

NDC FIRST CAMERA

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DOBYNS: I'm Lloyd Dobyns.

Our first report has to do with a candidate for the presidency and his followers. There is no shortage of candidates, heaven knows. The Federal Election Commission says there are 168 candidates in this election year, including at least one robot and maybe a coyote. Mark Nykanen has a story about one of the 81 candidates for the Democratic nomination, a man named Lyndon LaRouche. Since his name didn't come up in the results of the New Hampshire primary, you may not know him. But you may be aware of at least one of his causes, and you may have run into some of his followers. There are only 450 or so in the United States; but they're active.

NYKANEN: They have almost become fixtures in airports all across the country. They are mostly white, well-educated and earnest. They sell magazines that promote nuclear power. And they display signs critical of Walter Mondale and others. These people are part of a political cult run by Lyndon LaRouche. LYNDON LAROCHE (Presidential Candidate): Democrats, let those of us who remember, take back the leadership of the Democratic Party from this gang that's taken it over.

NYKANEN: LaRouche is a presidential candidate. He also ran in 1976 and 1980. He says he's a conservative Democrat. But party leaders say he has his own beliefs. He says, for example, that the Queen of England is a dope dealer.

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NYKANEN: LaRouche and his followers have formed a tightly-knit organization, the inner workings of which are not well-known to outsiders. Tonight, we'll talk to some former members. They call themselves defectors. And we'll look at LaRouche's involvements in local and national elections; with the Teamsters Union and the Reagan administration. We'll examine charges that he is an anti-Semite. We'll also see how LaRouche and his followers have suppressed some unfavorable news stories and tried to intimidate reporters. LaRouche's public involvement in politics began in the late 1960s here at Columbia University. He was the leader of a splinter group in the left-wing SDS, Students for a Democratic Society. And at that time, he called himself Lynn Marcus.

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NYKANEN: LaRouche broke from the SDS and recruited other members to join him in a new, even more militant, left-wing group, the National Caucus of Labor Committees. In 1973, LaRouche ordered his followers to physically attack dozens of political opponents. Many were hospitalized.

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NYKANEN: In the late 1970s, LaRouche became an extreme right-winger. Most of his cult fell into line. He then sought support from conservative Republicans. But he didn't win over all of them. Gen. Daniel Graham is a former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. GEN. GRAHAM: Well, I think he's a phony. I think the man is picking up issues, people of my conservative stripe, tend to support and then making a mockery out of them.

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