PS1 for 6/16/88#HOW GEORGE BUSH CAN WIN

""Running like a dry creek'' was the colorful expression used to describe Dwight Eisenhower's presidential campaign in 1952 before he was smart enough to enlist the support of the conservative wing of the Republican Party headed by Senator Robert A. Taft. After Ike lined up Taft and his supporters, Ike's campaign took off and his election was thereafter never in doubt.

The George Bush campaign sounds similarly parched. Bush's present slump in the polls is largely due to the unrelenting negative coverage he has received on network television, combined with the steady stream of positive coverage given to Michael Dukakis making him look presidential, tough, and people-oriented.

Night after night, the evening TV newscasts hang various albatrosses around Bush's neck, including Iran-Contra, Noriega, Ed Meese, and Don Regan's revelations. Give the guy a break! Bush isn't responsible for any of those things. He didn't appoint Meese or make the Noriega mistakes, and Don Regan's book makes it clear that Bush was out of the loop on Iran-Contra.

But Bush can't blame the media for all his problems. Considerable credit must be given to the Democrats' cleverness in keeping Jesse Jackson in the race. It is clear that Dukakis ""owes'' Jackson -- not merely for bringing black voters into the Democratic fold, but even more for the way Jackson is bolstering Dukakis' image among whites.

By staying in the race, Jackson has enabled Dukakis to make headlines every week as he ""wins'' another contested primary. For contrast, think what it would have done for Bush's campaign if every week the press proclaimed, ""BUSH WINS ANOTHER PRIMARY, DEFEATS DOLE AGAIN.''

More important still is that, by staying in the race, Jackson tends to make Dukakis look moderate. Of course, anybody would look

moderate standing next to the radical Jackson. Jackson has enabled Dukakis to put on a phony act complaining that Bush accuses him of being too liberal while Jackson accuses him of being too conservative.

The Bush campaign strategy seems to be: don't make any mistakes, ride Reagan's coattails, be nice to everyone, and make private phone calls to a few conservative leaders every two weeks to jolly them along. That strategy was successful against Republican opponents who had no anti-Bush strategy, but it won't beat the Democrats who do.

Here is what Bush needs to do to win in November:

1. Shed his campaign's preppie eastern establishment image which appeals primarily to country club Republicans; there are not enough of them to win a national election. Bush needs to create a campaign image that appeals to the Democrats and Independents who voted for Ronald Reagan, but are not in Bush's camp today.

George Bush himself can't and shouldn't change; he has to be authentic. But he can change the image of his campaign by appointing visible people, both in the headquarters staff and in the 50 states, with whom the blue-collar Republicans, Democrats, and Independents can identify, personally, ethnically, and as conservative spokesmen on law and order, abortion, traditional morals, AIDS, and drugs.

2. Seize the initiative on key issues that the Democrats are trying to coopt. Example A: Bush can make himself the ""education President'' he wants to be by endorsing a proposal to allow parents to choose any public school for their children to attend (like the newly adopted Minnesota plan).

Example B: Bush can seize the initiative on women's issues by endorsing tax credits for all children under a plan that assures 100 percent freedom of choice to parents to use the credit for the child care of their choice, including mother care. The Democrats, who want to appoint federal busybodies under an Administrator of Baby Sitting

to dole out funds on a discriminatory basis, are stuck with a real loser on this issue.

Example C: Bush can seize the initiative on the Panama/Noriega issue. After all, the real problem is the 1978 Jimmy Carter treaty that gave away our Canal to the same pro-Communist, anti-American, drug-peddling regime that is tweaking our nose today.

Resurrecting the Panama Canal Treaty issue could be a gold mine for George Bush because the three persons most frequently talked about as Dukakis' running mates are Sam Nunn, John Glenn, and Lloyd Bentsen, and they all voted in 1978 to give away our Canal.

3. Bush should build a broad-based campaign organization that includes people with their own constituencies, such as Jack Kemp, William Bennett, Phil Gramm, Newt Gingrich, John McCain, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and others who appeal to the Reagan Democrats and Independents, as well as to the Republicans who are unenthusiastic about Bush. It certainly doesn't help the Bush campaign to leak out trial balloons for Veep prospects of other preppie Republicans or of women who appeal to Geraldine Ferraro types.