

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMO TO RN

From Buchanan

August 15, 1968

Strategy, Some Thoughts on

1) This period of tranquility, has like the days after the Oregon primary, lost us some momentum I think. I think that moratoriums have just about outlived their usefulness, when we consider it is 85 days to the finish. When we sit idle like this---without taking the offensive and holding it, we enable others like HHH, MCBCarthy, the Establishment on Thurmond, to start nit-picking us--and we have to answer them. Maybe this is inevitable during this period---but I think that, like the period between May and August, we are letting the others do the firing--and we are only defending, not an enviable political position.

2) I am inclined to go with RFK's theory of going "flat out to the finish line" in the fall. Throw Humphrey on the Defensive, and keep him right there until November. Indict this Administration for every ~~xxx~~ ~~sin~~ sin of which it is guilty and they are ~~many~~ many. I think we will be making a mortal error if we think that the Establishment is going to give RN points for running anything approaching a Goody-Two Shoes Campaign. I don't think we need to ever again say that HHH is a nice and honorable man, in whose hands the country would be well off. We don't have to be irresponsible---just candid---and as President this weasel would be a disaster.

3) The ancient complaint. I got a call from some character from Downey, Cal., who said that the tv spot he heard was an excerpt from RN's acceptance speech, promising something on law and order----followed by fifteen minutes of applause. It was general and not specific; he thought it very ineffective; so did his friends. I know this is old ground---but I think the spots we run ought to start clearly and tersely what the hell has happened in this country in the last five years---specifically, what RN is going to do---and then say, damn, it, elect him. Maybe we ought to write the spots ourselves---or get some of Reagan's ad guys to write them. Honestly, much as I like Len, he just doesn't have the instincts to cut the hell out of these people like HHH, or to make the gut issues that anger and concern people. They're all soft sell---telling them to start hitting gut issues, and making gut appeals is ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ like trying to get Mary Poppins to act like Eartha Kitt. They don't know how to do it.

4) The Republicans are far behind the Democrats in types of appearances. I am sure we are now scheduling speeches and rallies and the rest of the traditional crap. What we should realize is what the Democrats do so well---speak not only with their words but with their settings. Where RN appears sometimes says as much to the nation as what he says there. Because Democrats have lower income, lower education supporters, they have to use symbols to appeal to all the senses---as well as to the intellect with words. Thus LBJ wanders through Appalachia and RFK inspects an Indian reservation. So, too, Lindsay's tours through Harlem are essential symbols. By ~~making~~ walking, he is saying he gives a damn.

Thought should be given to issue-oriented appearances by RN. I have sent examples to Whitaker of a number of them. Maybe they are no good---but we should think in these terms. We can speak to poor people ---other than by the words from the candidate's mouth.

There will be pockets of unemployment in the Steel Industry in Nov. What about a visit to Union Hall, drop a statement there, talk to these guys about their problem. What about a visit to a prison--to talk about how these places are turning out as many criminals as we put it. What about a visit to some shipyards to talk with some idle workers about the decline in the Merchant Marine. The Computer Job bank thing is in North Carolina---What is RN went down to that thing--and gave the reporters a briefing on how it works--and how it can apply on a national scale.

RN has mentioned at times that a lot of people don't read the papers; they look at the pictures---this, pictures plus captions, is how a number of immigrants learned the language. RN can speak through pictures as well as through words---and there must be one hundred thousand good settings for RN to be in when he drops his statements---so that his surroundings reinforce what he has to say.

For example---RN might stroll into a Catholic School and lecture the fifth grade for a little while---and there drop some statement on the contribution of religious parents who take the burden of education etc. and that this contribution should be reflected and recognized by government.

A visit to a hospital might serve as a background for talking about Vietnam (if war wounded are there) or to talk with the staff about the shortages in doctors and nurses etc.

5) RN has talked about excitement in a campaign. One way to be exciting is to be controversial. I think we ought to give consideration to holding our fire on the likes of these bastards like Abernathy and others. Charges RN with racism etc. And just wait on them. And one day, get up on a high horse and kick the hell out of them. Ninety per cent of the people in this country think that Abernathy is a unpolished and disreputable clod. The same is true of those who are saying Thurmond is running the campaign. We ought to give thought to some occasion, when we can program a little righteous indignation against these clowns---which will score heavily I think, and stir up the enthusiasm. What we want to avoid is to allow the ~~Establishment~~ Establishment to be setting some sort of guidelines of niceness which we are supposed to follow in this thing.

For what they are worth.

I talked briefly with Timmons and the others who are going to be with the Truth Squad group in Chicago. I think I know RN's positions better than anyone---and can write up the attack material rapidly. So, I talked with them and I wondered if I might not be ~~more~~ more useful writing for those guys in Chicago during those days, than being in N.Y. watching it on television.