

With the Plebes, Firing Broadships, Dropping Depth Charges, Dodging a Bullet - Correction Appended

The Washington Post

April 22, 2005 Friday, Final Edition

 **Correction Appended**

Copyright 2005 The Washington Post

The Washington Post
washingtonpost.com

Section: A Section; A05 , WASHINGTON SKETCH Dana Milbank

Length: 860 words

Byline: Dana Milbank

Dateline: ANNAPOLIS April 21

Body

Sen. John McCain is a walking news conference.

When MTV asked the Arizona Republican to follow Snoop Dogg, Marilyn Manson and Sting as a guest on its college television network, McCain didn't go in for the usual chatter about boxers or briefs and what's in his iPod. He announced a bipartisan proposal to restructure the American immigration system.

"Just by coincidence, Senator Teddy Kennedy and I, in the last couple of days, after several months of negotiations, have reached an agreement for an immigration proposal that we will be putting out next week," McCain confided Thursday to a first-year political science class at the U.S. Naval Academy here. For the 8 million to 13 million illegal immigrants in the country, the senator said, "our proposal is along the lines of make them pay a fine of a couple thousand dollars, make them work for three years, and after three years they can get in the back of the line for a green card and then eventually become citizens."

The *plebes* had no idea that they had heard the exclusive details of a deal between a border-state Republican and a New England liberal Democrat that could alter the national debate over immigration. But then, that's McCain.

In his hour with the students, the famously candid lawmaker:

- * Announced that President Bush would speak at the Naval Academy graduation -- before the White House managed to get that information into the public domain.
- * Urged a steroid ban covering all pro sports.
- * Criticized various U.S. "mistakes" in Iraq.
- * Declared that Bush "needs to start vetoing some bills," and said that on fiscal matters his fellow Republicans "are abandoning one of the pillars of our Republican Party."

With the Plebes, Firing BroadSides, Dropping Depth Charges, Dodging a Bullet - Correction Appended

Viacom's college campus network, mtvU, boasts that it has had a "parade of kick-ass people" perform as guest lecturers in its "Stand In" program. In addition to serious figures such as Elie Wiesel and John F. Kerry, the program has hosted Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (University of the Pacific), Ashley Judd (University of Kentucky), and, yes, Manson (Temple) and Snoop Dogg (USC).

But the midshipmen who heard McCain (who ranked near the bottom of his Navy class of '58) said they prefer him even to Sting (University of Illinois). "If Marilyn Manson or Snoop Dogg came, it wouldn't have been the same," insisted Jennifer Lloyd, a freshman from Texas. "You can look up to somebody from the bottom of the academy who has done so well."

McCain **dodged** the most intriguing question: whether he will run again for president, seeking the GOP nomination in 2008. "I'm going to wait a couple of years and then give it some thought at that time," the suddenly cagey senator said. Still, the session had the feel of the town-hall meetings McCain held during his "Straight Talk Express" tour of New Hampshire in 1999: take all questions, and give frank answers.

The clock in the drab lecture room was stuck on 3:58 when McCain entered just after 10 a.m. It was to have been a surprise, but word leaked out Wednesday, so few were fooled when the instructor was interrupted by a knock on the door and the appearance of McCain, who wrote his name on the chalkboard "for those of you who don't know me." Chuckles all around.

Much of the session was vintage McCain: protesting "outrageous" congressional pet projects such as studying bear DNA and cow flatulence. Asked how to deal with pork-barreling lawmakers, McCain deadpanned: "Kill them."

The once and possibly future presidential candidate has a knack for staying at the center of things. He was recently given the chairmanship of the Senate Indian affairs committee, a backwater compared with his previous job as commerce committee chairman. But the panel has subpoenaed Ralph Reed and Grover Norquist to testify in its investigation of lobbyist Jack Abramoff -- an event sure to be a media spectacle.

And now McCain is at the center of the immigration debate, which has split nativist from pro-business Republicans. The McCain-Kennedy plan, as McCain outlined it here, goes significantly further toward amnesty for illegal immigrants than Bush has proposed; that could give Bush leverage as he negotiates with anti-immigrant Republicans in the House.

The McCain-Kennedy plan, he said, would "spend a lot of money and a lot of effort" to secure the southern border, using high-tech tools such as unmanned aerial vehicles and lasers. It would also have a "guest-worker program" that, unlike Bush's, would lead to legalization. "If there's a job Americans won't do, someone who can have pools of workers in countries with tamper-proof documentation, they can come and do those jobs and over a long period of time become eligible for a green card and eventually citizenship."

Most controversial will be the McCain-Kennedy plan to allow illegal immigrants to pay a fine, wait three years, then apply for legal residency and citizenship. "Don't reward them for breaking the law, but also give them an opportunity to become citizens," McCain said. The senator sounded so reasonable that the students easily could have missed the fact that their MTV guest lecturer had just lobbed an ideological grenade into the U.S. Capitol.

Correction

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee has subpoenaed documents from anti-tax activist Grover Norquist's organization and has requested documents from consultant Ralph Reed's company. An April 22 article reported incorrectly that the two have been subpoenaed to testify.

Correction-Date: April 23, 2005

Classification

With the Plebes, Firing Broadships, Dropping Depth Charges, Dodging a Bullet - Correction Appended

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: IMMIGRATION (91%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (89%); MILITARY SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES (89%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (78%); US DEMOCRATIC PARTY (78%); VETO (78%); CITIZENSHIP (77%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (77%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (77%); AGREEMENTS (77%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (76%); LIBERALISM (76%); US PRESIDENTS (74%); POLITICAL DEBATES (73%); PRESS CONFERENCES (73%); EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION GRADUATION (72%); PROFESSIONAL SPORTS (72%); US NAVY (69%); ILLICIT STEROID USE (64%); POLITICAL SCIENCE (55%); RANKINGS (50%)

Company: VIACOM INC (53%)

Organization: UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY (75%)

Ticker: VIA (NASDAQ) (53%)

Industry: MILITARY SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES (89%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (77%); TELEVISION INDUSTRY (72%); US NAVY (69%); STEROIDS (64%)

Person: JOHN KERRY (79%); JOHN MCCAIN (79%); GEORGE W BUSH (56%)

Geographic: ARIZONA, USA (79%); ILLINOIS, USA (79%); KENTUCKY, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%); IRAQ (79%)

Load-Date: April 22, 2005