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William Schoderbek March 30, 2019

Turning the Tide in ’65: William F. Buckley, New York City, and the Rise of Modern Conservatism

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Abstract

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The 1965 New York Mayoral election was an inflection point in the history of American politics. As the people of the United States sought to define themselves amidst the assassination of Kennedy, the steady march towards Civil Rights, and the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the political undercurrents played out in this election, the only major election of 1965. With the entry of Buckley, this local election quickly gained national attention, soon becoming a microcosm of the American political sphere and highlighting the struggle of major political parties, as seen in the rival campaigns of liberal Republican John Lindsay and Democrat Abraham Beame, to lay claim to the conscience of a nation. Buckley broke all of the old political rules that bound his opponents, freely discussing such hot-button issues as integration, welfare, race, and crime in an in-depth, straightforward manner. In attacking both liberalism and liberal Republicanism, as epitomized by John Lindsay, Buckley asserted that his own conservative principles were universal. Running as a spoiler candidate against John Lindsay, Buckley’s candidacy unexpectedly won the support of conservative Democrats, undercutting his goal of defeating Lindsay but serving as the first electoral example of the coalition of voters who would become the foundation of Nixon’s Southern Strategy and later, Reagan Democrats. This was the enduring lesson of the Buckley campaign, as many of his ideas and proposals would form the foundation of conservative Republican dogma for the next fifty years.

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Chapter 1—Demand a Recount

When politicians enter elections, they usually run to win. Yet when William F. Buckley, Jr. became a candidate in the 1965 New York City Mayoral election, he quickly made it clear he was no usual politician. When asked how many votes he thought that he would receive, Buckley replied, "Conservatively speaking, one."[1] He pledged to the public that in the highly unlikely event he were elected mayor, his first act of business would be to "[d]emand a recount."[2] In his campaign for mayor, William F. Buckley waged a conservative war against the liberal Republican John V. Lindsay for the ideological soul of the Republican Party. Although Buckley did indeed lose the election, his quixotic campaign against entrenched political interests in the Democratic and Republican parties succeeded in establishing his polished image of conservatism as a reasonable and widespread political ideology.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in one of the largest electoral landslides in history. Across the nation, analysts prophesized that Goldwater's defeat spelled the political ruin of the nascent conservative movement. The vast majority of commentators in the wake of Johnson's victory thought conservatism had been thoroughly repudiated by the American people and viewed the Republican Party's experiment of nominating a conservative as an utter failure.[3] "The election has finished the Goldwater school of political reaction," wrote Richard Rover of the *New Yorker.* James Macgregor Burns, one of the nation's preeminent public intellectuals, proclaimed that "this is as surely a liberal epoch as the late 19th century [*sic*] was a conservative one."[4] Two leading specialists in American political behavior

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[1] William F. Buckley, Jr., *The Unmaking of a Mayor* (New York: Viking Press, 1966), 111.
[2] Dan Cordtz, "Buckley of New York: He Gains Surprising Support for Mayor By Breaking All the Old Political Rules," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October 1965.
[3] Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001), xi.
[4] Ibid.

speculated that if the Republicans nominated a conservative for president again, it might well spell "an end to a competitive two-party system."[5] Yet only four years later, Richard Nixon would win the presidency on a conservative platform. How could this have happened?

Simply put, the pundits were wrong. The conservative movement was built upon grassroots organization at the local level. The infrastructure developed by millions of conservatives to promote Goldwater's campaign and the wider cause of conservatism did not simply vanish in the wake of the presidential election.[6] America had repudiated Goldwater, but historian George H. Nash writes that "America had not repudiated the conservative philosophy . . . As Ronald Reagan, writing in *National Review*, put it, conservatism was not routed; only a 'false image' of it was."[7] Reagan and his conservative compatriots believed that with the right "image," conservatism could win, an idea Reagan himself would come to encapsulate in the succeeding decades. A *Wall Street Journal* editorial in the days following the election was one of the few contemporary accounts to correctly diagnose the state of conservatism: "Though the election was an emphatic rejection of a particular candidate and a particular campaign in a particular year, it was neither a repudiation of the policies of genuine conservatism nor a general embracing of the politics of unlimited government."[8] Despite this being a minority opinion in November 1964, history would prove otherwise.

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[5] John Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition: Republican Strategies in 1964* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 308, cited in Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 515; Lee Edwards, *Goldwater: The Man Who Made a Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1995), 344, cited in Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 516.

[6] For more on the grassroots nature of early conservatism, see Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); and Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), which focuses primarily on the grassroots origins of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF).

[7] Ronald Reagan, comment in *National Review* 16 (December 1, 1964), 1055, cited in George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 292.

[8] "Victory by Default," *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 November 1964.

The Republican establishment of 1965 believed that moderation, not conservatism, was the best hope for the renewal of the GOP.[9] *The Wall Street Journal* quoted a "key New York Republican" as declaring "[a]fter this election . . . the conservatives simply are not entitled to be heard any more. They have had their chance and almost killed the party in the process. The election proves we must appeal to independents and Democrats if we're to win, and that means a far less conservative tack."[10] No one better represented this moderate spirit than John V. Lindsay of New York. A young Republican representative of New York City since 1958, Lindsay was quickly becoming the national face of this emerging faction, successfully running for Congress on the slogan "The District's Pride—The Nation's Hope."[11] A liberal Republican who voted with the Democrats more frequently than the Republicans, Lindsay was seen by the press as one of the leading Republicans in Congress and a future candidate for the presidency.[12] Lindsay frequently crossed the aisle in Congress to further legislation he believed was just, such as working to abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee and to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[13] After Lindsay's convincing reelection in 1964 in the midst of Goldwater's landslide defeat, liberal Republicans widely viewed Lindsay as the future of the party.[14] Already gaining traction in the press "as a potential president," Lindsay was loathe to challenge popular Republican incumbents Senator Jacob Javits or Governor Nelson Rockefeller.[15] Since his final potential opponent for higher office, Democratic Senator Robert Kennedy, was not up for re-

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[9] "Victory by Default," *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 November 1964.
[10] Alan L. Ottin, "Whither the GOP? Republican Party Seen Shifting to Middle Road After Fierce In-Fighting," *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 November 1964.
[11] Vincent J. Cannato, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and his Struggle to Save New York* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 17.
[12] Ibid., 10-11.
[13] Daniel E. Button, *Lindsay: A Man for Tomorrow* (New York: Random House, 1965), 29; Ibid., 73.
[14] Ibid., 17.
[15] Bogus, Carl T. *Buckley: William F. Buckley, Jr. and the Rise of American Conservatism* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 264.

election until 1970, Lindsay took the remaining path open to him and entered the 1965 New York Mayoral race as the next logical step in his political career.[16] Running unopposed in the Republican primary, Lindsay was also endorsed by the Liberal Party of New York, a party ideologically more liberal than the Democratic Party and generally recognized as "the third major force in city politics," all of which further emphasized his liberalism and his cross-over appeal.[17] Anticipating Lindsay would attempt to use the New York Mayor's Office as a stepping-stone to the White House, William F. Buckley entered the race under the banner of the Conservative Party of New York to prevent Lindsay's lofty ambitions from being realized.[18]

Registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by a three to one margin in New York City.[19] To overcome this structural barrier to election, John Lindsay distanced himself from his Republican label to attract the support of independents and disillusioned Democrats. This was the only way a Republican could win in New York, he reasoned, and Lindsay capitalized on this strategy his entire political career. Since Lindsay viewed his political party as a means of election rather than a strict endorsement of party principles, his campaign posters never displayed his Republican designation.[20] His right-wing critics called him a Republican in name only, but Lindsay biographer Daniel Button offered a three-part diagnosis of his political leanings: "Intellectually he is a strong Republican; emotionally, he is fiercely independent; spiritually, he is a progressive and in that sense frequently finds common cause with the Democratic liberal group."[21] Personal character, optimistic pragmatism, and movie-star good looks were Lindsay's chief selling points to the people of New York.

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[16] Bogus, *Buckley*, 264.
[17] Walter Murphy, "Liberals Fear Defeat by Conservatives," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 13 October 1965.
[18] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 62.
[19] Terry Smith, "Lindsay's Foe—Arithmetic," *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1965.
[20] Button, *Lindsay: A Man for Tomorrow*, 39.
[21] Ibid., 40.

Although the 1965 New York Mayoral election has been only cursorily examined by historians, William F. Buckley's insurgent third-party campaign played a crucial role in the recovery of the American conservative movement after Goldwater's landslide defeat the previous year.[22] With the entry of Buckley, the election quickly gained national attention and came to be seen as a microcosm of the national political struggle between the moderate and conservative wings of the Republican Party to lay claim to the conscience of a nation.[23] Buckley's provocative, headline-generating campaign style was crucial to transforming a local campaign into one with national interest as a referendum upon the present and future ideology of the Republican Party. Though Lindsay won the mayoral battle, Buckley won the ideological war, as his polished brand of conservatism rose to become a key tenant of the Republican philosophy and fueled the rise of Ronald Reagan.[24]

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[22] Besides Buckley's 1966 memoir of the campaign, *The Unmaking of A Mayor*, there have not been any monographs or historical articles published on the event, excepting Thomas Lynch's article "Only Half in Fun" which summarizes the main points of Buckley's memoir. Buckley's extensive papers on the 1965 New York Mayoral campaign, filling thirty-three boxes and twenty-four metric feet in the archives at Yale University, are an indispensable resource for historians studying this election, yet they have been largely neglected by scholars. Nash's *Conservative Intellectual Movement Since 1945* referenced the 1965 mayoral election in a single sentence, Allitt's *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics* devoted a few pages to the election, and it went virtually unmentioned in all the conservative monographs listed in previous footnotes. Among monographs on Buckley, the election was given the same short shrift. See Linda Bridges and John R. Coyne, *Strictly Right: William F. Buckley, Jr. and the American Conservative Movement* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2007) which summarizes the election in four pages; John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr., Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988) devoted a twenty-five-page chapter to the mayoral campaign, yet Judis based his chapter solely upon *The Unmaking of a Mayor* and contemporary newspaper accounts, thus there was no incorporation of the Buckley Papers or other sources beyond the two already listed; Carl T. Bogus, *Buckley: William F. Buckley Jr. and the Rise of American Conservatism* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011) allotted twenty-pages to Buckley's campaign, and relied primarily on the works of Cannato, Judis, and Buckley himself. Bogus also consulted contemporary newspapers and *National Review*, but not the Buckley Papers. Cannato's *The Ungovernable City* cited the Buckley Papers at Yale but referenced them in only four endnotes; Timothy J. Sullivan, *New York State and the Rise of Modern Conservatism: Redrawing Party Lines* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009) cited the Buckley Papers tangentially in conjunction with his study of the Conservative Party specifically. Only Johnathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) made ample use of the Buckley Papers for its chapter on Buckley's run for mayor, but Schoenwald's chapter lacked a discussion of the local issues in New York, especially the racial dynamic of the campaign. These subjects are all discussed in this thesis based primarily on unpublished evidence from the Buckley Papers.

[23] Thomas E. Lynch, "Only Half in Fun," *Modern Age* 57, no. 4 (Fall 2015), 50.

[24] Geoffrey Kabaservice, "William F. Buckley Jr.: Right Man, Right Time," *The New York Times*, 9 December 2011.

Buckley's campaign was a conservative attack on the candidacy of John Lindsay and the proposition that liberal Republicanism was the future of the Republican Party. Buckley presented the conservative case in the manner of a "Happy Warrior," which contrasted sharply with the stuffiness, simplicity, and often unpolished rambling of Goldwater, a figure who provided many Americans with a negative first impression of conservatism.[25] While the two men held very similar political positions, Buckley presented conservatism using common sense, logic, humor, and Yale-honed debating skills. The *Boston Globe* dubbed him a "Devastating Campaigner" who accumulated many converts by painting conservatism in a new, positive light.[26] Capitalizing on his intelligence and quick wit, Buckley ran his campaign as an ideological guerilla against the forces of political moderation. Buckley sought to exploit the growing backlash against the failures of liberal social reforms that had been pushed by both Democrats and liberal Republicans like Lindsay in New York City, where despite a massive expansion of local government, the city suffered from worsening crime, "narcotics, air pollution, poor education, welfare, ailing hospitals, one-party rule, business exodus, middle-class exodus, black and Puerto Rican poverty, elderly poverty, fear in the streets, and an inefficient city bureaucracy."[27] In response to New York City's problems, Buckley staked out a series of political positions that would become the foundation of the conservative base for the next fifty years, including, but not limited to, advocating for greater government support for police to encourage "law and order," requiring welfare recipients to work for their payments, placing restrictions on the minimum

[25] "Lion of the Right: William F. Buckley Jr., 1925-2008," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 28 February 2008; Thomas W. Benham, "Polling For a Presidential Candidate: Some Observations on the 1964 Campaign," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1965), 189, cited in Jeffrey J. Matthew, "To Defeat a Maverick: The Goldwater Candidacy Revisited, 1963-1964," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1997), 669.
[26] Robert Donovan, "Buckley—N.Y. Touchstone," *Boston Globe*, 23 October 1965.
[27] Cannato, *The Ungovernable City*, 22.

wage, and imposing criminal penalties on unruly labor unions.[28] Despite Buckley's transatlantic elitism, he ironically won the support of working-class white Americans, many of whom had previously voted for Democrats, through his campaign promises and willingness to talk about the issues most political candidates would shy away from.[29] The shift of these conservative Democrats to the Conservative Party column would be one of the major surprise outcomes of the election. Buckley's campaign successfully generated publicity aimed at changing the negative public perception of conservatism while precipitating the image shift of conservatism which would characterize its rise throughout the later twentieth century.

New York City: 1965

In 1965, New York was a city beset by violence, inequality, social unrest, and racial animus. The demographics of New York changed substantially from 1950 to 1960. While nearly 500,000 white residents left the city during this period, their move was offset by the arrival of 340,000 African Americans and 400,000 Puerto Ricans.[30] In 1964, the editorial board of the *New York Herald Tribune* began a comprehensive investigative report into the problems facing the city. This special report, published in 1965 and titled *New York: City in Crisis*, was a source often consulted by William F. Buckley in outlining the problems facing New York. The editors of the *Herald Tribune* portrayed New York in 1965 as a metropolis with an increasingly diverse metropolitan population, writing that the city housed "more Puerto Ricans than in San Juan, more Negroes than in Alabama or Mississippi, more Jews than in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel-Aviv

[28] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 92-93.
[29] George J. Marlin, *The American Catholic Voter: 200 Years of Political Impact* (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2004), 268-269; Lynch, "Only Half in Fun," 48.
[30] Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press and Harvard University Press, 1963), 25; Ibid., 94.

put together, more Irish than in Dublin, more Greeks than in Sparta, and more Italians than in Venice."[31]

With racial diversity came racial antagonisms. Exacerbated by crime and social unrest, race relations and claims of police brutality kept the city constantly on edge. Many saw the New York Police Department as corrupt and discriminatory, as major cases of police brutality against African Americans spurred the outbreak of massive riots in Harlem in 1964. Critic Richard Whalen saw the violence of the Harlem riots as indicative of the city's ills, writing "[t]he floodlights and leaping flames in the streets exposed frightening realities: the state of war existing between Negroes and police; the inability of so-called Negro leaders to control or even communicate with their presumed followers; [and] the immeasurably great failure of white political and civic leaders who possess power, but who lack the will and imagination to use it."[32] Senseless criminality and an overwhelmed police force combined to foster a climate of fear on the streets. Many New Yorkers were afraid to venture outside. As Whalen has written, the crime problem was so pervasive that "[i]n broad daylight, mothers and children can use the city's green spaces, such as Washington Square in Greenwich Village, only apprehensively, because derelicts, sex perverts, and hoodlums congregate there."[33] The crime rate steadily increased as the nation's largest civic police force helplessly watched. In 1964, the violent crime rate rose a record 14% across the board, leading the police commissioner to gloomily admit the NYPD's fight against crime was "a war that seemingly has no end."[34] To contextualize the crime rate, the *Herald Tribune* staff calculated that on a daily basis there were two murders, three rapes, twenty-

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[31] *New York: City in Crisis* (New York: Pocket Books, 1965), v.
[32] Richard J. Whalen, *A City Destroying Itself: An Angry View of New York* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1965), 18. Whalen's *A City Destroying Itself,* described by Buckley as "the finest book on the deterioration of New York" was a crucial text for developing Buckley's understanding of the city's myriad problems. See "Meet the Press Transcript" p. 5-6, 17 October 1965, Box 320, Folder 234, Buckley Papers.
[33] Whalen, *A City Destroying Itself*, 23.
[34] *New York*: *City in Crisis*, 160.

two robberies, and forty-one assaults in the city.[35] Franz Leichter, the Democratic Representative of the 7th Assembly District, lamented the decline of the city: "In New York City in the heart of town—not only in the slum areas—people are afraid to go out at night . . . What you really have—or almost have—[are] battle conditions in New York."[36] New Yorkers were living in fear.

