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Running from Behind: Nelson Rockefeller and the Liberal Republicans During the 1964 Republican Primaries

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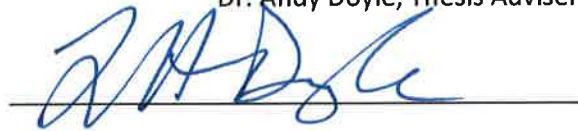
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December 20, 2017

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

We are submitting a thesis written by Christopher Eller entitled *Running From Behind: Nelson Rockefeller and the Liberal Republicans during the 1964 Republican Primaries*. We recommend acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

Dr. Andy Doyle, Thesis Adviser



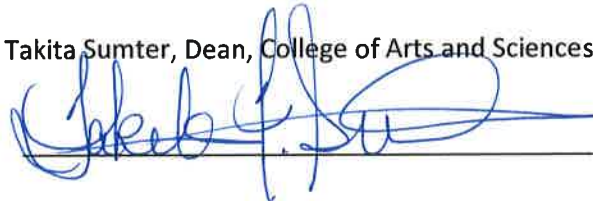
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RUNNING FROM BEHIND: NELSON ROCKEFELLER AND THE LIBERAL
REPUBLICANS DURING THE 1964 REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty

Of the

College of Arts and Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of

Master of Arts

In History

Winthrop University

December, 2017

By

Christopher Eller

Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine if the conservative victory in the 1964 Republican presidential primaries was inevitable. Based on archival research, primary source materials, and secondary source materials, it is concluded that conservative candidate Barry Goldwater faced numerous instances when his campaign could have been defeated by Republican challengers, campaign blunders, and internal party factions. This thesis focuses on liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller's campaign with the intention of articulating the fracturing of the Republican Party in the early 1960s. Rockefeller's quest for the nomination is emblematic of the changing nature of presidential politics in the post-World War II era leading to changes in voter preferences, campaign tactics, and ultimately the path to the White House.

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Introduction

Nelson Rockefeller waited in anticipation. Louis XV-style furniture dotted the forty-seven foot living room, touched off by cutting-edge furnishings and art, gilded consoles, ivory tables, and large Picasso paintings. Occupying most of the twelfth floor with a view of Central Park, Rockefeller's residence consisted of a living room, a formal dining room, a library, a massive two-bedroom master suite complete with a spacious master bath, a staff bedroom with its own bathroom, and a large family room off the kitchen.¹ It was Friday night, July 22, 1960, three days before the opening of the Republican National Convention in Chicago. Rockefeller prepared himself for the arrival of Richard Nixon to his apartment at 810 Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Days earlier, Citizens for Rockefeller, a political action group spearheading the draft Rockefeller campaign, made a newspaper and television appeal to voters that brought in over a million pieces of mail and telegrams to the Chicago convention along with a flood of telephone calls overwhelming the mail delivery services around the city.² People demanded that Rockefeller be placed on the ballot for president. Throughout the election cycle, Rockefeller remained coy about the nomination, never fading too far out of focus. By May of 1960, when disarmament talks with had Russia broken down and American interests abroad suffered, Rockefeller sensed a troubling future ahead for the

¹ Kay, Andrew, "Rockefeller Rich on Fifth Avenue," <http://iconsofnewyork.com/?p=599> (accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

² Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1960*, New York: Harper Perennial, 2010, 215.

country. These factors all reinvigorated his drive for the presidency. Like Taft in 1952, Rockefeller's supporters envisioned themselves streaming towards the convention hall singing the praises of their nominee. To Governor Rockefeller, it seemed like a grand possibility.

Nelson's grandfather, John D. Rockefeller, was once the richest man in the world, after having built the family fortune through the merciless business practices of Standard Oil. Estimates of the Rockefeller fortune ranged from three to six billion dollars.³ A sum so large that the Rockefeller family saw fit to re-envision the skyline of New York City, build the Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts and the Museum of Modern Art, and give rise to the Rockefeller plaza and the Rockefeller Center. The name "Rockefeller" became an institution unto itself, not confined to New York or even the Northeast, but all across the country. Money poured into an array of projects ranging from medical research and education to real estate and missile development. Despite this immense power, John D. Rockefeller closed himself off from the public. He taught his children and grandchildren to avoid bringing bad publicity on the family name by staying out of the newspapers. He, a titan of nineteenth-century finance, tried to avoid the press. Rockefeller's were not to have their picture in any publication nor were they to publically participate in politics aside from discreet donations to the Republican Party. Nelson Rockefeller changed all of that by accepting Franklin Roosevelt's offer to become Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs in 1940. He then served as a special advisor on international affairs in the Truman administration followed by a position as a diplomat

³ White, *Making of the President 1960*, 210.

under Dwight Eisenhower before becoming the governor of New York, the most populous state in the country. Rockefeller, in the words of a friend, “felt he had to run for elective office, because nobody really paid any attention to someone who was only an appointee.”⁴ He was an egalitarian extrovert who succeeded by using his charm and persuasion, prompting his defeated opponents to marvel at his political magic.⁵ By 1960, Nelson Rockefeller appeared as the liberal Republicans’ golden boy, the New York governor with the potential to swing the presidential election and Richard Nixon took notice.

Nixon arrived at the Fifth Avenue apartment under unusual circumstances. Rockefeller had requested a secret meeting with Nixon and wanted there to be an announcement afterwards that the meeting had taken place at the vice president’s request. He also wanted a “joint” agreement over changes to the party platform ahead of the convention.⁶ Accompanied by an aide and a Secret Service agent, Nixon took the elevator up to the twelfth floor at 7:30 that evening. Rockefeller’s shift from not seeking the candidacy in December 1959 to announcing that he would not campaign but make himself available for a party draft at the convention had kept him on the cusp of the nomination, at least in the public’s eye. He spent that time advocating liberal Republican ideals that threatened not only party unity but Nixon’s chance at winning the election. Nixon, toeing the line between being shrewd and pragmatic, was trying to have it both

⁴ “The Rocky Roll,” *Time*, Oct. 5, 1958, 18.

⁵ Manchester, William, “Nelson Rockefeller’s Moral Heritage,” *Harper’s Magazine*, May. 1959, 26.

⁶ Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, New York: Nation, 2009, 116.

ways. He appealed to the conservatives while repeatedly seeking liberal Republican support, sending mixed signals to both factions. Republicans like Barry Goldwater pushed Nixon to take a strong stand on conservative issues like reducing spending, balancing the budget, and ending bureaucratic growth. Nixon agreed to their points and even promised to advocate for a right-to-work plank in the Republican Party platform.⁷ To ease the worries of conservatives, Nixon told Goldwater that he had no intention of meeting with Rockefeller until after the convention. But, Rockefeller's sudden surge, bolstered by the Citizens for Rockefeller, changed the political calculus. Nixon believed that if he did not meet with Rockefeller he would risk losing New York and potentially the support of northeastern Republicans.

After exchanging greetings, Nixon and Rockefeller ate together in the opulent dining room of the Rockefeller residence while discussing their experiences in Washington. An hour or so later, they retired to the next room to focus on more pressing matters. Nixon wanted to discuss the vice presidency. In the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's selection of Texas senator Lyndon Johnson there appeared to be a growing weakness in the South for the GOP. By choosing Johnson as his running mate, Kennedy increased the pressure on Nixon to hold the northern industrial states including New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio. Nixon's campaign data suggested that Rockefeller could add as much as two points to the final tally. Knowing how close pollsters projected the election to be, Nixon offered the vice presidency to Rockefeller. Nixon promised Rockefeller control over the party platform, foreign policy, and New

⁷ Gary Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah: The Presidential Campaign of 1964*, Skyhorse Pub Co Inc., 2016, 28.

