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| 6 | 7 | 2/10/1971 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Campaign | Memo | From Bill Gavin to a Mr. Shakespeare RE: 1972 Republican National Convention. Handwritten note added by unknown. 2 pgs. |

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February 10, 1971

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Shakespeare

Some thoughts about the Republican Convention 1972:

There will be, of course, two Republican conventions: the one in some city and the same one as it appears on television. I have nothing to say about the convention site except that I think it should be in the West, perhaps Texas (Houston?). Such a site will be symbolic of the President's efforts to have a national party that includes the South and welcomes the West as a bastion of strength.

But wherever it is held, one thing is certain: The convention must be built around the use of television rather than having television serve the convention. In other words, an unconventional convention. That, it seems to me, is the basic consideration. How can this be done?

1. By a drastic revision of the convention ground-rules governing seconding speeches, party platform presentations and those parliamentary procedures dear to the heart of certain politicians but deadly dull to the mass audience. Some suggestions:

a. Seconding speeches can be taped beforehand in good locations, e. g. let's say someone from the State of Washington gives a seconding speech. He should be taped in some scenic Washington spot talking right into the camera. The parliamentary reality is that he is speaking to the Republican delegates only; the real reality (not as redundant as it sounds) is that he is addressing the television audience. Since this is so, we should make certain that the audience has something good to look at, not simply some wooden platform flanked by forty microphones, eighteen flags and a dozen or so sweating, tired newsmen.

b. The party platform has to be either eliminated entirely as an out-of-date function or else presented visually as well as orally. The American people are bored to death every four years with party platforms--or else the networks simply switch back to Dave and Chet or Walter or somebody who usually then starts some interpretive mischief because there is nothing else to do. A convention is, historically, part politics, part circus. Instead of complaining about that fact we should

exploit it and make certain that our sideshows are visually entertaining. Slides, imaginative graphs, photos, anything that will be useful for television. If we subject the mass audience to some political lunatic reading the platform to a bored and probably stupefied audience we deserve defeat and worse.

c. Get the best parliamentarian in the world and have him come up with some simplified rules of order so that this thing can move. I think we shouldn't be on the tube for any longer than two hours *(IN A GIVEN EVENING)*.

2. Instead of a key-note address (remember the absolutely numb keynoter given by Dan Evans?) why not something different, a key-note film? One man shouldn't have to bear the burden of keynoting an entire national convention--the entire Republican Party should do the keynoting through a film made by the Republican National Committee. It goes without saying (so I'll say it) that this has to be first rate, about the past four Nixon years, about America heading toward 1976, about "the system," how it works and how the Nixon Administration has worked through it.

3. At least one of the seconding speeches should be made by a young--I mean in the twenties--person, preferably a girl. Perhaps the Republican National Committee can have a search for this young person. This person would also give a taped presentation (or, if desirable, a live presentation, not at the convention auditorium, but, instead, somewhere else in America.)

The auditorium should be decorated and re-built so that it will work for us on television. Houston's Astrodome just might be too big for what I have in mind.

At any rate, these are a few ideas that I think might be looked into.

Bill

I/R - Bill Gavin

we have to make revolutionary changes at the one major political event the mass audience watches.

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