New York was the wealthiest city in the world and the poorest; it was the scene of massive social inequality, not only between white and black, but also between rich and poor. Writing on the vast difference in the quality of life between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in New York, social critic Lewis Mumford declared that "the so-called blighted areas of the metropolis are essentially '*do-without*' areas" inhabited by "people who do without pure air, who do without sound sleep, who do without a cheerful garden or playing space, who do without the very sight of the sky and the sunlight, who do without free motion . . . Eventually, you may live and die without even recognizing the loss."[37] This blight was all too evident for Harlem's African American population. In Harlem, 50% of minors lived in single-parent households, neighborhood schools reported a delinquency rate of 115.8 per thousand, and African American salaries averaged 30% less than those of whites.[38] Harlem was the focal point of inequality in New York City. Though city leaders claimed race relations were improving, the generational subordinate status of the city's African American population led the *Herald Tribune* staff to write that "[t]he rhyme 'White is right, Black step back,' is one every Harlem youngster knows."[39]

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[35] *New York*: *City in Crisis*, 160.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), 249, cited in Whalen, *A City Destroying Itself*, 17.
[38] Whalen, *A City Destroying Itself*, 20-21.
[39] *New York: City in Crisis*, 30.

Though issues of race were among the most important facing New Yorkers, urban problems went far beyond the color line. In their summary of the issues facing the city, the *Herald Tribune* staff stressed the ubiquity of New York's problems: "Everywhere—in our schools, in our rising crime rate, in our frightening, skyrocketing narcotics problem, in our troubled hospitals, in our poverty and welfare programs—New York City is in trouble."[40] Drugs were widely available and used on the street, as the city was home to nearly 100,000 heroin addicts, a majority of the addicts in the United States.[41] Even the air was deadly for those with lung problems.[42] New York City's air was so polluted with "acrid fumes" from cars and New Jersey factories that sixty tons of soot fell on each square mile of the city every month.[43] Though everyone agreed New York was a "city in crisis," no one agreed on how to fix it.[44]

In this climate, New Yorkers had largely given up on finding solutions to their urban problems. Democratic machine politics ruled the city and members of the political elite were perceived as being concerned not with public welfare, but with their own. Political disinterest reigned in this hopeless climate. "The great mass of New Yorkers are not so much apathetic as they are accustomed to being ignored or dealt with as statistics, which is the same thing," Richard Whalen wrote. "They resignedly learn to tolerate the intolerable."[45] The city's politicians were often either boring, corrupt, inept, or a combination of the three. As the contest for mayor approached in 1965, most expected the election to be uneventful and unimportant. That changed with the entry of William F. Buckley into the race.

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[40] *New York: City in Crisis*, vii.
[41] Ibid., 172; Ibid., 30.
[42] Ibid., 178.
[43] *New York: City in Crisis*, 178; Alfred L. Malabre, Jr., "New York City: The Crux of the Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, 1 November 1965.
[44] *New York: City in Crisis*, v.
[45] Whalen, *A City Destroying Itself*, 24.

A Conservative Candidate for Mayor

William F. Buckley was something of a pariah in establishment Republican circles. Catholic, anti-communist, and conservative, Buckley had made a name for himself as America's preeminent conservative public intellectual. A polyglot born into a wealthy oil family transplanted from Texas to Connecticut, from an early age Buckley expressed conservative sentiments. At the age of 6, he wrote a passionate letter to the King of England demanding Great Britain repay the debts accrued to the United States during World War I.[46] In 1951 he published his controversial first book, *God and Man at Yale*, in which he attacked his alma mater for straying from its founding Judeo-Christian principles. *McCarthy and His Enemies*, a book defending Senator Joseph McCarthy and his tactics, followed soon after. As Buckley rose in stature and in the public sphere, he notably founded *National Review* in 1955 to serve as the conservative intellectual journal of record. As there was little to no unified conservative intellectual movement in the early 1950s, *National Review* was the first journal of its kind to reach a national readership base. Uniting such thinkers as Russell Kirk, Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, Frank Meyer, and Willmore Kendall, *National Review* rallied a vast array of conservatives to articulate the ideas, precepts, and opinions of American conservatism.

In 1965, Buckley was the editor of *National Review*, but by no means a household name. On June 4th, *The New York Times* reported that William F. Buckley, Jr. was considering running for mayor of New York as the Conservative Party candidate. This rumor originated with a column in *National Review* in which Buckley, commenting on the upcoming race for mayor, listed ten potential campaign planks in a "paradigmatic platform" for fixing New York.[47] The

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[46] Douglas Martin, "William F. Buckley Jr., Champion of Conservatism, Dies at 82," *The New York Times*, 27 February 2008.
[47] Buckley Diary Tape, 6 June 1965, Box 316, Folder 196, Buckley Papers.

provocative planks included eliminating federal taxes on minority business owners to spur economic growth, enrolling welfare recipients in street cleaning, legalizing gambling, and eliminating the minimum wage law for children.[48] After writing the column, Buckley's sister suggested they give it the title "Buckley for Mayor?" as a stunt to "get some fun out of it."[49] Buckley and those at *National Review* intended that the column be a joke, but Dan Mahoney and Bill Rusher of the Conservative Party of New York realized that a Buckley candidacy would present a unique chance for the party in 1965, and began actively considering recruiting Buckley for mayor.

The Conservative Party of New York was founded in 1962 by a small group of conservatives dissatisfied with the liberal bent of Republican politics in New York state, particularly as exemplified by incumbent Governor Nelson Rockefeller.[50] Despising Rockefeller and his cronies' liberal Republicanism, elitism, support for civil rights, and close ties to Wall Street, the party was founded to nominate conservative candidates to challenge such Republicans and push the Republican Party in a more conservative direction.[51] Founded by William "Bill" Rusher, a conservative activist and the publisher of *National Review*¸ the Conservative Party was strongly supported by William F. Buckley, who had himself been instrumental in its founding.[52] The Conservative Party had performed moderately well in its first major campaigns in New York

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[48] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 92-93.

[49] "My sister Priscilla came up with a suggestion that since I had written a paradigmatic platform, we get some fun out of it by putting there "Buckley for Mayor?" I wondered whether that was a subject of universal enough interest and consulted James McFadden, the assistant publisher, who said, after deliberation, "Why the hell not," so I let it go." Buckley Diary Tape, 6 June 1965, Box 316, Folder 196, Buckley Papers.

[50] Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party from Eisenhauer to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 84.

[51] Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 84; for a comprehensive history of the Conservative Party of New York, see Timothy J. Sullivan, *New York State and the Rise of Modern Conservatism: Redrawing Party Lines* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

[52] Timothy J. Sullivan, *New York State and the Rise of Modern Conservatism: Redrawing Party Lines* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 16; Buckley strongly supported the Conservative Party in the pages of *National Review* and provided organizers with advice and a wide-ranging support network.

City, as "[t]he conservative vote in the city ran to 50,184 in 1962 when David Jaquith ran for Governor, the first year out for the infant party . . . [and in 1964] Henry Paolucci, running for Senator, polled 122, 967 in the city."[53] The Conservative Party sought to build on these electoral successes in nominating a strong candidate for mayor of New York to face John Lindsay, who party members opposed "on an almost visceral level."[54]

After publishing the "Mayor, Anyone?" column, Buckley himself began considering who might be the Conservative Party's best candidate for mayor. He settled on Bill Rusher. "I had done everything in my power to persuade Bill Rusher to accept the designation," bemoaned Buckley after a dinner with Rusher, yet "[h]e refused, on grounds personal and professional."[55] After Rusher's refusal, Buckley considered running himself: "I kept asking myself what actually were the reasons why I should myself refuse to submit to the rigors of the candidacy. The reasons why not were obvious, but not compelling. Principal among them are a personal distaste for orthodox political calisthenics."[56] Despite his disdain for traditional politicking, as he talked through his objections, "it struck me that considering that there was not any chance at all that a Conservative Party candidate would be considered serious in the sense of actually hoping for election, it would be quite feasible to run an unorthodox campaign of the kind that would spare the candidate precisely those rigors that rendered the running especially obnoxious."[57] Buckley realized an insurgent candidacy could fundamentally alter the political playing field and expressed a desire to use the "leverage that a conservative candidate might have on this particular campaign to project more forcibly than might otherwise be possible the cogency of a

[53] Tom O'Hara and Paul Weissman, "New Hopefuls—O'Connor And Buckley," *New York Herald Tribune*, 24 June 1965.
[54] Sullivan, *New York State and the Rise of Modern Conservatism*, 57.
[55] Buckley Diary Tape, 6 June 1965, Box 316, Folder 196, Buckley Papers.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

conservative critique of the way in which New York has become almost paralyzed against reform."[58] After an evening wooing Rusher to run, Buckley found he had talked himself into running for mayor of New York City.

On June 24, 1965, William F. Buckley announced his candidacy for mayor of New York on the Conservative Party ticket. In a packed press conference, Buckley outlined his goals and the rationale for his campaign. In his opening remarks, Buckley sought to clarify his choice to run not as a Republican, but as a Conservative: "I am a Republican. And I intend, for so long as I find it possible to do so—which is into the visible future—to remain a Republican. I seek the honorable designation of the Conservative Party, because the Republican designation is not, in New York, available nowadays to anyone in the mainstream of Republican opinion."[59] Buckley devoted a significant portion of his campaign announcement to attacking Republican nominee John Lindsay for his liberalism and his refusal to support Goldwater in 1964. Buckley criticized the ideological promiscuity of John Lindsay, "who, having got hold of the Republican Party, now disdains the association; and spends his days, instead, stressing his acceptability to the leftwardmost party in New York, the Liberal Party."[60] He attacked Lindsay for refusing to endorse Goldwater for president after Lindsay had said earlier in 1964 that "[w]hoever the Republicans nominate is most certainly deserving of the support of all Republicans."[61] Buckley stressed that Lindsay's endorsement by the Liberal Party demonstrated that he was not a mainstream Republican, as the platforms of the two parties were diametrically opposed. He even claimed Lindsay was "no more representative of the body of Republican thought than the

[58] Buckley Diary Tape, 6 June 1965, Box 316, Folder 196, Buckley Papers.
[59] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 104.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 104-105; Letter from John Lindsay to Henry P. Durkin, 24 January 1964, Box 309, Folder 146, Buckley Papers.

Democratic party in Mississippi is representative of the Democratic party nationally."[62] Buckley opened his campaign as an attack on Lindsay and liberalism while claiming the mantle of mainstream Republicanism for himself.

Buckley's campaign announcement received widespread media attention, but it was met with particular fanfare by the *New York Times*. Upon Buckley's entry into the race, the *New York Times* editorial board asked, "What Makes Buckley Run?" In this editorial, the editors smugly condemned Buckley as a radical do-nothing figure, declaring, "Mr. Buckley is glib, assertive and usually impossible. His kind of Republicanism suffered devastating repudiation at the polls here and throughout the nation last November. We are sure the voters will show the same excellent judgment again this year."[63] After ruminating on Buckley's possible motivations for running, yet neglecting to reference his detailed platform for addressing the crises facing New York, the editorial board concluded that "the only plausible explanation left is that he, and the Conservatives, wish once again to do as much damage as they can to the liberals in the Republican Party. Since one of that party's leading liberals, Representative John V. Lindsay, is a candidate for Mayor now, the opportunity to do a spoiling job on him was irresistible."[64] "If anything was needed to confirm the soundness of his credentials as a liberal," declared the editors, "this opposing candidacy by the editor of the National Review, bible of the conservative movement, is gilt-edged proof."[65] This offhand disregard of the Buckley candidacy by the *New York Times* would only serve to enliven his followers and to elicit an animated retort from the man himself.

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[62] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 105; Richard L. Madden, "William Buckley in Race for Mayor," New York Times, 25 June 1965.
[63] "What Makes Buckley Run?" *New York Times*, 25 June 1965.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

In response to the *Times* editorial, Buckley wrote a scathing letter to the editor defending his candidacy and criticizing what he perceived as editorial bias. "To judge from your editorial," Buckley wrote, "you would have your readers believe that I am running for Mayor primarily in order to displease the *New York Times*. I could be coaxed into defending the proposition that such a career is among life's nobler callings, but I am in fact running not in order to annoy you but to propose certain reforms for the city of New York which are not being proposed by any of the other candidates."[66] Buckley proceeded to list in detail the planks of his program for the city, none of which, he noted, were acknowledged in the *Times* editorial.[67] The public met Buckley's letter with fanfare, with the positive support generated even among Democrats suggesting early cross-over appeal. In another letter published in response to Buckley's letter, a regular Democrat wrote in to the *Times* editorial board: "As a registered New York City Democrat who has voted for Democratic party candidates about 80 per cent of the time, I read William Buckley's letter of July 1 to you with great interest. I also read your very poor editorial to which Mr. Buckley referred."[68] For this citizen, the interchange was enough to cause him to reconsider his vote, for "[h]aving voted for so many Democratic party hacks in New York for so long, I had decided to vote for Mr. Lindsay this time. After reading Mr. Buckley's letter, my vote is undecided."[69] This exchange was the first of many instances throughout the campaign that the press would unwittingly provide Buckley with free publicity, despite their widespread opposition to his candidacy.[70]

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[66] William F. Buckley, "Letter to the Editor," *New York Times,* 1 July 1965.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ralph L. Josephs, "Real Issues in Race," *New York Times,* 7 July 1965.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Eva Williams, "Letter to the Editor," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 15 October 1965; Letter to William F. Buckley from Ralph McCabe, 30 October 1965, Box 293, Folder 5, Buckley Papers.

After the initial flurry of publicity surrounding Buckley's announcement, his nascent "Buckley for Mayor" campaign organization began planning its initial approach for promoting his candidacy and the conservative brand. Publicity was the pre-eminent early issue. "It is important that the name and position of Bill Buckley be made as widely known as possible, starting immediately," wrote key advisor Marvin Liebman in an early internal campaign memo. "Bill should be available for radio and television appearances . . . comments to the press on pertinent issues raised during July and August; [and] appearances before important public gatherings."[71] The Buckley campaign viewed its most receptive audiences as "older families, families with school age children, upscale households . . . [with] better than average education . . . white households, (and) Catholic households."[72] Their campaign colors were neon orange and black, and within the first two weeks the campaign placed an order for 50,000 orange "Buckley for Mayor" buttons and 25,000 orange bumper stickers, which was "only an initial order to fill the tremendous demand."[73] Campaign manager James Buckley summarized the goals of the Conservative Party and the Buckley campaign as threefold: presenting a conservative plan for municipal government, "educating the electorate in the temporal application of eternal truths; and . . . to secure the largest possible number of votes without compromise of ideological positions—with the strategic objective of knocking out the Liberal Party."[74] With an organization now in place, Buckley and his associates began planning their campaign strategy.

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[71] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Martin Burgess, Jr., Neal Freeman, J. Daniel Mahoney, James P. McFadden, Kieran O'Doherty, Regina Kelly, and Kathleen Mahoney from Marvin Liebman, "Meeting held at Overseas Press Club," 8 July 1965, Box 296, Folder 45, Buckley Papers.

[72] Charles Eaton, "Radio Advertising Proposal: William F. Buckley, Jr. Mayoralty Campaign," Box 311, Folder 155, Buckley Papers.

[73] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Martin Burgess, Jr., Neal Freeman, Jim Griffin, Rosemary Gunning, Regina Kelly, J. Daniel Mahoney, Kathleen Mahoney, Joanne Mantikos, Hugh Markey, Jim O'Doherty, Kieran O'Doherty and Bill Rusher from Marvin Liebman, "Campaign Materials and Television," 9 July 1965, Box 296, Folder 45, Buckley Papers.

[74] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Rosemary Gunning, Hugh Markey, and Daniel Mahoney from James Buckley, "Position Papers—thoughts and comments," 9 September 1965, Box 324, Folder 288, Buckley Papers.

