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The Political Advance Man 230 6 tales total 1,680
EDITOR'S NOTE: Crowds scream, placards wave, confetti flutters. An unplanned manifestation of love and loyalty for a political candidate erupting in innocence from the grass roots? Well, perhaps, in part. But in the age of the political advance man, prearranged spontaniety has become a high art.

By JULES LOH
AP Newsfeatures Writer

LOS ANGELES AP - The motorcade rolled toward the front of the Spanish style courthouse and the right front door of the lead car popped open. A lithe, young, unsmiling man in shirtsleeves leaped out and trotted alongside.

On the run he took in the scene, a familiar one: Banners, bunting, balloons, bedlam; and swarms of humans suddenly thrown into transports of joy crushing in high-pitched frenzy toward the advancing car of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, candidate.

"Move this car!" the shirt-sleeved man shouted, pounding with his palm on the rear fender. "Move! Move! Move!"

The startled driver moved the police car another 20 feet. The motorcade advanced to its proper halting place and the young man dashed back to the convertible to lead the candidate through the inevitable pulling and tearing.

Their destination was a tiled porch 100 yards away in an inner courtyard where 8,000 perspiring worshipers were responding with throaty cheers to a loudspeaker screeching "He's here! He's here!" over the pulsing rhythms of a mariachi band.

Midsay there a localite, being helpful, angrily stiff-armed and elbowed the pressing mob to force a path. The young man grabbed his arm.

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"None of that," he barked. "Nothing physical."
"Amateurs," growled the localite.

In a sense he was right. The young man, Peter Smith, is by profession a lawyer. But if his rough critic considered Smith amateurish in the political art of crowdsmanship he could not have been more wrong.

Smith knew, for example, as in this instance at Santa Barbara, that a car stopped in a crowd doesn't start again without great struggle and should the candidate alight even 20 feet from the prearranged spot a hedge might block him and the resulting confusion throw his schedule a half hour behind. He knew too that strongarm methods can "turn off," as he put it, an enthusiastic crowd.

Peter Smith is a specialist in a little known craft which can mean success or failure to a political candidate. He's an advance man.

Is a welcoming crowd needed at an airport? The advance man must provide it. What route should the candidate take to the rally? The advance man must decide politically, not logistically. What if an expected crowd doesn't materialize? The advance man must have an alternate plan. What is a town's ethnic makeup? How many unemployed? What are the local issues? The advance man must know.

Thus, in communities throughout California armies of advance men for Kennedy and Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy charted political battle plans for the final feverish days before Tuesday's Democratic presidential primary.

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Its general is Jerry Bruno, a short, stocky professional of 42 with acute political instincts and an insatiable appetite for work. One day last week Bruno collapsed at his desk from fatigue. When he came to, his first words were, "Where the hell's that kid I sent to the printer?"

Smith, 32, is one of Bruno's chief lieutenants. Smith and eight other key Kennedy advance men, all except one of whom are New York lawyers, worked under Bruno in Kennedy's 1964 campaign for the Senate.

They receive no pay. "And in all truth," says Smith, "none of us has any notion about some personal pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I do this because I think Bob Kennedy ought to be President."

Bruno-trained advance men and Smith is a perfect example—reflect the tough, audacious, take-charge style that marks a Kennedy campaign, a shirtsleeve style that never walks but runs and orders police cars to move, move, move.

One Kennedy advance man said he felt that had Bruno been in Oregon it might have made the difference for Kennedy. Local strategists conducted the Kennedy campaign there while Bruno and his boys moved into critical California.

What is Bruno's magic?

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"There's nothing magical about it," Bruno says. "Ninety-nine per cent of the job is the attraction of the candidate. Kennedy attracts. We just see to it that the people who want to see him see him."

One Bruno innovation in the California campaign has been neighborhood motorcades. Normally, motorcades stick to downtown streets. Early in the campaign Bruno surveyed a Mexican-American neighborhood in Pico Rivera, a town southeast of Los Angeles.

"That's the street," he said, in the manner of an explorer discovering the Northwest Passage. And on that street exuberant crowds tore Kennedy's shoes off.