York state patronage.⁸ To Nixon's dismay, Rockefeller refused the offer, saying that he was not interested in standing by while someone else took the lead.⁹

Sometime around ten o'clock the pair began to work on Rockefeller's desired changes to the party platform. Thinking that he could still change Rockefeller's mind on the vice presidency, Nixon prepared to give ground to the governor. Rockefeller gave Nixon a draft of fourteen points that he wanted to see in the platform and the two began their work long into the night. At midnight, a four way phone call between platform committee chairman Charles Percy in his Chicago hotel room and Rockefeller's command center was established. They went over the defense budget, the issue of funding a federal program of medical care for elderly Americans, the rate of economic growth, and the proposal for the Atlantic confederation. Nixon did not stand in the way of Rockefeller's civil rights plank that praised the actions of demonstrators protesting at southern lunch counters reserved for whites.¹⁰ At 3:30 a.m., it was all over. With Nixon on his way to catch a flight at La Guardia destined for Chicago, Rockefeller telephoned his staff to tell them what had happened. At 5:00 a.m. a press release went out from the Rockefeller people: "The Vice-President and I met today at my home in New York City. The meeting took place at the Vice-President's request. The purpose of the meeting was

⁸ Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger: Volume I: 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin Press, 2015, 455.

⁹ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms: A Life of Nelson Rockefeller*, New York: Random House, 2014, 344-345.

¹⁰ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 345.

to discuss the platform of the Republican Party.”¹¹ Members of the press the next day called the meeting “the Truce of Fifth Avenue.”¹²

It was a big story: reaction to the meeting was explosive but neither side came away looking good. President Eisenhower accosted Nixon for “repudiating” the administration’s record and Rockefeller for “personal treachery.”¹³ Goldwater could not believe that Nixon had given in to Rockefeller. He was outraged, calling the meeting the “Munich of the Republican Party,” a “surrender” that spelled defeat in November.¹⁴ Nixon had been summoned by the conservatives’ arch-rival within the party, had crawled his way into his apartment in New York City, and had signed on to the liberals’ platform. Party regulars long believed that there had been an eastern liberal conspiracy against them, working behind the scenes to impose its will on the rest of the party. Nixon’s meeting with Rockefeller confirmed their suspicions, giving the leverage not to the vice-president and likely nominee, but to a northeastern liberal from New York. Rockefeller’s naked grab for power was too much for the right wing of the party. They looked like fools, having worked to write and rewrite the platform in Chicago while the real platform was being made in a luxury apartment on Fifth Avenue.

When Nixon arrived at the convention just before noon on Monday the 25th, he was caught in a precarious situation. Over the weekend, Eisenhower had formed a third

¹¹ “The Platform Statements by Rockefeller and Nixon,” *New York Times*, July 21, 1960.

¹² James Reston, “The Truce of Fifth Avenue, or Morningside Revisited,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1960.

¹³ Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 455.

¹⁴ Russel Baker, “Goldwater Hits Platform Accord,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1960.

faction working independently of and, more often than not, against Rockefeller, but he still in supported Nixon's nomination. On the far right of the party, conservatives bristled with contempt for Nixon's appeasement of the liberal wing. Not only had Nixon not even bothered to tell Goldwater about his meeting with Rockefeller, which he could have done so during the pair's telephone call Friday morning, but he also refused to budge on the issue of civil rights. Before Nixon's meeting with Rockefeller, members of the platform committee had worked to write an acceptable civil rights plank. South Carolinian's Roger Milliken and A. Dabney Barnes sought to counter the Democrat's liberalism with a more conservative approach. During the writing session, liberal Republicans protested that Nixon would not support the language put in by Barnes, to which she countered by quoting lines from Nixon's book on the topic. With that, the committee adopted the civil rights plank. Much to the dismay of Barnes and other conservatives at the convention, when Nixon arrived from New York he insisted that the original plank be substituted for the one directed by Rockefeller.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Milliken inserted conservative ideology into the business and labor sections that came closer to Goldwater's brand of politics. A delegate from the Virgin Islands commented to a Texan, "If they had a couple more people like that red-headed fellow over there (Milliken), they could turn this party inside out."¹⁶

Many Republicans and Democrats alike foresaw a looming shift in the electorate from the South that could hinge on how each party would approach the concerns of the

¹⁵ Newspaper clipping, John A. Montgomery, "It Started Here," *Columbia Record*, July 12, 1963, in James Duffy Papers , MSS 69, box 3, folder 24, Clemson University Archives, Clemson, South Carolina.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

people. There existed an opportunity for Republicans to change the mindset of southern voters when they went to the ballot box thus giving Republicans an opening to take the region away from their opponents. One line of reasoning, put forward by Rockefeller, held that due to the demographic changes, stemming from the northern migration of African-Americans to the cities, Republicans needed to make progress towards stopping the loss of African-American votes by outflanking the Democrats on civil rights. Another view, predominantly held by Southern Republicans, focused on the issue from a states' rights perspective that wanted to limit the power of the federal government including the enforcement of civil rights. If African-Americans, who were already voting in large numbers for Democrats, were going north, then Republicans would have free rein over the South. A middle ground, proposed by the Platform Committee, avoided outright support of the sit-ins across the South, but refused any federal intervention to secure equality for African-Americans. Both points stood in opposition to the Democratic platform. Nixon chose to favor Rockefeller's position to garner votes from African-Americans in the North because he believed in it on principle. Those on the far right would later cite this decision for Nixon's defeat in the general election.¹⁷

On the opening day of the convention, Goldwater had his own decision to make. Arizona and South Carolina Republicans agreed to pledge their thirteen delegates to the Arizona Senator on the basis that if Goldwater's name were nominated then conservatism would be represented at the convention. Amid cheers from supporters, Governor Paul

¹⁷ White, *Making of the President 1960*, 233-234.

Fannin of Arizona trumpeted Goldwater's authenticity, "He is not a 'me too' person."¹⁸ Goldwater shared their philosophical sentiments but, in light of recent events, he was compelled to respond as a force for the conservatives rather than act as a mere symbol. In doing so, he withdrew his name from the nomination. Inside the convention hall Goldwater gave a stirring speech to his supporters. He withdrew his candidacy then called on conservatives to "grow up" and support Nixon. In a boisterous tone he appealed to their sense of reason, demanding that they cast their ballots for the party against the tide of liberalism. Then in a moment that would change the direction of the party, he appealed to their sense of frustration, "If we want to take this party back, and I think we can some day, let's get to work."¹⁹ In an instant, Goldwater became a conservative icon for having stood up to eastern liberals while supporting the Republican Party at large.

Nixon won the nomination on the first ballot, and he then selected Henry Cabot Lodge as his running mate. Lodge was a part of the eastern internationalist wing of the party, a moderate hailing from Massachusetts like the Democratic nominee. Kennedy, in fact, had defeated Lodge in the latter's bid for reelection to the Senate in 1952. Conservatives viewed Lodge as one more attempt at winning over the liberal East, but come election time, he was unable to turn the tide against Kennedy in the region. Goldwater refused to allow himself to be a victim of defeat; instead, his principled image gave supporters hope that conservatism would have its day.

¹⁸ "Unity is Stressed," *New York Times*, July 28, 1960.

¹⁹ Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah*, 29-30.

