

# DEATH BY ELOCUTION



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**DEATH BY ELOCUTION**  
***Mad Magazine's***  
**Guaranteed Effective**  
**All-Occasion**  
**Non Slanderous**  
**Political Smear Speech**  
**by**  
**Bill Garvin**

My fellow citizens, it is an honor to be here today. My opponent has openly admitted he feels an affinity toward your city, but I happen to *like* it here. It might be a salubrious place to him, but to me it is one of the nation's most delightful garden spots.

When I embarked upon this political campaign I hoped that it could be conducted on a high level and that my opponent would be willing to stick to the issues. Unfortunately, he has decided to be tractable instead - to indulge in unequivocal language, to eschew the use of outright lies in his speeches, and even to make repeated veracious statements about me.

At first I tried to ignore these scrupulous, unvarnished fidelities. Now I will do so no longer. *If my opponent wants a fight, he's going to get one!*

It might be instructive to start with his background. My friends, have you ever accidentally dislodged a rock on the ground and seen what was underneath? Well, exploring my opponent's background is dissimilar. All the slime and filth and corruption you can possibly imagine in your wildest dreams are glaringly non-existent in this man's life. And even during his childhood!

Let us take a quick look at that childhood: it is known that, on a number of occasions, he emulated older boys at a certain playground. It is also known that his parents not only permitted him to masticate excessively in their presence, but even urged him to do so. Most explicable of all, this man who poses as a paragon of virtue exacerbated his own sister when they were both teenagers!

I ask you my fellow Americans: is this the kind of person we want in public office to set an example for our youth?

Of course, it's not surprising that he should have such a typically pristine background - no, not when you consider the other members of his family.

His female relatives put on constant poses of purity and innocence, and claim they are inscrutable, yet every one of them has taken part in hortatory activities.

The men in the family are likewise completely amenable to moral suasion.

My opponent's second cousin is a Mormon.

His uncle was a flagrant heterosexual.

His sister, who has always been obsessed by sects, once worked as a proselyte outside a church.

His father was secretly chagrined at least a dozen times by matters of a pecuniary nature.

His youngest brother wrote an essay extolling the virtues of being homo-sapiens.

His nephew subscribes to a phonographic magazine.

His wife was a thespian before their marriage and even performed the act in front of paying customers.

And his own mother had to resign from a women's association in her later years because she was an admitted sexagenarian.

Now what shall we say of the man himself?

I can tell you in solemn truth that he is the very antithesis of political radicalism, economic irresponsibility and personal depravity. His own record proves that he has frequently discountenanced treasonable, un-American philosophies and has perpetrated many overt acts as well.

He perambulated his infant son on the street.

He practiced nepotism with his uncle and first cousin.

He attempted to interest a 13-year old girl in philately.

He participated in a séance at a private residence where, among other odd goings-on, there was incense.

He has declared himself in favor of more homogeneity on college campuses.

He has advocated social intercourse in mixed company - and has taken part in such gatherings himself.

He has been deliberately averse to crime on our city streets.

He has urged our Protestant and Jewish citizens to develop more catholic tastes.

Last summer he conducted a piscatorial act on a boat that was flying the American flag.

Finally, at a time when we must be on our guard against all foreign isms, he has coolly announced his belief in altruism - and his fervent hope that someday this entire nation will be altruistic!

I beg you, my friends, to oppose this man whose life and work and ideas are so openly and avowedly compatible with our American way of life. A vote for him would be a vote for the perpetuation of everything we hold dear.

The facts are clear; the record speaks for itself. Do your duty.

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### **Follow-up Work**

As writers we are concerned to develop our awareness of the processes involved in writing – particularly how we process words as part of our writing, in dialogue, as part of a narrative and as part of a description. Inevitably this means we are concerned with the details of language. Here, for example, we are looking at the process of creating speech for a characters, and we are concerned with what this created speech tells us about the speaker, and behind that what it tells us about the writer and the writer's intentions.

- Look up the words *parody*, *satire* and *malapropism* in a dictionary.
- Are any of these words - *parody*, *satire* and *malapropism* - applicable to this speech?
- Can you say why you think so?
- Which parts of the text do you think these words apply to?
- What is the author exaggerating here?
- Is the speaker aware of the real meanings of the words he is using?
- Is he aware, but thinks his audience is too stupid to know the meanings?
- In either case how does this contribute to our understanding of the character of the politician?
- What does the speech say about the audience?
- Would you say the audience being satirised for its gullibility, its ignorance, its tendency to hear and believe stereotypes?
- What does the speech say about politics and politicians?
- What do you think this implies about democracy and the political process?
- What does it say about language?
- Why would a writer be concerned about political problems?
- In what way can you make use of this?