

Thank you.

Vote Kerry

Well, Friends, here we are in a city that has known the struggle of free people against tyranny, their rise above personal self-interest, their rise during the occasions of human emergency to move forward with courage, with intelligence and a long view to the future of the people, and with great energy and a perfect concentration on victory. "We must all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately" is a phrase spoken in Philadelphia by a man of this city—a phrase that again has personal meaning to us.

We are not so far in time from 1776. My own life extends over 40% the way there.

There is a man working in my campaign office whose distant grandfather planned Revere's ride and roused him to it that fateful night. This descendent planned my trip here, in fact.

All of us have not so much come to this city, but come back to it. Our forefathers and mothers, whether they were free or slave, elite or servant, newcomer or native, whether they fought for human freedom at Lexington or Omaha Beach, or at a segregated lunch counter, have given us something to defend, and we now have our moment to take our part in the continuing joyful struggle that is America in its

ongoing revolution against oppression and unfairness and cruelty. We rise up—the human spirit defends itself. We rise up to defend each other. It is in our genes.

So we are in Boston again—our noble and rebellious blood mixed through the generations, but still easy to boil at any danger to our independence. And we are here together, as civic friends, as true friends, and, history will record, as patriots kin to generations of patriots before us, who care nothing for safety nor for comfort when truth, love and the Constitution are at stake.

What sacrifices are we willing to make? This morning, I will speak of several necessary sacrifices. For some of you, these will be easy or no sacrifice at all. For others, they will be hard but necessary.

I come this morning to talk about John Kerry and the coming demonstrations during the two conventions.

Four years ago I looked at the poison of big business support for the major candidates and I advised my friends to vote their hearts, to let the chips fall where they might, on the theory that, even if their third party candidate lost, they would be building a constituency for such candidates in the future.

I was very wrong to suggest that party building was more important than the risks of a Bush presidency. While none of us knew how bad it would be, those of us who spoke out on the issue had an obligation to do our homework—to know more about the hidden agendas of the candidates.

I still believe we must vote our hearts, but we must inform our hearts.

I have done my homework. We all have done our homework—we know who Bush is and what he represents. We know the danger of another Bush term. We know the danger of splitting our vote.

I am for Kerry. My heart is completely dedicated to this victory.

If that is hard for some people, let me ask them to think about it this way. Imagine you knew John Kerry since the Vietnam War days. Maybe you were a fellow soldier or a nurse or a friend back home. Over the years, you have stayed in touch, exchanged long phone calls and birthday cards and kidded him about marrying well. You've ridden on the back of his motorcycle and shouted for him to slow down.

We forgive all sorts of things of our friends, so, when you argued with him about his vote on a big issue

close to your heart, you were angry, but you knew him well enough to be willing to stick with your friendship.

And you might defend him in his absence, say at a dinner party. John Kerry bad on the environment? No way, you would defend. He has one of the best environmental voting records in Congress. As President, you assure them, he would be addressing the critical issues of our day, such as global climate change and the myriad issues that connect with that crisis.

Further, you might assert that his political skills would mean that his strong position on the environment would enable him to move an agenda forward, while a president like Ralph Nader might rail against Congress like an Old Testament prophet, but get nothing through. Yes, you would assure any doubter, though you have problems with some of John's votes, he would be better for the environment and better in the necessary political work ahead than Nader or anyone you can think of.

And you might say the same for John Kerry regarding health care and civil liberties and justice issues, and on, and on.

Now, our problem in America today is that not enough of us have been on the back of his motorcycle and on the receiving end of his personal friendship and loyalty.

But in this American crisis, he is indeed our best friend, and we had better be his, and do everything we can for this friend. Will I be among those who put pressure on him to take bold steps after his election? Indeed I will, and I will be protected in those protests and in those walks and in those utterances by the document we will have saved so that it might continue to save us: The U.S. Constitution. That will not be the case if we must protest against another Bush Administration.

Can we hang together long enough to protect our freedom?

Some people will continue to say that, yes, four more years of Bush would be a disaster for the entire earth, its people and its environment, but they just don't have it in them to vote for John Kerry for one reason or another. I do not see Mr. Kerry as the lesser of two evils, but some people do. For them, I say that the very definition of the mature mind, the responsible mind, is not only being able to accept the lesser evil, but to embrace it with all your heart and energy.

