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George H.W. Bush wins the Iowa caucus, defeating frontrunner Ronald Reagan, the governor of California.

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Transcript
George H.W. Bush Wins 1980 Iowa Caucus
TOM BROKAW, co-host:
Good morning everyone, I’m Tom Brokaw, reporting to you live from Des Moines, Iowa on this Tuesday, January 22nd, the morning after the Iowa caucuses. A morning in which a lot of political experts are
shredding or burning earlier forecasts because going into these caucuses almost everyone was saying “too close to call, its very difficult to know how it will turn out.” Well it was not too close to call on the Democratic side certainly, President Carter with a landslide victory here, a big victory over Senator Kennedy, about two to one, that’s the margin. And on the republican side George Bush with a significant upset victory over Ronald Reagan who had been considered the frontrunner coming into these Iowa caucuses. Let us show you now some numbers specifically so that you will know what we are talking about.

President Carter, well whipped is an inadequate word. He has beaten Senator Kennedy decisively here with most of the precincts counted, Carter has 59 percent to Kennedy’s 31 percent, 10 percent remain uncommitted. Translated to delegates at the National Convention, this is the equivalent of 30 for Carter, 15 for Kennedy, five uncommitted. And on the republican side a big victory for George Bush who has spent a lot of time and a lot of money in the state, in fact he is still here this morning. He has beaten Ronald Reagan with 92,000 votes counted in the straw poll and on the republican side thus far. Bush has thirty thousand votes, about 33 percent of those counted. Next, Ronald Reagan with 25,000 votes or 27 percent, and Howard Baker with 13 thousand votes, 14 percent and John Connally finishing with about ten percent of the votes. What happened here by the republicans last night was best put by the man who we have declared the winner, George Bush.

Mr. GEORGE BUSH, GOP Presidential Candidate: The impossible dream, the asterisk on all these polls just four months ago.

BROKAW: And the man who lost big on the republican side last night was Governor Ronald Reagan of California who is at his home in Los Angeles and Don Oliver was with him.

DON OLIVER, reporting:

While the Republicans were caucusing in Iowa, Reagan was out to dinner in Los Angeles at the home of friends where they watched a movie. When he arrived home shortly after 10:00 California time Reagan said he had no idea how the caucus straw voting was going. He said it hadn’t even been discussed during his evening.

What would you say if we said that with about 30 percent of the precincts in that you were behind 33 percent to 29 percent to Mr. Bush.

Mr. RONALD REAGAN, GOP Presidential Candidate: Well it would not be too surprising, ‘cause I’ve said from the very first that I couldn’t match the time and effort that he’s put in there. We’re talking about a straw vote that does not necessarily represent the--because you are talking about a small tiny percentage of the total number of the half million republicans in Iowa who are going to go to those meetings, and its just a case of who can get their people out there.

OLIVER: Small group or not, there seems little reason to doubt that Reagan’s image as a successful Republican frontrunner has been tarnished in Iowa. Don Oliver, NBC News, Los Angeles.