

Struggle for Stars



Jack Anderson

THE PRESIDENTIAL candidates have started their quadrennial scramble for Hollywood stars to brighten up their campaigns.

Since the candidates are a lack-luster lot, they may be more eager than usual to find some glamor to excite the voters.

Sargent Shriver, who is running behind in the popularity polls, is out front in the race for stars. He has induced more than 100 celebrities to climb aboard his stalled bandwagon; including Lauren Bacall, James Caan, Carol Channing, Cloris Leachman, Paul Newman, Mark Slade and Joanne Woodward.

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RONALD REAGAN, himself a former actor, has an inside track in Hollywood. He has recruited such Hollywood stalwarts as John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart and Lloyd Nolan.

Fred Harris, the populist from Oklahoma, is claiming the support of Carroll O'Connor and Dennis Weaver.

Henry "Scoop" Jackson, the senator from Washington, has landed Bonanza's Lorne Greene, with a supporting cast of luminaries.

Alabama's Governor George Wallace has rounded up a few country and Western stars. Most of the other candidates, like Senator Birch Bayh, (Dem-Ind.), have been inquiring quietly how to go about lining up stars. One of President Ford's backers also acknowledged lamely: "We don't have

anyone big yet."

In contrast, his predecessor, Richard Nixon, just about had Hollywood locked up four years ago. We can now tell how he did it.

To win the favor of the movieland brass, Nixon characteristically promised special tax relief for Hollywood. As early as April 5, 1971, he met with the industry's top executives who, according to a confidential memo, "pleaded for some sort of tax relief." The President agreed to "take a look."

Not long afterward, the Internal Revenue Service gave the movie industry a multi-million-dollar tax break. A Nixon aide immediately began to recruit stars on the basis, as a memo puts it, of "what the President has done for the film industry."

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THERE was also some Nixon-style arm twisting. A popular Canadian rock singer, who wanted to become a U.S. resident, was offered an immigration waiver if he would come out for Richard Nixon.

An extraordinary effort was made to bring Sammy Davis Jr., into the Nixon camp. Sammy wanted a diplomatic passport or, at least, a White House appointment. Finally, an appointment was promised to a presidential commission.

Thereafter, the Nixon campaign spent thousands of dollars to fly Davis in style wherever he would appear for Nixon.