

Primary colors



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

3/7/13 Film Review: Primary Colors The film I reviewed for this assignment was Primary Colors; the film is very closely related to Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. The film stars John Travolta who plays a charismatic southern governor by the name of Jack Stanton. Jack is trying to win the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States. Henry Burton, an idealist is impressed by Jack's warmth and likeability with the people so he joins Jack's team as a political adviser. This is an example of material covered in lecture; Jack Stanton's party was very influential so they recruited Burton.

After participating in an intense debate against his democratic rivals, Henry's ex-girlfriend asks Jack a question about his previous arrest during the 1968 democratic convention in Chicago. Jack's team of political advisors becomes worried that his blemished past could come into play and effect his chances to win. The team hires Jack's old friend Libby Holden and basically keep her on retainer. The presidential advisors hired her in anticipation to womanizing allegations that might surface since Jack was notorious for that.

Libby Holden's job is to respond to attacks that can negatively affect Jack's candidacy. One of the women Jack was having an affair with produces secret taped conversations of the pair to prove that the affair took place. After finding out that the tapes have been altered, Libby finds the man responsible for the tapes. Libby forces him at gunpoint to sign a letter admitting what he did so the public can see. The campaign team is shocked when "Big Willie", Jack's old friend tells Burton that his 16 year old daughter is pregnant and Jack is the father.

They convince Big Willie to keep quiet on the issue. Jack's team decides to take a different approach to the campaign since they are falling behind in the polls. Jack attacks his rival, Senator Lawrence Harris for being pro-Israel and also for wanting to cut Medicare. During a radio debate, Harris confronts Jack but has a heart attack. Harris later announces that he will be withdrawing from the presidential race. Fred Picker, a former governor of Florida and friend of Harris takes his place. Jack's political advisors see Picker as a potential threat so they dig up information about his past. Henry and Libby discover that Picker had a cocaine addiction as Governor of Florida and it ultimately lead to the end of his first marriage. Henry and Libby also find out that Picker had a homosexual affair. They share their findings with Jack and his wife Susan not expecting them to use the potentially harmful information. Jack and Susan decide to leak the information to the press and Libby in turn threatens to tell about the affairs and reveal the real results of the paternity test that says his is the father of the 16 year girl's baby.

Libby is an emotional wreck and can't believe what kind of people the Stanton's really are. Libby can't bear the fact that she has idealized them her whole life and they are not at all what she thought, she commits suicide. Filled with guilt after Libby's death, Jack goes to Picker and presents all of the information and apologizes for everything. Picker willingly admits to his past and withdraws from the campaign. After everything, Henry is not happy being part of Jack's team and is thinking about withdrawing from the campaign.

Jack convinces Henry to stay and says they will make history together if he stays. Jack ultimately wins the election and becomes president of the United

States. The class lecture reinforces what took place in this part of the film. Political advisors/consultants first seek out political candidates to work for just like in this particular film. When Henry tried to quit the campaign after realizing what type of person Jack really was, the Political Candidate was the one who asked for help.

Political candidates are seeking out political advisors/consultants because they can improve their chances of winning an election. This film is a fairly accurate portrayal of presidential candidate Bill Clinton in 1992. Clinton is essentially played by the Southern Governor Jack Stanton. Primary Colors provides an interesting insight on the scandals of Bill Clinton's presidency. I find it interesting that these political candidates are fighting to be the leader of the nation and they use foul language and engage in questionable ethical behavior.

Jack Stanton's character who is running for president is a womanizer and resorts to Nixon style tactics. Jack believes that if the ends justify the means then it is okay. I can't imagine a sequel to this movie for two reasons; the first one is the fact that the film is over 20 years old, and the second reason is the fact that neither Hillary nor Bill are in the public eye as much and Hillary Clinton did not win the presidential election. In my opinion, manipulation is the most important theme in this film; the political consultants manipulate the presidential campaign in favor of Jack Stanton.

Since the film is closely centered on the 1992 Clinton campaign, I find it to be an accurate portrayal of campaign communication. A sense of charisma may be projected in a candidate's image, most often through the communication of campaign discourse. Chapter four in our book states " A

charismatic candidate may also be one who conveys a warm and friendly image, who seems genuine and personable, one who is comfortable speaking and who has the capacity to speak from his or her heart". This definition fits Jack Stanton's character to a tee. He seemed warm and genuine and he was extremely likeable.