

Flowers and Explosions:

How One TV Advertisement Changed the Course of Political Advertising

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Individual Documentary

Process Paper: 490 words

Documentary: 9:59 minutes

[Documentary Link](#)

NHD Process Paper

I chose my topic based on my aspirations for when I grow up. I want to go into politics when I'm older, and a big part of politics is campaigning and advertising. While searching for famous televised political ads, I came across the "Daisy Girl" ad, a 1964 ad for Lyndon B. Johnson, which attacked the dangerous nuclear warfare stances of his opponent, Barry Goldwater. The ad was, in essence, the first ever negative political ad, or "attack ad". In today's media, many of the political ads that air on television are negative in nature, and were inspired and influenced by the "Daisy Girl" ad.

I began my research by building my background information on the events leading up to the ad, including the content of campaign ads prior to 1964, and basic information about the 1964 presidential election and the opinions of the participating candidates. After this, I researched how the ad was created, produced, and aired, before moving on to researching the immediate impact of the ad. Finally, I researched future political ads, and made connections on how they were influenced by the "Daisy Girl" ad. Throughout the research process, I found multiple interviews and quotes from professors and people who were involved in the making of the ad itself, including a short documentary made by Retro Report, which featured an interview from Sid Myers, one of the co-creators of the ad.

I knew early on that one of the biggest pieces of my project would be the one-minute video of the "Daisy Girl" ad itself. I also knew I would have many other audiovisual elements in the project, so for this reason, I concluded that the best format for my project would be a documentary. To create my project, I first completed a NHD Documentary Template where I wrote my script and uploaded the pictures that I intended to use. After that, I worked on some

paperwork before moving on to recording and putting the documentary together in a software program. From there, I made revisions on the documentary until I was left with the final product.

My overall argument is that the "Daisy Girl" ad was very influential, in that it set a precedent for future political attack ads, which have become very prevalent and impactful in modern campaigns and elections, either helping or hindering a candidate's performance. The ad was the first to target or attack an opposing candidate, and the first to use the element of fear as a tool of persuasion. My project relates to the NHD theme, "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding", because the message of the ad was successfully understood because of the use of effective audiovisual elements, and the message was amplified by its broadcast via television, which made it possible to reach a larger audience than ever before. Overall, the "Daisy Girl" ad was a revolutionary advertisement that paved the way for many political campaign ads today.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Brown, Rothwell H. "Now Let's See." *Rappahannock Record*, 24 Sep. 1964, p.6.

This newspaper op-ed from 1964 describes the author's disagreement with the "Daisy Girl" ad. It served as a great documentation of the immediate reaction to the ad, and helped me to build my argument on the impact of the ad.

Ceppos, Jerome; Luiz, Monique; Mann, Robert; Myers, Sidney. "The 1964 'Daisy Girl' Campaign Ad." *C-SPAN*, Louisiana State University, 24 October 2011, www.c-span.org/video/?302628-1/1964-daisy-girl-advertisement#

This interview with a co-creator, actress, and expert from the "Daisy" Girl ad provided a great primary source for my research. It helped me gain an insider look at the making and reception of the ad, and offered video interviews from reliable sources that I was able to use in my documentary.

"Goldwater Comments on the Daisy Ad." *YouTube*, uploaded by CONELRAD6401240, 10 July 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6_PGj3VQXI

This interview with Barry Goldwater filled in some of the gaps I was missing in my argument. The interview consisted of Barry Goldwater's remarks on the ad, and it gave me insight into what Goldwater's true reaction was to the ad, and how he believed it impacted future political ads.

Schwartz, Tony, and Luiz, Monique. "Peace, little girl: Daisy political spot." *Library of Congress*, 1964, www.loc.gov/item/mbrs01185386/, Accessed 26 October 2020.

This original video of the 1964 "Daisy Girl" ad highlights the dangers of nuclear war, and encourages voters to vote for Lyndon B. Johnson. This source helped me to understand the intensity of the ad and how Americans would have immediately reacted to it.

Spolar, Matt. "Daisy: Political Ads That Changed the Game." *Political Ads That Changed the Game*, season 1, episode 4, *Retro Report*, Edited by John MacGibbon, 1 July 2016, youtu.be/ERs09s6k6zM, Accessed 3 November 2020.

This short documentary features interviews from Monique Luiz and people who worked on the "Daisy Girl" ad and Johnson's campaign, who relayed their experiences with the ad and why they believed it was so effective. It helped me gain a better understanding of why the ad was so revolutionary compared to other previous ads, and how it helped Johnson win the election.

Secondary Sources

"Go Negative." *So You Wanna Be President? With Chris Matthews?* From MSNBC, 24 February 2020, www.nbcnews.com/podcast/so-you-wanna-be-president/go-negative-n1140021, Accessed 12 January 2021.

This podcast provided me with a quote from Andrea Mitchell that I used in my documentary. It helped to show the vast number of people that the ad actually reached, offering a modern analogy for deeper understanding.

Howard, Katelyn, "Oklahoma Engaged: How Negative Campaign Ads Appeal To Voters' Fears." *KGOU*, 14 October 2020, www.kgou.org/post/oklahoma-engaged-how-negative-campaign-ads-appeal-voters-fears, Accessed 11 February 2021.

