

## The Press of Freedom:

# Scenario for Lindsay: Rocky's the One

by Jeff Greenfield

John Lindsay has a problem. It's not garbage or police graft or the Con Ed Astoria plant or the ghettos. It's what the hell to do in the governor's race.

Let us assume that John Lindsay wants to be President; or at least, in the words of Adlai Stevenson, that he would not let the cup pass from his lips. Let us also assume that he knows he

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cannot get there as a Republican, and that a jump to the Democratic Party is his most logical path to the White House. Because the 1972 season is rapidly approaching, it is necessary for Lindsay to make his move sometime soon—perhaps this fall.

Now the conventional wisdom would have the Mayor endorse Arthur Goldberg. But this move creates real problems. First, Goldberg has thus far not lit a fire of charismatic enthusiasm or moral fervor, in case you didn't notice. Second, if Goldberg loses with Lindsay's backing, the Mayor's political clout will be questioned by skeptical Democrats all over the country. Third, since everyone is so conscious of Lindsay's politics, an endorsement would be reported solely as a gesture of political opportunism.

But neutrality is unacceptable. The Dante quote that John Kennedy liked so much about the hottest places in hell being reserved

for neutrals would be revived. And neutrality looks like passivity—not the proper posture for an active, virile candidate.

So Lindsay must do something this fall to bring Democrats into his debt, and to make plausible a switch to the Democratic Party. Is there a way out for the Mayor? You bet. What is it? An endorsement of Governor Rockefeller.

Let's say that sometime in late September or early October—after secret consultation with the Goldberg camp—Lindsay calls a press conference. He declares that because of Rockefeller's help to the city this past year,

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# Scenario for Lindsay: Rocky's the One

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Rocky is the best man for governor. Lindsay then begins an intense campaign effort for the Governor.

Here is the key: Lindsay campaigns for Rockefeller, all right—in Bay Ridge, in Bensonhurst, on Staten Island, in Little Italy—in all those places where Lindsay's popularity is a shade under that of Attila the Hun. He goes to the suburbs and congratulates Rocky for "getting commuters to pay so much in taxes for the city they use." He goes upstate and

praises the Governor for being "a New York City man all the way." He goes to construction sites and talks of Rockefeller's "empathy for the black and the youthful dissidents."

What happens? Goldberg hits the hustings, promising that "Lindsay's governor will go. I will speak for the people." While Lindsay is barnstorming Queens Village and Red Hook, speaking for "the Rockefeller-Goodell ticket," Goldberg is moving through Brooklyn and Queens, promising a new kind of governor.

The consequences are clear by Election Day. Instead of a Goldberg endorsement which would have won no new votes for Arthur, Lindsay's pitch for Rocky has completely undercut the right-wing silent majority campaign that Rockefeller has so clearly built up. And the Gover-

nor cannot repudiate Lindsay without looking like a complete fool.

On Election Day, of course, Goldberg rides into the governor's chair owing Lindsay a powerful, publicly unmentioned political debt.

Okay. In January of 1971, Lindsay and Goldberg meet privately. In a statement afterward, Governor Goldberg says, "I know Mayor Lindsay opposed me, I know he worked for my opponent, but the future of the cities is too important for partisan political considerations."

Goldberg then gets through the legislature a series of bills: more state aid for the city, money for housing, help in the prisons, and a general program which erases the unfair state treatment of our city.

In April of 1971, with the city treasury bulging, Lindsay calls a press conference. He says: "I supported Rockefeller. But that was a mistake. Governor Goldberg did more for New York this

year than the Republicans did for the last 12. I see now that the Democratic Party does care about the cities. And for that reason—to help my city—I am taking the difficult step of changing my registration to Democratic."

There you have it. Goldberg is in Lindsay's debt for the 1972 convention. The city has gotten the help it needs. And John Lindsay's defection has taken place not for reasons of politics in the heat of a partisan campaign, but for reasons of high-minded statesmanship. And as Lindsay prepares for a two-month skiing vacation in New Hampshire, he goes with the warm wishes of his state's Democrats.

It can't miss. Mr. Mayor, the idea is all yours. Maybe you could also back Louis Lefkowitz for attorney general. Adam Walinsky could use your help, too.

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