



CANDIDATE PROFILES: SHOOTER/PRODUCER CHECKLIST

If you're getting this, it means that you agreed to film a candidate in your area for the social media campaign around 'Grassroots'. We are partnering with several large organizations in the U.S. – on both sides of the political spectrum - to further the reach of this campaign. We look forward to working with you on spreading the word of action.

Now is the time to make change in America, and we are thrilled to have you be part of that movement with us.

This document is a quick guideline on what we are looking for, and some things to watch out for. Chances are a lot of the information here is old hat to you. Bear with us and take a moment to read it anyways, if you can – even the most seasoned pros sometimes need a refresher.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We want authentic stories from and about people who care enough about our country to take action, and who will step up to serve as inspiration points to other people hoping to run for office, or, indeed, to make media around politics.

We are profiling people running for office across the U.S., Republican, Independent and Democrat alike. The final short documentaries will be between 3 and 5 minutes, and will live online on a special YouTube page, as well as on Grassrootsthefilm.com and all related social media sites.

As a participating filmmaker, you are welcome to use the footage and the final edited videos in any way you like. We operate under Creative Commons Attributions ShareAlike 3.0 license, and would hope that you would do the same.

More info on the Creative Commons license can be found here:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/>

We will edit the footage in-house here in Los Angeles, and will have end slates on the content giving credit as it's due. On that note, do not forget to provide a quick explanation of how you and you team would like to be credited when you send the final footage. (For example: Shot by Amanda Fosse, Sound by Mike Nelson, Lighting by Bob Mole, Additional camera by Lorne Sullivan, Location Assistance by Georgi Cartman, etc)

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CREATIVE GUIDELINES

Try to keep away from:

- Overly jarring camera movements, when shooting hand-held. A little motion is inevitable, but tuck your elbows into your chest and stay as still as possible.
- Sudden framing changes (e.g. wide shot to super tight shot). Unless you have the proper equipment to pull it off, these tend to be unwelcome distractions. Set up a shot, and stick to it as long as possible. Again, some are inevitable, but when there's a choice stop shooting, and reframe properly.

When shooting interviews, simplicity is your friend. Frame a shot, and hold it steady for the duration of the shot (again, unless some sudden action occurs that you need to get). If you do not have a tripod, place the camera on a table or a stack of books, get it in focus, and don't touch it.

Place the candidate in a well-lit place, preferably facing the source of light, i.e.: a window or lighting kit. Never place your subject **between** the camera and a bright light source. They will come out as a silhouette.

Don't let your subject look straight at the camera, unless it's for effect (as in to make a point, or to interact with the viewer directly). Have them look at their interviewer - you most likely - slightly off camera.

Sound matters: Find a quiet place; turn off fans, radios, fridges or TV's. If a plane goes by or someone starts mowing the lawn, stop the shot and wait for it to pass.

Don't forget to get plenty of b-roll (AKA cutaway shots) for context. A general rule is to hold a framed b-roll shot for *at least* 10 seconds. Any less is useless to an editor. You can reframe and reshoot a b-roll shot as many times as you like, but don't reframe *in the middle* of the shot. These shots can include things like:

- Details of the room where you are conducting the interview (a plant, a poster on the wall, etc.)
- Shots of the candidates' hands in motion (you can ask the candidate to do repeat some of his/her hand movements for camera once you're done with the interview)
- Good focused shots of the candidate's election paraphernalia (buttons, posters, etc.)
- Any photos or ephemera lying around (you can ask the candidate to provide)
- Shots of the subject walking, shaking hands, interacting with people or things (pets, books, affixing a button to someone's shirt, etc.), or generally going about his/her business as if the camera was not there.

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To save our editors from pulling their hair out, make sure your interview subject answers in whole sentences. A good trick is to make them repeat the question before they answer, or incorporate the question into the answer.

Question: What compelled you to run for office?

Bad Answer: Hmmmm good question. I guess a sense of responsibility.

Good Answer: The thing that compelled me to run for office was a deep sense of responsibility for my family's future.

Or: What made me want to run? A sense of responsibility.

Question: How do you feel about the campaign so far?

Bad Answer: Yeah good! It's been fun!

Good Answer: I feel that the campaign so far has been a good one.

Or: How do I feel about the campaign so far? Pretty good, all told.

To help with our journalistic integrity, we ask that you try not to ask overly leading questions (e.g. "So obviously you hate the Republicans. Why are they so awful?"), or elicit responses that are inflammatory or offensive to an opponent or any other group. We want dialogue, not hard rhetoric. So keep your questions classy, keep the interview kind, and focus on getting a sense of what compelled this candidate to run, and how he or she hopes to make a difference in the world.

Here are some examples of questions you can ask your interview subject:

- Who are you? Who's your family?
- What are you proudest of in your career so far?
- What's your past experience in public service, if any?
- Why did you decide to run for office?
- What issues are closest to your heart, and what do you want to do about them?
- What challenges have you faced along the way, so far?
- How do you feel about the democratic process in America?
- Do you have any advice for young people who want to run for office?
- Do you have any further political aspirations, beyond the current campaign?
- What was the first step, very specifically, that you took when you decided to run?
- Also be sure to get a good soundbyte of a basic introduction from your interview subject, speaking slowly and clearly: "My name is Margaret Presneill and I'm running for City Council, CD-13 in Los Angeles"

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

CAMERA SETTINGS:

- If possible, shoot HD.1080p is preferable, but 720p is okay. Also check for the 'p' for progressive, not 'i' (interlaced) if possible.

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- Shoot at 24 fps (frames per second) rather than 30 or 60 fps if available. It's more film-like and better looking.
- If your shot looks tinted blue or orange, it is because of improper white balance. You can use presets for daylight or tungsten (indoor bulbs). When in doubt, just use auto.

EXPORTING AND SENDING FOOTAGE:

- **DSLRs:** The files should be already compressed (h.264) and will appear as .mov files right off the camera. These require no transcoding and can be sent as is.
- **MiniDV:** If you shoot on DV tapes and are unfamiliar with the transcoding process, you can by all means just send the tapes to us. Otherwise, please use the Final Cut Pro Log and Transfer tool. This should convert the files to ProRes (4-2-2 is fine).
- **Prosumer Cameras:** This would include cameras such as the Sony EX-1, Panasonic HVX, etc. and will most likely shoot to card. Please export the content of the cards as is and send the entire file directory. **DO NOT** only send what you determine to be the video files at the end of the file chain - Most transcoders need the complete directory.

Last but not least – please set the original footage/files aside and do not format or film over them until you have confirmation that the Grassroots team successfully received the footage.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Never hesitate to contact us at any time with any questions at all. The team is on Pacific Time, so, you know, don't inadvertently call us at 4AM.

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**WE THANK YOU, DEEPLY, FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT.
NOW LET'S GO MAKE SOME CHANGE, TOGETHER!**

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