

NATIONAL OBSERVER

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MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 1967

A Weekly Newspaper

Nelson Rockefeller's Last Hurrah

The Almost-Perfect Political Campaign

NEW YORK CITY.

Nelson A. Rockefeller, the happiest multimillionaire, repeated those magic words last week: "I do solemnly swear that I will . . . faithfully discharge the duties of the office of governor according to the best of my ability."

Sweet words for a man no one ever thought could be elected to a third term. Costly words. To win re-election, some \$260,000 was spent for each lovely little word. Nelson Rockefeller's winning campaign was far and away the most expensive state-wide effort ever put together in this country. Not only the most expensive, but the most professional, the most astute, the most imaginative, and perhaps the most ruthless. It was, in fact, the closest thing to a perfect political campaign this democracy has ever seen.

Some supporting evidence:

✓ No state-wide candidate has ever used television so much, so well. A National Observer survey indicates that 3,027 commercials were shown on New York State's 22 commercial television stations in behalf of Mr. Rockefeller. The actual figures, given the inconsistency of reporting methods, might run as high as 4,000.

✓ No state-wide candidate has ever distributed so much literature and campaign paraphernalia. The Rockefeller forces distributed 27,000,000 buttons, brochures, and broadsides. That's about 4½ items for every person who turned out to vote.

✓ The candidate himself, traveling by bus, by jet, by helicopter, even by seaplane—and constantly in radio touch with his 84-room headquarters at the New York Hilton—visited all 62 counties in the state. In August alone, he shook hands at 17 county fairs in upstate New York. Mr. Rockefeller spent his energy with just as much abandon as he and loyal members of his family spent their cash.

The Last Campaign?

"Never again," says one of his chief advisers, "will we see another campaign like it." He may be right, for Mr. Rockefeller insists his recovery from Presidential fever is complete, and his advisers take him at his word. Presumably, this campaign was Nelson Rockefeller's last hurrah.

It is, of course, ironic. Here, the picture of rugged good health at the age of 58, is a man who has mastered the mysterious arts of the new politics; or, at least, these arts have finally been mastered by the men around him. But, just as he and his experts have reached the top of their political form—in a technical sense—the game is up.

Mr. Rockefeller may leave many legacies; he has been, after all, an activist as governor of New York. He leaves, too, a political legacy, and it's his winning campaign for a third term as governor. From this day hence, this campaign will be the apotheosis. Already, wise men are traveling to New York to talk and listen; professionals from the British Labor Party have been here and so have Scandinavians. The men who seek to win the Republican nomination for George Romney are wooing the men who worked for Nelson Rockefeller (so far without much luck).

And for the ordinary voter, living anywhere, the Rockefeller campaign is significant. After all, this campaign, like

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The Almost-Perfect Political Campaign

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any other, was ultimately directed at that lone voter, buffeted by personal problems and petty concerns and hardly willing or able to devote more than peripheral attention to politicians or to political issues. In this campaign, new techniques were used to win that lone voter's attention and his support. Some of these techniques—if improperly used by sincere men or properly used by insincere men—may be dangerous. They at least should be understood.

Here then is the story—told in detail for the first time—of how the almost-perfect campaign was planned and waged.

To start at the beginning, there was Nelson Rockefeller. A very unpopular Nelson Rockefeller. At his side was a heavy-set man named William J. Roman, one-time dean of the New York University Graduate School of Public Administration and Social Services. Mr. Roman—Dr. Roman, really—is an issues man, and the politicians held him in contempt. A thinker, they said; you don't win elections with intellectuals. As usual these days, the politicians were wrong. Dr. Roman planned the Rockefeller campaign; he was its architect.

"We had a problem," Dr. Roman recalls. "In January of 1966 the position of the governor in the polls was not very good. Indications were that almost anyone could beat him. There were so many negatives. He had been in office for a lot of eight years and he had made a lot of decisions that irritated some people; other people just thought they were aggrieved. He'd raised taxes twice in a major way. One was a sales tax. And he got full credit for all these new taxes.

"Then he had this very long session with the Legislature and a struggle over Medicaid [New York's program for medical care for the elderly]. The compromise was higher than the original bill, and the governor got credit for it. It was only after the bill was passed that newspapers pointed out its cost to state and local government. The result was a furor in the Buffalo and Syracuse areas.

"Also, there was the so-called personal problem. Some people alleged it was still there," Dr. Roman meant, of course, Mr. Rockefeller's celebrated divorce and his remarriage to a younger woman who was a divorcee herself.

