

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
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July 23, 1971

Falls
Chron

MEMORANDUM FOR:

L. HIGBY

FROM:

GORDON STRACHAN

SUBJECT:

Walter De Vries

Magruder arranged for Flanigan, Garment, Marik, Marumoto, and myself to interview Dr. De Vries for the polling consultant position with the campaign.

Dr. De Vries works almost exclusively for Republicans, including Romney, Milliken, Rockefeller, and currently Bob Griffin. His only Democratic candidate is one of the Louisiana longs who is currently running for governor. His explanation for working for a Democrat is that he has been given a free rein in terms of research, media, and campaign management control.

Although his background is basically one of survey research. He also prepares media spots and does general campaign consultant work.

He has done a good deal of work analyzing the "ticket splitter". He has recently completed a book which will be in print in September. The co-author of the book is Lance Tarrance, our friend at the Census Bureau. It is De Vries view that the classic distinctions between Republicans, Democrats, and Independents do not take into account the fact that 54% of those who voted in 1970 split their tickets. De Vries believes that the general trend toward Independents is even larger than currently indicated by the registration statistics because even those who register with a particular party do not demonstrate the standard party loyalty, but rather, split their ticket.

De Vries is not particularly impressed with ORC or Dr. Derge as he believes their techniques are too ridged and old fashioned. In particular, De Vries suggests unifying the polling and communications aspects of a campaign. For example, suggested spots or many documentaries or campaign literature could be pre-tested and analyzed by the same individuals who are doing the polling in general.

Another suggestion that De Vries has is that nationwide polling does not help you determine who the uncommitted voter is and how to get to him in a key area. He says that polling should be conducted in the top media markets in the key states so that the emphasis of the campaign can be on these swing voters.

GS:lm

July 2, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

LARRY HIGBY

FROM:

GORDON STRACHAN

At your request, I saw Mr. Bruce Merrill, the Director of the Survey Research Center at Arizona State University. His resume is attached.

Merrill is a very interesting individual who has some definite ideas about survey research:

1. Simulation will cost at least \$1.2 to \$2 million.
2. Merrill doubts that simulation is worth it from a cost effective stand.
3. The problem is not use of simulation, but more effective use of current polling information.
4. ORC and Benham are competent but old and static.
5. As you can see from his resume, he has worked for conservative Republicans, yet he has a very free wheeling impression of which voters are moving;
6. He disagrees with Kevin Phillips and will send synopsis of four thesis dissertations, done by his graduate students, refuting the argument in Phillips book.
7. He thinks the Republican hierarchy has poorly used available university Republicans.
8. He will also be forwarding to me his comments on Roll's book, THE HOPES AND FEARS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

GS:lm