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Heroes in The War Room

The War Room is a 1993 documentary following the Presidential campaign for Bill Clinton. Throughout the film, viewers are treated to unprecedented access to the strategies and ideas that won the 1992 presidential race. The film follows James Carville and George Stephanopoulos as they navigate critical moments in the campaign. There are many moments of crisis shown in the documentary, including the scandal affair with Gennifer Flowers. When Gennifer released a taped phone conversation between her and Bill, it looked as if this would negatively affect his Presidential hopes. Carville and Stephanopoulos quickly strategized and claimed the tapes had been doctored. Through their quick thinking and effective strategizing, Carville and Stephanopoulos helped Bill Clinton win his Presidential campaign and are painted as the film's heroes.

In this film, we see Bill's campaign team is very young, the staff has a lot of energy, and can quickly react to changing situations. Behind closed doors, we see The War Room and experience firsthand the stress running a political campaign bears. There are scenes where we watch Carville and Stephanopoulos debate seemingly minor details, like the exact word choice of a phrase in a speech, that they believe will significantly impact how the American public views their candidate. This attention to detail paints a picture of the character of these two men and what it takes to run a successful Presidential campaign.

When presented with the Gennifer Flowers affair crisis, Stephanopoulos and Carville step up, crafting many effective ads based on moral values and American stereotypes. We see these two men work tirelessly to display their candidate in a positive light to the press and American people; in one scene, we see Stephanopoulos run through the building at the end of a debate to be the first one to interact with the press. This allows him to give out information that shows Bill positively when the paper is printed the next day. Carville and Stephanopoulos deal with numerous accusations of draft-dodging and adultery; under intense pressure, they always find an effective and professional solution working quickly and with coordination.

In the chaos of the campaign, we see the two central characters bond, which is almost surprising given how they carry themselves in the film. Carville gives off the impression that he has a lot of experience in this domain; he is an excellent public speaker who is able to win over many people with his charisma. Stephanopoulos seems inexperienced and more inward than Carville; at the same time, he looks more professional, always dressed nicely, delivering a solid message that Clinton can change the country for the better. The documentary shows us that these two men were not just political machines but friends who worked together closely on something that meant very much to them both personally. The bond between these two characters shows the human side of politics and helps grab the attention of Democrats and Republicans alike. In the final scene, after the election victory, we see Carville, a seemingly pragmatic man, breaks down in tears while thanking the campaign's supporters.

The War Room isn't just about the political campaign that won the 1992 election; it is also a story of people coming together. The intelligence and cunning of the people involved in the election are on display, while at the same time, we see bonds being formed by crucial characters. For example, Carville bonds with Stephanopoulos, but he also falls in love with Mary

Matalin, the campaign manager for Bill Clinton's opponent George Bush. This documentary shows the strategy of the campaign while at the same time showing the soft side of the characters involved, painting George Stephanopoulos and James Carville as the heroes of the 1992 campaign for President.

Works Cited

The War Room. Dir. D.A.Pennebaker & C.Hedgus. Universal, 1992.