The 1984 Senate Campaign

In 1984, Senator Jesse Helms faced re-election for the second time. His opponent was Jim Hunt, then finishing his second term as governor. The election was the most expensive non-presidential election in the nation's history to that point, and it was also one of the ugliest. Although Helms trailed by 20 percent in polls a year before the election, he won re-election by 4 percentage points, helped by Ronald Reagan's landslide victory that year.

The Old South vs. the New (Time, September 24, 1984)

Jesse Helms and James Hunt, 47, the Democrat who hopes to wrest away his seat, met in the second of four scheduled television debates. It was a battle of the Old South vs. the New. Hunt is North Carolina's popular, two-term Governor, an earnest, mild-mannered and moderate Democrat.