To an advance man that sort of photogenic tumult—though at some risk to the candidate's hide—represents solid gold success.

During a motorcade through the coastal town of Oxnard Smith sat grinning on the roof of the lead car watching the forest of clutching hands thrust at the tousled candidate two cars back.

"This is fun," he said. "This is real street theater. That's exactly what it is, street theater. It's spontaneous and it's fun." Spontaneous?

"Yes. It's true those people didn't just hap e, to ,n m2 \$ng there. We got them out—by telling them that Bob Kennedy would be there. We didn't compel them; we can't. What we can do is create the conditions for spontaneity and watch what happens. Usually we have a pretty good idea what that will be. But the name of the game is fun," he said, "and you can't contrive fun."

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There are, also, a few tricks to creating spontaneity.

How, for instance, do you get a crowd at an airport 15 miles from a small town? One way is to hold a poster contest there, make a party of it, have the candidate sign the winning poster. Smith talked a Republican mayor into judging such a contest.

On the Wednesday trip visits were scheduled at Fontana and San Bernardino and Smith wanted supporters from a community midway between to help swell the crowd at Fontana, a smaller town than San Bernardino. So he offered "free refreshments" soft drinks at one place but not the other.

Experience has taught him techniques of spreading the word beyond the usual route-map handbills and newspaper ads.

For example, a sound truck should first stop at the head of the block and blare out a long, unintelligible message. Then, when the people come to their windows to see what the racket is about the truck should move slowly along, passing the word distinctly.

Smith analyzes his towns neighborhood by neighborhood, gives his sound truck men shaded maps to indicate priority areas, draws them in closer and closer to the appointed place as the appointed hour of arrival nears.

The candidate's schedule-which aims to squeeze every available minute of every day-must allow some time for crowd-caused delays, but how much?

Smith says he never can be sure. His solution is to note possible unscheduled stops along the way-a park where picnickers gather, a store front where old people sit on benches. Should a candidate arrive too early he would miss the maximum crowd; too late he would alienate them. Advance men seem to regard a half hour late as right on time.

Eager backers of both California candidates often show up with placards at their opponents' rallies but not by the advance men's initiative.

Smith, in fact, takes a typical advance man's view of the practice. "Let 'em come," he says. "It helps swell the crowd."

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Creating the conditions for spontaneity began a long way from Oxnard.

In the Kennedy organization it began in a Washington office which staff men call the boiler room. There researchers compiled a 300-page profile of California laden with data concerning economic conditions, ethnic breakdowns, analyses of private polls and past elections, even such miniscule facts as the number of students 73 in the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Strategists plotted the campaign in broad outline, concentrating on general areas of Kennedy strength. A scheduling staff narrowed it to specific cities. Then the advance men took over.

Bruno divided the state into four zones and assigned a man to each. Smith drew the quadrant with Los Angeles at its center where the boiler room told him 2.3 million of the state's 3.8 million registered voters live. Within the zone were 17 key areas for the candidate to visit.

A typical two-day swing, Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, took Kennedy to eight cities.

In each city Smith had experienced assistants, most of them California lawyers but also school teachers, graduate students and one Navy veteran who had helped in the Indiana campaign.

For four or five days before the scheduled visit the assistants conferred with local Kennedy backers, set up headquarters where there were none, surveyed the cities, learned local issues.

Smith, clipboard always under arm, motored from town to town approving plans, making notes, consulting with Bruno. At length he hammered out a 13-stop tour that included motorcades, shopping center rallies, airport receptions, luncheons.

Periodically he reported to John Martin, a Kennedy speechwriter, who jotted notes in a small black looseleaf notebook.

Thus Kennedy was able to say when he arrived at Santa Barbara,

"Just a few miles from here live a group of Indians who . . ." and to greet the crowd at El Monte with a convincing "Viva La Raza!" and to tell rebellious steelworkers at Fontana, "Your international president said I shouldn't run for President, is that what you say?"

For two or three days before each visit Smith's assistants set about creating the conditions for spontaneity.

In the main what that boiled down to was plain sweaty work-printing handbills, prodding telephone committees, deploying sound trucks, ordering poster paint.

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