

**SALMAGUNDI**  
**The Making of a President 2008**  
**Presented by "Theodore H. White"**  
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It's good to be back. I'm sorry Judge Heyburn was called away. But I am glad to have an opportunity to tell you why this recent election ended as it did. I used to be pretty good at this, you know. I don't get out much any more. Besides there are so many reporters crowded behind the scenes now that nobody can get behind the scene like I once did. But, I do have a few random thoughts.

My, how the country and its politics have changed since I first began reporting in 1958. Back then, Alaska wasn't even a state: now its governor is on the national ticket. From 1960, our population has grown from 170,000,000 to 305,000,000; persons calling themselves white were 80% of that population, now they are 66%; and our national government budget has increased from 92 billion to over 3 trillion dollars. And look at the American economic engine. It has raised the median family income from \$5,000 to \$61,000. This is astonishing to me.

The places where our national election is actually contested have changed also. When I first reported on the election of 1960, among the states with the ten most electoral votes, six of them—Ohio, California, Michigan, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey—were truly battleground states. Forty-eight years later only one of those, Ohio, remains truly a battleground state in this election. Across the country more states are polarized. That's not all.

The political parties have polarized also. Each is a captive of its extremes. This is completely different from when I last reported. Politicians no longer need moderate their views to be elected; nor need politicians compromise within their own party to hold it together.

The polarization of our media astonishes me as well. I understand that now people have