Rockefeller endorsed Nixon, pledging all ninety-six votes of the New York delegation to him. “We want to be the first state to put the key in the lock and open it for you,” Rockefeller told Nixon.²⁰ Flashbulb explosions captured the two of them with their arms around each other, grinning as members of the convention and national television audience looked on. An undercurrent of anger and resentment festered over Rockefeller’s heavy-handed attempt to make changes to the platform after it had been agreed upon by the Committee members. Unable to sense the blunder, Nixon announced that Rockefeller would be campaigning for him throughout the election cycle. Henry Kissinger later revealed Rockefeller’s view of the vice-president, saying, “He loathes Nixon.”²¹

South Carolina party chairman Greg Shorey foresaw a vicious battle on the horizon, “Senator Goldwater is the man the liberals will have to climb over to get what they want.”²² In the months that followed, John F. Kennedy defeated Nixon in one of the closest elections in American history. As with any major political defeat, the party faithful were left to ponder what went wrong. For conservatives, the answer was clear. The Republican Party embrace conservatism, distinguish itself from liberal Democrats, and give the electorate a clear ideological choice. On the other hand, Rockefeller and liberal Republicans concluded that aside from Nixon’s tactical errors, the party appealed to a broad base of Americans who, by nature, were drawn to moderate left-leaning

²⁰ “Unity is Stressed,” *New York Times*.

²¹ Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 456.

²² Newspaper clipping, John A. Montgomery, “It Started Here,” *The Columbia Record*, July 12, 1963, in James Duffy Papers, MSS 69, box 3, folder 24, Clemson University Archives.

politics. When the final ballots were counted in 1960, the race was on for control of a contentious Republican Party in 1964.

Chapter 1: Rockefeller Decides to Run

A Brief History of Liberal Republicans

“I’m feeling like a bull moose,” Theodore Roosevelt declared to reporters in 1912 shortly after forming the Progressive Party.²³ Political writers and cartoonists seized on the mental image of a bull moose pushing the Democrat’s donkey and Republican’s elephant to the side with an imposing physique, boundless energy, and sharpened antlers. Roosevelt’s progressive ideals careened into his opponents forcing a political battle unlike any other in American history that would divide Republicans, and, as a result, elevate the Democrats with consequences that reverberated into the middle of the twentieth century. This ideological split serves as a crucial moment for understanding the dynamic between party factions up to and during the 1960s.

When Republican leaders showed a preference for keeping the party in the hands of President William Howard Taft for the election of 1912 instead of Theodore Roosevelt, the party split in two. Conservatives kept their allegiance to their president, a level-headed if uncharismatic politician who longed to be in the courts instead of the White House. Taft’s pragmatism and deft legal work instituted a number of progressive changes to the law which were not politically feasible under Roosevelt. Roosevelt’s

²³ Edmund Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*, New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2011, 245.

supporters loved their candidate's energy, his sense of adventure, vigorous spirit, and the romantic image that he had crafted for himself since his days as a Rough Rider in Cuba. Taft and Roosevelt's fight for the nomination sparked the states to adopt a primary system. In order to get Roosevelt to the top of the ticket, his Republican supporters reasoned that they needed to bypass party regulars at the convention. They strategized that Roosevelt had to demonstrate his popularity in order to sway the political bosses to give their support to the candidate. To do this, backers convinced five states to join the already existing primary states to create a larger series of primary elections.²⁴

Initial opposition to Taft had come from Robert LaFollette in Wisconsin, George Norris in Nebraska, and Hiram Johnson in California. They represented a form of progressive militancy that was growing in western and farm states and was aimed at railroad companies and other business influences that controlled the party structure. Leaders within the movement found support among farmers and small business owners who raised concern among eastern progressives because of their attacks on eastern corporations and intellectuals. Eastern progressives shared the radicals' desire to curb big business and were equally upset with Taft's decision to raise tariff rates after he had promised to reduce them when he got elected in 1908, but progressives feared a growing movement. Sensing trouble, progressives urged Roosevelt to run. Reading the situation,

²⁴ Jody C. Baumgartner and Peter L. Francia, *Conventional Wisdom and American Elections: Exploding Myths, Exploring Misunderstanding*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007, 160.

Roosevelt made overtures towards the radicals by ratcheting up his rhetoric, thus placating their concerns.²⁵

In the primaries, Roosevelt crushed Lafollette and Taft only to be denied the nomination. Taft had managed to keep control of the Republican National Committee by wielding his presidential patronage powers in the South. Since the end of Reconstruction, southern delegates could be coerced into either delivering votes to a candidate or not giving votes or support if patronage could be had. Republicans in the South essentially held little power except during national functions. Their influence exceeded the electorate value that each state possessed.²⁶ Roosevelt, a towering political figure, was convinced that the Republican Party had gone astray so when he walked out of the Chicago convention millions fled the party with him. Swept up in election fever, Roosevelt maintained that only he had the experience and political acumen to advance his brand of progressive conservatism into a new era. Woodrow Wilson exploited the Republican Party's dysfunction and won the presidency in an Electoral College landslide.

During the election of 1916, Roosevelt urged his fellow progressives to make amends with conservatives. Four years later, Warren G. Harding returned the Republican Party to the White House by signaling the end of the sweeping changes of the Progressive Era, thus making way for a "return to normalcy." Throughout the 1920s Republicans in the West and Midwest quarreled with the eastern wing of the party over the issues of farming and agriculture and the evils of corporate capitalism. Many were strong

²⁵ Nicol C. Rae, *The Decline and Fall of Liberal Republicanism*, Oxford University Press, 1989, 20-21.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

advocates of isolation stemming from their German ancestry. They accused easterners of being internationalists who brought America into an unnecessary war in Europe that damaged the country's image in front of the world.²⁷ When Democrats nominated a Catholic in Al Smith in 1928, Herbert Hoover rallied Protestant support in these areas by running as a businessman whose strong organizational skills could keep the country's economy booming. But when the stock market crashed in 1929, ushering in the Great Depression, the Hoover administration was overwhelmed by bank failures, property foreclosures, falling wages, a dramatic increase in hunger, and rising unemployment.

During his inaugural address, Franklin Delano Roosevelt condemned the business practices propagated under the years of Republican rule, "Yes, the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The measure of that restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit."²⁸ Roosevelt and his administration passed numerous liberal policies to jump start the nation's economy. In light of the financial crisis, conservatives initially sided with Roosevelt until another bad year at the polls triggered them to act by equating the New Deal's centralization of economic power with fascism and communism. This tactic failed miserably in 1936 because Democrats tarred the Republicans with the image of uncontrolled capitalism that put the American democracy at risk; they were the ones at fault and the Democrats wanted to save the country rather than destroy it. During the 1930s, the Republican Party

²⁷ Ibid., 23.

²⁸ Michael E. Eidenmuller, "American Rhetoric: Franklin Delano Roosevelt - First Inaugural Address," American Rhetoric: Franklin Delano Roosevelt - First Inaugural Address, accessed January 3, 2017, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrfirstinaugural.html>.

saw its support and influence plummet. Faced with such adversity and the real threat that the party might never again regain the White House, many Republicans moved to adopt liberal policies.

Conservatives found their opening in the 1938 mid-term elections when the Republicans won eighty seats in the House and six seats in the Senate. Among the freshman class was Robert Taft of Ohio, the son of President William Howard Taft. His midwestern politics placed him at odds with eastern Republicans who represented corporate interests and Wall Street. Taft vehemently argued against the New Deal and the Republican penchant for making concessions rather than presenting viable alternatives. He called Republicans weak and confused; he believed that many of them did not understand that the New Deal had been stopped. The returns in 1938 proved that when Roosevelt attempted to pack the courts, he had reached the limits of his powers under the Constitution and voters had had enough. The Republicans' victory offered them a glimmer of hope that they could avoid the fate of the Whigs and Federalists from generations past.²⁹ As Senator, Taft formed a coalition with conservative northern Republicans and southern conservative Democrats to block civil rights legislation, lower taxes, restrict unions, and limit spending on social programs.³⁰

Taft's isolationist stance amid escalating tension in Europe coupled with his anti-internationalist views made easterners consider a nominee who, up until 1938, was an

²⁹ Russell Kirk and James McClellan, *The Political Principles of Robert A. Taft*, New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publ., 2010, 41-43.