"On the other side, Rockefeller had accomplished more in eight years than any other governor. But these positives

Could you intent in they well to a tribute to her ability in your field? Rob her to bring you to the election? Campaigns and put her. Not far about Rockefeller and THE NATIONAL OBSERVER. Nelson Rockefeller's Last Hurrah Leadership?

Just an honest exchange of competence?

from the usual political approach," Dr. Roman notes. "We moseyed around the field and we found Jack Tinker & Partners, part of the Interpublic complex. We liked their different approach. It was off-beat and it had been successful in restoring some products." One of those restored products was Alka-Seltzer; another, Braniff Airways, Inc.

The scene switches, in wonderful contrast, from the stark, businesslike office of Dr. Roman to the swinging offices of Jack Tinker & Partners. The door opens upon a large living room, a well-stocked bar ready to go at one end. The couches are deep and modern. Minkskirted girls dash breathlessly from room to room, carrying mugs of coffee. This is the place where the celebrated Mary Wells used to work, until she quit to open her own agency. Not so surprisingly, her first account turned out to be Braniff Airways.

A Different Kind of Agency

But, with or without Mary Wells, Tinker has an air and a style about it that is almost singular. It's a different kind of agency. The favorite word of the people who work there is *creative*. The trademark of a Tinker commercial is its rapport with the person who is expected to look at it. Says Jack Conroy, who supervised the Rockefeller account: "Each of our commercials tries to talk with the viewer. You talk to the people in front of their sets in their own terms. This is almost automatic with the Tinker people."

The Tinker people had never handled a political client. But, when they heard the account was up for grabs, they went after it. The Tinker presentation was made by Mary Wells, shortly before she quit. It won the day.

Tinker learned it had won the account about the first of April, fully five months before the Republican State Convention was due to convene. The Tinker people still remember their first meeting with Governor Rockefeller and his people. "It was held in his private offices on 55th Street," one of them recalls. "He was there and so was Roman, and his private pollsters too. We were impressed by the governor's own evaluation of his problems. One of the pollsters got up and said to him, 'You couldn't be elected dog-catcher.'"

The Time to Work

The creation of good television takes time, Mr. Rockefeller, because he was an incumbent and because of his own

microphone to resemble a reporter talking to a fish puppet."

The script reads, in part:

Reporter: You, sir.

Fish: Uh huh.

Reporter: How do you feel about Governor Rockefeller's Pure Waters Program?

Fish: His pure what?

Reporter: Pure waters.

Fish: Oh, oh yeah.

Reporter: This program, sir, is wiping out water pollution in New York within six years.

Fish: Well, it was pretty smelly down here.

Reporter: By the end of summer, the governor will have called in every major pollster for a hearing.

And so on, for an exchange or two more.

Bill Pfeiffer remembers looking at the first Tinker commercials with a number of political leaders. "The politicians," says Mr. Pfeiffer, "said it was no damn good. They're so used to the staged stuff, to the candidate standing there talking. You had to wait out these Tinker commercials to find out what they were all about. But the politicians thought they were just a waste of time. That's when I knew we had done the right thing."

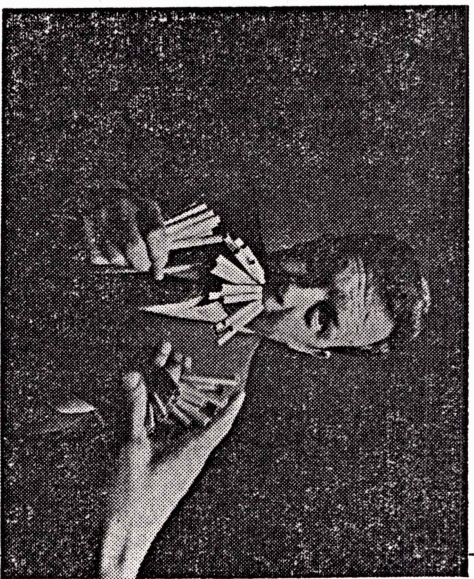
A Germ of Truth

Each commercial dealt with a single subject, directly and imaginatively. The commercials were amusing and they were interesting. And each of them contained a germ or two of truth.

The second Tinker commercial was classic in its utter simplicity. A camera was mounted on a hood of a car, and the commercial showed what the camera photographed as the road slipped by. The script reads: "If you look all the roads Governor Rockefeller has built, and all the roads he's widened and straightened and smoothed out. . . . if you look all these roads, and laid them end to end, they'd stretch all the way to . . . Hawaii."

At that point—the Hawaii bit—the sound swells; it's all crashing breakers and hula music. Then the car obviously backs up and turns around. The road starts to slip by again. The voice returns: "All the way to Hawaii. . . . and all the way back."

