



Smooth! Docs Say Senator Kerry Looks Botoxed

by Alexandra Wolfe

When the question was put to Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry on Boston talk radio station WRKO AM 860 on Jan. 28, speculation had been percolating for a week:

"Can you categorically deny the reports that you have used Botox or other kind[s] of cosmetic surgery or cosmetic enhancements to your appearance," one of the hosts of the Blute and Scotto show asked the presidential candidate, fresh off his New Hampshire primary win.

"Absolutely, I've never even heard it," Mr. Kerry responded. "I've never even heard of it."

Whether the senator was denying he'd heard the media reports insinuating that, somewhere between Iowa and New Hampshire, Botox injections had erased the ravine-like worry lines traversing his football-field sized forehead, or, more improbably, claiming complete ignorance about the plastic surgery procedure that has been in vogue since the 90's, a number of doctors interviewed by the Observer said they were certain the candidate had had some work done.

"He's definitely gotten Botox," said Dr. Michael Kane, the Manhattan-based plastic surgeon and author of *The Botox Book*. Sen. Kerry, the doctor explained, "has certain facial motions, characteristic expressions that he makes all the time. Like when he frowns, he tends to push the center of his eyebrows up. It's a trademark of John Kerry's -- and he just can't make that happen now," said Dr. Kane. "That's the look that's normally plastered on his face and it never happened once on his victory speech."

Indeed, Dr. Kane suggested that Sen. Kerry might seek a second opinion. "What he's got isn't Botox, it's bad Botox," the doctor said. "He has what I call the classic rookie mistake which is, in a man who has a lot of horizontal lines on his forehead, the Botox is overdone in the person's forehead. It changes normal emotions, facial expressions; now his eyebrows are incredibly low because someone has over-injected them. His forehead is bizarrely smooth, his eyebrows now sit right on his eyes and if you look at the Drudge Report pictures he now has classic bunny lines." He explained that "bunny lines" happen "when so many muscles are over paralyzed" that the Botox recipient begins to rely on "the unusual muscles on the sides of his nose, making those little scrunchy lines on his nose -- so he looks like a bunny."

Surveying the "Before" and "After" shots of Mr. Kerry that were posted, along with the WRKO sound bite, on Matt Drudge's website, New Jersey plastic surgeon Bany Citron let out a whoop and exclaimed, "That's definitely the most effective \$600 he could spend on his campaign!" That would be the cost of the 30-40 units of Botox that Dr. Citron guessed Mr. Kerry would have needed to smooth the expanse above his eyes.

"I'm willing to bet that between the beginning of Iowa and end of New Hampshire he had some Botox done," said Dr. Michael Sachs. The Manhattan-based plastic surgeon said he could tell because Mr. Kerry looked much less haggard last Tuesday night than he did in Iowa, and because, he added: "His eyebrows didn't move."

Dr. Sachs, explained that Botox, which is created from the botulinum toxin type A (there are seven different types), starts working its muscle-relaxing magic in three to five days, peaks at two weeks and lasts between three to five months.



Photo illustration by Keith Stoneham; photo by Spencer Platt, Getty Images

"Down the road, he may look even more relaxed and his eyebrows may droop even more," Dr. Sachs explained. Come convention time in July, however, the candidate will need a booster shot.

Or was Mr. Kerry winning because he looked relaxed? Hamptons cosmetic surgeon Dr. Bruce Nadler opined that Mr. Kerry's new look was responsible for his win in New Hampshire. "The issues are 50 percent, but voters also looking for someone who is likeable, who has a calming influence. He has a more relaxed look whereas you'd expect him to look more haggard, more tired as this campaign grinds away," said Dr. Nadler. "If Edwards is so much younger and winning votes as a result, and that's going to sway the crowd, Kerry thinks, 'If this other guy has a youthful look, then youthful looks are going to help me. I could win over some of his supporters if I look a little more youthful as well.' It's a campaign strategy. Look at poor Joe Lieberman, he's not doing very well, maybe he looks a little too senior."

Whatever the case, Sen. Kerry's press secretary David Wade, sounded flabbergasted by the accusations. "John Kerry has not had Botox treatments," Mr. Wade wrote in an email. "And since when do plastic surgeons make diagnoses from Drudge Report photos? While it's amazing how two big victories in Iowa and New Hampshire can put a smile on your face, it's equally astounding how desperation leads our opponents to invent accusations. They can't run against John Kerry on health care, education, or national security, so they're attacking his looks."

Of course, in New York, a town where plastic surgery ranks right up there with cable and psychotherapy on urbanites' necessity lists, what's really driving the did-he-or-didn't-he? debate is whether Sen. Kerry lied about something as minor as a question about his physical upkeep. As Dr. Kane observed: "If it becomes an issue it goes right to his credibility."