

The Miami Herald

October 12, 1996

ARE YOU CONSERVATIVE, LIBERAL OR MUSHBALL?

by FRANK DAVIES Herald Staff Writer

A sampling of the questions in the new paperback *Are You a Conservative or a Liberal?* (Boru Books, \$5.95), put together by political consultants Victor Kamber (on the left) and Bradley O'Leary (on the right) to test where you fit on the political spectrum:

* Which do you trust more: professional athletes or team owners?

* Whose political views do you consider more extreme: former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders or Pat Robertson?

* Which TV show would you watch: Walker, Texas Ranger or Friends?

And you're asking yourself: What if I wouldn't watch either show? Nor give much credence to the preachings of Elders or Robertson, nor have much use for the egos and greed displayed by team owners and athletes?

Here's another choice: Whom would you feel more comfortable buying insurance from -- Hillary Rodham Clinton or Nancy Reagan?

You can almost hear a vast chorus responding: "I'd take root canal instead!"

It's election season, when you expect the simplistic. And authors Kamber and O'Leary don't let you down. The book's first chapter says it all: "Which side are you on?"

Maybe it's time to celebrate what satirist Al Franken calls the "great mushball middle," which probably encompasses many more of us than those at either pole on politics.

"Fortunately, I believe that 'confused' is a majority position in this country," Franken wrote. "I'm not talking about stupid, uninformed confusion. I'm talking about intelligent, overinformed confusion."

So with these folks in mind, I offer my own multiple-choice question.

This book by O'Leary and Kamber is: a) merely annoying, or b) more evidence that society is plagued by oversimplification and labeling.

Of course, the answer is probably somewhere in the mushball middle.