This article, which is transcribed from an audio radio segment, discusses how anxiety and fear play into negative ads like the "Daisy Girl" ad. I had seen articles describing this before, but what caught my attention in this article was the author's comments and analysis of style choices made in advertisements, such as sounds, music, and photos, which I was able to tie back into my project. In my documentary, I specifically used this information when comparing the style choices of the "Daisy Girl" ad to the style choices of a 1968 ad, which also used fear as a tool of persuasion.

Lariscy, Ruthann. "Why negative political ads work." *CNN Opinion*, Updated 2 January 2012, www.cnn.com/2012/01/02/opinion/lariscy-negative-ads/index.html, Accessed 9 November 2020.

This CNN opinion article breaks down many of the psychological reasoning on why negative political ads work better than positive political ads. The article helped me to understand much of the "why" behind the effectiveness of negative ads compared to positive ads. I used this source to provide reasoning to aid my argument.

Levy, Michael. "United States presidential election of 1964." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Updated 27 October 2020, www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1964, Accessed 26 October 2020.

This Britannica article offers details on the 1964 presidential campaigns, election, and results, and was one of the first sources I consulted while beginning my research. The article gave me key background information about the 1964 presidential election to use in my paper, especially in the content paragraph.

Mandelaro, Jim. "When campaign ads go low, it often works." *University of Rochester*, 3 November 2016,
www.rochester.edu/newscenter/when-campaign-ads-go-low-it-often-works/, Accessed 17 January 2021.

This article described the impact of the "Daisy Girl" on modern political ads, and provided me with several charts related to negative ads in politics today, one of which I used in my documentary. It helped me to see the long-term impact of the Daisy Girl ad on modern political ads, and how negative ads have become more popular over time.

Mann, Robert. "How the 'Daisy' Ad Changed Everything About Political Advertising." *Smithsonian Magazine*, 13 April 2016,
www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-daisy-ad-changed-everything-about-political-advertising-180958741/, Accessed 26 October 2020.

This Smithsonian article focuses on campaign ads prior to the "Daisy Girl" ad, and how the "Daisy Girl" ad changed political advertising. This article provided me with new information on how future political campaign ads were similar to and affected by the "Daisy Girl" ad, which I was able to include in the significance section of my essay.

"Memorable Campaign Ads", *CBS News*,
www.cbsnews.com/pictures/memorable-campaign-ads/,
Accessed 9 November 2020.

This source included 19 famous political ads, including the "Daisy Girl" ad, the Ronald Reagan "Bear" ad, and the "Humphrey at the Convention" ad. This source provided me with information about other political ads that I was able to use to connect back to the "Daisy Girl" ad in the significance portion of my essay. I also used several of these ads in my documentary.

Nowicki, Dan. "'Daisy Girl' political ad still haunting 50 years later." *USA Today*, 7 September 2014,
www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/09/07/daisy-girl-political-ad-still-haunting-50-years-later/15246667/, Accessed 26 October 2020.

This USA Today article was where I began my research, and provided a good summary of the events leading up to the "Daisy Girl" ad, how the ad itself was communicated, and the aftermath

of the ad. I used this article to form much of my initial information on the "Daisy Girl" ad, which enabled me to continue with deeper research.

"Why attack ads work." *Quinlan School of Business: Loyola University Chicago*, Contributions by Joan Phillips, www.luc.edu/quinlan/stories/archive/why-attack-ads-work.shtml, Accessed 26 October 2020.

This article gave information that was non-specific to the "Daisy Girl" ad and instead focused on attack ads in general. This offered a fresh perspective, and helped me to understand the reasons why attack ads are so effective, partially by integrating some psychology into the explanation.








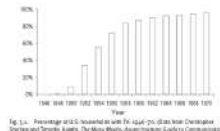







Mann, Robert, "LBJ's Mad Men." *Politico*, 7 September 2014, www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/09/lbjs-mad-men-110642.html, Accessed 20 January 2021.


This article written by Robert Mann described the ad in detail and explained why the ad was so effective and persuasive. This ad gave me more facts I was able to integrate into my documentary, and also discussed how future ads were influenced by the Daisy Girl ad. This article mostly helped me understand why the impact of the ad was as massive as it was.











Mitchell, Kerrie. "'I Approve This Message': The Birth of TV Campaign Ads and 9 Presidential Election Classics." *New-York Historical Society Museum and Library*, 28 May 2020, behind thescenen.nyhistory.org/i-approve-this-message-the-birth-of-election-ads-and-9-classic-tv-spots/, Accessed 27 October 2020.

This source included 9 famous political ads, including the "Daisy Girl" ad, detailed the basis of the ads, and also explained how they impacted the American population. This source provided me with information about other political ads that I was able to connect back to the "Daisy Girl" ad, especially the "I Like Ike" ad.