³⁰ Geoffrey M.. Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 5.

active Democrat known for his speeches against the New Deal and support of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Emboldened by his progress in Congress, Taft set his sights on the Republican nomination in 1940, only to be beaten out by Wendell Willkie of Indiana. Willkie's nomination came as a surprise to many but it was also emblematic of a progressive resurgence in the works. Willkie sold himself as an Indianan, but he was a part of the eastern, Wall Street establishment. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes called Willkie "a simple, barefoot Wall Street lawyer."³¹ He had earned his spot at the top of the ticket only a week after the fall of France, which raised doubts about isolationism moving forward. Even then, he was nominated on the fifth ballot.³² In a fierce and bitter campaign, he kept Republicans closer to the center on domestic and international issues which, in turn, angered the likes of "Mr. Conservative," Robert Taft. Willkie received 6 million more votes than the more conservative Landon and cut dramatically into FDR's margin of victory, leading eastern liberal Republicans to conclude that their ideological stance offered the party a better path to victory.

Republicans nominated New York governor Thomas Dewey in both 1944 and 1948, maintaining the grip of the eastern wing of the party. Dewey represented a valuable piece of the puzzle for Republicans. He was a moderate from the nation's largest state, and he had proven vote getting ability in traditional Democrat strongholds like urban areas. Winning New York had been an essential part of the electoral math in presidential politics since the Antebellum era. The winner of the national election carried New York

³¹ Lewis L. Gould, *The Republicans: A History of the Grand Old Party*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 286.

³² Rae, *Decline and Fall*, 31.

state in 28 out of 32 elections between 1832 and 1964, and a New Yorker was on the ticket for president or vice-president for at least one party from 1868 thru 1948. Based on this historical trend, Republicans became convinced that they would need a New Yorker to win the White House. Dewey's candidacy appealed to middle-class professionals who agreed with many of the Democrats' positions on social issues but were alienated by racist Southern Democrats, ethnic urban machines, and the anti-business attitude of the New Deal and Fair Deal.³³ Critics charged that Dewey's liberal stance on social reform and internationalism was "me-too" politics that did nothing to advance the Republican cause. From his base of operations in New York, he organized a far-flung network of support for his candidacy, demonstrating that the party was indeed moving in the right direction. His loss to Roosevelt was expected but his loss to Harry Truman sent shockwaves. Stunned, Republicans convinced themselves that Dewey's ineptitude and Truman's searing attacks that accounted for the loss. He had missed an opportunity to strike at the Democrats vulnerability on communism, opting instead to show support for internationalist programs like the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO when he instead could have focused on two crises between the United States and communism: the Soviet-backed Czech coup and the Berlin airlift.³⁴

A series of events followed that inflamed anti-communist feelings. In 1949, Mao Zedong's communist army defeated the U.S.-backed nationalist army led by Chiang Kai-Shek. State Department documents show that there was debate as to whether the U.S.

³³ Ibid., 33.

³⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 8.

properly armed Chiang's army or if the regime simply disintegrated.³⁵ The question became, "Who lost China?" While U.S. intelligence reeled from the emergence of Red China, Russian scientists detonated a nuclear device. In response, Truman ordered the hydrogen bomb to be built and established the Office of Civil Defense. Adding to the hysteria, Alger Hiss came before the House of Un-American Activities Committee pitting New Dealers against their detractors. Grabbing headlines and basking in the spotlight of television was California Congressman Richard Nixon. To ensure a conviction, J. Edgar Hoover supplied him with FBI files that exposed Hiss as a Soviet spy in an effort to put a stop to secret communist activities.³⁶ Hiss's trials and conviction became the tipping point for the McCarthy era. When North Korean forces poured across the South Korean border in 1950, soon followed by U.S. and Chinese troops engaging in combat, communism came to the forefront of national politics. Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy spearheaded a political movement that targeted communists in all levels of government and society, including Hollywood and, fatally for him, the military. Republicans did not unite in their support of the Senator. Taft at times showed reluctance and characterized McCarthy as reckless, yet he said McCarthy should "keep talking and if one case doesn't work he should proceed with another."³⁷ Moderates noticed that McCarthy's obsessive anti-communist rhetoric seemed to be targeting the East. Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith, from the moderate wing of the party, was one of his

³⁵ Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 89.

³⁶ David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994, 21.

³⁷ Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 125-126.

sharpest critics. Still, Taft saw McCarthy as a useful political tool and coveted his grassroots support for the 1952 nomination.³⁸

Standing in his way was retired general Dwight D. Eisenhower. The eastern wing of the party was determined not to let an isolationist like Taft represent the party, and Eisenhower had more than enough credentials to make the case for commander-in-chief. He was not taken in by “the false doctrine of isolationism,” nor was he keen on McCarthy’s red-baiting.³⁹ Sweetening the deal, Eisenhower could not be blamed for the Republican defeat in 1948. He was a centrist candidate acceptable to moderate Democrats. In fact, Truman offered to not run if Eisenhower would accept the Democratic nomination.⁴⁰ Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts was dispatched to gauge the general’s interest and convinced him of the dangers that lay ahead if an isolationist were permitted to lead the Republican Party. At the convention in Chicago, moderates and conservatives clashed in a particularly wild scene. Dewey convinced Republican governors to adopt a “fair play” amendment barring delegates from voting in contests concerning their own credentials. In other words, Southern delegates could not vote for their own right to be seated at the convention thus undercutting Taft’s support in the South.⁴¹ Furious over such strong-arm tactics, Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen screeched at Dewey, “We followed you before and you took us down the path to

³⁸ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 10.

³⁹ Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*, New York: Random House, 2013, 511.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 505.

⁴¹ Rae, *Decline and Fall*, 38.

defeat!”⁴² Taft handled his third unsuccessful run at the nomination, like a professional but his followers harbored deep resentment towards the eastern liberal faction made up of Dewey, Lodge, and New Hampshire governor Sherman Adams. Eisenhower selected Nixon as the vice-presidential nominee to try heal the fractious party after the convention and quell conservatives’ resentment. He did not take part in any pre-convention attacks on Taft, and he was a compromise choice between liberals and conservatives.⁴³ Eisenhower’s victory ended the two decade long drought for Republicans seeking the presidency.

Eisenhower’s “modern Republicanism” meant to balance the federal budget and reduce the size of the federal government while, at the same time, acknowledging public support for social welfare programs like Social Security. Conservatives wanted to overturn major components of the New Deal but Eisenhower pushed back on the issue over concern that voters would not look kindly on the administration come re-election. Again, Eisenhower faced criticism from within the party when he aimed to cut defense spending. During the Second World War, he was the Supreme Allied Commander yet rank-and-file Republicans cried out that Eisenhower was leaving the country vulnerable to attack from the Soviet Union. Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater insinuated that Ike had been lured by “the siren song of socialism” then moved to increase defense appropriations.⁴⁴

⁴² Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 11.

⁴³ Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, New York: Warner Books, 1979, 88-91.

⁴⁴ Gould, *The Republicans*, 342.

