

Carl Golden: Candidates facing gaffes, cell phones and social media

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If you've ever gotten caught up in watching one of those 1940s spy movies on cable television, you're familiar with the scene in which the two agents meet in a seedy hotel room in the dark of night to exchange secrets and,

In the past, if a candidate stumbled, uttered smarmy comments, or misstated facts, his gaffe was reported in print and usually overtaken by other events in a day or two. Now, the blunders are up on YouTube forever, in the twitter universe for eternity, and filed within easy reach on Google.

It is increasingly difficult for a candidate or campaign to cast doubt on allegations of unbecoming conduct by claiming comments were taken out of context, distorted, or deliberately misrepresented. When the image is on screen and the words clearly audible on tape, the odds of offering a credible rebuttal are nil.

Perhaps Romney's description of an entitlement society or Obama's guns and religion complaint offer a glimpse into their thinking, but they are just as likely to have been the product of the frustration, fatigue and tension which settle over campaigns.

No matter, even the walls have ears.

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