Images (V=video)






				
<p>Paperboy delivering newspaper, circa 1950s-1960s, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>I Like Ike, 1952, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Barry Goldwater, Britannica</p>	<p>Barry Goldwater, Baines Report</p>	<p>Volkswagen Ad, 1959, Medium</p>
		 <p>Fig. 1.1. Percentage of U.S. households with TV, 1946-70. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Economic Research, The National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968).</p>		
<p>Daisy: Political Ads That Changed the Game, 2016, Retro Report (V)</p>	<p>Lyndon B. Johnson for President, 1964, Button Museum</p>	<p>Percentage of U.S. households with TV: 1946-1970, 1978, U-M Library Digital Collections</p>	<p>David and Bathsheba clip, 1951, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, 1964, Amazon</p>
				



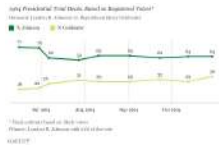







<p>NBC Monday Night at the Movies, 1979, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Barry Goldwater, 1967, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</p>	<p>Communist Youths parade Stalin portrait, Russia, 1951, Foreign Policy</p>	<p>NBC Peacock, 1964, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>So You Wanna Be President? With Chris Matthews: Go Negative, 2020, MSNBC (only audio)</p>
				
<p>American family watching TV, 1950s, Pinterest</p>	<p>Sale of Color TV, circa 1960s, ThoughtCo</p>	<p>Richard Nixon Political Spot on Communism, 1960, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Kennedy for Me ad, 1960, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Historic Newsreel Footage of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Cuba, 1962, YouTube (V)</p>

				
<p>Luiz holds up a Newsweek article from 2007 that refers to the LBJ political ad., 2014, The Arizona Republic</p>	<p>Atomic Bomb, 1945, The Conversation</p>	<p>Barry Goldwater, 1964, Courier-Journal</p>	<p>Aerial view of an atomic bomb, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>"Now Let's See," Rappahannock County, Virginia, 1964, The Rappahannock Record</p>
				

<p>Psychologists once claimed that United States Senator and nominee for president, Barry Goldwater, was psychologically unfit to be president. , The Guardian</p>	<p>Lyndon B. Johnson, Britannica</p>	<p>Lyndon Johnson Elected President, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1964, Rarenewspapers.com</p>	<p>1964 Electoral Map, 1964, Politico</p>	<p>"Daisy Girl photo", 1964, Smithsonian Mag</p>
				
<p>"Daisy Girl" ad, 1964, Library of Congress (V)</p>	<p>Percentage of Negative Presidential Ads, 2016 (data from 2012-2013), University of Rochester</p>	<p>Reagan Bear ad, 1984, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>Children reading "Celebrating World Book Day", circa 1960, Flickr</p>	<p>Convention ad, 1968, YouTube (V)</p>

				
<p>A mock-up of the set for "Daisy," Seattle, 2016, The Seattle Times</p>	<p>The First World Championship Game, AFL vs. NFL, later known as Super Bowl I, Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, January 15, 1967, TIME</p>	<p>U.S. Capitol Building, Washington D.C., 1956, Wikimedia</p>	<p>Johnson and Goldwater in the Oval Office, Washington D.C., 1968, Politico</p>	<p>"The political attack ad hall of fame," 2016, YouTube (V)</p>
				
<p>Barry Goldwater Endorses Extremism, 1964, YouTube (V)</p>	<p>The 1964 Daisy Girl Advertisement, 2011, C-SPAN (V)</p>	<p>Lyndon B. Johnson, The Atlantic</p>	<p>Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, 1963, History Channel</p>	<p>John F. Kennedy greets fans after a 1959 appearance,</p>

				Seattle, 1959, AARP
				
"It Is What It Is" Joe Biden for President, 2020, FaceBook	President Lyndon B. Johnson on the campaign trail, Sacramento, California, September 17, 1964, LBJ Presidential Library	Grieving people lined the street on Nov. 24, 1963, as the body of President John F. Kennedy was carried on a horse-drawn caisson to the Capitol Rotunda to lie in state., Washington D.C., Nov. 24, 1963, The Washington Post	CBS Evening News - 1964-11-18, November 18, 1964, YouTube (V)	Goldwater Comments on the Daisy Ad, YouTube (V)

				
<p>Barry Goldwater supporters and foes stand side by side, Madison, Wisconsin, September 1964, Wisconsin State Journal</p>	<p>Barry Goldwater speaks to reporters after meeting with President Richard Nixon at the White House to discuss Nixon's decision on resigning, Washington D.C., August 7, 1974, The Salt Lake Tribune</p>	<p>1964 Presidential Trial Heats, based on Registered Voters, Gallup</p>	<p>Daisy Girl Ad film roll, Youth and Student Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament</p>	<p>A campaign button for Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential bid quotes from his speech accepting the Republican nomination, New York Times</p>
				

Joan Phillips, Loyola University Chicago	A sunny day in the mountains, Pinterest	Hurricane outlook, 2019, FreightWaves	Campaign ad collage, 2016, Vox	Anti-War Protests, Washington D.C., 1968, TIME
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 Amazon
 The Arizona Republic
 The Atlantic
 The Baines Report
 Britannica
 Button Museum
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 The Courier-Journal
 C-SPAN
 FaceBook
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 FreightWaves
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 History Channel
 LBJ Presidential Library
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 Loyola University Chicago
 Medium
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