Then came "Butterfingers" (about state scholarships) and "2 Packs a Day"



Let Bill Tilles know you'd like to know Mary Wells, the former Bruce Harbely and your chosen candidate. Monday, January 9, 1967

ature turned out to be as strikingly original, in concept and design, as the Rockefeller television.

'Out of This World'

"First," says Dr. Roman, "we wanted to reach the opinion makers, for we were afraid we had lost them. They just weren't articulate for us and I mean the legislators, the newspaper people, the leaders of various special groups. So we decided to approach them on a clientele basis. We prepared eye-getting stuff in each category—a brochure for the people in the field of mental retardation, another for labor, another for the fine arts." Satty Bill Pfeiffer puts it in somewhat different terms. "It was out of this world," he says. "We had something for every group except the Times Square prostitutes."

Preparing the literature is one thing; distributing it is another. In most campaigns, thousands of brochures are still lying around headquarters the day after election. This time, a paid worker was assigned to each kind of brochure with instructions to make sure the literature got to the people it was written for. Thus, if there was a meeting anywhere in the state of people interested in higher education, there was a Rockefeller staffer there to make sure everyone got a brochure dealing entirely with what the governor had done for higher education in New York.

Another Roman innovation was the preparation of a series of brochures aimed at individual regions in the state. Every major region had a Rockefeller brochure, and the text in each told precisely what the Rockefeller administration had done for that part of the state. Getting the facts out of the bureaucracy was the tough part of that job; it was accomplished only because the

An early commercial for Rockefeller

dealt with air pollution. This is how it looked. The script gives video and audio directions.

own party's position—was a toll road. He and the Democrats wanted a free road. That refinement, naturally enough, never was explained.

Or take this Rockefeller 20-second commercial. The script reads: "Frank O'Connor from New York City is running for governor. He says the New York subways should be free. Guess who he thinks should pay for them?"

It is interesting that this commercial was only run in upstate New York; never in New York City. Moreover Mr. O'Connor never meant to say that he wanted the New York subways free now or even at any time in the next few years. He had been musing about long-term goals when he made his proposal, and he had been thinking about subways in all cities. Again, Mr. O'Connor never was able to explain the refinements involved.

In every campaign, smart politicians look for the "gut issue," an emotional, supercharged issue that can be battered home to almost every voter. The Rockefeller people, months before the campaign began, anticipated just such a gut issue.

TIME: #60-26
DATE: 1/9/67
TITLE: "2 Packs a Day"

AUDIO

ANNOUNCER (V.O.): You're looking at one day's supply of good old New York City air.

ANNOUNCER: Just breathe for 24 hours and you get what you've got from 2 packs of cigarettes every day.

The Governor of New York doesn't want you inhaling that kind of air.

Governor Rockefeller has called for air pollution controls on all cars and trucks by 1968 models—and that will help.

So has signed a law that gives tax incentives to businesses that restrict pollution—and that will help.

Time for Tim, his air pollution bill is the strongest in the U.S. — and that will help.

Your money goes for the Governor, and New York would break the air pollution habit for good.

Your guess of somebody else... (Gasp)

and who doesn't? (Gasp)

JOHN TINKER & PARTNERS, INC.

A paid political announcement by Friends of the Rockefeller Team.

he got full credit for all these new taxes.

"Then he had this very long session with the Legislature and a struggle over the Medicaid [New York's program for medical care for the elderly]. The compromise was higher than the original bill, and the governor got credit for it. It was only after the bill was passed that newspapers pointed out its cost to state and local government. The result was a furor in the Buffalo and Syracuse areas.

"Also, there was the so-called personal problem. Some people alleged it was still there," Dr. Roman meant, of course, Mr. Rockefeller's celebrated divorce and his remarriage to a younger woman who was a divorcee herself.

"On the other side, Rockefeller had accomplished more in eight years than any other governor. But these positives weren't apparent. He'd done so much it was all kind of a blur—the state university, highways, aid to local governments, health, parks, right across the board.

"Adding it all up, the governor just wasn't popular. People didn't like him any more."

Fortune Favors the Brave

That's almost an understatement. The Rockefeller problem was so serious that some Republican leaders actually were calling for him to step aside in favor of U.S. Sen. Jacob Javits. Even some of the people closest to Rockefeller were privately saying that defeat was inevitable. But things weren't quite as bad as they looked. As Dr. Roman says, "Fortune favors the brave."