The disengaged and haughty intellectual who will not take part in the defense of his own city from the barbarian attack, perhaps because he never really liked the mayor, stands by as the enemy enters and ravages his fellow citizens. Is he rather like the haughty liberal who is willing to enable another Bush Administration to kill innocents abroad and imprison innocents at home so that one doesn't have to have the soil of real politics under one's manicured fingernails? Such people need to grow up emotionally, and become real men and women who will fight for justice and for their fellow human beings and for nature itself on the battleground at hand, not the ideal battleground of their musings. Such people get in the way, take up space, and hinder those who will make the hundred leaps of faith necessary to be engaged in the real world and do battle in the war between the forces of dark and light, between fear and love.

John Kerry has a long record of supporting women's and minority' rights, and of opposing discrimination based on sexual orientation. He has worked to boost fuel standards, worked to limit pollution, worked to boost alternative energy, worked to stop drilling in the Arctic Preserve, worked to protect public schools and the social security program, worked to oppose the flood of guns in our society, worked to oppose tax windfalls to the wealthy, worked against Star Wars

funding, worked to provide resources to the poor. The list of what he has done is a long one, and the list of the things you might argue with him about is a short one.

Two centuries ago, there were probably Americans who didn't quite like part of the Declaration of Independence or who did think George Washington was just the right man to lead the Continental Army, or who thought there should be a few more articles to the Bill of Rights before they would sign on. They were barnacles on that Yankee Clipper that sped despite them toward liberty, and they are now less than footnotes. This is a time for action, and our man is John Kerry.

Yes, I am voting my heart, my whole heart, when I vote for John Kerry.

And I shall vote for him on October 12th. I think all Democrats should vote three weeks early by mailed ballots. That way, there will be a paper record of our votes. You may have suspicions about the voting machines, but I assure you that the Secretaries of State and the town and county clerks of this nation take their jobs very seriously and our paper ballots in their hands will be our best defense against any secretly rigged or otherwise malfunctioning or sabotaged machines--and the Bush Administration

can stop talking about putting off the election, for that issue may not be as dead as we hope.

Besides, if we vote three weeks in advance, we will all be free to volunteer on the Get Out the Vote projects in the swing areas.

Now, let me say a word about one other thing we must do, which may be a sacrifice for some people and time off for good behavior for others.

Many, many Americans will decide which side they are on as they watch the national conventions on television and as they read and hear about the events.

They will look at the pretty politicians and delegates, and they will look at the people on the street. They will identify with one group or another.

Every roudy, rude, pushy person in a demonstration, whether in Boston or New York, is a vote for George Bush. Every clash with the police is another swarm of votes for Bush, and therefore clashes will be provoked.

Should we demonstrate? Yes. We should demonstrate respectfully in Boston in support of regime change. We should cheer on the Democratic

Party and its candidates, for they are our best friends in this American crisis.

In New York, we should have signs that speak the truth respectfully, and signs that say why we are for Kerry and Edwards. We should look like and sound like people one would want to know, not one would want to run from.

Some people will think they have a right to express their anger and their creativity and they are right. But, is their need to express themselves a higher value to them than saving our Constitution or the environment of the earth or the lives of thousands of people?

This is a moment when people on our side are going to be fully tested for unselfishness and maturity.

If they want to move history, they have to persuade their fellow citizens. Ranting and raving will not help, and will in fact do harm. If you want to persuade your fellow citizens to follow you, you must speak and act and even dress the part of a thoughtful, respectable citizen.

"That's not who I am, Granny. I have to tell it like it is."

Yes, I hear you. It is the sound of children playing while people are dying on account of your selfishness.

We are a little spoiled in this country, and we do not take seriously enough our responsible role in the world.

Our individual actions as citizens, even as non-voting age young people, have important effects in the world. People live and die, the environment thrives or dies, people are tortured or tutored, according to how we vote, and how we influence the votes of our fellow citizens.

In this moment, we must shed our differences and act as one people, one voice, one voting block. We will save our nation in these next few months, and then we will resume the hard work of fighting out our differences and moving our own issues forward. But for now, we are for Democracy, we are for justice, we are for liberty, we are for a peaceful and sustainable future, we are for the Constitution, and, God Bless America, we are all for John Kerry.