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Description

In this commentary, NBC's John Chancellor says the "careful and deliberate" pick of Dan Quayle as George H.W. Bush's running mate is actually a decision by default because Bush had few other options.

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Citation

MLA
"Commentary: Dan Quayle, Vice Presidential Candidate by Default?" John Chancellor, correspondent.
Transcript

Commentary: Dan Quayle, Vice Presidential Candidate by Default?

TOM BROKAW, anchor:

Our commentator John Chancellor with us now and John as we all know it’s now more then 24 hours later, and still a lot of people are asking, how did it get to be Dan Quayle on the ticket?

JOHN CHANCELLOR reporting:

I have a few answers based on what we know around town today. George Bush began the process of choosing his running mate by making out a long list of potential vice presidents. Some people simply said then they didn’t want the job. Howard Baker and Nancy Kassebaum and Governor Deukmejian of California said no. Senator Alan Simpson said no several times, and on television. The long list was being trimmed. There were others. Peter Uberoff, the baseball commissioner, Lee Iacocca of Chrysler, Dick Thornburg the new attorney general all were judged too unorthodox or too busy. Elizabeth Dole didn’t make the cut, not strong enough as a candidate. Illinois Governor Thompson was dropped. The list got shorter.

There were background checks made on many people and Dan Quayle had some problems in his background, but a key Bush advisor said those were manageable. Other potential candidates had problems that would have been harder to deal with he said. Jack Kemp looked like a finalist until he was dropped and now the list was very short indeed. Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico may at that point have still have been under consideration. One campaign official said Bush didn’t want an independent operator, the official didn’t say, but that may have been the reason for dropping Bob Dole. Bush-Dole relations have been stormy.

So at the end, George Bush didn’t have a lot of candidates to choose among. The decision to pick Quayle has to be described in politics as careful and deliberative because that is politics. But in the end, Mr. Bush had hardly anybody else to pick except an unknown and untested Senator from Indiana.

Which is commentary for tonight, Tom.