One of the secrets of the Rockefeller campaign's success was its early start. First, there was Dr. Roman, ready to go on issues. Then there was "the other Bill"—William L. Pfeiffer, an old professional who had worked for Mr. Rockefeller before. This time, he actually went to work for Rockefeller on Dec. 1, 1964. His assignment was to organize the 1966 campaign—to pick the personnel, to open a headquarters, to lay out a schedule. Bill Roman was the ideas man. Bill Pfeiffer was the organization man. Ultimately, Mr. Pfeiffer put together a paid staff of 307 people, 190 of them working out of headquarters at the New York Hilton. In a more traditional way, his operation was just as brilliant as Dr. Roman's. And almost as costly.

Yet, with all credit to Mr. Pfeiffer and the professionals working for him, the major assignment was Dr. Roman's. He had to sell Nelson Rockefeller just as Miles Laboratories sells Alka-Seltzer. He had to make an unpopular governor an acceptable product.

The Substantive Issues Group

And so he formed a small committee, himself at its head, grandiloquently called the Substantive Issues Group. Like Dr. Roman himself, this elite group—never numbering more than five—was exclusively intellectual.

"We undertook a pre-campaign approach," says Dr. Roman. "We wanted to improve the governor's position before the state convention [the ticket in New

quilt. It won the day.

Thicker learned it had won the account about the first of April, fully five months before the Republican State Convention was due to convene. The Thicker people still remember their first meeting with Governor Rockefeller and his people. "It was held in his private offices on 55th Street," one of them recalls. "He was there and so was Roman, and his private pollsters too. We were impressed by the governor's own evaluation of his problems. One of the pollsters got up and said to him, 'You couldn't be elected dog-catcher.'"

The Time to Work

The creation of good television takes time. Mr. Rockefeller, because he was an incumbent and because of his own far-sightedness, had the time. His ultimate Democratic opponent, Frank D. O'Connor, never did have the time, and the quality of his television showed it.

"Advance planning is so damn important," says Thicker's Mr. Conroy. "I don't see why a lot of incumbents don't start planning a lot sooner. And, in fact, I don't see why the out-party couldn't do it either. The out-party couldn't do it without having a candidate of their own."

And so the work began, Dr. Roman and his team deciding on the issues to be stressed, the agency people developing these issues into brilliant television commercials. As Bill Pfeiffer puts it: "We had to sell the record, associate it with the governor. And it had to be done so subtly it crept up on you before you knew what the hell had happened to you."

Thicker commercials are prepared by teams. Each team is composed of a copywriter and an art director. Unlike most agencies, the two members of the team follow the commercial all the way through the production process, from writing the script to directing the filming to editing the sound. Two of these teams were assigned to the Rockefeller account. Working on the No. 1 team were Eugene Case, writer, and Bob Reitzel, art director. Mr. Reitzel has since defected to Mary Wells' agency.

Quality Commercials

The first commercials produced by these teams all were 60 seconds in length. Each was done in a process called sound-on-film. It's slower to produce but the quality is better. Moreover, a creative team can do more with film than with tape. It is not surprising that most of the Rockefeller commercials were sound-on-film, that all of the Democratic commercials were videotape.

The first Thicker commercial set the whole tone of the early phase of the campaign. The title of the commercial is "Fish Interview." Stage directions read: "Open on hand wearing a press hat and

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Then came "Butterfingers" (about state scholarships) and "2 Packs a Day" (air pollution) and all the rest. [For the full scripts, see the accompanying illustrations.] Nelson Rockefeller didn't appear in any of these commercials. His voice wasn't even used. The Thicker agency picked a professional—actor Ed Bimis—to read the scripts. It is this same Ed Bimis that millions of Americans hear on television every day—talking about Alka-Seltzer and Gillette razors.

The first of the soft-sell Thicker commercials began dropping up on screens in July. Just as Bill Pfeiffer says, they "crept up" on the viewer. Long before the commercials began to appear, the Rockefeller and Thicker people had worked out a schedule based on a detailed analysis of the voters' market.

They had found, for example, that 86.7 per cent of the registered vote lives in 22 of the 62 counties. Conclusion from that: Saturate the television markets serving those 22 counties. Thus, the 60-second commercials were scheduled for the six stations in New York City and for television stations serving Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.

The television campaign was divided into three phases. Phase 1 covered the period July 5 to Sept. 12. In that period, the schedule called for running 37 Rockefeller 60-second commercials every week in New York City and 18 every week in each of the five upstate markets.

The result was that the Rockefeller commercials, stressing the administration's accomplishments but never the candidate himself, were shown 700 times before the state convention even began.