The "Buckley for Mayor" campaign set out to transcend traditional party labels with the proposition that conservative beliefs, such as anti-communism, religious traditionalism, and limited government, were values that crossed party lines. Neil McCaffrey, a close friend and advisor of Buckley and a prominent publisher of conservative books, wrote in a July campaign memo that "[t]he kind of campaign Bill will be running will appeal as much to Democrats as Republicans. It will strike deeper chords and aim at a level at which Party labels dissolve."[75] McCaffrey sought to distance Buckley from the Goldwater campaign, writing that the Buckley campaign would present conservatism not as a niche political ideology, as did Goldwater, but instead as a universal approach to the political world.[76] By framing conservatism in this light, "Bill will be doing what Barry should have done."[77] The conservatives' early goals for the Buckley candidacy were nothing if not ambitious: "If the campaign goes well it will presage the Party realignment (under Republican auspices, we hope) on which the hope of a constitutional republic is riding."[78] Buckley echoed these sentiments in a confidential memo of his own, writing that "irrespective of whether the Conservative Party wins the election, it is the cradle of political reform . . . On its success the future hopes of the national Republican Party may very well depend; from which it may follow on its success, the future of the country may well depend."[79] By presenting conservatism as a universal philosophy and armed with wit, humor, and the willingness of the papers to publish every conservative broadside, William F. Buckley hoped his campaign would cause the defeat of John Lindsay, eclipse the vote total of the Liberal Party, and hasten the conservative realignment of the national Republican Party.[80]

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[75] Memo to Bill Buckley and Dan Mahoney from Neil McCaffrey, 7 July 1965, Box 293, Folder 5, Buckley Papers.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Confidential Memo to "Conservative Party Officials" from William F. Buckley, Jr., 8 September 1965, Box 297, Folder 47, Buckley Papers.
[80] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 299.

Chapter 2—The Major Issues: Crime, Education, Welfare, and Race

The Buckley mayoral campaign set out to provide common-sense conservative solutions to the many problems facing New York City. According to James Buckley, one of the essential goals of his brother's campaign was "[t]o formulate a comprehensive conservative position as to the management of cities in general, and the solution to New York's problems in particular."[81] To achieve these ends, the campaign scrupulously authored ten official position papers on the major municipal issues.[82] Written by a variety of conservative authors, each final paper was credited to William F. Buckley. A key role in the creation and editing of the position papers was played by Brent Bozell, a prominent conservative intellectual and the ghost writer of Barry Goldwater's influential manifesto, *The Conscience of a Conservative.* In addition to writing a number of position papers himself, Bozell oversaw the final editing stage of all the position papers to maintain stylistic conformity.[83] Reflecting on the goals for his position papers in *The Unmaking of a Mayor,* Buckley wrote that "[t]hey were—or at least sought to be—realistic: in that they sought to restore movement, to break up the log jam that had been caused by the conflicting interests of (a) politico-sociological abstractions, (b) organized political power, and (c) reality."[84] Each of the Buckley campaign position papers was released to the press, yet the papers on crime, education, and welfare received the lion's share of media attention and ignited the most heated debates of the campaign largely due to perceptions of an underlying racial subtext behind Buckley's positions.

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[81] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Rosemary Gunning, Hugh Markey, and Daniel Mahoney from James Buckley, "Position Papers—thoughts and comments," 9 September 1965, Box 324, Folder 288, Buckley Papers.
[82] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 170. The Buckley campaign released position papers on crime, education, welfare, housing, municipal finance, taxation, narcotics, water, transportation, and pollution.
[83] Memo to William F. Buckley, Rosemary Gunning, Hugh Markey, and Dan Mahoney from James Buckley, "Summary of agreed upon position papers," Box 317, Folder 202, Buckley Papers.
[84] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 170.

Crime and Law Enforcement

In 1965, New York City was one of the most dangerous cities in America.[85] In the midst of the war on crime, widespread allegations of police brutality against the New York Police Department led many minorities to view law enforcement as corrupt and discriminatory. Though contemporary issues of police brutality have been transformed by technology giving the public a window into arrests and encounters with police, no such technology existed in the 1960s. Claims of police brutality were almost impossible to prove and easy to dismiss, as they often were based only on the word of a criminal suspect against the word of an arresting officer. John Miles, a black activist and chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) local committee on police brutality, told a reporter from the *Herald Tribune* that "[n]ot all policemen are brutal . . . I am 25 years a witness to these wrongs and I know you don't know them. You don't even come to Harlem, and if you do you keep going . . . I don't know how I can make you understand the facts I have seen."[86] The difficulty of achieving justice for victims of police brutality was pervasive and complicated the narrative that "law and order" prevented crime.

The claims against the police department occurred in conjunction with a wider, sweeping revision of the rights of criminal defendants by the United States Supreme Court. Key decisions such as *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961) revised search and seizure laws, ruling that any evidence discovered during an unlawful arrest was not permissible in court.[87] *Escobedo v. Illinois* (1964) was another landmark decision that guaranteed the right of a criminal defendant to request and receive counsel.[88] This decision met a particularly thorny public response, as the defendant had

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[85] Eric Pace, "'True' Tally of Crime Pushes Rates Up Sharply: Burglaries Up 96.4% and Robberies 89.9% as 'Hidden' Data Emerge—Murders Statistically Unchanged." *New York Times*, 5 April 1966.
[86] James Lynn, "Again, the Pros and Cons of a Police Review Board." *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 July 1965.
[87] "The Police Have Rights, Too," *New York Times*, 28 May 1965.
[88] "Escobedo v. Illinois." *Oyez*, 30 January 2019.

admitted to committing a murder, but only after the police had refused his multiple requests for a lawyer.[89] These decisions highlighted the growing recognition of the rights of criminal defendants, yet they created a number of new procedural hurdles that were not always well received by law enforcement. A New York district attorney explained that major difficulties in implementation still remained: "A serious obstacle to immediate and vigorous law enforcement lies in the confused and muddled state of the law in areas such as search and seizure laws, wire tapping, confessions, [and] the right of the accused to counsel . . . What is essential to stem the tide of crime is . . . a resolution of doubt concerning the extent of the present powers."[90] The uncertain legal ground between the police and the people in turn fueled the calls for accountability for police brutality in New York City.

One idea popular among New York's African American community and more hotly debated in communities beyond was the creation of a "civilian review board," a proposal to appoint civilians to a board to review accusations of police brutality. The plan's promoters sought to provide an unbiased review of valid claims of police brutality, while its detractors claimed it was unnecessary, it leveled false claims that prevented policemen from doing their jobs, and it was a distraction from the city's dangerously high crime rate. The police routinely rejected calls for a review board, asserting that "the average citizen has neither the right nor the knowledge to question the performance of a policeman during his duty."[91] An excessive number of police brutality claims led some to accuse defendants of lying or falsifying accusations in order to reduce their sentences, as one black NYPD officer reported that claims were so common that "the chances are pretty good that when you make an arrest a charge of police brutality will

[89] "Escobedo v. Illinois." *Oyez*, 30 January 2019.
[90] *New York: City in Crisis*, 165-166.
[91] Ibid., 163.

be made."[92] Though not all accusations were true, the sheer volume of complaints against law enforcement led a youth coordinator in Harlem to declare "all these kids in Harlem can't be lying. These things do happen up here, and not a damn thing is being done about them."[93] The perception that local government was failing in the fight against both crime and police brutality resulted in widespread dissatisfaction across the local political spectrum.

The issue of police brutality that the review board proposal sought to address was not just limited to New York; it had gained widespread attention through televised abuses of members of the Civil Rights movement by police and was extensively debated in the aftermath. In a *U.S. News & World Report* article entitled "'Police Brutality'—How Much Truth—How Much Fiction?", F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover dismissed allegations of police brutality. "Our investigations indicate that a large number of police-brutality allegations have no basis in fact," he wrote. "Police brutality and police misuse of authority are rapidly becoming issues of the past."[94] For Hoover, who famously wiretapped Martin Luther King, opposed the Civil Rights movement, and despised its practice of civil disobedience, police brutality claims were nothing more than a spurious tool "being exploited by some selfish-minded, irresponsible men who apparently are concerned only with what they can gain today and are totally oblivious to the great disservice they are doing to their country."[95] Hoover directly attacked the methods of such civil rights activists and called for a backlash from outraged citizens: "The conscientious law-abiding citizen should rise in righteous anger against those who falsely cry 'police brutality' to cover their insidious scheming to gain something they covet but are not willing to acquire in the

[92] *New York: City in Crisis*, 28.
[93] Ibid.
[94] J. Edgar Hoover, "'Police Brutality'—How Much Truth—How Much Fiction?" *U.S. News & World Report*, v. 59, 27 September 1965.
[95] Ibid.

judicious way."[96] Hoover even linked claims of police brutality with communism, as "Communist adherents are schooled in methods of intimidating law enforcement. Whenever they are confronted by a law-enforcement officer, the word brutality is foremost upon their lips."[97] Hoover's claims were echoed by conservatives in New York. In a protest against the review board, seventy-five conservative demonstrators held picket signs reading "Why do Communist Worker, CORE and NAACP allege police brutality?" and "The police are our last line of defense against communism."[98]

The supporters of William F. Buckley stood firmly on the side of police and "law and order," while discounting claims of police brutality, often in racial terms. "If a Negro offender resists arrest," wrote one Buckley backer, "the pressure groups immediately scream 'Police Brutality!'"[99] Many such supporters saw this as a national issue, with "pressure groups" such as CORE and the NAACP interfering in local law enforcement. Another Buckley supporter mirrored J. Edgar Hoover's wariness of the Civil Rights movement and what he perceived as its embrace of lawlessness, writing "why should those who violently disobey the law in complete disregard of the majority's rights, in the name of 'civil rights,' be treated in the same manner as others who violently flout the law?"[100] Other letters to Buckley stressed the malignant effects of police brutality claims on police morale: "If police officers are subjected to double jeopardy in performance of their duty where certain minorities are involved—possible death or serious injury, plus persecution or alleged 'police brutality'—it could destroy their morale and seriously reduce their effectiveness in combatting crime."[101] The courts were also targets of Buckley

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[96] J. Edgar Hoover, "'Police Brutality'—How Much Truth—How Much Fiction?" *U.S. News & World Report*, v. 59, 27 September 1965.
[97] Ibid.
[98] "Against Civilian Review: 75 Picket at Police Hq." *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 May 1964.
[99] Letter to William F. Buckley from Thomas Kilpatrick, 8 October 1964, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[100] Letter to William F. Buckley from Albert B. Kates, 14 July 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[101] Ibid.

supporters. “Many policemen are discouraged and disgusted,” wrote one supporter, “because the courts seem slanted in favor of the criminal, and against justice, and often treat the policeman as though he were the offender instead of the apprehender of the criminal.”[102]

Buckley incorporated these conservative ideas into his campaign position paper on “Crime and Law Enforcement,” in which he staked out a strongly pro-police stance. The paper castigated the soaring crime rate in the city as an institutional failure on the part of municipal government. “The first mark of the civilized community,” it began, “is the ability to control its criminal element. By this standard New York City has lapsed into barbarism.”[103] Fixating on the issue of crime and how to solve it, it argued strongly in favor of police and dismissed claims of police brutality as a distraction from the real issue of crime in the city: “The problem in New York [City] is that there is too much crime—not that there is too much police brutality. And yet as the crime rate rises, the hue and cry in certain quarters is, of all things, for establishing machinery to harass not criminals, but policemen.”[104] Buckley blamed the increase in crime on “the increasing moral and social disorder that marks contemporary society, and is thus less a problem for civil magistrates than for our churchmen and educators.”[105] Only education and religion, argued Buckley, could be the forces to prevent crime from occurring in the first place.

Buckley’s position paper on crime also placed blame on the recent Supreme Court decisions in favor of the rights of criminal defendants, arguing that the decisions were expanding the rights of criminal defendants at the expense of the rights of their victims. Along with the issue of police brutality, Buckley viewed these legal changes as aimed at hampering the ability of

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[102] Letter to William F. Buckley from Thomas Kilpatrick, 8 October 1964, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[103] William F. Buckley, Jr. “Position Paper on Crime and Law Enforcement,” 13 October 1965, Box 298, Folder 60, Buckley Papers.
[104] William F. Buckley, Jr., “Guest Editorial,” *New York Daily News*, 15 July 1965.
[105] Buckley, “Position Paper on Crime and Law Enforcement,” Buckley Papers.

policemen to do their jobs, writing that "much of the trouble bringing criminals to justice can be traced to the decisions of the United States Supreme Court—for instance in the Mallory, Mapp, Escobeda cases—which . . . extend the implicit rights of the accused as guaranteed by the Constitution."[106] He criticized local courts as well, which he claimed "have applied the rules of search and seizure, and other evidentiary and procedural requirements, with an extravagant, often ludicrous technicality."[107] Buckley contended the result of such 'ludicrous' practices was that guilty criminals were let free to the detriment of public safety, as "our judicial system blinds its eyes on countless occasion to demonstrable guilt, and turns loose upon our streets the drug pusher, the sex offender, the mugger, the thief . . . the City's judicial system has defaulted on its primary duty to protect the public."[108] This failure to protect the public was the central tenant of Buckley's position paper and the key factor in his pro-police stance.

To address the problems facing crime and law enforcement in New York, Buckley's main proposals were to hire more police officers and to oppose a civilian review board.[109] To combat the perceived weakness of the judicial system toward criminal defendants, he proposed bringing "vigorous pressure to bear on local judges to abandon criminal-coddling policies, and resume the administration of justice."[110] One of the more memorable proposals was to publish the names and crimes of juvenile offenders guilty of "serious offenses," as well as the names of their parents to promote parental responsibility and accountability, a practice he cites as resulting in a 50% decrease in juvenile crime in Helena, Montana.[111] The final major proposal was to increase bounties for informers and to introduce payments for witnesses to testify as a means of

[106] Buckley, "Position Paper on Crime and Law Enforcement," Buckley Papers.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

incentivizing greater public participation in the administration of justice.[112] "Of all the crises now gripping New York," concluded the position paper, "the emergence of Crime Triumphant is the gravest. The challenge to a new Administration could not be plainer: it is to make New York habitable."[113]

Education, Integration, and Busing

New York public schools were divided by battles over integration and busing. As organizations such as the NAACP and CORE increased calls to break down *de facto* patterns of segregation in the city, the local board of education agreed to take steps to promote integration of the school system.[114] Despite being indefinite and allowing for a year to determine how to best integrate New York schools, this agreement prompted a fiery response from white New York parents against what they viewed as the excesses of the Civil Rights movement. This fight was led by the local Parents and Taxpayers Association (PAT). Rosemary Gunning, the 1965 Buckley ticket nominee for president of the city council, founded PAT to oppose busing and other integration efforts in New York, despite the fact that she had no children of her own.[115] Gunning described busing, one of the proposed methods of transporting students by bus to school in order to achieve more racially-balanced student bodies, as detrimental to the education of the children. "In attempting to achieve racial balance, our school officials are destroying education," she claimed. "It would be an abdication of all our rights and at best a waste of time for our children to submit to politically inspired sociological experiments."[116] PAT based its arguments against busing and integration in terms of what was best for the children, yet historian

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[112] Buckley, "Position Paper on Crime and Law Enforcement," Buckley Papers.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 167.
[115] Fred M. Hechinger, "Education: The Impact of the Boycott," *New York Times*, 20 September 1964.
[116] Myron Feinsilber, "N.Y. Integration Plans Raise Ire, No Results," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 August 1964.

Clarence Taylor notes that no integration proposals would satisfy the organization, as "Parents and Taxpayers . . . publicly opposed *any* effort to desegregate the public schools."[117] "Playing the race card in an attempt to attract white parents," writes Taylor, "PAT claimed that children would spend part of their day in dangerous neighborhoods. According to PAT, [busing] would increase racial tension by forcing integration."[118] With these techniques, Rosemary Gunning and PAT set out to oppose busing and integration efforts in New York with protests and boycotts.

The year 1964 marked the climax of school integration battles in New York. As PAT's rhetoric about the prospect of white children being bused to lower quality schools with large minority populations worried many white families, boycotts were planned against the school board's proposed integration measures. The original integration plan was relatively minor, only affecting eight predominately white and eight predominantly black schools, yet concerns about safety were rampant. Many whites viewed crime as intrinsically tied to minorities, thus the prospect of being forced by the city to send their children to integrated schools was a significant rationale for them to leave the city entirely. [119] As PAT began using school boycotts to protest integration, promoters of integration staged their own counter-boycotts of schools, resulting in hundreds of thousands of students staying home during the respective days the boycotts occurred. The largest PAT boycott in September 1964 resulted in nearly six hundred thousand white students staying home over the course of two days.[120] During the boycott white parents picketed Harlem schools with placards declaring "Children Must Not Be Political Pawns" and "Civil Rights for All—Not Forced Busing."[121] Another sign held by the white protesters, a sign

[117] Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door,* 167-168. Emphasis added.
[118] Ibid., 168.
[119] Henry Logeman, "White Pickets in N.Y.: We, Too Shall Overcome," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 16 September 1964.
[120] Ibid.
[121] "Boycott Cuts Attendance in N.Y. Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 September 1964.

clearly in response to the progress of the Civil Rights movement and hinting at the racial motivations of the PAT boycott movement, unapologetically proclaimed "We, Too Shall Overcome."[122] As busing proposals were shelved in late 1964 and with all the mayoral candidates in 1965 favoring other methods of integration, the boycotts and the protests abated, but the scars and underlying resentments brought forth in their wake remained in New York.

