

The original documents are located in Box 64, folder “February 7, 1972 - Peter H. Dailey - Documentary Films” of the Robert Teeter Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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COMMITTEE FOR THE RE-ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

February 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: PETER H. DAILEY

FROM: ROBERT M. TEETER

While we do not have the majority of our current polling in yet, I will react to your question regarding documentary films for the convention and the campaign on the basis of my experience and results in previous campaigns and what data we ~~would~~ have in now.

LENGTH

Thirty minute films are clearly preferable to an hour. We have previous results indicating that it's almost impossible to hold an audience for a political program for an hour unless it is clearly a special event such as a debate. It is, however, possible to keep them for a half-hour if you can hold them for the first three to four minutes. Therefore, the introduction is critical.

Moreover, there is evidence that five, and particularly 15 minute versions of the same film can be effectively used during the day time and fringe time.

SUBJECT MATTER

I think that a 30-minute film only on foreign policy could be deadly and would have to be extremely well done and the issues simplified if it were to be effective. I would prefer to see the subject covered as part of a broader film that would cover the President's entire first three years in office. This would have the advantage of more variety and would develop the idea that the Administration has moved on a broad variety of fronts--not just in foreign affairs--and emphasizes the complexity of the job.

With regard to the specific areas that might be stressed in such a film, it is my conclusion based on our early data that Vietnam and foreign affairs are clearly issues that are working for the President, that the economy/inflation issue is a fairly neutral issue in a net sense as there are both significant groups who see it as an important Administration accomplishment and as an Administration failure. The issues which the President is clearly receiving low ratings on and where work needs to be done to improve the perception of his handling of these issues are crime,

It ^{also} would help to negate the

drugs, and unemployment. Other issues that are important to particular constituencies that should be at least touched on are the environment, consumerism, health care, particularly for the aged. Again, I think it is especially important that any films done with regard to the issues show the breadth of the Administration and the large number and diversity of its accomplishments.

I also think that each of the documentaries, or one in particular, should deal with the President as an individual. There are indications in our early data that personal perception and voting behavior correlate more highly than do perceived ability to handle specific issues and voting behavior. The President receives high ratings on the personal dimensions which tend to relate to the performance of his job such as experienced, trained, informed, competent, honest, and intelligent, but he receives fairly low ratings on the dimensions of friendliness and amiability. He is subject in the polls to the criticism of "never letting his hair down," lacking a sense of humor, and never relaxing or being just himself. He is seen as a one dimension President, that is, a "professional President" who is only concerned with the official role of being Head of State. I think it is important that the documentaries attempt to add more dimension to Richard Nixon than that of just being the Chief Executive of the country. This might be done through interviews with his friends or family who might relate antidotes concerning him relating to both his political and non-political life. A documentary which dealt with not just the First Lady but with the entire family might be useful. For example, I think that recent publicity about the President being a football fan has added a dimension to his perception with some people.

Another dimension which I think the film should have is that of showing that the President has a vision of what he wants this country to become and how his various programs and actions tie together to move the country further towards its destiny. This idea ties well with several speeches the President has made concerning the position of the United States in the world.

USAGE AND SCHEDULING

I think that the documentary should be used for a short period immediately following the Republican convention in addition to at the convention to serve as past Presidential re-election research has shown that a fairly substantial number of people decide on how they are going to vote during the first week or two following the conventions. After that, I think they should be scheduled as a normal part of the advertising during the campaign with some emphasis on the shorter versions.