That, of course, was only part of the pre-convention strategy. The governor himself quickly toured the state all during August, shaking hands and trying to make friends. Personal emissaries—men like George Hinman, who had done so much for Mr. Rockefeller in his Presidential efforts—toured the state, talking to "opinion makers." An indication of the success of this effort may be the fact that only two daily newspapers in the state—the Adirondack Enterprise and the Syracuse Herald-Journal—ultimately decided to support a candidate opposed to Mr. Rockefeller.

In New York City, both the liberal City Post and the conservative Daily News, which rarely

assigned to each kind of brochure with instructions to make sure the literature got to the people it was written for. Thus, if there was a meeting anywhere in the state or people interested in higher education, there was a Rockefeller staffer there to make sure everyone got a brochure dealing entirely with what the governor had done for higher education in New York.

Another Roman innovation was the preparation of a series of brochures aimed at individual regions in the state. Every major region had a Rockefeller brochure, and the text in each told precisely what the Rockefeller administration had done for that part of the state. Getting the facts out of the bureaucracy was the tough part of that job. It was accomplished only because the fact-gathering had begun months earlier.

Detailed Data Sheets

Beyond this, the Roman group prepared immense research reports for each of the 62 counties in the state. These data sheets showed how many miles of highways had been built, and where, the number of new bridges, the number of state scholarships awarded to county students, even specific examples showing how high property taxes would be if it weren't for increased state aid. All of the candidates used these data sheets in their personal appearances.

A bulkier document was called "The Massive Record." It was an account of the accomplishments of the Rockefeller administration and it was distributed to all of the campaign workers. A shorter version was prepared for the general voter.

Because they had started so early, the Rockefeller people had the time—and, to be sure, the cash—to anticipate the issues. Polls were taken regularly. They showed that one of the major criticisms of the governor was that he was arrogant. "So," says Dr. Roman, "we flipped that over to the positive. The positive of arrogance is leadership. So we said, 'This is leadership and let's keep it in Albany.' It came through again and again in what we did. It was summed up by the phrase, 'He Cares.'"

The polls had also shown the voters were angry about high taxes. The answer to that was to show where the money had gone. All the Rockefeller material emphasized the amount of money that had been returned to local jurisdictions in the form of state aid.

Anticipating the Opponent

The Rockefeller people also tried to anticipate their opponent. They guessed right that Frank D. O'Connor, president of the New York City Council, would be the Democrats' choice. He was chosen at the Democratic State Convention in Buffalo on Sept. 7-8. By then, the Republicans had a fat file on his career and almost everything he had ever said.

Thus, after both conventions were over, the Rockefeller campaign moved into a new—and tougher—phase. Gradually, radio and TV commercials (radio was used to supplement television) began to zero in on Mr. O'Connor. Finally, Mr. Rockefeller appeared full-face, using his own voice, to attack with extraordinary

GOVERNOR, HE SAYS THE NEW YORK SUBWAYS should be free. Guess who he thinks should pay for them?

It is interesting that this commercial was only run in upstate New York, never in New York City. Moreover Mr. O'Connor never meant to say that he wanted the New York subways free now or even at any time in the next few years. He had been musing about long-term goals when he made his proposal, and he had been thinking about subways in all cities. Again, Mr. O'Connor never was able to explain the refinements involved.

In every campaign, smart politicians look for the "gut issue," an emotional, supercharged issue that can be battered home to almost every voter. The Rockefeller people, months before the campaign began, anticipated just such a gut issue. When it came time, they were ready.

The Narcotics Issue

The issue was, specifically, narcotics: more broadly, crime. Mr. Rockefeller, as governor, had proposed a sweeping narcotics program. It involved getting all of the addicts off the street—mandatory treatment, in other words—and jailing all of the pushers. It was strong stuff, so strong that it worried many civil libertarians. Yet, for voters generally, it was popular enough, for every poll taken in New York State recently rates crime as the leading concern of the citizenry.

The Rockefeller people expected that Mr. O'Connor would take a position against the Rockefeller narcotics program. Mr. O'Connor did take such a position, perhaps to win back dissident liberals to the Democratic line (many of them were flocking to the Liberal Party and its candidate, Mr. Roosevelt). Or perhaps Mr. O'Connor, as his aides suggest, just thought the program, as outlined by Mr. Rockefeller, was unworkable.

Whatever the reason, Mr. O'Connor was vulnerable, and he was cloberbered by every device available to his opposition. The television commercials were eerie, frightening. A police car, lights flashing, cruises down a dark street. There's the sound of footsteps in the background. A disembodied voice begins talking: "If you walk home at night or if there's a teenager in your family, you should be worried. Governor Rockefeller's worried. As much as he's had the crime in New York is caused by addicts. That's why the governor has sponsored a tough new law that can get addicts off the street for up to three years. . . ."