Among conservatives, fears of the potential consequences of integration outweighed the benefits, as their widespread perception, whether qualified or not, was that the net result of integration would place their children in danger at the expense of quality education. Under these auspices, busing and education became synonymous among whites with the rights of parents and their hopes for their children. Opposition to busing was often conflated with racism, and though some opponents of integration were racists, the central emotion fueling anti-integration efforts was fear. One supporter writing to Buckley saw the entire issue as one of school choice: "Obviously, Negroes should have the right to attend any publicly-maintained school their parents prefer. But so, too, should white people."[123] The abolition of choice, he went on to argue, was the most 'outrageous' aspect of the busing proposal in the minds of white parents, as "[t]o insist that white children must attend schools not of their parents' choice, in neighborhoods requiring bus transportation, is an outrageous abridgement of their 'civil rights!'"[124]

Any issue concerning children is likely to provoke strong reactions, and this situation was no different. Despite crime and safety being the main concerns of white families, their fierce criticisms of integration could all too easily be seen as criticisms steeped in prejudice. The Buckley campaign, however, tried to shift the focus away from the objecting white parents to

[122] Henry Logeman, "White Pickets in N.Y.: We, Too Shall Overcome," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 16 September 1964.
[123] Letter to William F. Buckley from Albert B. Kates, 14 July 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[124] Ibid.

what they saw as misguided school officials. “The purpose of education is to educate, not to promote a synthetic integration by numerically balancing ethnic groups in the classroom,” the position paper on education stated.[125] Written by Rosemary Gunning, the paper argued that sudden, artificial measures such as busing only led to white flight, and would do nothing in the long-term to further the cause of integration.[126] Although no other candidates were actually endorsing busing, Buckley used this hot-button issue to tackle a sensitive subject the other candidates were uncomfortable addressing, as he knew how explosive this issue was with white voters. The central argument of the position paper echoed PAT in condemning integration efforts as aimed not at improving education, but as foolhardy social experiments. The position paper suggested that any form of integration would lead to a decrease in the quality of education, belaying the assumption that non-white students would harm the educational climate of integrated schools and thus cause white parents to “become bitter, and even hostile, towards the minority groups whose pressures they hold accountable for unnatural arrangements.”[127] If this proposed integration were to occur without considering the qualms of white parents, the paper argued, such action would “cultivate hostility rather than diminish it.”[128] This statement drew a clear distinction between education and integration, arguing that pursuing integration had no direct link to the cause of providing students with quality education. It implicitly assumed that non-white students would lag behind their white peers, even proposing that “[t]he Board of Education should address itself courageously to the special needs of students of differing race, background and training,” in order to combat such educational differences.[129] Yet the underlying

[125] William F. Buckley, Jr. “Position Paper on Public Education,” 5 October 1965, Box 310, Folder 149, Buckley Papers.
[126] William F. Buckley, Jr. “File—Position Papers Notes,” Box 324, Folder 288, Buckley Papers.
[127] Buckley, “Position Paper on Public Education,” Buckley Papers.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

presumption guiding this paper, beyond issues of race, was that students of differing abilities could not be taught in the same classroom. While the paper notes that "[a]s an obvious example, Puerto Rican children should be taught English before being plopped into classes conducted in English," it does not take into account the reality that not all minority students are underperforming, yet at the same time it cites this assumption as the primary argument against the "unnatural arrangements" caused by the integration of New York schools.[130] The Buckley campaign position paper on education toed the conservative line while making little effort to solve the problem of how to actually succeed in integrating New York City.

Welfare

In 1962, an article in the *New York Herald Tribune* dubbed New York City the "Welfare Capital of the World."[131] In the space of the three years since that article was published, the number of New Yorkers on welfare increased 40% to number nearly half a million.[132] Partially due to the large influx of immigrants and the generous payments available upon arrival in the city, the New York welfare system was one of the oldest and most complex in the nation, with a history stretching back nearly one hundred years and an inefficient bureaucracy with nearly one hundred agencies.[133] The disarray of the city's welfare bureaucracy led one welfare worker to rhetorically ask: "Where else do you have such problems as we have in New York City?"[134] The welfare system discouraged recipients from pursuing employment, as it deducted any earnings from welfare checks, which many viewed as disincentivizing the pursuit of stable, long-term employment.[135] "Why should I work, I get more on the Welfare" was an extremely common

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[130] Buckley, "Position Paper on Public Education," Buckley Papers.
[131] William G. Wing, "New York City: Welfare Capital of the World," *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 December 1962.
[132] Alfred L. Malabre, Jr., "New York City: The Crux of the Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, 1 November 1965.
[133] William G. Wing, "New York City: Welfare Capital of the World," *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 December 1962.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Pete Hamill and Francis Lee, "Welfare Wasteland: A Fresh Look," *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 November 1964.

refrain among relief recipients interviewed by the *Herald Tribune* in 1964.[136] The rapid increase in the number of people on welfare in New York each year was seen by many as indicative of the wider failures of the system. "Public assistance is a symptom of failure," admitted Wilbur J. Cohen, a chief New Deal architect of the American welfare system and incumbent Assistant Secretary for Legislation of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1964. "As a society, we have failed many people."[137] Overburdened, understaffed, and admittedly broken, the welfare system would be a common target for the ire and criticism of William F. Buckley throughout the mayoral campaign.

Although individuals on both sides of the political aisle acknowledged the problems of the welfare state, only conservatives tied the concept of welfare to the idea of moral decline. The Buckley campaign portrayed welfare as an exemplary illustration of the failure of liberalism and big government. The first draft of the Buckley campaign's position paper on welfare contained highly racialized language equating poverty, crime, and minorities. The position paper on welfare was written by "an intelligent young lawyer called Charles Rice," who would eventually achieve the position of Professor Emeritus at Notre Dame Law School.[138] Rice's draft attacked the existing welfare program with a tenor of moral indignation which condemned the "immorality" of welfare recipients.[139] It opened with a discussion of crime in the city, declaring that "although Negroes are only 11% of the population, they outnumber whites in arrests in three of the five violent crime categories. Unofficial estimates given by the Mayor's office in New

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[136] Pete Hamill and Francis Lee, "Welfare Wasteland: A Fresh Look," *New York Herald Tribune,* 15 November 1964.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Rice's authorship of the Welfare Position Paper has never before been mentioned in any study of the Buckley campaign. Heavily involved in conservative causes throughout the sixties and beyond, for more on Rice see Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative America, 1950-1985.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
[139] Memo to Brent Bozell from James Buckley, 10 September 1965, Box 324, Folder 288, Buckley Papers; Charles Rice, "Welfare Position Paper Draft," Box 324, Folder 297, Buckley Papers.

York indicates that 80% of all crime in New York is committed by Negroes and Puerto Ricans."[140] After presenting these statistics, Rice links them directly to the issue of welfare with a moralistic, albeit flawed, repetition of conservative dogma on the insidious nature of welfare programs: "It is little wonder that increasing negro [*sic*] dependence upon welfare has paralleled an increasing rate of Negro crime."[141]

The first draft of the welfare position paper centered upon the idea that welfare was inherently immoral and promoted vice and depravity. To support this moralistic argument the paper draws on Franklin Roosevelt's 1935 State of the Union speech, in which the President warned of the long-term dangers of an overdependence on welfare, as "the lessons of history . . . show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber."[142] "New York City's welfare program . . . subsidizes the lazy, the immoral, and the cheat," wrote Rice, who proceeded to directly link these unsavory characteristics with African Americans in the succeeding sentence. "If we are to make a realistic effort to advance the legitimate cause of civil rights, which means the cause of meaningful equal opportunity in an orderly society, we must address ourselves first to the correction of our welfare system."[143] The paper even went as far as to condemn mothers on welfare as unfit to raise their own children, proposing that "it is time that the welfare rules were revised to provide for the removal of children from promiscuous mothers who make a career of bearing illegitimate offspring. Such children would be far better off in foster homes or in properly conducted public facilities than in such private schools of immorality."[144] Ironically, the

[140] Charles Rice, "Welfare Position Paper Draft," Box 324, Folder 297, Buckley Papers.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

paper concludes with a call for "the strengthening of the Negro family" and "family solidarity and virtue" directly following the paragraph championing the virtue of dividing families by taking children away from their parents.[145]

After reading the draft, James Buckley proposed that the racial language be omitted from the position paper. In a memo to Brent Bozell, James Buckley wrote that "the racial statistics and civil rights implications should be eliminated, for purposes of this particular paper, as purely racial questions are irrelevant to how one should handle persons receiving Welfare payments."[146] James Buckley did not reject Rice's thesis in the memo; his only mention of the issues discussed in the paper was in noting that "[t]he relationship between welfare and crime is an important one, but it was decided that this correlation should appear later in the paper."[147] Further in the memo, James Buckley admitted that to equate race, crime, and welfare could lead to talk of a racial bias on behalf of the campaign, as the use of "such statistics could be damaging in the light of the fact that the important positions taken thus far by Bill have all specifically involved racial problems."[148] This was one of the first acknowledgements of how currents of racial politics ran beneath the policies endorsed by Buckley, a subject fraught with debate during the campaign and which will be examined later in this chapter. Though the racial statistics were not included in the final draft of the position paper, their inclusion in the never before cited first draft is useful for examining the basis upon which the position paper was written, especially within the context of the later public outcry against Buckley's welfare program.

The final draft of the welfare position paper contained much of the text of the first draft, but the inflammatory language regarding race and civil rights was eliminated, and the tenor of

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[145] Charles Rice, "Welfare Position Paper Draft," Box 324, Folder 297, Buckley Papers.
[146] Memo to Brent Bozell from James Buckley, 10 September 1965, Box 324, Folder 288, Buckley Papers.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

moral righteousness was toned down. The final version argued that welfare payments were only justified in "emergency" cases where private entities could not provide adequate support for the poor.[149] Disbursements in any case other than emergency necessity were portrayed as discouraging work and encouraging dependency, as exemplified by the paper's condemnation of the policy of deducting earnings from welfare checks: "The result is a clear economic inducement to idleness."[150] Buckley ties this inducement in with the lack of a residency requirement for welfare, asserting that the three year, 40% increase in welfare recipients was due to the influx of "thousands of persons who either do not desire to work, or who cannot work . . . to New York, often with large families, leaving areas where unemployment is less severe than here; where housing is less scarce; where families are in a position to provide help; and stream into this festering city."[151] Buckley declared that as many as 3% of welfare recipients were "able-bodied" and "permitted to share in the public largesse without being asked to perform work on public projects, or even to enlist in vocational training programs."[152] By allowing such individuals to receive payments without doing anything for them, Buckley claimed "[t]he City thus positively contributes to their demoralization."[153] He also argued that welfare contributed to family breakdown due to the system's policy of penalizing marriages by slashing disbursements in half for individuals who chose to marry, thus disincentivizing marriage and family life. Under these auspices, wrote Buckley, "[i]llegitimacy, and promiscuity are therefore subtly promoted by the existing arrangements."[154]

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[149] William F. Buckley, Jr. "Position Paper on Welfare Program," 1 October 1965, Box 310, Folder 149, Buckley Papers.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

Buckley's plan to fix the welfare system included a number of proposals designed to appeal to the conservative base by reining in spending and waste. He proposed implementing a one-year residency requirement, allowing welfare recipients to work outside jobs without those earnings being deducted from their payments to incentivize employment, as well as mandatory enrollment in trade schools.[155] As an alternative to vocational programs, Buckley proposed that all "able bodied" welfare recipients could "work on public projects, neighborhood rehabilitation projects, etc., for which they should receive a few extra dollars per week."[156] Also included was the obligatory promise to reduce welfare fraud by halting payments to ineligible recipients.[157] These proposals emphasized the importance of work to break the cycle of welfare dependency.

One of Buckley's welfare proposals outshone and overshadowed the rest. Hotly debated among the candidates and among the news media after its release in the final weeks of the campaign, Buckley's most well-known and controversial welfare plank suggested "relocating chronic welfare cases outside the City limits."[158] Buckley proposed New York City invest in "great and humane rehabilitation centers" where welfare recipients could enter vocational training outside of the city limits at the expense of the city.[159] This was the second prong of Buckley's residency and rehabilitation solution to the problem of welfare, but it provoked a campaign firestorm. By proposing that New York deport or remove its welfare recipients, an idea only added in the final draft of the position paper, Buckley based his proposal for welfare rehabilitation centers on his similar proposal for rehabilitation centers for narcotics addicts. Many in the public, however, failed to see those in poverty as bearing the same need for

[155] Buckley, "Position Paper on Welfare Program," Buckley Papers.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

institutionalized "rehabilitation" as those addicted to heroin.[160] As this proposal would become a key issue of the campaign, Buckley hoped to demonstrate to his supporters that he was willing to propose creative solutions to combat the problems facing New York City.

Race and White Backlash

One of William F. Buckley's key objectives during his campaign was to completely avoid racial and ethnic appeals by treating voters not as monolithic voting blocs, but as individuals with independent needs, judgments, and voices. Expounding upon this fundamental idea of his campaign, Buckley told the *Herald Tribune* that "the time has come to ask people to try to transcend, where politics is concerned, their racial or ethnic backgrounds, and simply vote for the person he thinks will do most for New York."[161] Buckley was not afraid to bluntly discuss hot button issues which his opponents refused to talk about due to their fear of alienating voters. After the election, Buckley credited much of his success to this ability: "I had working for me . . . an invaluable advantage, namely that I did not expect to win the election, and so could afford to violate the taboos."[162] Buckley's supporters embraced his devious and often humorous violation of political orthodoxy. "You don't have to kow-tow to minority pressure groups," wrote one Buckley backer. "You know very well that, come hell or high water, you're not going to get their votes even if you out-dance and out-baby-kiss your 'liberal' opponents."[163] Despite Buckley's promise not to campaign along racial or ethnic lines, his liberal opponents accused his policy proposals on crime, education and welfare of disproportionately targeting minority residents.

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[160] William F. Buckley, Jr. "Position Paper on Narcotics Crisis," 25 October 1965, Box 310, Folder 148, Buckley Papers. Buckley proposed quarantining narcotics addicts in treatment centers and treating them with methadone.
[161] Russ Gustaitis, "Buckley: 'Thinking Man's Choice,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1965.
[162] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 272-273.
[163] Letter to William F. Buckley from Albert B. Kates, 14 July 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.

This perception led to widespread claims from the left that the Buckley campaign was subtly encouraging racism and attracting racist adherents. In response to reports that one of his supporters had complained about "niggers in Prospect Park," Buckley disavowed all racist supporters, declaring that "if such a person does exist, I have a message for him, and it is this: 'Buster, I don't want your vote. If you think I'm your man, you're mistaken. Go off to the fever swamps and find yourself another candidate.'"[164] Despite Buckley's strong public disavowal of racist supporters, he still received support from racists. The extent of this narrow support cannot be accurately judged, however, as the Lindsay campaign actively engaged in race-baiting tactics against Buckley, such as releasing anonymous racist letters supporting the Buckley candidacy.[165] Though the number of Buckley's racist supporters was a small fraction of his total support, his campaign's inability to kill the narrative that it attracted racists marred its public image.

