

# Hunkins platform being adopted by Freudenthal

## Shades of the 1964 presidential election

Dusting off a tactic successfully employed in the 1964 presidential election campaign by fellow Democrat Lyndon Johnson, Wyoming's Dave Freudenthal effectively portrayed his 2006 opponent as uninformed - out of touch with the voters and what his administration had done and was doing - and almost dangerous because of that loss of contact with the reality of the situation.

Lyndon Johnson, who had only been president for a year and had gotten there because of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, ran one televised campaign commercial, a 60 second spot, that had a little girl sitting, picking the pedals off a daisy and counting. She struggled with the count as she removed each pedal, sometimes repeating the number.

When she reached ten and the pedals were gone, a countdown backward started. Ten, nine, eight, etc. When it reached zero, a loud explosion was seen and a mushroom cloud appeared on screen. Johnson's vote then intoned, in part: "Either we must love each other or we must die."

While the stakes weren't suggested to be as high in Wyoming, it was nevertheless suggested that Ray Hunkins was wrong on his claims and unaware of what the governor had accomplished and would be a poor choice for Wyoming voters.

Barry Goldwater was cast as an extremist who would escalate the war in Vietnam and might employ nuclear weapons there to prevail. He lost the 1964 election by the largest margin of popular vote through that election. The record wouldn't stand long because Richard Nixon soon after defeated George McGovern by an even greater margin of the popular vote.

A popular joke a few months later went something like the following: "A vote for Barry Goldwater will see 500,000 troops in Vietnam ..." Then, "Well, I voted for Goldwater and there are 500,000 troops in Vietnam."

But, the troops were sent there by Lyndon Johnson, not Barry Goldwater.

It wasn't the first and won't be the last time that the victor disparages the idea(s) of his opponent and then adopts it, or them. Such is the case with Dave Freudenthal.

Trumping Johnson's adoption of what his campaign used to scare the voters about Goldwater's plan to send troops to Vietnam if he were elected, Dave adopted much, maybe even most, of Ray Hunkins' platform well before being sworn in for his second term.

Playing off the joke of 1964, we could now say: **"A vote for Ray Hunkins will see the State negotiating with the feds about the wolf problem."** Ray took the stand that he would end the endless and fruitless litigation and negotiate a settlement with the U.S. Game and Wildlife concerning the handling of Wyoming's wolf issues.

It was just announced that the State and Feds were going to meet, with some hope of reaching agreement on an issue under the purview of the feds.

**"A vote for Ray Hunkins will see a 'drug czar' appointed."**

Sure enough, those who voted for Ray have just witnessed Dave naming Rodger McDaniel to such a position. In the campaign, Freudenthal scoffed at the notion of having one person in charge of the huge and escalating meth problems - because it had been tried on the federal level and had failed.

**"A vote for Ray Hunkins will see an additional 15 highway patrol."**

Sure enough, those who voted for the Republican read where the governor, after having been successfully re-elected, added 15 more highway patrol positions in the budget he presented to the Legislative Joint Appropriations Committee.

Funny how when your opponent proposes a solution, it's wacky, poorly thought-out, unnecessary or just plain stupid. When you hijack his ideas, it becomes brilliant.

**"A vote for Ray Hunkins will see an amped-up effort to deal with the state's meth problems."**

Dave said his administration had been diligent and effective in their efforts. He may have confused success with the messages being conveyed to him by Bill Sniffin. But, sure enough, those who voted for Ray Hunkins have seen the governor now confess that the meth epidemic requires much greater focus and has so directed.

Speaking of Sniffin' Sniffin, have you seen the two ads now being run on television about the meth scourge?

I've spent much of my business career in advertising - catalog, direct mail, newspaper and broadcast. A basic objective in designing an effective advertising campaign involves getting the consumer's attention and holding it. If the message is unread, unseen or unheard, it has no chance for success. It is worthless.

The two pieces of crap now being shown on television will never retain anyone's attention for longer than five seconds.

The first of the offensive and totally ineffective spots shows a mass that represents a human brain. Then, a meat slicer. If people haven't turned away and tuned out by this point, they need some serious mental evaluation. Watching this spot long enough to write about it took all I could muster. I still have not watched it to a conclusion. Anyway, the voiceover talks about the use of meth slicing away part of your brain and this glob is run against the blade of the meat slicer.

If this blather is effective, everything I ever learned about advertising was wrong.

The second spot shows a man, who we are lead to believe is a doctor, in dimly set surroundings - with a guy strapped to a chair. The doctor appears, and indicates he intends to cut the skin off the guy as well as remove his teeth.

If revulsion is an effective advertising message, this one should work great.

And who is the target market for these two pieces of slime? Are meth users who would deteriorate into losing their teeth and skin likely to be watching television? And, if in the condition suggested, would they be likely to understand the consequences promised?

Meth is a highly addictive drug. Just like trying to scare someone into not smoking is usually counterproductive, one on meth is not likely to listen to a loved one's pleading - nor to watch such television commercials or radio pleadings.

If this is further evidence of the Sniffin' One's contributions to dealing with the meth problems in Wyoming, it is not money well-spent.

This advertising campaign makes me wonder why hot dog and sausage makers don't show their products being made.

If the purpose of successful advertising were to disgust people's sensibilities and then ask them to consume your product, the Wyoming Department of Health's spending on these two commercials may be brilliant. Otherwise, it stinks.

So, where are we at here?

Oh, yes, Ray Hunkins proposed in his recent campaign for governor that we work with the feds to settle the wolves dispute. Dave scoffed and now is doing exactly that.

Ray Hunkins proposed adding 15 additional highway patrol officers. Dave scoffed and now is doing exactly that.

Ray Hunkins criticized the Governor's efforts on dealing with the meth problems in Wyoming and proposed much more serious efforts to try to deal with the epidemic. Dave scoffed and now is doing exactly that.

Ray Hunkins proposed naming a single person to coordinate the efforts directed at the meth epidemic and the Governor and certain media dubbed his plan appointing a Drug Czar and dismissed it as unworkable and unwise. Now Dave, after earlier scoffing, is doing exactly that.

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson's portrayal of Barry Goldwater was effective and registered with the voters. That fact that it was he, LBJ, who did escalate the war in Vietnam - not Barry Goldwater - to the extent that that single issue drove him from office four years later, should not be, and was not, lost on historians.

The fact that Johnson took the very action he convinced voters was wrong and one Goldwater would take if he were elected, should not be lost on anyone.

Johnson won 44 states in the '64 election - all of the states except Arizona (Goldwater's home state) and five clustered southern states that held Johnson's role in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against him and Minnesota's Hubert Humphrey. Johnson/Humphrey took over 61% of the popular vote.

In 2006, incumbent Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal convinced voters that Ray Hunkins was wrong on the issues and that he had been doing the things Ray said needed to be done. He trounced Ray in the general election.

Ray Hunkins should feel vindicated by actions Dave has taken even before being sworn in a second time. Ray must have been right for Dave to quickly adopt so much of his platform.



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