Rockefeller Speaks Out

At first, the commercials made no mention of Mr. O'Connor. Then they noted that, as district attorney of Queens, he had been alone among all prosecutors in the state in opposing a tough narcotics law. Finally, Mr. Rockefeller himself—speaking into a battery of microphones in a television studio—took the fight directly to his opponent. "If you want to keep crime rates high," he concluded, "O'Connor is your man."

It was devastating. Its effect was heightened by a local issue in New York City—the police civilian-review board. The Conservative Party and the police themselves had managed to get a referendum on the ballot challenging Mayor John

would amount to \$6,000,000. The official figure filed by Mr. Rockefeller and his people is \$4,800,000. Hardly anyone doubts, however, that the O'Connor people are reasonably accurate when they say they spent \$600,000. It just couldn't have been much more.

Even with this lopsided spending, Mr. Rockefeller didn't win by very much. The final count was: Rockefeller, 2,690,626; O'Connor, 2,298,363; Adams, 510,023; Rockefeller could have beaten. He won because he had the money and the talent to wage a brilliant campaign. And, to be sure, he had luck on his side—luck in having the Democrats pick the bombing Mr. O'Connor, luck in having Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Adams splintering the vote.

A Personal Victory

Then, too, it was a personal victory. New York Republicans failed to win back any of those Congressional seats they lost in 1964. They failed to win control of the State Assembly. They just barely held their margin in the State Senate.

It was a personal victory because almost everything was directed to the top of the ticket. That's where the action was, and that's where the money was. In point of fact, there hardly was a state committee operating in New York in 1966. Its function was taken over by the Rockefeller organization. Even now, weeks after the election, there is no real functioning state organization in New York. It remains a Rockefeller operation.

The Lessons?

Money and more money. Money wisely, even ruthlessly, spent. A candidate or a party must have it early and spend it often.

Television. It's the premier instrument for political campaigning. It penetrates into almost every home; it sways and angers and converts. Item: During the week of Oct. 18, Rockefeller ran 74 television commercials in New York City. They were seen in 91 per cent of all television homes in the city and 5,600,000 of 6,000,000 New York homes have television. Not seen just once—but seen an average of 9.8 times in each home.

Experts. No one wins any more with amateurs. Good television means people like Dr. Roman and the copywriters and art directors at Jack Thicker. Good organization requires innovators like Bill Pfeiffer.

Time. It takes time to put together a campaign. Mr. Rockefeller had the time. Mr. O'Connor didn't. It was as simple as that.

But what about candidates? Is there a lesson in New York that almost anyone can be elected, given money, television, experts, and time? Perhaps not. Mr. Rockefeller, after all, is a great campaigner, and he has been, a many people think, a strong and effective governor. There was, in all the confusion and bitterness, a product to be sold, albeit in a battered and dusty package.

Yet a note of doubt remains. These new techniques are so overwhelming, so terribly effective. Some day, maybe they will elect a truly dangerous and sinister

One of the secrets of the Rockefeller campaign's success was its early start. First, there was Dr. Roman, ready to go on issues. Then there was "the other Bill"—William L. Pfeiffer, an old professional who had worked for Mr. Rockefeller before. This time, he actually went to work for Rockefeller on Dec. 1, 1964. His assignment was to organize the 1966 campaign—to pick the personnel, to open headquarters, to lay out a schedule. Bill Roman was the ideas man. Bill Pfeiffer was the organization man. Ultimately, Mr. Pfeiffer put together a paid staff of 307 people, 190 of them working out of headquarters at the New York Hilton. In a more traditional way, his operation was just as brilliant as Dr. Roman's. And almost as costly.

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"We undertook a pre-campaign approach," says Dr. Roman. "We wanted to improve the governor's position before the state convention [the ticket in New York is chosen by party convention, not by direct primary]. Since people were down on the governor, we decided to sell his accomplishments without using him at all."

The key decision was the choice of an advertising agency. "We wanted to depart

the governor. And it had to be done so subtly it crept up on you before you knew what the hell had happened to you."

Thinker commercials are prepared by teams. Each team is composed of a copywriter and an art director. Unlike most agencies, the two members of the team follow the commercial all the way through the production process, from writing the script to directing the filming to editing the sound. Two of these teams were assigned to the Rockefeller account. Working on the No. 1 team were Eugene Case, writer, and Bob Reitzfeld, art director. Mr. Reitzfeld has since detected to Mary Wells' agency.