Throughout the campaign, journalists described the rising number of potential votes for Buckley as a white backlash, as nearly all of his policies angered and alienated minorities while energizing the white middle class. "In a sense, the anticipated 'white backlash' votes that failed to come to Mr. Goldwater's rescue in 1964 appears to be having a delayed reaction in favor of Mr. Buckley in New York," wrote journalist Robert J. Donovan in the *Journal-American*. "Many of the Democratic conservatives, and Republican conservatives as well, who will vote for Mr. Buckley will do so because of his stand on issues clearly related to the racial question. His stand on these issues is the very opposite of what the Negroes are demanding."[166] The same day that article was published, Buckley claimed he would support a white "backlash" against Adam Clayton Powell and other "demagogic" black leaders, including the March on Washington

[164] Buckley Draft of Statement, Box 318, Folder 212, Buckley Papers.
[165] Letter to a Fellow-New Yorker from Joseph M. Wysocki, Box 93, Folder 98, Lindsay Papers.
[166] Robert J. Donovan, "Buckley 'Threat'—An Analysis," *New York Journal-American,* 21 October 1965.

organizer Bayard Rustin.[167] Buckley accused Powell of "constantly play[ing] on the entrenched hostility in the Negro community to all white people" and Ruskin of "upsetting the entire American economic structure to advance the cause of the Negro."[168] Buckley couched his "white backlash" remarks in language aimed at specific leaders rather than at the entire black community, yet his pronouncement further alienated many African American voters.[169]

Buckley's backlash comments raised an uproar in New York's African American community. Civil rights icon Jackie Robinson weighed in on the controversy, charging the Buckley campaign with subtly promoting bigotry among whites against minorities. "If they get a substantial number of the votes here in this city, it could only mean that we have a lot more bigots than we figured that we had here in New York City," Robinson said in a radio interview days before the election. "Everything is so subtle that Buckley talks about, when he talks about busing, when he talks about welfare, when he talks about everything that pertains to the Negro. It's subtle, but you know exactly what he's talking about."[170] Other black New Yorkers found Buckley's comments suggesting African Americans lacked the ability to prevent themselves from being manipulated by demagogues demeaning. "The Negro in New York has no leaders, we bow down to no one," declared one black New Yorker in a rejoinder to Buckley's backlash comments. "When we think an injustice has been done we organize with each other not any leader . . . Your smart talk and clever debates means nothing, we hate your very guts, every one of us."[171] Not all minority individuals expressed such strong sentiments against Buckley, but the vast majority viewed him in a negative light.

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[167] Paul Weissman, "Buckley's Stand on A 'White Backlash,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 October 1965.
[168] Ibid.
[169] "Brutish Instincts," *New York Times*, 29 October 1965.
[170] Transcript of Jackie Robinson on WINS Radio, 31 October 1965, Box 318, Folder 212, Buckley Papers.
[171] Anonymous letter to William F. Buckley, Box 315, Folder 185, Buckley Papers.

Journalists pounced upon the racial dimensions of the Buckley candidacy, most notably when the *New York Times* editorial board condemned the Buckley campaign for allegedly unleashing the "Brutish Instincts" of New York City.[172] "For weeks William F. Buckley Jr. has been pandering to some of the more brutish instincts in the community," the editorial began, "though his appeals to racism and bigotry have been artfully masked."[173] The editorial centered upon Buckley's proposals as well as his backlash comments, castigating Buckley for urging "a 'white backlash' against Negro leaders ranging from the demagogic Adam Clayton Powell to the vastly more thoughtful Bayard Ruskin."[174] Long an adversary of the Buckley candidacy, the *New York Times* endorsed John Lindsay a week prior to the editorial.[175] In making this claim, the *Times* mirrored Lindsay's accusation that "[i]n the streets, the Buckley campaign becomes a racist campaign" and repeated Lindsay's clarification that he was "not saying Mr. Buckley personally is a racist."[176] The *Times* also repeated the dogma of the Democrats for Lindsay organization, which publicly stated that "[w]hile we believe that Buckley himself may be innocent of the racism, hatred and viciousness of many of his supporters, he provides the rallying point for all that is ugly and hateful in New York."[177] Attacks of racism against Buckley were based on perception rather than concrete evidence; Democrats such as Abraham Beame's campaign manager condemned Lindsay's accusing the Buckley campaign of racism as purely political, calling it "irresponsible" political mudslinging that "must be stopped."[178]

In the days following the editorial, Buckley responded with a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. He adopted an incredulous tone in reply to the accusations of "masked

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[172] "Brutish Instincts," *New York Times*, 29 October 1965.
[173] "Super-Patriotism a la Buckley," *New York Times*, 23 October 1965.
[174] "Brutish Instincts," *New York Times*, 29 October 1965.
[175] "Mr. Lindsay for Mayor," *New York Times,*14 October 1965.
[176] Paul Weissman, "Lindsay Tags Buckley 'Ultra-Right,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 October 1965.
[177] "Brutish Instincts," *New York Times*, 29 October 1965.
[178] Thomas P. Ronan, "Costello Scored on Religious Issue," *New York Times*, 17 October 1965.

bigotry," querying, "What brutish instincts am I appealing to? Come now, my fair-minded friends, tell me. Are these appeals so artfully disguised that they are only penetrable to your editorials?"[179] In reference to his comments on problems specifically facing African Americans, Buckley cited the sociological Moynihan Report, conducted by prominent liberal intellectual Daniel Patrick Moynihan, as source material for many of his claims, declaring "I have not, as it happens, said a single thing about the Negro problem in Harlem that hasn't been said by others whom you have not, so far as I am aware, done one of your hippopotamus-walks over."[180] Continuing in a gently mocking tone, Buckley bade the editors "be good enough to advise me what are the brutish instincts to which I appeal, I promise to be so compliant as to attempt to persuade you that they are not brutish at all, that rather they are good, decent instincts, good for you, for me, for New York City; or else, failing that, I shall publicly repent."[181] In turn, the editorial staff responded that "[t]hose instincts are fear, ignorance, racial superiority, religious antagonism, contempt for the weak and afflicted and hatred for those different from oneself."[182] With this broadside released only days before the election, Buckley issued no retort except to declare in the debate that evening, "If I become Mayor . . . the first thing I'd do is string a net under the editors' windows at the New York Times."[183] With this, the dispute between Buckley and the *New York Times* was laid to rest.

Questions of race and racism have always been present in discussions and studies of Buckley's mayoral campaign. Although it has generally been acknowledged that Buckley himself was not a racist, his campaign did certainly attract racists, who in turn Buckley publicly

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[179] William F. Buckley, Jr., "Buckley's Views on Anti-Vietnam Protests," *New York Times,* 29 October 1965.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] "Brutish Instincts," *New York Times,* 29 October 1965.
[183] Pete Hamill, "The Buckley Act," *New York Post,* 26 October 1965.

disavowed. The question of whether Buckley or his surrogates used any kind of gesturing or dog-whistle tactics during the campaign to gain the support of racists, both within New York and beyond, has until the present been a continuing matter of debate, as no concrete evidence has been presented either in the affirmative or the negative. An unpublished confidential memo in the Buckley Papers, however, is groundbreaking in suggesting that agents within the Buckley campaign did indeed surreptitiously seek the support of racists while publicly stating otherwise. In the memo, authored by Neal Freeman, Buckley's personal assistant and body man, Freeman wrote: "Buckley is unabashedly pro-police, *with all its implications for the race question*, the structure of the review board, the prevailing mentality of the bench and the child disciplinarians."[184] The phrasing of this never-before published memo is all-inclusive, as it implied Buckley's strong support for law enforcement affirmed that on racial issues, Buckley would always side with the whites over the blacks. This suggests the Buckley campaign sought to attract, through implication, the votes of racists. After this statement, Freemen went on to say that "[w]e must not complicate this issue: our identification will be largely that of the pro-police candidate; we must get this message across."[185] Sent to campaign advisor Marvin Liebman and ccd to Conservative Party president Dan Mahoney and William F. Buckley, this memo affirms that while Buckley and the members of his campaign staff were not racists themselves, they did pursue a covert dog-whistle strategy to win the votes of the extreme right.

[184] Memo to Marvin Liebman from Neal Freeman, cc Bill Buckley and Dan Mahoney, 19 July 1965, Box 296, Folder 45, Buckley Papers. Emphasis added.
[185] Ibid.

Chapter 3—The Campaign

In the months between the announcement of the Buckley candidacy on June 25th and the Democratic primary on September 15th, the Buckley campaign kept a low public profile, expanded its donor base, and made plans to begin serious campaigning only after the Democratic primary. The Buckley campaign's initial donor base was predominately comprised of Goldwater associates and long-time conservatives.[186] With unlimited access to long lists of major conservative donors, the Buckley campaign calculated that it would need to raise a dollar per vote.[187] With only $35,000 cash on hand in July, Buckley admitted he could only win if he raised more money, but tacitly acknowledged that he would not be able to compete with Lindsay's fundraising totals, as Lindsay had already spent $534,177 prior to the Democratic primary.[188] In a nationally distributed fundraising letter, James Buckley framed the upcoming race for mayor as "the battle for the survival of the American two-party system."[189] Emphasizing the national consequences of the fight to engage supporters outside of New York, he warned readers that "if John V. Lindsay is elected mayor of New York City in November, and if conservatives do not register their strength, his brand of 'Republicanism' is apt to control the next presidential convention and spell an end to a meaningful opposition."[190] Buckley stressed that the campaign needed to make extensive use of television and radio, and set a fundraising goal of $250,000 to achieve these ends by October 1st.[191] In concluding his letter, he reiterated the far-reaching

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[186] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Martin Burgess, Jr., Neal Freeman, J. Daniel Mahoney, James P. McFadden, Kieran O'Doherty, Regina Kelly, and Kathleen Mahoney from Marvin Liebman, "Recommendations," 30 June 1965, Box 296, Folder 45, Buckley Papers.
[187] "James Buckley to A Fellow Conservative," Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[188] M.C. Blackman, "The Other Campaigners," *New York Herald Tribune,* 19 July 1965; James F. Clarity, "Campaign Spending: Lindsay, $534,177," *New York Herald Tribune,* 9 September 1965.
[189] "James Buckley to A Fellow Conservative," Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.

national implications of the campaign by declaring: "This will not be a local campaign . . . All Americans will know about this fight, just as all Americans will be affected by the outcome."[192] With the endorsement of Claire Boothe Luce and the opening of a new headquarters in Manhattan, the Buckley campaign charged into September with a rudimentary organization, respectable fundraising totals, and a local message with national implications.[193]

On September 15th, Abraham Beame won an upset victory in the Democratic mayoral primary. Beame, the incumbent city controller, was a moderate, fiscally-minded New York machine Democrat. "This is a blow to the Conservative Party," wrote William F. Buckley in the aftermath of Beame's win.[194] Buckley feared Beame's promise to balance the city's budget would attract votes from his conservative column and splinter the conservative vote, while liberal Democrats would reject Beame's moderation, abandon their party, and vote for Lindsay on the Liberal Party line.[195] Due to the perceived potential of Beame to both fuel the fortunes of Lindsay and the Liberal Party and decrease conservative vote totals, Rosemary Gunning observed that "[t]he Beame-O'Connor ticket is formidable and presents serious problems in the attainment of our goals."[196]

With the nomination of Beame, the campaign season should have commenced in earnest, yet within hours the major New York newspapers had stopped printing. The New York City

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[192] "James Buckley to A Fellow Conservative," Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[193] "Mrs. Luce Says She'll Join Buckley-For-Mayor Group," *New York Times*, 7 September 1965. In her endorsement of Buckley's candidacy, Luce declared "[j]ust once or twice in a century, a man appears on the political scene who is brilliant, witty, courageous, honest, and articulate. What a wonderful thing it is to be on his side of the political barricades"; Richard J.H. Johnson, "William Buckley Opens Headquarters," *New York Times,* 31 August 1965.
[194] William F. Buckley, "Notes (after the fact) from a Diary (never written)," Box 314, Folder 173, Buckley Papers.
[195] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Martin Burgess, Jr., Neal Freeman, Jim Griffin, Rosemary Gunning, Regina Kelly, Marvin Liebman, J. Daniel Mahoney, Kathleen Mahoney, Joanne Manikos, Hugh Markey, Jim O'Doherty, Kieran O'Doherty, and Bill Rusher from Rosemary R. Gunning, "Consideration of Campaign Issues and Techniques," Box 323, Folder 271, Buckley Papers.
[196] Ibid.

newspaper strike of 1965 lasted from September 16th – October 10th, resulting in a twenty-five-day news blackout during which New Yorkers had extremely limited access to print news sources. Beginning as a walkout by the *New York Times* employee union over wages and job security, the employees of the other members of the New York Publishers Association went on strike as well in a show of solidarity. In addition to the *New York Times*, the strike shuttered the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *New York Journal-American*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York World Telegram & Sun*, the *Long Island Star-Journal*, and the *Long Island Press*.[197] The only paper in continuous operation throughout the strike was the *New York Post*, which had left the Publishers Association during the previous newspaper strike in 1963.[198] In a city where New Yorkers primarily depended on the papers for their news, with many routinely reading multiple papers each day, the newspaper strike was widely referred to as a news "blackout."[199] New Yorkers principally turned to television and radio to stay informed.

Live televised debates would become central to the campaign, as they offered viewers direct, unfiltered access to the ideas, personalities, and demeanors of the candidates. The Buckley campaign viewed the vacuum created by the newspaper strike as a unique opportunity to speak directly to the people, to dominate the headlines, and to convince the public that Buckley was, in the words of a campaign advisor, "seriously out to win this thing."[200] This was an opportunity for Buckley to showcase his lightning wit and deft Yale debate skills, which he notably applied to James Baldwin in a series of televised debates earlier in the year to rave reviews from the public. Buckley's debate style combined fact-based argumentation, biting

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[197] James F. Tracy, "The News About the Newsworkers: Press Coverage of the 1965 American Newspaper Guild Strike Against the *New York Times*," *Journalism Studies* 5, no. 4 (2004), 452.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid., 460.
[200] Confidential Letter to William F. Buckley, Jr. from J. William Middendorf II, 17 September 1965, Box 297, Folder 47, Buckley Papers.

humor, fanciful vocabulary, and a killer instinct. "Buckley is the intellectual's intellectual," wrote one fan after the Buckley-Baldwin debates. "There isn't a speaker on TV who can withstand his biting wit and clear reasoning. What Churchillian delivery! What oratory!"[201] Another praised him for his devilishly satisfying ability to rhetorically destroy the arguments of his opponents: "My, my you were nasty. Why, I even heard a long LOUD silence from Mr. Baldwin after one of your excellent verbal exchanges with him—he couldn't think of anything else to overstate, caught out in the open, all alone . . . Well done, sir, well done!"[202] Buckley's skill on television would serve him well during and after the campaign, as his debate performances were the central rationale for the creation of his television show *Firing Line* in 1966, the groundbreaking publicly broadcast debate program that cemented Buckley's position at the forefront of the conservative movement and featured nearly every major intellectual and political figure in American life during its historic thirty-three-year run until Buckley's retirement in 1999.[203]

In the 1965 mayoral election, Buckley adopted a common-sense approach to the issues with a humorous twist to put forth his arguments in a way that transcended party labels. Multiple letters from self-identifying Kennedy Democrats dubbed his straightforward style "refreshing;" one writer even went so far as to call Buckley "the most refreshing and exhilarating political figure to come on the American scene since the late president, John F. Kennedy."[204] Yet even with well-received television appearances under his belt, Buckley aides advised him to tone down his tendency toward elitism and use of obscure words. His long-winded vocabulary had

[201] Letter to William F. Buckley from Patricia Carr, 19 July 1965. Box 318, Folder 214, Buckley Papers.
[202] Letter to William F. Buckley from Paul G. Christensen II, 15 June 1965. Box 318, Folder 214, Buckley Papers.
[203] Lynch, "Only Half in Fun," 49.
[204] Letter to William F. Buckley from Edward Lee Bare, 25 June 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers; Letter to William F. Buckley from John Bratowicz, Box 293, Folder 9, Buckley Papers.

been an asset in his Yale debate days, but Neil McCaffrey viewed it as hindering his appeal to the average voter: "You are talking the 'in' language of the initiate. You are not getting specific. Above all, you are acting too detached . . . You must come across as caring, as someone who has sense-making alternatives. You haven't done badly; it's just you could be doing so much better."[205] To counter this perception, Buckley concentrated on speaking in "short, declaratory sentences" in preparing for his first debate of the campaign.[206]

The most anticipated and widely viewed political event during the blackout was the September 26th debate between Buckley, Lindsay, and Beame. This debate marked the first time that all three candidates met on a debate stage, and therefore Buckley regarded it as "the most important single appearance of the campaign."[207] The debate was lively and animated, with Lindsay and Beame attacking each other, while Buckley aimed barbs at both of them. When Lindsay began the debate with clichés, declaring, "New Yorkers must choose between the tired past or a new beginning, a new change, new hope, new ideas, action against inaction," Beame countered with the line "I cannot speak as glibly as Mr. Lindsay . . . nor do I like generalizations and platitudes."[208] As the Democrat and the Republican traded blows, Buckley accused them both of avoiding specifics in discussing the problems facing the city.[209] Amid the rival attacks, the moderator asked Buckley if he was seriously interested in being mayor. "I'm seriously interested, of course," replied Buckley, who went on to relate he initially would have been "flabbergasted" to be elected mayor considering he lacked political machines, bosses, and

