

# FOIA MARKER

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**Folder Title:**  
Nielsen Ratings

**Stack:**

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**Row:**

**94**

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**3**

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**10**

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**1**

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

FYI  
re: Nielson  
ratings

October 4, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR JODIE TORKELSON  
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR  
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

FROM: CHERYL MILLS *CM*  
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Nielson Ratings

This memorandum is in response to your request that I review a request by the Communications Department to purchase Nielson ratings.

After reviewing a preliminary memorandum from two members of the Communications Department, Evelyn Lieberman sent me a subsequent memorandum further explaining the Department's need for this information. In particular, she indicated that these ratings will be used in determining when to schedule Presidential interviews during which he will discuss his Administration's "policies and efforts on behalf of the economy, health care and welfare reform, education and many other critical issues facing the country." See Attachment.

Based upon my discussions with Ms. McHugh regarding the amount of official air time the White House purchases and the needs that they articulate in their memorandum, this purchase would be for official purposes. Because these ratings, if purchased, will be acquired using appropriated funds, they may not be used for unofficial purposes. Accordingly, the information contained therein may not be used for or transferred to any other entity or individual for unofficial purposes.

Please call me if you have any questions regarding whether appropriated funds may be used to purchase Nielson ratings.

cc: Evelyn Lieberman  
Lorrie McHugh

*Mason  
what does  
this say?*

*Summary:*

*We can buy Nielson  
ratings with official  
funds*

October 3, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR CHERYL MILLS

FROM : EVELYN S. LIEBERMAN

SUBJECT : NIELSON RATINGS

Since the beginning of the administration, the Office of Media Affairs has produced more than 800 satellite interviews with the President, Vice President, First Lady, various other Administration officials and numerous citizen-participants in Presidential events.

The purpose of these interviews is to communicate the President's policies and efforts more effectively on behalf of the economy, health care and welfare reform, education and many other critical issues facing the country.

Americans receive most of their daily news information from their local TV news shows. Nationwide, there are more than 700 local television stations that each produce, on average, seven separate daily local news programs. These stations are often very interested in covering the President and educating their own viewers on what his policies mean to them.

Currently, without access to TV ratings, we do not know which stations have the largest audiences. With local Nielson Ratings, we can assure that a Presidential interview is booked with, for example, station X's 5:00 PM news which has 800 thousand viewers, instead of station Y, which has only 150 thousand viewers.

The local Nielson Ratings will permit us to reach the greatest number of American television viewers and will help us make better use of the President's limited time.

If you have any questions, please contact Lorrie McHugh at 6-2987.

Thank you.

May 2, 1995

MEMORANDUM TO EVELYN LIEBERMAN

FROM: LORRIE MCHUGH  
DAVE ANDERSON

RE: SATELLITE BUDGET REQUEST

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Given our very frugal approach to satellite spending thus far, we would like to propose an expenditure of \$9000 from the satellite budget to purchase the television ratings of every local television news show in the nation to enable us to book the President and others onto the best local news shows.

BACKGROUND

For the past three years, we have had in our possession the television database. This database lists every single local television station in the country by market and ranks both the station and the station's individual news shows and viewership. It is an invaluable resource. We update all the station contacts every six months and distribute it to all the regional desks, the press offices of the Vice President, First Lady and Mrs. Gore and all key contacts at agency public affairs offices. It's the Administration's TV bible and it's very popular.

It's also very out-of-date in one important way -- the Nielson rankings listed in it (that tell us how stations and shows stack up within the market) are seven years old. That's before Fox even existed. We've never been able to update the ratings of these local shows since -- and believe us, we've tried -- until now. For \$9000 we can have the viewership figures of every single local TV news program in the country. We can make the purchase through a vendor that is already under contract to the White House.

We recommend making this expenditure now while this rate is still being offered to us (normally it runs \$25,000). We can afford it, and it's invaluable.