

Clinton-Trump Debates, Round 2

Sex, Lies, Videotape, and a Jail Threat

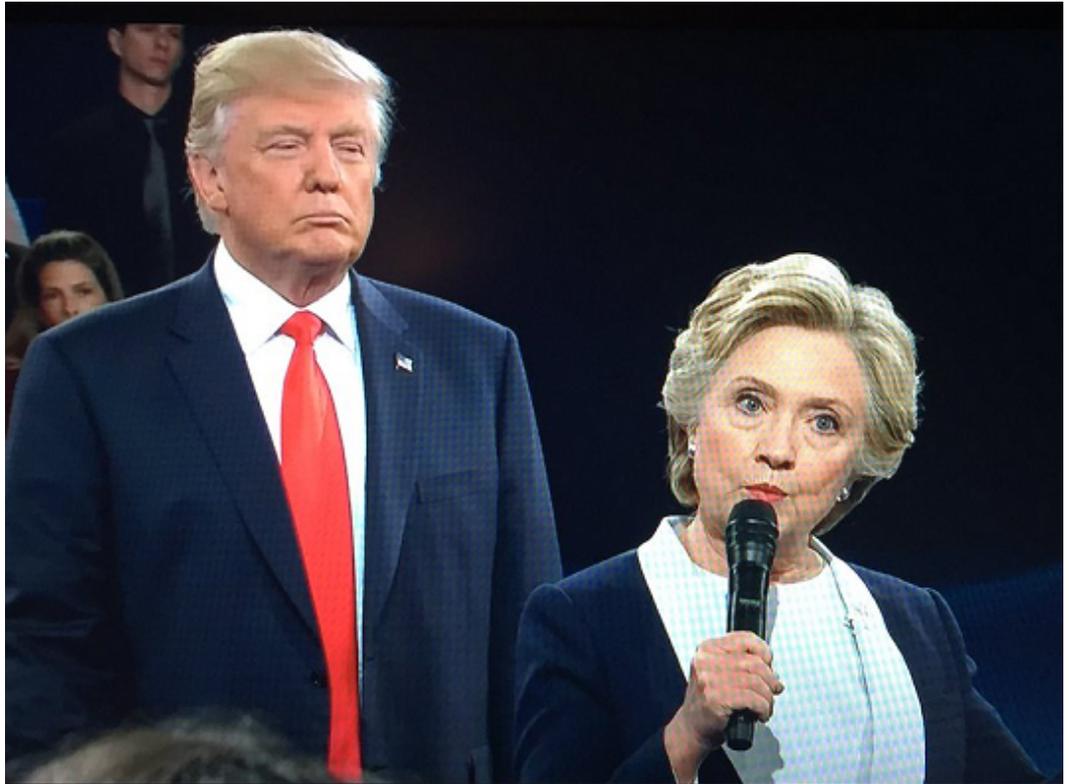
✘ *By Virgil Scudder, President, [Virgil Scudder & Associates](#)*

This was the Super Bowl of the political campaign. It was the debate that GOP leaders and down-ballot candidates were hoping would showcase a different [Donald Trump](#), a man of substance and character whose demeanor might stem the mass exodus of party leaders who are fast withdrawing their support of the head of their ticket.

But, it was not to be.

Trump needed to humbly and sincerely apologize for his vulgar and boastful comments about his assaults on women on that famous Access Hollywood bus ride while swearing that he no longer behaves or thinks that way. Instead, he once again sought to trivialize his crude remarks as “locker room banter,” a characterization that has been widely rejected by men and women alike.

True, he did voice an apology, but his words rang hollow as he immediately launched into an attack on Bill Clinton’s sexual escapades of two decades ago. The argument didn’t fly.



(Photo Source: Twitter)

At the beginning it looked like we were going to see a more controlled Trump as he spoke softly and began to lay out positions. But, he soon reverted to form, rudely interrupting his opponent, complaining about unequal treatment by the moderators, and calling Mrs. Clinton a liar.

And, it was to get worse. Trump effectively acknowledged that he has paid no Federal taxes for nearly two decades. He took vitriol to a new level, saying “(Clinton) has tremendous hate in her heart.” And, shockingly, he threatened to appoint a special prosecutor to put her in jail if he is elected. Even the suggestion of such action, common in dictatorships, is unheard of in this country.

A stronger, less self-centered candidate could have given [Hillary](#) a hard time. She badly over-talked a lot of responses, as did he, frequently going beyond the standard two-minute time limit. Politicians seem to feel that they have to babble on for the entire allotted time when their points could often be more effectively made with a brief answer. My

advice: when you score a big point, shut up. Continuing to talk will water down the effect of the point(s) you made and make your answer less memorable.

Here's the basic rule: **communication** is not what you know or what you say but what the listener takes away. Thus, a good, concise comment is often the best one.

Clinton did not have convincing answers on the email or leaked speeches issues but Trump failed to press her as hard as he should have on them.

The body language battle clearly went to the Democrat. Trump shuffled around the stage when Clinton was talking, often grimacing or frowning, and generally looking away. At times it looked almost like he was stalking her. By contrast, she was attentive when he was speaking, often non-committal but sometimes smiling or shaking her head.

At last we got a debate with tough and capable moderators, Anderson Cooper and Martha Raddatz. They were far better than their debate predecessors in forcing the combatants to directly answer questions and just generally policing the event.

Trump's challenge Sunday night was to show that he had the demeanor and temperament to be president. Only his most ardent supporters could believe that he succeeded. He may have stayed alive, quieting some calls for him to resign from the ticket, but it's hard to believe either Trump or Clinton swayed many undecided voters.

***About the Author:** Often referred to as "The Dean of Media Trainers," Virgil is considered one of the world's foremost communication experts. In a 30-year career that has covered 26 countries on five continents, he has provided coaching and counsel to heads of some of the world's largest corporations and government leaders. Virgil is a prolific writer and*

speaker. His book, *World Class Communication: how great CEOs win with the public, shareholders, employees, and the media*, written with his son Ken, was named one of the 25 best business books of 2012. His column, *In the C-Suite*, appears in every quarterly issue of the *Public Relations Strategist* and is read by leaders of major public relations agencies and global heads of public relations of large companies. He has written or been featured in articles that have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *Reuters*, *Investors Business Daily*, and numerous professional publications. Two of his speeches have been reprinted in the prestigious *Vital Speeches of the Day*. Prior to founding *Virgil Scudder & Associates* in 1990, Virgil headed the media training units of two of the world's largest public relations firms, *Hill & Knowlton* and *Carl Byoir & Associates*. Earlier, he was an award-winning news broadcaster at major radio and television networks and stations in New York City. He was a first-night Broadway drama critic for six years during that period, broadcasting reviews on NBC's all-news radio network and all-news WINS radio.