Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail ‘72
By Hunter S. Thompson

Note: Thompson’s description of his (mis)adventures on the campaign trail uses language that some of you may find offensive or even disturbing. Be warned! Nonetheless, his book is widely accepted as a classic in American politics and gives a true flavor of what it is like to be a journalist covering a presidential campaign.

Democratic Candidates for President in 1972

Shirley Chisholm: Congresswoman from New York; first black woman to run for president.

Hubert Humphrey: Former Senator from Minnesota; Lyndon Johnson’s Vice-President from 1965-1969; the Democratic nominee for President in 1968; he lost the Presidential election to Richard Nixon in 1968 (he received 42.7% of the national vote—to Nixon’s 43.4%—but only 191 electoral votes).

Henry “Scoop” Jackson: Senator from Washington

Ted Kennedy: Senator from Massachusetts. He would probably have won the Democratic nomination in 1972 if not for the Chappaquiddick incident in 1969. In that incident, Kennedy, on his way home from a party, drove off a small bridge. He was driving home a woman, but he swam out of his car and fled the scene. The woman died.

John Lindsay: Mayor of New York City. Was a Republican until 1969.

Eugene McCarthy: Senator from Minnesota. He ran for the Democratic nomination in 1968 and did surprisingly well (although still lost to President Johnson) in the important New Hampshire primary. That “better than expected” showing caused Johnson to drop out of the race. Soon after, Robert Kennedy entered the race, but Kennedy was killed in early June 1968, on the day he won the California primary. Despite McCarthy’s good showing in the primaries, the Democratic nomination went to Humphrey, mostly because the primary process was not as important as it is now in determining the party’s nominee.

George McGovern: Senator from South Dakota; the Democratic nominee in 1972. He received only 37.5% of the popular vote and won only one state, Massachusetts.

Edmund Muskie: Senator from Maine; Hubert Humphrey’s running mate in 1968. He would later serve as Jimmy Carter’s Secretary of State, from 1980-1981.

George Wallace: Governor of Alabama; candidate for President in 1968 on the American Independent Party ticket (he received 13.5% of the national vote and 46 electoral votes, winning Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia)

Sam Yorty: Mayor of Los Angeles
Other Important People

**Spiro Agnew:** Nixon’s Vice-President; former Governor of Maryland; resigned as Vice-President in 1973 for income tax fraud. He did not go to jail.

**Warren Beatty:** Top McGovern advisor; actor

**Pat Caddell:** McGovern’s pollster

**Thomas Eagleton:** Senator from Missouri. McGovern’s original running mate, before he stepped aside after revelations about his mental health.

**Gary Hart:** McGovern’s campaign manager; in 1974 he was elected Senator from Colorado; he ran for the Democratic nomination in 1984 and 1988, but he dropped out of the race in 1988 after it was discovered that he cheated on his wife.

**Frank Mankiewicz:** McGovern’s political director; he also served as Robert Kennedy’s press secretary in Kennedy’s 1968 presidential campaign; Mankiewicz was the man who announced to the media that Robert Kennedy had died as a consequence of the shooting in California.

**John Mitchell:** Nixon’s Attorney General; resigned as AG in 1972 to become head of Nixon’s Committee for the Re-election of the President (CREEP).

**Richard Nixon:** Eisenhower’s Vice-President from 1953-1960; lost the presidential election in 1960 against John F. Kennedy; lost the election for Governor of California in 1962; elected President in 1968; re-elected in 1972; he resigned in 1974 because of the Watergate crisis.

**Larry O’Brien:** Chairman of the Democratic National Committee at the time of Watergate

**Sargent Shriver:** Kennedy in-law, married to John F. Kennedy’s sister; Director of Peace Corps during JFK administration; George McGovern’s second running-mate in 1972, after Eagleton stepped down.

**Richard J. Daley:** Mayor of Chicago (1955-1976); his son, Richard M. Daley, is now mayor of Chicago

**Important Pieces of Information**

**Chicago:** the location of the 1968 Democratic National Convention