

Frank McNaughton to Don Birmingham, "Dewey XXI--Campaign Train", October 1, 1948. McNaughton Reports File, McNaughton Papers.

BG-POLITICS (REQUESTED)

TO: DON BIRMINGHAM
FROM: FRANK MC NAUGHTON

ROCK SPRINGS, WYO.
OCTOBER 1, 1948

DEWEY XXI - CAMPAIGN TRAIN

GREEN RIVER WYOMING. LIFE ON A CAMPAIGN TRAIN IS NOT EXACTLY A LARK. YOU WEAR ALL YOUR SHIRTS UNTIL THEY ARE DIRTY, THEN BEGAN CULLING BACK THROUGH THEM TO WEAR THE LEAST DIRTY. ONE LAUNDRY STOP SO FAR AT FRISCO. IT MUST BE MUCH WORSE IN TRUMAN'S LESS LEISURELY TOUR. THIS BAD ENOUGH.

LIFE BEGINS AT NINE O'CLOCK WITH A FIVE MINUTE LAYOVER AT SOME TANKTOWN. HERE, THIS FRIDAY MORNING, THERE ARE ABOUT A HUNDRED OUT TO SEE THE CANDIDATE, NOT A COWBOY HAT IN THE BUNCH. THE LOUDSPEAKER JUST BROADCAST, "ALL INTERESTED IN SEEING GOVERNOR DEWEY PLEASE WALK TO THE REAR OF THE TRAIN." YOU LISTEN TO THE CUT AND DRIED BACK PLATFORM SPEECH ON THE WONDERS OF THE COUNTRY, THE FUTURE OF THE WEST, UNITY, AND ALL THE STOCK PHRASES UNTIL AT EACH STOP YOU ARE READY TO SCREAM FOR MERCY. THUS IT GOES ALL DAY LONG AT NIGHT STOPS, YOU HUSTLE INTO A HOTEL ROOM, USUALLY FIVE RESERVED AND TRY ALONG WITH A HUNDRED OTHERS TO GET A CRACK AT THE SHOWER BATH, A BITE OF DINNER, A BIT OF BATTERY FLUID FOR YOUR DYNAMO, BEFORE COVERING THE MAJOR SHOW. YOU WAVE AND FLIRT WITH THE GIRLS ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE, BUT YOUR HEART ISN'T IN IT. ANYTHING TO RELIEVE THE BOREDOM. YOU CADGE AND PRY AT THE OFFICIAL SPEECHWRITERS, TRYING TO GET A NEW ANGLE AND YOU'RE GENERALLY

DIGGING IN A CEMETERY. THEY ARE CLOSE MOUTHED. YOU'RE
JERDED AROUND BY COPS AND TRAMPED BY LOCAL POLITICOES.
YOUR SUITS COME UNPRESSED, GET SLEAZY, SMELLY. YOUR COMPARTMENT

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COMES TO RESEMBLE A CATHOUSE AFTER A HARD WEEKEND. YOUR NERVES GET
JANGLY AND ROUGH. WHEN THE MIMIOGRAPHED SPEECH COMES OUT ABOUT TEN
O'CLOCK. YOU PSYCHOANALYZE IT WORD BY WORD A COUPLE OF HOURS A
DAY YOU SIT IN THE CLUB OR DINER AND DRINK BEER OUT OF SHEER BOREDOM,
AND COIN SNOTTY LEADS ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN. THE TRAIN STOPS WITH A
TREMENDOUS JERK, AND YOU COME UP WITH A NEW ONE. "CASCADE.
THE TRAIN STOPPED WITH A TREMENDOUS JERK. HE GOT OFF AND MADE
A SPEECH, "OR," THAT DEMOCRAT ENGINEER WANTS THE JERK AT
THE FRONT OF THE TRAIN TO BE AS BAD AS THE JERK AT THE BACK." YOU
FIGURE OUT THE REPUBLICANS HAVEN'T YET GONE OUT AFTER THE
QUEER VOTE, AND IF YOU CAN GET A CANDIDATE WHO CAN ROUND THEM UP
YOU'VE WON THE ELECTION. YOU FIGURE OUT THE POLLS AND CONCLUDE
THAT THE CANDIDATE DOESN'T HAVE TO WALK UP AND DOWN UNDERNEATH HIS
BED, WORRYING. YOU SWAP YARNS WITH THE STAFF AND NEWSMEN,
CAJOLE MENUS AND PENCILS AND OTHER SOUVENIRS OUT OF THE PULLMAN DINERS.
AT SOME STOPS, THE CANDIDATE WINDS UP BEFORE THE ALLOTTED TEN
MINUTES; THE WHISTLE BLOWS, AND YOU MAKE A MAD SCRAMBLE TO BOARD
THE TRAIN, CURSING THE PARTY, THE TRAIN CREW YOURSELF FOR
GETTING OFF IN THE FIRST PLACE.

YOU FIND JIM HAGERTY AND HERBERT CAMPBELL OF THE PRESS STAFF
VERY ACCOMODATING, PAUL LOCKWOOD A REFRIGERATED EFFICIENCY,
ALLEN DULLES WARMLY AFFABLE, ELLIOTT BELL A SCHOLARLY FRIENDLINESS.

MOST OF ALL YOU LIKE WHITE-HAIRED OLD ED JAECKLE. HE IS
THE MOST REFRESHING CHARACTER ON THE TRAIN, PERFECTLY FRANK,
ALMOST BRUTALLY REALISTIC, FRIENDLY. HE HAS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE
FUND OF SIDESPLITTING LEFTFIELD STORIES. OF LATE EVENINGS, HE

DROPS INTO THE CLUB CAR, BUYS A ROUND OF DRINKS, AND SWAPS
YARNS WITH THE REPORTERS. HE CAN TELL THEM FOR HOURS, NOT ONE
DUD. BETTER THAN JAECKLE IS THE SCENERY. YOU NEVER REALIZE

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THE DIVERSITY AND MAGNIFICENT POWER OF THE COUNTRY UNTIL YOU TRAVEL
ACROSS IT. DEWEY IS RIGHT ABOUT THAT. NO AMERICAN KID SHOULD BE
ALLOWED TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE UNTIL HE HAS TAKEN
THE SOUTHERN ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA, THE NORTHERN BACK. IT
OUGHT TO BE REQUIRED. THERE'S MORE OF LEARNING AND FEELING
FOR THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE IN THIS THAN IN ALL THE TEXTBOOKS
EVER WRITTEN. WE'VE REALLY GOT SOMETHING HERE. THE SHAME IS
SO MANY OF US GROW UP AND DIE WITHOUT EVER SEEING JUST HOW GREAT IT
REALLY IS.