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[205] Memo to William F. Buckley from Neil McCaffrey, 29 September 1965, Box 293, Folder 5, Buckley Papers.
[206] Memo to William F. Buckley from Bill Rusher, 24 September 1965, Box 297, Folder 47, Buckley Papers.
[207] Memo to James Buckley, Rosemary Gunning, Dan Mahoney, Kieran O'Doherty, and Bill Rusher from Neal B. Freeman, 20 September 1965, Box 295, Folder 30, Buckley Papers.
[208] "Channel 2 News Special Campaign Debates: Beame v. Lindsay v. Buckley," 26 September 1965. Box 321, Folder 235, Buckley Papers.
[209] Ibid.

millions of dollars to spend on the campaign.[210] "Having, however, heard Mr. Beame and Mr. Lindsay," continued Buckley, "I would be flabbergasted if I weren't elected Mayor, and at this point I worry more about how many of my votes am I going to lose to Mr. Beame when he makes what Mr. Lindsay calls a demagogic point, or to Mr. Lindsay when Mr. Beame accuses him of making a reactionary point."[211] As Buckley concluded, the moderator mentioned he had more time if he cared to comment further, to which Buckley cheekily replied, "No, I think I'll just contemplate the great eloquence of my previous remark," prompting the audience to burst into laughter.[212]

The candidates hotly debated the meaning and practice of Lindsay's liberal Republican philosophy. Lindsay portrayed his position as voting his conscience without regard for party labels, while Buckley viewed this as evidence he disdained Republican principles. After Lindsay declared himself a proud Republican, Buckley criticized Lindsay for his refusal to support Barry Goldwater in 1964: "He wasn't proud enough of his party to back its national choice for President a year ago. He hasn't been proud enough of his party to vote with his party most of the time in Congress."[213] Lindsay responded by accusing Goldwater, Buckley, and conservatives like them of being out to ruin the Republican Party. "I'm trying to restore [the damage] done in 1964 when the Republicans advanced Mr. Goldwater as their candidate," he declared, "and yet Mr. Buckley is running against me for precisely that reason and his people ran against me last year, in 1964 . . . and they tried to destroy me then."[214] Buckley attacked Lindsay as a Republican in

[210] "Channel 2 News Special Campaign Debates: Beame v. Lindsay v. Buckley," 26 September 1965. Box 321, Folder 235, Buckley Papers.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.

name only who used the party as "an auxiliary huffing machine, to push him along on his photogenic and disingenuous career toward great political heights."[215]

Buckley accused Lindsay of being ego-driven, disingenuous, and afflicted by a savior complex.[216] "He tells us never again in history will we have an opportunity to save New York," said Buckley regarding Lindsay's egotism, "by which he means never again in history will we have an opportunity to vote for him."[217] Only once Lindsay decided to run for mayor, Buckley argued, did he begin "caring" about the issues facing New York, and only once he raised one million dollars did he "decid[e] to bring in all the rhetoricians and construct the necessity for him to come to the aid of you and me and other political incompetents."[218] Buckley took issue with what he viewed as Lindsay's duplicitous effort to portray his run for mayor as anything other than a stepping-stone to higher office, declaring that Lindsay was suffering from "the megalomania of the aging despot."[219]

Buckley's stand-out performance in the debate won him support from both Republicans and Democrats alike. "As a certified liberal of long-standing, I feel impelled to issue a stern warning to you," wrote one such Democrat. "Unless you cut out this nonsense—unless you stop being so damnably amusing and entertaining—you are in grave danger of getting the votes of many liberals who feel that life with you as Mayor will be more fun, and to hell with everything else."[220] Commenting on Buckley's debate performance, Robert J. Donovan wrote in the *Journal-American* that "[h]e is more fun to listen to than most professional comedians."[221]

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[215] "Channel 2 News Special Campaign Debates: Beame v. Lindsay v. Buckley," 26 September 1965. Box 321, Folder 235, Buckley Papers.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Letter to William F. Buckley from Leonard H. Sandler, 20 September 1965, Box 311, Folder 155, Buckley Papers.
[221] Robert J. Donovan, "Buckley 'Threat'—An Analysis," *New York Journal-American,* 21 October 1965.

Another registered Democrat told Buckley that after the debate, "I was practically in a rage, the way Beame and Lindsay refused and completely ignored your demands to say something concrete about several of the really important issues."[222] Viewers watched in delight as Buckley dismantled his opponents, with one writing "I loved the way you lashed back at them, in a manner which only you can do . . . It was a sheer delight watching and listening to you."[223] In comparison to Buckley, many found Lindsay and Beame's performances to be boring and hollow. In a letter to Buckley, self-identified liberal R. Thomas Flemming praised Buckley for his down-to-earth, logical style: "You are the first so-called conservative spokesman who I have heard or read that makes 2+2 sense."[224] This letter, like many others from Democrats, demonstrated Buckley's cross-over appeal to many voters.

Buckley's campaign surged after the September debate. Initial estimates had suggested that Buckley would only receive ten percent of the vote. In the New York World's Fair *Daily News* Poll on September 29th, however, Buckley notched his best polling performance to date, placing second behind Lindsay's 44.6% with 30.4%, and ahead of Beame, who only polled 25%.[225] Though news reports acknowledged that the *Daily News* poll was "conducted on an informal basis" and therefore had a large margin of error, it suggested that the Buckley surge might now be strong enough to swing the election.[226] Soon after, Buckley received congratulations from Ronald Reagan, then gearing up to run for governor of California. In a

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[222] Letter to William F. Buckley from Michael A. Cassidy, 29 September 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.
[223] Letter to William F. Buckley from Diana and Richard Richards, 30 September 1965, Box 293, Folder 9, Buckley Papers.
[224] Letter to William F. Buckley from R. Thomas Flemming, 19 October 1965, Box 294, Folder 16, Buckley Papers.
[225] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr. from H.W. Long, Jr., "N.Y. World's Fair Daily News Poll," 29 September 1965, Box 297, Folder 47, Buckley Papers. It should be noted that this was an outlier poll, as all the other polls from September to late October had Beame as the clear frontrunner, Lindsay trailing by 2-10%, and Buckley in the realm of 12-20%. This being said, it is a useful demonstration of Buckley's resonance and popularity with New Yorkers after the first televised debate.
[226] Guy Savino, "Buckley Poll Surge Startling: Conservative Runs Ahead of Beame at Fair Tally," *Newark Evening News*, 28 September 1965.

conversation with Buckley's older brother John, Reagan expressed his support for Buckley's burgeoning movement: "Tell your brother two things. First, that he's an intellectual giant pitted against two pigmies, and second, that I am for him all the way."[227] The surge in Buckley's popularity led to a rise in expectations for his campaign. Conservative Party city campaign chairman Kieran O'Doherty told the *New York Herald Tribune* that "because of the upsurge in the last few weeks," Buckley hoped to win as many as 400,000 votes.[228]

When the newspaper strike finally ended on October 10th, it was clear that William F. Buckley had been its chief beneficiary. As the newspapers began printing again, the blackout was often credited for Buckley's rise. "No one—and that goes for the so-called experts—dreamed that Buckley's appeal would be as widespread as it now appears to be," wrote Edward O'Neill of the *Daily News*. "And no one predicted a newspaper shutdown that would play directly into Buckley's hands. In one of the other remaining news media, television, Buckley is admittedly without equal. Love him or hate him, TV fans found it difficult to turn off a master political showman. His rolling eyes, deft handling of the English language and razor-sharp debating techniques were exciting to watch."[229] Besides increasing his own popularity, Buckley had also damaged the candidacy of John Lindsay, who fell further behind frontrunner Abraham Beame in the polls. This led Joseph Zullo of the *Chicago Tribune* to write that after Buckley's blows, "[t]he matinee idol projection of Lindsay—tall, handsome, polished—was jolted, if not shattered."[230] Lindsay had portrayed himself throughout the early campaign "as a cool, distant Olympian figure," but after his faceoffs with Buckley on live television "it became clear that

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[227] Memo to William F. Buckley from John W. Buckley, "Your Candidacy," 30 September 1965, Box 297, Folder 47, Buckley Papers.
[228] "That 'Secret' Buckley Goal—$250,000," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 October 1965.
[229] Edward O'Neill, "City Hall," *New York Daily News,* 11 October 1965.
[230] Joseph Zullo, "Buckley's Entry in New York Race Jolts Lindsay," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 October 1965.

Lindsay was not good in the cut and thrust of debate, that, in fact, he was neither funny nor clever. Worse still, it became clear that he had a nasty temper."[231] Buckley took full advantage of the special importance the newspaper blackout placed on the debates, successfully using the medium to popularize his candidacy while assailing the candidacy of John Lindsay.

As Buckley attacked Lindsay, Beame solidified his position as the frontrunner. He had led in nearly all the polls conducted since the Democratic primary due to his moderation and his inherent advantage running as a Democrat in New York City. Since the number of registered Democrats dwarfed the number of registered Republicans in the city by a margin of over 3:1, John Lindsay's most formidable opponent was arithmetic.[232]. Despite the fact that Lindsay had leveled nearly all his attacks against Beame while essentially ignoring Buckley, regarding him, in the words of a *New York Times* reporter, "as a noisy but essentially harmless mosquito," Lindsay's campaign appeared to be stuck in neutral behind the frontrunner.[233] With Buckley's unexpected conservative surge now threatening to draw 400,000 to 500,000 votes from the Republican total, Lindsay was "forced" to adopt the new campaign strategy of attacking Buckley.[234] Buckley supporters saw this as indicative of their candidate's progress; one supporter told Buckley, "[y]ou're getting to Mr. Lindsay and it seems to me he isn't presenting a very pretty picture in his ripostes."[235] Lindsay's only hope was to counterpunch.

This tactical change coincided with worried Republican perceptions that the frontrunner Beame was beginning to pull away in the polls. In mid-October, the *New York Times* editorial board noted Beame had amassed a significant advantage, as "[t]he polls, published and

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[231] Joseph Kraft, "Beame and Buckley Are in Lindsay's Eye," *Chicago Daily News*, 28 October 1965.
[232] Terry Smith, "Lindsay's Foe—Arithmetic," *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1965.
[233] Sydney H. Schanberg, "Lindsay and Buckley Duel," *The New York Times*, 12 October 1965.
[234] Terry Smith, "Lindsay's Foe—Arithmetic," *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1965; Edward O'Neill, "City Hall," *New York Daily News,* 11 October 1965; Joseph Zullo, "Buckley's Entry in New York Race Jolts Lindsay," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 October 1965.
[235] Letter to William F. Buckley from Howard M. Ziff, 12 October 1965, Box 294, Folder 16, Buckley Papers.

otherwise, all show Mr. Beame in the lead."[236] One of the major polls released at the time, the October 13th *Herald Tribune* poll, gave Beame a significant lead with 44.1%, Lindsay 36.7%, and Buckley 11.3% after sampling over 11,000 New Yorkers.[237] In the final weeks Buckley routinely polled in the range of 10-20%, with the wide margin of error expressing the uncertainty surrounding his final vote total.[238] Buckley's attacks on Lindsay were widely credited for Beame's lead and left Democrats bullish going in to the final weeks.[239] Former Postmaster General and prominent Democrat James Farley confidently told the press Beame would easily win by 300,000 to 400,000 votes, and that Lindsay "doesn't have a chance."[240]

With three weeks remaining in the campaign, Lindsay attacked Buckley as an agent of Goldwater and the radical right. He called him "a candidate of the ultra-right" with "nothing to do with responsible conservatism."[241] Lindsay attempted to link him to the radicalism many had feared from Goldwater in 1964. Though Buckley had presented himself as an articulate, and charismatic conservative, Lindsay described him as the candidate of "bigotry and negativism which would divide and destroy New York."[242] Lindsay viewed Buckley's conservatism as a losing philosophy that America had wholeheartedly rejected in the forty years since the Great Depression and by an historic margin in 1964. Lindsay regarded Buckley's conservative candidacy as a force aimed only at dragging the Republican Party into further decline by tearing apart its mainstream wing, the only wing of the Party that had proved capable of winning national elections in the previous forty years. Due to this, Lindsay accused Buckley of being a young, unserious spoiler candidate who would gladly hand the election to the Democrats for the

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[236] "How Goes the Mayoral Campaign?" *New York Times,* 18 October 1965.
[237] "That 'Secret' Buckley Goal—$250,000," *New York Herald Tribune,* 13 October 1965.
[238] Julius Duscha, "An Outside Expert Sizes Up Race for Mayor," *New York Journal-American,* 18 October 1965.
[239] Joseph Kraft, "Beame and Buckley Are in Lindsay's Eye," *Chicago Daily News,* 28 October 1965.
[240] Dick Lee, "Wagner and Powell Join We're-for-Beame Team," *New York Daily News,* 19 October 1965.
[241] Paul Weissman, "Lindsay Tags Buckley 'Ultra-Right,'" *New York Herald Tribune,* 16 October 1965.
[242] Homer Bigart, "Buckley A Clown, Beame Declares," *New York Times,* 30 October 1965.

sake of putting on a show. "Make no mistake about it," he said, "all the forces of Goldwater and the radical Right are working overtime to elect Mr. Beame and see me defeated."[243] While Buckley denied these claims publicly, in the aftermath of the campaign it would become clear that his ultimate goal was indeed to defeat Lindsay, and Lindsay's claims, minus the segment regarding the "radical right," were substantively correct.[244]

Lindsay even tangentially linked his Democrat opponent Abraham Beame to Goldwater and the radical right, proclaiming that a Beame win would be "a major victory for Goldwater and the radical righters of the right" as it would achieve the conservative goal of defeating his candidacy.[245] Though it was not explicitly stated, Lindsay's proclamation seemed to suggest a conspiracy between Beame and the "forces of Goldwater" to swing the election to the Democrats.[246] The insinuation was conspicuous enough for Beame to issue a public response, declaring that the implications of Lindsay's remarks were "insulting to me and to the public. I'm getting a little sick and tired of his irresponsible charges. He's trying to paint me with the Goldwater brush."[247] There were no actual links between Goldwater and the Beame campaign, but Lindsay's attacks on Goldwaterism and the radical right grabbed headlines and gave much-needed life and energy to his candidacy.[248]

Though Barry Goldwater was often mentioned in the press in reference to the Buckley candidacy, Goldwater was never involved with the campaign itself. Goldwater privately offered Buckley his endorsement during an impromptu lunch with Buckley in October, but Buckley chose not to publicize it or to accept it so as to chart his own course away from memories of

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[243] Edward J. Silberfarb, "Lindsay Attack on Goldwater," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1965.
[244] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 299.
[245] Harry Schlegel, "Lindsay: Buckley Wants Vengeance," *New York Daily News*, 25 October 1965.
[246] Edward J. Silberfarb, "Lindsay Attack on Goldwater," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1965.
[247] Harry Schlegel, "Lindsay: Buckley Wants Vengeance," *New York Daily News*, 25 October 1965.
[248] Edward J. Silberfarb, "Lindsay Attack on Goldwater," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1965.

1964, to avoid comparisons, and to set reasonable expectations in the press for his own campaign.[249] Buckley had distanced himself from the negative public perception of Goldwater conservatism during the campaign with his reasonable, humorous, and clever presentation of the conservative cause. To ally himself directly with Goldwater would diminish those gains. In addition, Buckley felt that a Goldwater endorsement would automatically lead his candidacy to be measured against the 800,000 votes Goldwater won in New York City in the presidential election of 1964.[250] Buckley admitted that was an unfair comparison, as he was running as a third-party candidate in an off-year, local election, but he believed a Goldwater endorsement, combined with the impossibility of matching Goldwater's vote total, would lead to his candidacy being construed as a failure by the press.[251] Word of the "proffered endorsement" never reached the press, yet it did not prevent Lindsay from alleging, according to Buckley, "that Goldwater was a vindictive underworlder, managing my campaign for the purpose of evening a score."[252]

John Lindsay's "concentration camp" attack, however, would become the most infamous smear of the campaign. The idea originated with Senator Jacob Javits. Upon cursorily reading Buckley's proposals that the city provide for the rehabilitation of heroin addicts with a methadone treatment, essentially modern government-sponsored "rehab," as well as a similar proposal to relocate "chronic" welfare recipients outside of the city for vocational training, Javits surmised that these proposals were really "concentration camps" in disguise.[253] John Lindsay quickly picked up on the phrase in the lead-up to the October 28th debate in an attempt "to arouse Jewish voters by invoking, inferentially, the specter of Nazism and equating it with the

[249] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 277-278.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid., 278.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid., 162.