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The television campaign was divided into three phases. Phase 1 covered the period July 5 to Sept. 12. In that period, the schedule called for running 37 Rockefeller 60-second commercials every week in New York City and 18 every week in each of the five upstate markets.

The result was that the Rockefeller commercials, stressing the administration's accomplishments but never the candidate himself, were shown 700 times before the state convention even began.

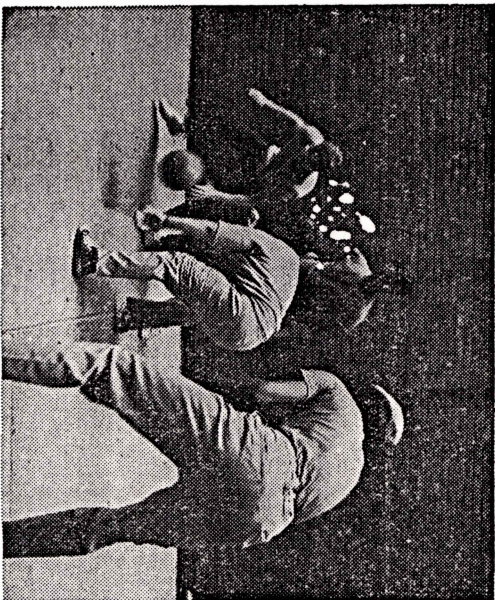
That, of course, was only part of the pre-convention strategy. The governor himself quietly toured the state all during August, shaking hands and trying to make friends. Personal emissaries—men like George Hinman, who had done so much for Mr. Rockefeller in his Presidential efforts—toured the state, talking to "opinion makers." An indication of the success of this effort may be the fact that only two daily newspapers in the state—the Adirondack Enterprise and the Syracuse Herald-Journal—ultimately decided to support a candidate opposed to Mr. Rockefeller.

In New York City, both the liberal Post and the conservative Daily News, which rarely agree about anything, endorsed Mr. Rockefeller.

Dr. Roman and his Substantive Issues Group were busy with other things too. One of these projects was campaign literature.

"We had long felt most of it is not very valid," Dr. Roman says. "There's a picture of a guy and it says, 'Vote for Joe Smith.' Now, here we had Nelson Rockefeller, one of the most visible of people. He'd run twice in the state and tried for President twice. There was no need to try to produce a recognition factor. Just what we didn't want people saying was, 'Aha, there's Nelson Rockefeller.'"

Thinker agency produced this film on actual location in New York. Only the fat boy is a model. Script is final copy.



Because they had started so early, the Rockefeller people had the time—and, to be sure, the cash—to anticipate the issues. Polls were taken regularly. They showed that one of the major criticisms of the governor was that he was arrogant. "So," says Dr. Roman, "we flipped that over to the positive. The positive of arrogance is leadership. So we said, 'This is leadership and let's keep it in Albany.' It came through again and again in what we did. It was summed up by the phrase, 'He Cares.'"

The polls had also shown the voters were angry about high taxes. The answer to that was to show where the money had gone. All the Rockefeller material emphasized the amount of money that had been returned to local jurisdictions in the form of state aid.

Anticipating the Opponent

The Rockefeller people also tried to anticipate their opponent. They guessed right that Frank D. O'Connor, president of the New York City Council, would be the Democrats' choice. He was chosen at the Democratic State Convention in Buffalo on Sept. 7-8. By then, the Republicans had a fat file on his career and almost everything he had ever said.

Thus, after both conventions were over, the Rockefeller campaign moved into a new—and tougher—phase. Gradually, radio and TV commercials (radio was used to supplement television) began to zero in on Mr. O'Connor. Finally, Mr. Rockefeller appeared full-face, using his own voice, to attack with extraordinary ruthlessness his gentle and bumbling Democratic opponent.

Mr. O'Connor had no meaningful reply. The Democrats, up to the time of their convention, had done almost nothing about preparing a campaign. They had no literature, no television, hardly any organization. The entirely predictable result was chaos in their camp. Worse, they were constantly on the defense. Troubling the waters, too, were the additional canidacies of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., on the liberal ticket, and Paul L. Adams, on the Conservative.

The Thinker agency returned to the battle, preparing 10- and 20-second commercials attacking Mr. O'Connor and his record. Typical was this script: "Frank O'Connor, the man who led the fight against the New York State Thruway. Is running for governor. Get in your car. Drive down to the polls, and vote."