On October 4, 1957, the Soviets launched *Sputnik*, the first satellite to be placed in orbit. Nelson Rockefeller issued a report that instilled national paranoia over a nonexistent missile gap.⁴⁵ His own foreign policy advisor, Henry Kissinger, wrote in an editorial for the *New York Herald Tribune*, “The Soviets have outstripped us. We’re really in trouble now. We’ve been pushed back gradually, position by position...The basic trend is against us.”⁴⁶ Unbeknownst to them, the American military had been flying over Soviet airspace since July and U-2 photographs gave evidence that there was no missile gap. John Foster Dulles urged Eisenhower to make the information public but he refused, preferring to maintain the extant strategic advantage over the Soviets.⁴⁷ A few years earlier at the behest of Eisenhower, Rockefeller assembled a group of experts at Quantico, Virginia and produced a concept known as “open skies” that called for mutual aerial inspection by both the Soviets and the Americans.⁴⁸ Rockefeller would go on to use Kissinger’s theories on “limited nuclear war” as a basis for his foreign policy that ran contrary to Dulles’s strategy of massive retaliation.⁴⁹ Eisenhower became increasingly irritated with Rockefeller’s persistent opposition to the Oval Office. Ike would not soon forget Kissinger’s and Rockefeller’s criticisms of his foreign policy. Goldwater took a similar position, though philosophically different from Rockefeller, and he worked with Rockefeller to make changes to military policy.

⁴⁵ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 260.

⁴⁶ Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 382.

⁴⁷ Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower*, 733-734.

⁴⁸ William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, Boston, Little Brown, & Co., 1973, 980-981.

⁴⁹ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 249.

When the Republican nomination came open again in 1960, Nixon received Eisenhower's tepid support. By the same token, when Rockefeller sought Eisenhower's opinion on his potential candidacy, Ike waited two days to reply and then brought up the subject of foreign policy before chastising Rockefeller's indecisiveness during the campaign.⁵⁰ After Soviet aircraft shot down a U-2 spy plane in May, leading to the failure of the Paris summit to implement a nuclear test ban treaty that same month, Rockefeller increased his profile in the hopes of being drafted at the convention. Hoping to make a splash by creating the Republican equivalent of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, Nixon met with Rockefeller in his Fifth Avenue apartment just before the convention to offer him the vice-presidency which he refused. Disappointed but not devastated, Nixon rationalized that Rockefeller's independent temperament might have been a detriment in the long run and chose Henry Cabot Lodge in his place.⁵¹ At the convention, both Goldwater and Rockefeller spoke, with Rockefeller introducing Nixon before his acceptance speech. Nixon hoped for a display of party unity that night, but when the Republicans were once again defeated on Election Day, conservatives could no longer hold back their frustration with the direction of the party.

For liberal Republicans, Wendell Willkie was a transformational figure that moved the Party to Dewey, then to Eisenhower, and finally to the nomination of Nixon. However, conservatives believed that the election of John F. Kennedy ended the liberal's run of success. Rockefeller's critique of Eisenhower and Nixon stifled party unity, and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁵¹ Nixon, *Richard Nixon*, 215-216.

the last minute changes he forced into the party platform drew the ire of conservatives. Over the years, they had seen their best and brightest falter at the finish line. After Kennedy's inauguration, the party was once again scrambling to put the pieces back together. For all of his political posturing and free-wheeling personality, Nelson Rockefeller would be the liberals' best chance to win back the White House if he could stay out in front of a growing wave of conservative momentum.

Rockefeller as Governor and the South's Discontent

As governor of the most populous state, Rockefeller enjoyed considerable political privilege. Upon his election to the governorship of New York he was viewed as a rising star within the party at a time when returns from around the country indicated that the party was slipping. He then ran a national campaign for president that earned enough attention for his "liberal Republican" philosophy that even Kennedy thought would be enough to beat him had he stayed in the race.⁵² Barring any major changes to the field, his path to the nomination was relatively clear.

New York has a long and distinguished history of producing national candidates for president from both parties: Martin Van Buren, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin Roosevelt not to mention almost presidents like Al Smith and Thomas Dewey. New York City was older than the Puritan colonies in Massachusetts. During World War I, as Europe destroyed its economic and monetary supremacy, New

⁵² Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1964*, New York: Harper Perennial Political Classics, 2010, 78.

York City became the center of global finance, and during the interwar years, it kept the entire system of international debt afloat. After World War II, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of federal grants and loans poured into the state, some of the best universities in the world were located within its borders, and for thousands of immigrants, it was the first place they saw when they came across the Atlantic.

Nelson Rockefeller was at the helm of a powerful instrument. On his way to his seat in Albany, Dewey and his circle of friends played a key role in Rockefeller's campaign. In return, the people of New York gained a governor with years of business, philanthropic, and governmental experience and who had some of the world's leading experts at his fingertips; a treasure trove of facts, charts, and reports could be had with a single phone call, and, above all, he was a man of action.⁵³ He was a rich man, but he was not a rich man who merely wanted to survive, he wanted to build, he wanted to lead. Rockefeller surrounded himself with experts, while his dyslexia (undiagnosed at the time) prevented him from reading their reports; instead, he insisted that they use visual aids when they talked face to face with him. This could have been interpreted as self-indulgence or as evidence that he lacked the intellectual capacity to do the job, but, given the circumstances that he was running a massive and complex state while remaining active in national politics and dealing with a reading disorder, this was the best course of action. His dyslexia hindered him in his formative years, but he persevered to find a workable solution. The impact of the disorder on him and how others around him perceived his character cannot be overstated, it was a significant part of his persona. It

⁵³ Neal R. Peirce, *The Megastates of America: People, Politics and Power in the Ten Great States* New York: W. W. Norton, 1972, 24-25.

influenced not only how others viewed him, but how he came to view himself. In spite of it all, he possessed a talent for sifting through mountains of information from a verbal presentation and ability to focus on their best ideas. His expert panels produced findings and studies that resonated with the intelligence world and with presidents.

Conservatives in the Empire State loathed his internationalist views and seemingly perpetual centralization of power within the governor's office. Rockefeller advocated the construction of better highways, ports, and federal offices. He had grand ambitions for improving healthcare, education, and social programs. He saw himself as an architect with an artist's touch, but conservatives heard what sounded like the New Deal all over again. Rockefeller wanted all of these things at the expense of the taxpayer as evidenced by his tax hikes during his early years as governor. During the 1960 convention, members of the media crowded around him and referred to his ideology as "progressive" to indicate its origins with Teddy Roosevelt.⁵⁴ Easterners argued that Rockefeller was the one who could remove the stigma of vested interests attached to the party, citing a 1959 Gallup Poll that showed that independents preferred him to Nixon.⁵⁵ Conventional wisdom suggested that Nixon represented the Old Guard, and that he would not be able to swing voters in the North. Simply put, conservatism would not lead to victory. All of his finagling and ideologically soft visions of the future made Rockefeller anathema to conservatives. They could not help but be reminded of another New York governor, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

⁵⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 20.

⁵⁵ William Manchester, "Nelson Rockefeller's Moral Heritage," 31.

