

**TEACHER GUIDE**

# 1964 DOC. #1: Goldwater “We Will Bury You” TV Commercial

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

TV commercials had first appeared in presidential campaigns in 1952. By 1964 they had become a major way of selling the candidates. CBS commentator Charles Kuralt joked that the 1964 campaign was not “between President Johnson and Senator Goldwater” but between their advertising firms (Troy 218).

A major issue in 1964 was the Cold War and fear of the Soviet Union. Republican candidate Barry Goldwater was considered by many to be a right-wing extremist. At first he embraced this image with his remarks at the Republican convention that “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice!” He suggested that the United States should break diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and leave the United Nations. He suggested that military commanders be given the option to use nuclear weapons. He said he’d like to “lob [a nuclear missile] into the men’s room of the Kremlin and make sure I hit it” (Boller 311). Many U.S. citizens, including Republicans, found his message frightening. When Goldwater tried to change this impression it was too late. He had already been stuck with the image of a “trigger happy” Cold War warrior.

The Goldwater commercial that you will see includes images of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev speaking in the Kremlin, the building in Moscow containing the governmental offices of the Soviet Union. This commercial became less effective after Khrushchev was removed as head of state on October 15, three weeks before the U.S. elections.

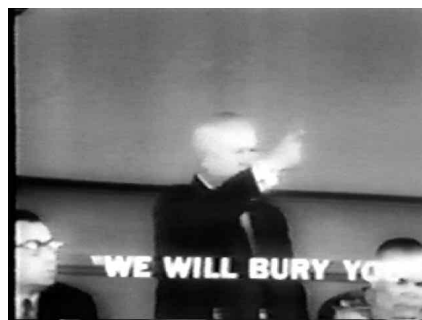
> **Play the video clip.**

**QUESTION** | **What are the messages that Goldwater is trying to convey?**

**SUGGESTED ANSWER** | The United States is at risk of attack from the Soviet Union.

**EVIDENCE** | clips of Khrushchev with the subtitles “we will bury you” and “your children will be communists”

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**Goldwater “We Will Bury You” TV commercial**

**Video Clip**  
LENGTH: 1 minute

SUGGESTED ANSWER | Goldwater is patriotic and courageous in his response to this threat.

EVIDENCE | children pledging allegiance show patriotism; quote “if we have the guts to make our intentions clear” highlights Goldwater’s courage

QUESTION | **What techniques are used to get this message across?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER | Fear that Soviets will take over, and that they will turn American children into communists.

EVIDENCE | commercial cuts back and forth between American children and Khrushchev making threatening remarks

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Can you think of other examples of how fear of “the enemy” has been used to attract votes for a particular candidate?

Goldwater’s slogan was “In your heart you know he’s right.” What target group(s) would be encouraged by this slogan? What group(s) might be turned away by this slogan?

**ADDITIONAL INFO**

Goldwater responded to his critics by saying, “I wanted to educate the American people to lose some of their fear of the word ‘nuclear.’ When you say ‘nuclear,’ all the American people see is a mushroom cloud. But for military purposes, it’s just enough firepower to get the job done” (Boller 311).

On October 16th China exploded a nuclear device that further increased fears of a Goldwater presidency in a world of nuclear proliferation.

**CONNECTIONS**

(see thematic listing)

- Attack**
- “Family Man”**
- Fear**
- Foreign Policy**