Distorting the Issues

Of necessity, all spot commercials are oversimplifications. After all, no one can say very much even in 60 seconds. In the first phase, though, most of the Rockefeller commercials were reasonably truthful. Now, however, in the second and third phases, they became distortions. Take the thruway commercial. Mr. O'Connor, as a state legislator, didn't actually oppose a thruway. What he did oppose—taking his

Roosevelt. Or perhaps Mr. O'Connor, as his aides suggest, just thought the program, as outlined by Mr. Rockefeller, was unworkable.

Whatever the reason, Mr. O'Connor was vulnerable, and he was cloberbed by every device available to his opposition. The television commercials were eerie, frightening. A police car, lights flashing, cruises down a dark street. There's the sound of footsteps in the background. "If you walk home at night or if there's a teen-ager in your family, you should be worried. Governor Rockefeller's worried. As much as half the crime in New York is caused by addicts. That's why the governor has sponsored a tough new law that can get addicts off the street for up to three years. . . ."

Rockefeller Speaks Out

At first, the commercials made no mention of Mr. O'Connor. Then they noted that, as district attorney of Queens, he had been alone among all prosecutors in the state in opposing a tough narcotics law. Finally, Mr. Rockefeller himself—speaking into a battery of microphones in a television studio—took the fight directly to his opponent. "If you want to keep crime rates high," he concluded, "O'Connor is your man."

It was devastating. Its effect was heightened by a local issue in New York City—the police civilian-review board. The Conservative Party and the police themselves had managed to get a referendum on the ballot challenging Mayor John Lindsay's review board. It was, by itself, the most emotional issue in the city. And the narcotics issue dovetailed neatly with it.

In the final weeks of the campaign, the Rockefeller people simply overwhelmed the opposition. And television was the battering ram.

Consider these figures. On television station WNBC, in New York City, the Rockefeller forces ran 208 commercials. They paid \$237,000 to do it. The O'Connor forces ran on this same station 23 commercials. They paid \$41,000. On WGBS, Rockefeller outspent O'Connor \$231,105 to \$35,920. On WABC, the third network station in the city, it was \$137,000 for Rockefeller and \$25,100 for O'Connor.

The disparity upstate was sometimes even more remarkable. On WBEH in Buffalo, Rockefeller spent \$27,762; O'Connor, \$2,465. Little WYNY in Watertown ran 99 Rockefeller commercials, at \$3,067.50, against 18 O'Connor commercials, at \$1,307.50.

Rockefeller strategists hasten to point out that they began their television campaign "way back in July. They're right, of course—but they had to start that early to make a campaign. That early spending was just as crucial as the final spending. It was, in fact, one campaign. And

wisely, even ruthlessly, spent. A candidate or a party must have it early and spend it often.

Television. It's the premier instrument for political campaigning. It penetrates into almost every home; it sways and angers and converts. Item: During the week of Oct. 18, Rockefeller ran 74 television commercials in New York City. They were seen in 91 per cent of all television homes in the city (and 5,600,000 of 6,000,000 New York homes have television). Not seen just once—but seen an average of 9.8 times in each home.

Experts. No one wins any more with amateurs. Good television means people like Dr. Roman and the copywriters and art directors at Jack Thinker organization requires innovators like Bill Pfeiffer.

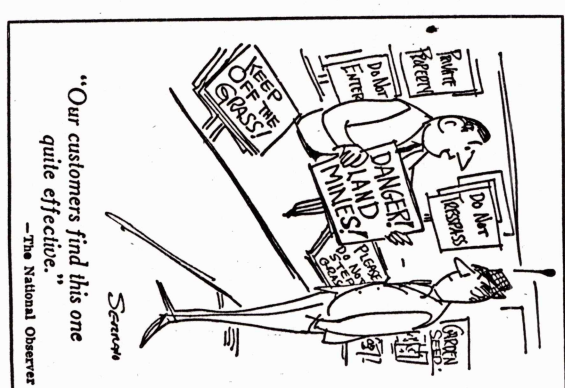
Time. It takes time to put together a campaign. Mr. Rockefeller had the time. Mr. O'Connor didn't. It was as simple as that.

But what about candidates? Is there a lesson in New York that almost anyone can be elected, given money, television, experts, and time? Perhaps not. Mr. Rockefeller, after all, is a great campaigner, and he has been, many people think, a strong and effective governor. There was, in all the confusion and bitterness, a product to be sold, albeit in a battered and dusty package.

Yet, a note of doubt remains. These new techniques are so overwhelming, so terribly effective. Some day, maybe they will elect a truly dangerous and sinister man to high public office.

The preventive, perhaps, is a general understanding of what it's all about.

—JAMES M. PERRY



"Our customers find this one quite effective."

—The National Observer

a little knowledge will be as disastrous as even