

“Cruz Commander”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSGIZDEtAY>

There are many candidates running in the 2016 Presidential Election; that means there are many political ads going around. These ads contain rhetorical elements that can be analyzed and broken down to reveal further meanings and illogical reasonings. One ad that I found interesting is in support of Republican candidate, Senator Ted Cruz. The ad is titled “Cruz Commander.” It is appropriately named considering Phil Robertson of Duck Commander is the supporter in the ad. It uses a quirky play on words. In the ad, Phil vouches for Cruz while dressed in duck hunting gear and in a duck blind. This ad appeals to southern conservatives voting in the 2016 Presidential Election. It is telling them his relatable traits and why they should vote for him.

The ad starts off with Phil Robertson saying what he is looking for in a president which is as follows: “Is he or she Godly? Does he or she love us? Can he or she do the job? Would they kill a duck and put ‘em in a pot of good duck gumbo?” Basically, he wants a president that is a Christian, truly loves the people, will do the job well, and are they relatable to the common southern hunter? He then proceeds to tell the audience that Ted Cruz embodies all of these qualities and has his vote. To most people this ad would need no explaining or background on the relevance of Phil Robertson, while some may have no idea what is going on. For those who have no idea, Phil Robertson is the patriarch of the Robertson family that was on the show “Duck Dynasty.” The show was created as a result of their growing duck call business in Monroe, LA. Their family

is God-centered, and so is their show. Phil is a Godly man who is unwavering in his faith and is set in what he believes.

The purpose of this ad is to get people to vote for Senator Ted Cruz based on the ideals he represents and who sides with him. The target audience would be southern conservatives. This is the ideal target audience because he is from the south and holds true to conservative beliefs. As a senator, he has voted on many issues that are important to conservatives such as the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms, life, marriage, and the First Amendment. These are plus signs for Conservatives when searching for a candidate. However, this ad alienates voters who may be non-Christians as well as for gun control. Seeing Phil and knowing who he is might turn people away, and if that doesn't do it, then killing an animal will. Cruz establishes good ethos in this ad with Phil. He is highly respected in the south for his belief in God and moral standards, so if he sides with Cruz then many others could be influenced to vote for him as well. He is also a television figure that has been seen nationally. His opinion holds weight with those who support him.

Pathos is very evident within this ad as well. The use of family Christian values appeals to many in the south and is very effective in winning over hearts and votes. Phil is known for his moral values and how firm he is in what he believes and stands for. Seeing that Phil was willing to invite him to his home and hunt with him is a big move. On another side, the use of guns to kill animals could be a turn off. It is appealing to emotions as well, just in a negative perspective. Voters who are against gun rights have an emotional connection to their beliefs as well. Using guns on camera and killing ducks

would be expected to have some sort of effect on people. Ted has used a similar emotional appeal when at a rally in his hometown. He began talking about the pastor who had led him to salvation when he was a boy. The pastor was present and so it became a heartfelt, unscripted moment.

In terms of logos, there are few places that include this appeal. There is one that is present that is not clearly spoken but is implied. It is a syllogism that implies that since Phil is a southern conservative that trusts Ted, then a person should trust him just because they are a southern conservative as well. It is also illogical to only ask those few basic questions to determine who a good candidate is. Some may claim to be Christians but disagree on other conservative views. Going on religion alone is a faulty premise because there are more aspects in running a country. The questions that Phil asks that should describe a good candidate are all premises themselves. In syllogism style, they would read as follows: a good candidate is Godly, loves the people, will do a good job, and is for gun rights; Ted Cruz embodies all of those so therefore he is automatically a good candidate. Within the format itself, it is valid, but it may not be true. It can be, but that is something you won't know unless he gets into office. Past successes can show whether he can do a good job and what his stances are, but the other two are morally based and are observable acts of character.

Within this ad there are reasons stated as to why someone should vote for Ted Cruz for the 2016 Presidential Election. It uses ethos to establish credibility with Phil Robertson, pathos to draw people in emotionally, and logos to establish reasoning and logic. This ad is very effective at persuading southern conservatives to vote for Ted

Cruz by showing his support for God, the people, and gun rights. However, this ad would be very persuading for liberals to not vote for Ted for the same reasons. Overall this is a very persuasive ad.