Buckley candidacy," reported Warren Weaver Jr. of the *Times*.[254] Lindsay said Buckley's program was an endorsement of "concentration camps," telling the *Herald Tribune* that "[t]he vile implications of what Buckley advocates . . . would destroy the last fiber of decency for every minority-group member and all citizens of New York."[255] Lindsay's reckless fearmongering outraged Buckley, who saw it as an indefensible attempt to attract Jewish voters by exploiting the memory of the Holocaust. "The terrible traumatic ordeal of the Jewish people ought not to be invoked for the vulgar purposes of political advantage," he said.[256]

The tensions between Lindsay and Buckley boiled over during the final debate of the campaign. When asked if New York was a city of fear, Buckley answered in the affirmative, declaring his belief that "John Lindsay is doing everything in the world that he can do to cultivate that fear . . . and that operation is explicitly leveled at the Jewish voters of New York City. Mr. Lindsay has been trying to say to them . . . 'Do you realize that Buckley is really in favor of concentration camps?'"[257] Buckley argued Lindsay was using this crooked political tactic to equate his candidacy with Nazism and the Holocaust by characterizing "all my attempts to solve some of the pressing problems of New York as [calling for] one or another form of concentration camps, summoning up all kinds of Nazi visions of horror, aimed especially at members of the Jewish race."[258] Buckley notes in his memoir of the campaign that his declaration left Lindsay "visibly stunned."[259] When Lindsay offered a weak rebuttal, Buckley went on the attack. "He is trying to appeal to the Jewish voters by *scaring* them," asserted Buckley. "He is trying to do to the Jewish voters what the Ku Klux Klan has been trying to do to

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[254] Warren Weaver Jr., "Buckley Charges Lindsay Appeals to Jewish Fears," *New York Times,* 29 October 1965.
[255] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor,* 162.
[256] "Buckley to Lindsay: Disavow Sen. Javits," *New York Daily News,* 30 October 1965.
[257] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor,* 157.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.

the white people in the South, keep them scared, that if the Negroes make certain progress, make certain improvements in their lot that the white people will be wiped off the face of the South."[260] "Cut it out, Mr. Lindsay, and I'll cut it out," he said. "Stop this . . . silly business about the ultra-right and concentration camps."[261]

The theoretical and practical outcomes of a vote for William F. Buckley were widely debated in the twilight of the campaign. Each side claimed that Buckley took votes from them. According to Abraham Beame, "[a] vote for Buckley is a vote for Lindsay."[262] Beame also thought a vote for Buckley was a vote for the "national Republican philosophy, a vote to encourage the wild-eyed radicals of right extremism."[263] Interestingly, Lindsay characterized a potential Beame victory in similar terms as "a victory for the radicals of the right."[264] The Democrats for Lindsay organization, however, argued that a vote for Buckley was not a vote for Lindsay, but "[a] vote for Beame is a vote for Buckley. If Beame wins Buckley wins. William Buckley, the serpent-tongued agent of the sinister forces of the extreme right, will rightly assume credit for Lindsay's Defeat."[265] In the midst of this mess, a letter to the *Times* editor countered this assertion, declaring that "[t]he notion that a vote for William F. Buckley Jr. is 'a vote for Beame and against Lindsay' is absurd. If Mr. Buckley were not in the race, could one reasonably expect that his supporters would vote for Mr. Lindsay? Mr. Lindsay has repeatedly rejected the Goldwater wing."[266] To summarize these arguments, a vote for Buckley was a vote for Beame, a vote for Buckley was a vote for Lindsay, and a vote for Beame was a vote for Buckley.

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[260] "WCBS New York Mayoral Debate," 28 October 1965. https://crooksandliars.com/gordonskene/politics-past-1965-new-york-mayoral-de.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Harry Schlegel, "Lindsay: Buckley Wants Vengeance," *New York Daily News,* 25 October 1965.
[263] Homer Bigart, "Buckley A Clown, Beame Declares," *New York Times,* 30 October 1965.
[264] David Murray, "The Rivals Wind It Up," *New York Post,* 2 November 1965.
[265] Democrats for Lindsay, "What Does This Election Mean? . . . A Letter To The Thinking Voter," 26 October 1965, Box 317, Folder 204, Buckley Papers.
[266] C.P. Cooney, "Candidates Assessed," *New York Times,* 23 October 1965.

According to these hopelessly confused declarations, it seemed the only way for New Yorkers to support the candidate they liked best was to vote for someone else entirely.

Despite the confused rhetoric, it was becoming clear that a great surprise of the campaign was that the conservative Buckley candidacy was having the unanticipated effect of winning Democratic votes. Considering pundits, including Buckley himself, had initially conjectured that his campaign would only win votes from Republicans due to his Republican conservatism, polls in the final weeks of the campaign showed a growing trend of working-class Democrats crossing party lines to support William F. Buckley.[267] In an October 21st article titled "Buckley 'Threat'—An Analysis" in the *Journal-American*, Robert J. Donovan recorded that "it now appears that instead of capturing only conservative Republican votes, Mr. Buckley is going to get a large number of conservative Democratic votes, especially among Irish Catholics in Brooklyn and Queens."[268] Commenting on this disquieting pattern, a close Beame aide said, "I'm really worried. It looks bad for us in Queens. Buckley seems to be picking up strength there at our expense."[269] According to Alex Benson of the *World Telegram & Sun*, "[t]he atmosphere of concern in Beame's headquarters was apparent . . . with several Beame aides expressing worry with the candidate's fortunes. The mold was in sharp contrast to the optimism that prevailed up until last weekend."[270] Initial reports had suggested that Buckley would take votes from Lindsay, but the growing trend of Democrats supporting Buckley worried members of the Beame campaign. "Democrats are being conned into voting for Buckley," said Beame campaign manager Edward Costikyan. "We've got to get those votes back."[271] Although Beame had led in

[267] Alex Benson, "Beame Aides Worry Over Buckley Gains," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 26 October 1965.
[268] Robert J. Donovan, "Buckley 'Threat'—An Analysis," *New York Journal-American,* 21 October 1965.
[269] Alex Benson, "Beame Aides Worry Over Buckley Gains," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 26 October 1965.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.

nearly all the polls through mid-October, a poll conducted by the *Daily News* in the final two weeks of the campaign showed Lindsay gaining a slight lead over Beame.[272] The *Daily News* poll had correctly predicted the outcome of every mayoral election since it began in 1933, leading Lindsay to tell the press "my campaign has caught fire."[273] Despite President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Bobby Kennedy endorsing Beame, the mounting trend of Democrats for Buckley combined with the closeness of the race convinced some Democratic insiders that the late Buckley surge would spell the end of the Beame candidacy.[274] "I'm afraid it's all over," said one veteran Democratic politician. "I've been around politics for 35 years and I can tell we're not going to make it."[275]

Though Lindsay's political tactics were debatable, their effectiveness was quickly becoming apparent in the polls. Beame led nearly all the polls through mid-October, but this trend was broken when Lindsay notched his first lead in the first release of the highly-respected *Daily News* poll on October 19th. In a race the pollster now called a "dead heat," Lindsay at 42% held a narrow lead over Beame at 41.8%, while Buckley trailed with 16.2%.[276] In each daily iteration of the poll, Lindsay maintained his lead. The October 24th poll saw marginal increases for Lindsay to 42.5% and Buckley to 16.7%, as Beame's total decreased to 40.8%.[277] This was the poll that was earlier cited as worrying the Beame campaign, as it included an in-depth breakdown of the vote demonstrating that Buckley was inordinately popular among traditionally solid Democratic groups, such as Irish Catholics and the working class, and would likely win

[272] James Desmond, "Beame Slips; Buckley Upsets Vote Patterns," *New York Daily News*, 24 October 1965
[273] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 286; Harry Schlegel, "Catching Fire, Lindsay Believes," *New York Daily News*, 20 October 1965.
[274] Letter to Steve Trynosky from Robert F. Kennedy, 25 October 1965, Box 320, Folder 329, Buckley Papers.
[275] Alex Benson, "Beame Aides Worry Over Buckley Gains," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 26 October 1965.
[276] James Desmond, "1st Poll: Lindsay, Beame in Dead Heat," *New York Daily News*, 19 October 1965.
[277] James Desmond, "Beame Slips; Buckley Upsets Vote Patterns," *New York Daily News*, 24 October 1965.

many conservative Democratic votes in the upcoming election.[278] This news was perturbing to members of the Buckley campaign as it suggested instead of contributing to Lindsay's defeat as they had hoped, they might actually be helping him win. "The New York News poll frightens me," wrote a friend to Buckley. "Apparently you're taking as many votes away from Conservative Democrats as you are from Conservative Republicans."[279] Buckley's reply expressed his own private uncertainty and endeavored to remain hopeful: "I guess both camps are a little worried! They should be! But I do think John Lindsay has been wounded."[280]

The confusion and ambiguity surrounding the meaning of the Buckley candidacy and the effect it would have on the outcome of the mayoral election was in full gear in the final days of the campaign. Considering everyone predicted that the Buckley vote would be the swing vote in the election, wrote Robert J. Donovan in the *Journal-American*, "[t]he bewildering thing is that no one knows where the votes are coming from . . . [Buckley] has the picture so scrambled that neither the polls nor the experts can agree on the probable winner."[281] As planned in the initial stages of his campaign, Buckley's conservative platform made inroads with conservative, working-class Democrats, but the full extent of its progress was unclear prior to the election.[282] Lindsay was the first to claim Buckley would sabotage his candidacy, yet in the final weeks the Beame campaign expressed the same fears.[283] When asked to comment on the Democrat voters crossing the aisle, Buckley stated, "I think there's a very welcome migration going on from the Democratic Party to the Republican party and to the Conservative party—the reason for this being I think obvious . . . disillusion is setting in. People are finding after years and years and

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[278] James Desmond, "Beame Slips; Buckley Upsets Vote Patterns," *New York Daily News*, 24 October 1965.
[279] Letter to William F. Buckley from Harry O. King, 19 October 1965. Box 321, Folder 241, Buckley Papers.
[280] Letter to Harry O. King from William F. Buckley, 27 October 1965. Box 321, Folder 241, Buckley Papers.
[281] Robert J. Donovan, "Buckley 'Threat'—An Analysis," *New York Journal-American*, 21 October 1965.
[282] Memo to Bill Buckley and Dan Mahoney from Neil McCaffrey, 7 July 1965, Box 293, Folder 5, Buckley Papers; Alex Benson, "Beame Aides Worry Over Buckley Gains," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 26 October 1965
[283] Alex Benson, "Beame Aides Worry Over Buckley Gains," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 26 October 1965.

years of Democratic rule in the city that the city is getting worse and worse."[284] Yet when specifically pressed on where he thought his votes were coming from, Buckley admitted, "I don't know. I honestly don't know . . . I simply say what I think needs to be said and welcome those from wherever they come."[285] Since no one knew where the Buckley votes would come from, least of all Buckley himself, the mystery of the Buckley vote added a significant dramatic element to the final days of the mayoral campaign.

As the Buckley campaign entered its final weeks, William F. Buckley staged five massive "Buckley for Mayor" rallies in each of New York City's five boroughs. Since Buckley had refused to engage in street campaigning, these rallies were described by Rosemary Gunning as his "only real concession to traditional campaigning."[286] These rallies served as gathering places for thousands of Buckley converts who cheered on their candidate. At the Manhattan Rally, Edward C. Burks of the *Times* reported that "4,000 cheering supporters . . . filled Manhattan Center to roar laughter at his sallies and to applaud virtually every sentence [as] Mr. Buckley sarcastically ripped into Mr. Lindsay."[287] As Buckley confidently joked, jabbed, and analyzed the race, his supporters expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for his honesty and passion; in a letter to Buckley after the rally, one supporter said "[i]t truly was the most wonderful and deeply honest rally I have ever heard."[288] In describing the electric atmosphere at the final Buckley rally in Queens, Richard L. Madden wrote in the *Times* "[a]t the arena last

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[284] "Wins News Conference," 17 October 1965, Box 296, Folder 37, Buckley Papers.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Memo to William F. Buckley, Jr., Martin Burgess, Jr., Neal Freeman, Jim Griffin, Rosemary Gunning, Regina Kelly, Marvin Liebman, J. Daniel Mahoney, Kathleen Mahoney, Joanne Manikos, Hugh Markey, Jim O'Doherty, Kieran O'Doherty, and Bill Rusher from Rosemary R. Gunning, "Consideration of Campaign Issues and Techniques," Box 323, Folder 271, Buckley Papers; Carl Schoettler, "Better Than Ringo? His Dedicated Young Followers Idolize Buckley," *Baltimore Evening Sun*¸ 28 October 1965.
[287] Edward C. Burks, "Buckley Assails Vietnam Protest," *New York Times,* 22 October 1965.
[288] Letter to William F. Buckley from Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth K. Philcox, 22 October 1965, Box 293, Folder 3, Buckley Papers.

light, the crowd gave Mr. Buckley a six-minute deafening ovation. A chant of 'We Want Buckley' filled the air in thunderous waves when he appeared shortly before 10:30 P.M."[289]

When the roars died down, Buckley challenged the ideas and precepts of elitism and politics as usual. "I happen to believe you are the sophisticated people," Buckley passionately proclaimed, "the politically sophisticated, in that you uniquely see through the emptiness, the tired and tiring platitudes of the two candidates who promise to cure New York's ills by administering homeopathic doses of the same poison that has brought New York to its present state of despair and agitation."[290] Admitting he stood as a candidate for a minority party, Buckley proudly declared his belief in the ability of his followers to make history: "I am a minority candidate, and I say: you may be a minority, but the whole world hangs on you. You are the strength of our free institutions, the strength of our traditions. I am very proud of you, and I want to identify myself with you, for all time."[291] Carl Schotter of the *Baltimore Evening Sun* reported on the power of those closing lines: "Boom. The audience broke into five minutes of standing applause. Mr. Buckley broke for the door with his wife and son. A gaggle of girls broke through the police guards after them. He began signing autographs like a matinee idol."[292] "Do you ever feel like Ringo Starr, Bill?" someone asked as Buckley was mobbed by fans upon leaving the rally. "'I wish I were Ringo Starr,' he replied. 'He's better than Ringo Starr,' said one of the girls."[293] With his celebrity on the rise, Buckley's campaign rolled into election day brimming with excitement, confidence, and a sense of greater purpose.

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[289] Richard L. Madden, "Buckley Cheered By 3,000 In Queens," *New York Times*, 31 October 1965.
[290] William F. Buckley, "Queens Rally Speech," 31 October 1965, Box 321, Folder 243, Buckley Papers.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Carl Schoettler, "Better Than Ringo? His Dedicated Young Followers Idolize Buckley," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 28 October 1965.
[293] Ibid.

On November 2nd, 1965, the citizens of New York made their choice for mayor. With Lindsay and Beame neck and neck in the polls, the Buckley campaign was optimistic about its chances for a good showing and anticipated winning anywhere from 300,000 to 800,000 votes.[294] The final *Daily News* poll predicted a narrow Republican victory, placing Lindsay in the lead with 42%, Beame close behind with 40%, and Buckley trailing with 18%.[295] The article accompanying the poll noted that while Lindsay's final day showing equaled his total from the first *Daily News* poll on October 19th, "Beame . . . has seen a 1.8% drift to Buckley, who has been cutting into both major candidates."[296] Buckley made his final television appearance on Election Day, declaring that "[i]f the Conservatives roll up a substantial vote, it is the beginning of the dawn for New York . . . I am not asking you to vote for me; but for a vision of a new order . . . Make your voices heard. The echoes will reverberate for years to come in the hearts of all the public servants of the land."[297] As the votes came in, it became clear that though the Buckley campaign succeeded in eclipsing the vote total of the Liberal Party, it failed to prevent John Lindsay from winning the election.[298] The final vote tally was Lindsay—1,149,106 (45.3%), Beame—1,046,699 (41.3%), and Buckley—341,226 (13.4%).[299] As Buckley watched the returns, he was not surprised that Lindsay had won considering his narrow lead in the polls, but he found himself struggling to "rouse the old heave-ho" in his concession speech.[300] As midnight struck he congratulated Lindsay, thanked his supporters for their dedication and hard work, and wished everyone a good night.[301] With that, the Buckley campaign for mayor came to an end.

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[294] Edward J. Silberfarb, "Buckley: Summing Up," *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 November 1965.
[295] James Desmond, "News Poll Predicts Thin Lindsay Win," *New York Daily News*, 1 November 1965.
[296] Ibid.
[297] "Channel 13-TV Transcript," 3 November 1965, Box 322, Folder 250, Buckley Papers.
[298] Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, 326. Lindsay won 281,796 votes on the Liberal Party line.
[299] Ibid., 326-327.
[300] Ibid., 303.
[301] Ibid.