By the mid-twentieth century, choosing a governor as a candidate seemed more likely than choosing someone from the legislative branch. Only two previous twentieth-century presidents had served in Congress prior to becoming president: Warren G. Harding and Harry S. Truman. Harding was the beneficiary of a powerful political machine and Truman ascended to the presidency after the death of FDR before winning in his own right in 1948. As history would prove, this was not a trend that would continue. In his article “Why the Odds are Against a Governor Becoming President,” pollster Louis Harris concluded that governors were no longer on a clear path to the Oval Office. Writing in the autumn of 1959, he noted the conventional wisdom of desirable traits for a president: governors share many of the same basic responsibilities as a president, governors also have a legislative and judicial branch that they must learn to work with, and, if need be, they can stay out of any polarizing national issues on which members of the House or Senate must take a stand. All of this seemed like a reasonable way to conclude that governors were a fixture of national politics, but he concluded that a shift was taking place. Amid the vastness of both domestic and foreign policy, governors who had traveled abroad struggled to build a national image, and their actions were dwarfed by a vice-president. Following World War II, America grew at an exponential rate thus the governorship became so complex that it was nearly impossible to emerge under the spotlight unscathed from negative press in a governor’s home state. No doubt, opponents would seize on a particular controversial issue and exploit it to their

advantage. His analysis proved prescient when both parties selected nominees who were not governors.⁵⁶

Looking back on Harris's findings ten years later, Joseph A. Schlesinger wrote that a governor's powers and responsibilities were similar to those of a president, and they did make a governor a likely option. However, these similarities were by no means an accurate predictor of getting the nomination. Schlesinger argued that regional distributions of strength within the party system were a greater factor in the nominating process. Selecting a governor was a strategic choice made by the minority party in a specific region of the country. For a party to win, it needed to poach voters from its opponent's region of strength and any governor the minority party would elect in that area was of significant value. Majority parties tended not to nominate governors, rather, it tended to be the "out-party" that was also the minority party who chose governors. For example, Republicans in 1944 and 1948 enjoyed relative strength in the Midwest and West but were not strong in the East, so they nominated New York governor Thomas Dewey.⁵⁷ Of course, this strategy is predicated on the assumption that the party makes a correct assessment of its own strength and has a strong pool of candidates from which to choose, which is not always the case.⁵⁸

During Governor Rockefeller's first bid for the presidency, Jack Platten of J.A. Ward, Inc. advised him that his best chances to win were in 1960 and 1964. Above all,

⁵⁶ Louis Harris, "Why the Odds are Against a Governor Becoming President."

⁵⁷ Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Governor's Place in American Politics," *Public Administration Review* 30, no. 1, 1970.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Rockefeller had to demonstrate that he could carry New York. Party members must be convinced that he had voter appeal, and that he could entice independents and disgruntled Democrats to pull the lever for the GOP. If Rockefeller chose to accept Nixon's offer of the vice-presidential nomination, which Platten advised against, he would have to carry his state or lose influence within the national party. Agreeing to run on the ticket would put him in the precarious situation of wanting to do well, but not too well. Rockefeller's chances for 1964 rested on Nixon getting the nomination in '60 and then losing. No matter if he agreed to be the vice-presidential nominee or not, Rockefeller needed to exude strength and a desire for party unity to maintain his golden boy status. He could achieve this by agreeing to campaign for Nixon but allowing Nixon's strategists to dictate how he should help. Thus, if Nixon were defeated then Rockefeller could show that he was not to blame for the loss.⁵⁹

Kennedy carried New York by five percentage points over Nixon, a drop of nearly fourteen percent from Eisenhower's margin of victory in the state in 1956. Rockefeller was unable to deliver Albany for Nixon and Kennedy's overall victory in New York City won the day for Democrats. It was a disheartening blow for the party and for Rockefeller's chances in 1964. Nixon did well in the West, winning California by the narrowest of margins, he also performed admirably in the Midwest by taking Ohio and Indiana but losing in tight races in Illinois and Missouri. Reflecting on the bitterness of the campaign, Nixon believed that members of the media had used their "substantial and influential power" to shape how the public heard and saw the campaign. He believed that

⁵⁹ Laura Jane Gifford, *The Center Cannot Hold: The 1960 Presidential Election and the Rise of Modern Conservatism*, Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009, 41-42.

the media had slanted coverage towards Kennedy. He found it disconcerting and clever that the Kennedy campaign made the religious issue “a referendum on tolerance versus bigotry.” Most resentful of all, “Kennedy’s organization approached campaign dirty tricks with a roguish relish and carried them off with an insouciance that captivated many politicians and overcame the critical faculties of many reporters.”⁶⁰ Rockefeller had little sympathy for Nixon, blaming the loss on Nixon’s efforts in the South when he should have been concentrating on voters in the Northeast and African Americans. Goldwater reached the opposite conclusion, believing Nixon had spent too much time in the North and not enough time picking off electoral votes in the South.⁶¹

Republicans found that conservatives within the Democratic Party, especially Southerners, were no fans of the Kennedys either. Voter turnout throughout the South was much lower than in the North and in places like South Carolina conservatives of all stripes were wary of a northeastern liberal running the country. In Alabama, arch segregationist Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia received six Electoral College votes. At the Republican convention, both South Carolina and Arizona pledged their delegates to Barry Goldwater. Race relations during the Eisenhower administration were a hot-button issue, it was a concern for southerners that a liberal president would continue to side with proponents of civil rights. Even Nixon was known to make different comments on the issue depending on which side of the Mason-Dixon Line he was on. In Asheville, North Carolina he was quoted as saying “I must emphasize that there are drawbacks to efforts to

⁶⁰ Nixon, *Richard Nixon*, 225-226.

⁶¹ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 349.

achieve racial progress by way of law... They (laws) tend to provoke the extremists on both sides. They can even have the effect of silencing moderate and constructive elements that have been trying for years to bring justice and harmony into our racial picture." A month later a congressman from Connecticut commented, "(Vice-President Nixon) is determined to do all he can to get the Civil Rights Bill passed, no matter how long it may take."⁶² Most southerners were averse to any kind of federal intervention to enforce Supreme Court rulings like the *Brown* decision, and they did not take Nixon's comments on the subject lightly.

Southerners felt this issue, among others, was not being addressed in the proper way by their fellow party members. Democrats took the South for granted. It had virtually been a one-party system since Reconstruction, but pairing Texas Senator Lyndon Johnson with Kennedy came across as a cynical ploy to get the southern vote. James Jackson Kilpatrick, a leading segregationist spokesman and editor of the *Richmond News-Leader*, captured the sentiment, "In putting this Counterfeit Confederate on the ticket, Mr. Kennedy and his advisors have blundered. If Mr. Kennedy sweeps the South, it will not be because of Lyndon, but in spite of him; for the Senator from Texas, however he may be respected on the Senate floor, is neither liked nor admired below the Potomac. In the South of 1960, as in the South of 1870, a carpetbagger may be bad, but a scalawag is worse... bit by the Presidential bug... Lyndon turned his back upon the South."⁶³ Republicans ascertained that there were cracks in the "solid South" that merely

⁶² "Nixon vs. Nixon," *Democratic Digest*, 1960, in James F. Byrnes Papers, Series 8, MSS 90, box 43, folder 5, Clemson University Archives.

⁶³ Publication, James Jackson Kilpatrick, "Lyndon Johnson: Counterfeit Confederate," in James F. Byrnes Papers, Series 8, MSS 90, box 43, folder 5, Clemson University Archives.

adding a southerner to the ballot would not fix but they also needed to be careful that their own nominee struck the right tone with voters.

Rockefeller took a clear stance on civil rights: he was strongly in favor of it. The Rockefeller family had been supportive of African-Americans since the antebellum era, when they sought to prevent slave owning missionaries from speaking at their northern Baptist church. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, John D. Rockefeller funded foundations provided crucial support for black churches and black education.⁶⁴ On this issue, Nelson Rockefeller could not understand how the party of Lincoln could bring racist elements under its tent, but that was what was happening. Republicans in the West and Midwest were looking to unite with conservative Democrats from the South and bring down their liberal opponents with the issue of government intervention in civil rights as the fulcrum for success. Rockefeller's response to the subject might swing the 1964 nomination one way or the other.

