there's this explosion of the idea of, well people ought to

decide it ought not be chosen in the backrooms, in the dark backrooms. Jimmy Carter's nomination as a guy who's a one-term Georgia Governor, very few people remember how close he came to not getting the nomination. He won the first ever Iowa caucus, which I made fun of for six months working for a candidate by the name of Moe Udall who came in second in seven straight primaries before dropping out, last would be the Wisconsin primary, a real heartbreaker. But for Jimmy Carter he found an upset, something called the Iowa caucus. Caucuses are different from primaries because the universe of people who participate is infinitesimal compared to the greater number. So even though the press gives enormous play to the Iowa caucus, and in most recent years the Iowa picnic, the Republican Iowa picnic, the truth is that the number of people in Iowa who participate in the caucus is about 7% of all Democrats and about 9% of all Republicans. They don't go to a central location, sometimes as few as ten and as many as thirty people can meet in a farmhouse. They choose delegates by trading, it has nothing to do with democracy or who should win. It is who can organize. And the reason that's important is because the media says it's important. That's why it's important.

It's a lot better to start in two states, Iowa and New Hampshire for a primary and Iowa for a caucus, where retail campaigning can be done. Where people actually get to talk to a candidate just like they would a state rep or a state senator. Once you get into the big states, once you move out of there, particularly to the what we call Super Tuesday which is, every year it occurs at a different time, different states participate. Usually eight to ten states at a time, and these Super Tuesday primaries mean that there are a number of primaries in a number of states at the same time. So if you don't have money, you can't be on TV everywhere. If you can't be on TV you don't exist, and if you don't exist you can't win. So you see various campaigns trying to win one or two of the eight or ten. You see the wealthiest candidates competing everywhere, and that's where the wholesale campaigning versus the retail campaigning starts to take hold. By the time you get to the convention, under the process that we have now, lots of states have participated in the process of primaries. The problem of course is sometimes candidates win the nominations early, so later primaries don't matter at all. California this year, in the Republican primary didn't matter because it had been decided, actually after the Republican Super Tuesday, Super Tuesday early this year in March, it's been as late as May. Bobby Kennedy, in 1968 was June, McGovern was, wasn't nominated until almost July. But, and obviously the downside if you're a

Mitt Romney, meaning this cycle an “insurgent candidate” is, how do you keep yourself alive when you don’t have campaigns going on to be able to focus on the differences between yourself and the, the other candidate. And that takes us right back to the convention, because the convention becomes the moment where the non-political participants in this country, people who’ve sort of been on the edges and have a bias but haven’t made up their minds can see these candidates, the candidates’ families, the candidates’ surrogates, the candidates’ messaging in one location at one time. And that can be a boon to a, to a party or it can be a disaster to a party.

If Barack Obama is re-elected, I don’t think there’s any question that the next Supreme Court Justice will make it 5-4 against campaign financing and funding. I don’t think there’s any question that there are a lot of people, and I happen to fall into that category, who believe this may be one of the 3 or 4 worst decisions ever made by a Supreme Court. And what makes it interesting is that this is the first Supreme Court in the history of the United States of America where not one single member of the court, male or female, white or black, ran for any office themselves. There’s always been somebody, in many cases 3 or 4 or 5 people, who themselves were political people, who understood what it meant to run for office. The cost of running, the power of dollars. This particular group of people, this group of 9, don’t have a single person who themselves has ever knocked on a door. And that makes the difference, you can’t understand the power of money unless you yourself have been out there asking people for votes.