Afterword—The Man and The Movement

"What is significant," said William F. Buckley in his statement to the press on the outcome of the election, "is the crystallization of a vote of responsible protest."[302] While acknowledging that not all of the goals for his candidacy had been met, Buckley argued that his effort emphasized the strength and staying power of conservatives in state and national politics, predicting that "the Conservative Party, which with meager resources and with total organizational inexperience drew more than fifty per cent as many votes as there are registered Republicans in New York City, will either grow into the second major Party in New York State, or—preferably—will use its influence successfully to rejuvenate the Republican party."[303] Although Buckley had failed to achieve his goal of defeating Lindsay, he was humbled by the 341,226 votes he received: "The Conservative Party, thanks to your efforts, has polled a vote vastly in excess of what we thought possible in the most liberal city in the world."[304] The defeat of the Liberal Party and the emergence of the Conservative Party as a third major force in New York state politics led one columnist to write that for the conservatives on election night, "concession was just another word for victory."[305] Considering the Buckley vote total of 13.4% was substantially less than the 15-18% anticipated by the final polls, Buckley attributed the decrease to the late defections of sympathizers who wanted their votes to count: "It seems clear that at the end I lost a hundred thousand votes or so—people who wanted a direct voice in the

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[302] "Statement by Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., On the Outcome of the Election," 3 November 1965, Box 298, Folder 59, Buckley Papers.
[303] Ibid. Despite over one million votes for Lindsay's ticket, there were only 697,000 registered Republicans in New York City, as opposed to 2,377,000 registered Democrats, see Terry Smith, "Lindsay's Foe—Arithmetic," *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1965.
[304] Michael Stern, "For Conservatives: A New Political Force," *New York World-Telegram & Sun,* 3 November 1965.
[305] Frank J. Prial, "Conservatives See Silver Lining In Cloud of Defeat," *New York World-Telegram & Sun,* 3 November 1965. The Conservative Party would remain a crucial force in New York politics, with its most notable victory being the dramatic election of Buckley's brother James as U.S. Senator on the Conservative Party ticket in 1970.

final results of the election. Surprisingly, a lot of them chose Lindsay. I say surprisingly, because I had after all done much to expose him and they clearly rallied to that exposure."[306] Buckley surmised that these voters only voted for Lindsay because they wanted change, and despite their personal distaste for his liberalism, they saw him as a better choice to change New York for the future than the Democratic machine-controlled Beame, a representative of the broken status quo.[307] Despite his loss, Buckley had gained positive national exposure for polished conservative principles.

William F. Buckley's campaign for mayor benefited from extensive domestic and international publicity. Every Buckley witticism, attack, or clever remark injected a marked degree of humor and levity to the otherwise staid campaign, and generated headlines not just in New York, but across the nation. "No one in the history of local political contests, who was a certain loser, has ever attracted such fantastic attention from the Establishment," wrote a friend to Buckley after the election. "You have had more time on the air in a few short months than Goldwater did in his entire campaign—and for chicken feed."[308] Buckley's success on television propelled his campaign in New York and gained national attention. The Buckley campaign was covered by every major American newspaper and by countless local papers across the country; though it was a local race, Buckley made it a national event.[309] Although Buckley's television and radio ads were broadcast only in New York, his affable style led to him being featured in a number of nationally televised appearances. As the *Omaha Morning World-Herald* noted "he has a gift for leaving his audience laughing at his two opponents. In his nationally televised

[306] Letter to Ralph McCabe from William F. Buckley, 10 November 1965, Box 293, Folder 5, Buckley Papers.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] For a sampling of this phenomenon, note the geographic breadth of the newspapers and periodicals cited in the bibliography.

appearances, he has shown unexpected warmth and maturity."[310] Buckley even received significant international publicity. Writing on the benefit of free publicity for the Buckley campaign, the *London Observer* noted that "[w]here other candidates have to buy television time, many of the local stations are glad to put Mr. Buckley on the air free because he is good entertainment value. Unlike his opponents, he does not care whom he offends or what he says."[311] Buckley's national exposure throughout the campaign gained widespread popularity for him and his brand of conservatism.

Though Lindsay was registered as a Republican, few New Yorkers viewed his win as a Republican victory. While many columns praised Lindsay's win as a triumph for the future of the Republican Party, most agreed that it was not a triumph for traditional Republicanism. Richard Nixon said it was a win for the city as opposed to a win for the Party.[312] The *New York Times* editorial board proclaimed in its feature on Lindsay's win that "[t]his was, of course, no Republican victory; Lindsay's party gave him only perfunctory help. He asked none, wanted none. This was a victory won not because Mr. Lindsay was a Republican, but in spite of it."[313] Average New Yorkers chaffed at the claims that Lindsay's win was a coup for the Republican philosophy. "I'm getting annoyed with all the comment about Lindsay's election being a Republican victory," wrote a liberal New Yorker to the *New York Post*. "Lindsay would not have won running only as a Republican. I voted for him on the Liberal Party line because he was, on the record, further to the left than Beame. There were almost 300,000 voters like me, and we provided Lindsay's winning margin . . . It was a triumph not for typical Republicanism, but for

[310] "Amazing Mr. Buckley," *Omaha Morning World-Herald*, 28 October 1965.
[311] Joyce Egginton, "The outsider on the Right," *London Observer*¸ 24 October 1965.
[312] "Elections: The Party Lines Are Blurring," *New York Daily News*, 7 November 1965.
[313] "Lindsay's Astounding Victory," *New York Times*, 3 November 1965.

liberalism."[314] New Yorkers agreed that Lindsay's win was not a typical Republican victory, but national political pundits begged to differ.

"John V. Lindsay for president?" queried an eager November 3rd article in the *World-Telegram & Sun* entitled "GOP Liberals Hitch Lindsay Star to Presidency."[315] In the aftermath of the election, commentators claimed that John Lindsay was now a leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968.[316] William F. Buckley acknowledged in October that the mayoral campaign was "a power play for control of the national Republican Party," and after the election, the Republican establishment believed it had won a crucial victory over the conservatives.[317] Leading members of the Republican establishment said that Lindsay's triumph signaled that liberal Republicanism was the only winning ideology for the Republican Party, just as they had said in the aftermath of the Goldwater loss. Future Republican presidential candidate George Romney said that Lindsay's win demonstrated that "[i]f we really want to win, we must get more than just Republican votes. Our only hope for a victory rests squarely on our ability to win the support of Independents and Democrats."[318] Other commentators suggested that nominating Lindsay might be a necessary move for a party with slim hopes of remaining nationally competitive, and that only by nominating a liberal Republican such as Lindsay would the party have at least a chance of preventing the debacle of 1964 from occurring all over again.[319] Looking forward to 1968, Nelson Rockefeller discussed Lindsay's presidential prospects shortly after the election: "His future is very bright and if he has a good administration

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[314] M. Hartman, "Lesson in Liberalism," *New York Post,* 7 November 1965.
[315] "GOP Liberals Hitch Lindsay Star to Presidency," *New York World-Telegram & Sun,* 3 November 1965.
[316] William McCullam, "The Big 'Whys': Buckley Swing, A Negro Shift," *New York Journal-American,* 3 November 1965; "The Jolly Rock Tells GOP: Follow Lindsay!" *New York Daily News,* 4 November 1965; William S. White, "An Observer's Opinion: Nixon Eyes '68—And Lindsay," *New York Journal-American,* 11 October 1965.
[317] Sue Reinert, "Buckley: Power Play In GOP," *New York Herald Tribune,* 27 October 1965.
[318] "Romney Warns On GOP Future," *New York Herald Tribune,* 30 September 1965.
[319] William S. White, "An Observer's Opinion: Nixon Eyes '68—And Lindsay," *New York Journal-American,* 11 October 1965.

for the next four years and is reelected by a big plurality he will be a Presidential possibility . . . He is the kind of man people will be looking for then."[320]

History would prove otherwise. Though Lindsay remained a popular Republican and was a "serious possibility" for the Republican vice-presidential nomination in 1968, he was eventually passed over in favor of Spiro Agnew.[321] Through callousness, mismanagement, and the aloofness that dogged him throughout the campaign, however, the conclusion of Lindsay's first term was undermined by strikes, riots, and Lindsay's apparent apathy, once in office, for the concerns of average New Yorkers. Lindsay's liberal approach and general unpopularity alienated so many in his own party that he lost the Republican mayoral primary in 1969. Refusing to give in, Lindsay ran under the banner of the Liberal Party and managed to achieve the highly unlikely feat of winning reelection with a coalition of liberal Republicans and Democrats. Despite this local victory, his liberal philosophy was increasingly out of place in national Republican circles as he publicly condemned the Nixon administration's conservatism and its Vietnam policy, attacks that angered many on the right.[322] In 1971, John Lindsay finally took the fatal step that Buckley had dared him to take in 1965: he became a Democrat.[323] "Changing parties has been a fresh breeze in my life," he told the *Times*. "[Democrats] really talk my language . . . I feel much freer about my own beliefs and I wonder a little bit about what I was doing all those years."[324] When Buckley heard the news, he called Lindsay's switch "six years overdue. I suggested it to him in 1965."[325] Though Lindsay was pleased with his decision to become a Democrat, his ensuing announcement that he was running for president, according to historian and Lindsay

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[320] "The Jolly Rock Tells GOP: Follow Lindsay!" *New York Daily News*, 4 November 1965.
[321] Geoffrey Kabaservice, "On Principle: A Progressive Republican," *Summer in the City: John Lindsay, New York, and the American Dream*. Edited by Joseph P. Viteritti (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 47.
[322] Ibid., 48.
[323] Cannato, *The Ungovernable City*, 500.
[324] Ibid., 501.
[325] Ibid.

biographer Vincent J. Cannato, "never made any sense. Running for president in the Democratic primary four months after switching parties was suicide."[326] After his hasty run failed in 1972, John Lindsay's presidential dream was shattered and his political career was over. Cannato wrote that after his crushing loss, "[t]he Lindsay mystique, so powerful in 1965, had steadily been chipped away in the nation's second-toughest job . . . He returned to the city a beaten man."[327] Although John Lindsay won the battle for mayor in 1965, the defeat of his liberal Republican philosophy at the hands of the conservative movement suggests that William F. Buckley won the war.

John Lindsay's conversion from Republican to Democrat runs contrary to the more prevalent and significant trend from the sixties into the seventies: the exodus of conservative Democrats to the Republican Party. William F. Buckley's popularity among Democrats was evident before the election, but only in the aftermath of the vote could forecasters recognize its crucial influence on the election. The aftermath of the election proved these suspicions were well-founded, as analysts suggested that the conservative Democratic exodus resulted in the key margin for Lindsay's victory: "Analysis of the election returns show that Democratic candidate Abraham D. Beame lost largely because 339,127 votes for Mr. Buckley cut heavily into the normal strength of the Democrats in the pivotal boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn."[328] The ironic consequence of Buckley's anti-Lindsay bid was that he received as many votes from Democrats as Republicans, thus undermining his own effort to undermine Lindsay.[329] This unexpected outcome of the Buckley candidacy led the newspapers to widely publish a cartoon

[326] Cannato, *The Ungovernable City*, 515.
[327] Ibid., 523.
[328] William McCullam, "The Big 'Whys': Buckley Swing, A Negro Shift," *New York Journal-American*, 3 November 1965.
[329] "Lindsay's Astounding Victory," *New York Times*, 3 November 1965.

depicting Buckley holding a toy rifle and Beame lying on the ground. “Sorry about that, Abe,” read the caption. “My bullet had Lindsay’s name on it.”[330]

The label “conservative Democrats” was frequently applied by the press to those who crossed over to vote for Buckley during the campaign. Despite the prevalence of this designation, anti-Buckley columnist William S. White presciently claimed that to dismiss such voters as merely ‘conservative’ was an oversimplification: “The great point is that many perfectly sensible voters in New York, and in other giant metropolitan areas as well, feel intolerably and persistently short-changed by both major parties and are demanding some alternative—even, as in this case, the irrational alternative offered by William Buckley.”[331] This feeling of being left behind by contemporary politics and the practical implications of liberalism was especially pervasive among Buckley voters, but little-noted in the wider press. “If a Buckley,” continued White, “a clever writer without the slightest experience of public office, can stir up this much dust, a moderate and balanced, and thus a true conservative, could have stirred up incomparably more. This is the lesson of the campaign for mayor.”[332] This argument suggested that the Buckley candidacy demonstrated that with an experienced, charismatic, and serious leader, conservative Republicans would have the chance to build a powerful coalition based on conservative principles while targeting their message to appeal to the Americans who felt left behind by the tide of sixties liberalism and social change.

Senior Buckley campaign advisor Neil McCaffrey uncovered the vast potential significance of the votes of conservative Democrats for Buckley, the Republican Party, and the conservative movement soon after the election. In a November 3rd memo to Buckley and other

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[330] “Sorry Abe. My bullet had Lindsay’s name on it,” *Washington Star*, 9 November 1968.
[331] William S. White, “True Meaning of Buckley Bid,” *New York Journal-American*, 22 October 1965.
[332] Ibid.

key Conservative Party leaders, McCaffrey wrote, "[y]ou have reason to be discouraged—if your motive was mainly to beat Lindsay. But Bill's showing has a much deeper significance, one that we either overlook or unconsciously shrink from."[333] The subject of Democrats for Buckley was a distasteful topic among the conservative contingent still smarting from their defeat in the mayoral election, yet McCaffrey realized that the dissatisfied, fed-up Americans earlier described by William S. White were not just in New York, but across the nation: "The pattern unfolds. George Wallace polls primary totals last year that rival, up North and among Dems only, Barry's total vote in the same areas. The Wallace votes weren't from Klansmen. They were from the same fed-up, disenfranchised, basically conservative Dems who had earlier switched to Ike and cheered for Joe."[334] After explaining these vote totals and acknowledging the oddity that Buckley was receiving votes from a bloc known for racism, McCaffrey summarized his findings: "I don't mean to make you nervous, but Bill got Wallace Democrat votes."[335] McCaffrey warned his fellow conservatives not to be nervous, for he saw the core issues that appealed to these forgotten voters as the potential basis upon which they could effectuate the conservative realignment and revitalization of the Republican Party: "The point is simply that the new conservative consensus, if it is ever to be fashioned, will be an authentic national majority whose major concerns are crime, forced integration, moral collapse, patriotism, labor exorbitance, taxes, and a cautious anti-Communism that shrinks equally from nuclear roulette and Communist expansion."[336] This line, written in 1965, presaged the emergence of Richard Nixon's "Silent

[333] Memo to Bill Buckley, Dan Mahoney, and Bill Rusher from Neil McCaffrey, 3 November 1965, Box 293. Folder 5, Buckley Papers.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.

Majority" and elucidated the key issues and political planks that would form the 1968 Republican Platform.

The day after the 1965 election, McCaffrey had described the fundamental issues upon which the Republican Party would rebrand, attract widespread support, and build a national conservative consensus that would endure for decades to come. Populist appeals against Liberalism and institutional elitism have remained a central tenant of Republican electoral strategy and have been used to great effect in recent times by another patrician New Yorker: President Donald Trump. Despite his wealth and elite upbringing, Trump's populist approach won the support of working-class Americans who felt left behind by the political elite and galvanized right-wing political sentiment into a winning coalition. The modern parallels to the Buckley candidacy emphasize the enduring relevance of conservative populism and its shift from the fringe of partisan dialogue to its present position in the mainstream of American political debate.

Although William F. Buckley's run for mayor of New York was viewed by many contemporary conservatives as a disappointment for failing to defeat Lindsay and his brand of liberal Republicanism, the positive outcomes of the election for the conservative movement would soon be evident in the succeeding years. Few conservatives wanted to talk about the Democrats who had voted for Buckley in the aftermath of the campaign, as those votes had undermined the goal of defeating Lindsay, yet the true significance of those conservative Democrat votes for the Republican Party, however, would become one of the most important outcomes from the 1965 campaign. "Votes are where you find them," concluded McCaffrey in his post-election memo on conservative Democrats for Buckley. "Never mind if they once voted

for Roosevelt. Let the prodigals be welcome."[337] The conservative, working-class Democrats Buckley appealed to would soon after form the basis for Nixon's Southern Strategy, the "Silent Majority," and the eventual rise of Ronald Reagan and the "Reagan Democrats" of the 1980s. Buckley's campaign was the first to demonstrate the electoral prevalence and significance of this group. Mentioned in only hushed whispers at the time, the conservative Democrats for Buckley were one of the first examples of the cross-over appeal of conservatism, as conservative Democrats across the nation flocked to Republicanism as the parties underwent an historic ideological realignment. This was the importance and significance of William F. Buckley's campaign for mayor of New York City.

[337] Memo to Bill Buckley, Dan Mahoney, and Bill Rusher from Neil McCaffrey, 3 November 1965, Box 293. Folder 5, Buckley Papers. As an historical aside, throughout his political career Ronald Reagan was often keen to mention that he voted four times for Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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