Chapter 2: Picking Up the Pieces

Ideology and Factions

At the start of 1961, three names swirled around to lead the party for the next election: Nelson Rockefeller, Barry Goldwater, and Richard Nixon. What exactly the party was going to look like by the time the next campaign season was underway was a matter of speculation. In broader terms, there was a debate among academics on the left

⁶⁴ Ron Chernow, *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller Sr.*, New York: Little Brown, 1999, 20-21.

and right in the 1950s and early 1960s over what was termed “the end of ideology.” American sociologists Daniel Bell and Edward Shils, and French sociologist Raymond Aron were chief among the intellectuals popularizing the idea that the achievements of postwar Europe’s partially managed, mixed economies made it possible for an end to the ideological politics of class conflict and polarization between left and right.⁶⁵ Shils cited the decline of marxism, national socialism, and fascism. Aron contributed to this with a chapter in his 1955 book, called “The End of the Ideological Age?”, which pointed out the disappearance of social-structural conditions in the advanced nations of the West created by the failures of nationalism, classical liberalism, and marxism.⁶⁶ By 1960, Daniel Bell had concluded in his collection of essays, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, that while the welfare state that was created in the wake of the political and economic turmoil of the 1930s, was ripe for criticism, it had resolved the ideological crisis between bourgeois capitalism and socialism by eliciting concessions from both.⁶⁷ This was a historical precedent on which liberals within the Republican Party could base their actions.

Aron’s works on moderation would serve as an influence for Charles De Gaulle and Rockefeller advisor Henry Kissinger. Aron occupied a space in the political

⁶⁵ José Colen and Élisabeth Dutartre, *The Companion to Raymond Aron*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 177.

⁶⁶ Vincent Geoghegan and Rick Wilford, *Political Ideologies: an Introduction*, Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014, 291.

⁶⁷ Howard Brick, *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social Theory and Political Reconciliation in the 1940s*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986, 198.

discourse that brought him attacks from both sides. Moderation was not an easy stance to take considering its paradoxes, inconsistencies, charges of pusillanimity, and the question of whether it is possible to be a passionate moderate. Aron's view of moderation rested on reason, prudence, an understanding of the nuances of political action, the rejection of the political prophecy that Marxists claimed existed, and the distrust of moral posturing.⁶⁸ When combining the "end of ideology" argument with Aron's moderation, the context within which liberal Republicans were operating in at the start of the decade becomes clearer. There was indeed a widening gyre between operatives on the far-right and far-left, but moderates had reason and philosophical support to believe that they were a valuable piece of the American democracy that was necessary for the advancement of modern politics.

Liberals saw their stock rise when Earl Warren became governor of California in 1942. Warren's policies managed to fuse Democratic ideology with Republican principles to support responsible government spending and taxes, bolster free enterprise, and build up social and educational programs.⁶⁹ Warren would go on to be considered a dark horse for the presidency in 1948 but it was his appointment to the Supreme Court and subsequent rulings that made him a favorite target for liberal opponents. Liberal stalwart, friend of Nelson Rockefeller, and New York Senator, Jacob Javits was a fixture of the party as well. He was representative of the liberals who emerged in the Northeast

⁶⁸ Raymond Aron, Bryan-Paul Frost, and Daniel J. Mahoney, *Political Reason in the Age of Ideology: Essays in Honor of Raymond Aron*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007, 277-278.

⁶⁹ Jim Newton, *Justice for All: Earl Warren and the Nation He Made*, New York: Riverhead Books, 2007, 197.

in the late 1930s and who accepted and defended the New Deal.⁷⁰ Javits was a key player in the redirection of the Republican Party in the aftermath of the Roosevelt presidency. In 1950, he joined Republican Advance, a political group that served as a counterbalance to the liberal ideology, centered-around the political organization Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), espoused by Reinhold Niebuhr, Joseph P. Lash, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr among others. While members of the ADA held the idea that liberalism would succeed over time through passivity and reason, Advance sought a consensual approach to solving domestic and international problems. Members of the organization included Javits, Margaret Chase Smith, Henry Cabot Lodge, *New York Herald Tribune* editorialist August Heckscher, McGeorge Bundy, and Congressmen Clifford Case, Kenneth Keating, Hugh Scott, and Richard Nixon.⁷¹ Advance, like the ADA, opposed communism, but while they denounced the tactics of Joseph McCarthy, they were also supporters of Truman's foreign policy. They wanted to limit federal intervention in the economy to protect the private sector, and within the party they competed against Taft and his supporters in the struggle for reorienting the party's philosophy. Their overall goal was to form a coalition with Democrats based on an anti-statist and anti-communist ideology.⁷² Advance would neither last nor make any major changes to the party, but it did add to the disdain for northeastern politicians felt by conservatives in the Midwest and West.

⁷⁰ Gisela Sin, *Separation of Powers and Legislative Organization: the President, the Senate, and Political Parties in the Making of House Rules*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 27.

⁷¹ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 16-17.

⁷² Jonathan Bell, *The Liberal State on Trial: the Cold War and American Politics in the Truman Years*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 213-215.

Liberals were disappointed with Eisenhower when he left office. While Ike had focused on healing the rift between the Northeast and Midwest, he did little to reconcile the party's extremes. Margaret Chase Smith wrote a "Declaration of Conscience" opposing McCarthyism in 1950 yet Eisenhower appeared on the campaign trail in Wisconsin with the polarizing Senator in 1952. Liberals in the Senate, put off by McCarthy's recklessness, signed Chase's petition. Behind the scenes, Eisenhower worked to undermine McCarthy, though, at the time it appeared that he wanted to avoid a confrontation.⁷³ Liberals had gravitated towards Nixon's anticommunism, his internationalist ideals, and support for civil rights legislation in 1957 and 1960. They stood to gain from Rockefeller's pre-convention meeting with Nixon to rewrite the party platform but they misread the situation.

Liberal Republicans, like their Democratic counterpart, took conservative support within the party for granted. Following Nixon's defeat, conservatives, who had never liked the New Deal and were kept in the margins during the Eisenhower years, were emboldened to act. William F. Buckley's *National Review* became a mouthpiece for conservatives to vent their frustrations during the 1950s. Buckley soon paired his syndicated column, *On the Right*, circulating in over 300 newspapers, with his television show, *Firing Line*.⁷⁴ Buckley also founded a conservative group known as the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), comprised mostly of early Barry Goldwater supporters, which made waves the previous fall when they produced the Sharon Statement, a

⁷³ Arthur C. Paulson, *Electoral Realignment and the Outlook for American Democracy*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007, 82.

⁷⁴ Rae, *Decline and Fall*, 48.

declaration of conservative principles. Groups like the YAF had their own vision of the party that departed from previous attempts to work together with Democrats. This “New Right” much like the “New Left” of Tom Hayden and the Students for Democratic Society (SDS), wanted to shake off the rust of the establishment and forge a new path. Liberal Republicans, in their attempts to modernize the party by adopting major liberal Democrat policies, managed to drive voters back into the arms of the Democrats. Though it was not their intention, their efforts to bend the Republican Party towards a more liberal stance resulted in a loss of votes.

On the fringes of the party was an anti-communist group known as the John Birch Society. Led by Robert Welch, they considered themselves to be the vanguard against the communist infiltration of America; Joseph McCarthy had been mostly right, Eisenhower had been either “a mere stooge, or... a Communist assigned the specific job of being a political front man,” Gen. Douglas MacArthur had been fired by Stalin, and the American government had failed to protect middle-class democracy.⁷⁵ Historians of the era noticed a definite correlation between McCarthyism of the 1950s and the John Birch Society. In 1954, sociologist Martin Trow put his findings in an article entitled, “Small Businessmen, Political Tolerance, and Support for McCarthy.” Trow visited Bennington, Vermont and found that less-well-educated, small business owners overwhelmingly supported McCarthy. After spending time in Dallas, Texas, sociologist Alan C. Elms found that rightists tended to be married to businessmen or high-income salesmen. Over in the Pacific Northwest, sociologist Ira Rohter linked a decrease in social prestige with middle-

⁷⁵ Robert Welch, *The Politician*, Appleton, WI: Robert Welch University Press, 2002, 278.

class status among groups of right-wing supporters. Trow concluded that the far right consisted of men and women who held “a generalized hostility toward a complex of symbols and processes bound up with industrial capitalism.” Among their grievances were the “growth and concentration of government,” an emphasis on the growth of business and production, and “the men, institutions, and ideas that symbolize these secular trends of modern society.”⁷⁶

Later in the decade, Daniel Bell put forth his theory of the radical right in his book, *The New American Right*, that tied together much of the thinking that pervaded intellectual circles. His idea was based on two things: his personal disillusionment with liberalism and a disdain for a Marxist reduction of causation. Bell asserted that “the social group most threatened by the structural changes in society is the ‘old’ middle class—the independent physician, farm owner, small-town lawyer, real-estate promoter, homebuilder, automobile dealer, gasoline station owner, small businessman, and the like.”⁷⁷ In short, Bell concluded that supporters of the John Birch Society and others on the far-right were clinging to values that, through modernization, improvements in society, and changing social convictions, were no longer within their grasp. They were reactionaries in the sense that they wanted to return society to some previous state, unchecked by the pressures affecting post-war America.

While this line of reasoning has mostly held true, it fails to acknowledge additional circumstances overlooked by their author or at least unstated in their writings.

⁷⁶ Kendrick Oliver, “‘Post-Industrial Society’ and the Psychology of the American Far Right, 1950-74,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, No. 4, 1999.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Americans during the 1950s were undergoing changes that went beyond how they made money. Numerous works of fiction and nonfiction illuminate the dissatisfaction that the middle class was feeling, such as *Revolutionary Road*, *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*, and *The Organization Man*. These books captured the sentiment of a generation, of people trying to find themselves in a world unlike anything previous generations had ever faced. Later theorists and political pros found that cultural and political beliefs were not necessarily tied to any socio-economic base, as evidenced by fundamentalist Christianity.⁷⁸ Also, among many of the changes taking place in the mid-twentieth century were a challenge to traditional gender roles. Women increasingly asserted themselves in the masculine arena of politics. Wives and mothers were not immune to societal changes. They felt the effects of their husbands responding to pressure to achieve a certain level of middle class prosperity, and the men in turn responded to that additional pressure. As what would become evident to future historians reflecting back on the campaigns of 1960 and 1964, women could be independent enough to solicit others to join in party activities, organize meetings, and vote in large numbers. Women would have their own part to play in Republican politics of the early 1960s.

Equally important to understanding the Republican field is the distinction between conservatives like William F. Buckley versus extremists like Robert Welch. Welch gave financial support to get the *National Review* off the ground in the mid-1950s and both men were anti-communists, but Buckley grew increasingly worried about the damage to the conservative movement caused by groups like the John Birch Society. Subscribers

⁷⁸ Ibid.

looked to Buckley for intellectual guidance and if he denounced Welch then it could be a financial setback as well as a potential misstep for the direction of the party.⁷⁹

Conservatives and the far right had overlapping principles, like opposing communism and government overreach, but they were not the same group. On the contrary, conservatives were not alienated, maladjusted, or hostile to modern society. Northeastern conservatives, like Buckley, were interested in different issues representing different social and demographic sources. This brand of conservatism drew from a subsection of Americans concerned with economic and social policy not a domestic communist conspiracy; they tended to younger, better-educated, and successful to some degree not older and less successful. These conservatives were better able to adjust to the psychological constraints of modernity that the other exhibited hostility towards.⁸⁰

Barry Goldwater's book, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, had been a huge hit during the previous election cycle, rocketing up the *New York Times* bestseller list, and by the end of 1960, half a million copies had been sold. L. Brent Bozell, Buckley's brother-in-law and a senior editor of the *National Review*, was the ghostwriter in charge of articulating Goldwater's conservative ideals. His skills were recommended by South Carolina Republican, Clarence Manion, a former official in the Eisenhower administration who left his position over the failure of the Bricker Amendment, which would have restricted presidential powers on foreign policy. Manion first met Goldwater in 1957 when he appeared on a radio program attacking Eisenhower's 'modern

⁷⁹ Lee Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr. The Maker of a Movement*, Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2010, 10-50.

⁸⁰ Robert A. Schoenberger, "Conservatism, Personality and Political Extremism," *The American Political Science Review*, No. 3, 1968.

Republicanism' but not until Goldwater gave a speech in South Carolina, criticizing *Brown v. Board of Education*, was Manion able to convince enough Republicans to realize Goldwater's potential. Manion had previously declared of Goldwater, "I hear from millions of people and I conclude that Senator Goldwater is the only hope of the party."⁸¹ Manion reached out to key political players like industrialist Roger Milliken, a leading member of the South Carolina Republican Party, to raise money and support from corporations and small businessmen. He need them to buy into Goldwater's gospel of conservatism that included limiting government interference on issues like civil rights, education, and welfare.⁸² Not all of the resulting pages met Manion's approval; for example, the Senator favored breaking diplomatic ties with Russia, something Goldwater insisted be retained.⁸³ Manion capitulated and *Conscience of a Conservative* became a recruiting tool for the conservative movement, positioning Goldwater as Rockefeller's challenger in 1964. However, Goldwater was not entirely sold on the idea that he should be the one to get in the race. Conservatives would have to persuade and cajole Goldwater to take up the mantle, but for the time being, he was their shining star.

Toward the ideological center of the party *Advance: A Journal of Political Thought*, a progressive magazine run by college students, offered an alternative.

⁸¹ Bob Piser, "Manion Sees Goldwater in White House," clipping from *The Phoenix Gazette*, in Gregory Shorey Papers, box 2, Campaigns, National; Presidential, Goldwater, Barry, General, South Carolina Political Collections, Thomas Cooper Library Archives, Columbia, South Carolina.

⁸² Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: the Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009, 127-130.

⁸³ Peter Edson, "Goldwater Book Reaps Financial, Political Hay," *New York World-Telegram*, in Gregory Shorey Papers, box 2, Campaigns, National, Presidential, Goldwater, Barry, General, South Carolina Political Collections, Cooper Archives, Columbia, South Carolina.

“America continues in need of a new political philosophy, one that borrows freely from the best of ‘conservatism’ and ‘liberalism’ and whose essence is not mere moderation.”⁸⁴ Republican leadership, they argued, needed to expand intellectual and policy-generating resources, and in the next election they needed to reach out to people in the cities, minorities, intellectuals, and young people; groups that had not been supporting the party in the past.⁸⁵ *Advance* could have been a starting point for liberals to find their balance. Its writers were young, enthusiastic, highly educated, and motivated to contribute. Moments like these, that produce organic political support for a candidate’s philosophy, are rare and cannot be paid for. It thus comes as a surprise that Rockefeller did little more than write checks to the editors. This decision would come back to haunt him three years later.

Rockefeller was too preoccupied to realize the error. He raised serious doubts about his own qualifications to run the party, not the least of which involved bringing conservatives, who were still angry about his conspiring with Nixon before the 1960 convention, back under the Republican tent. He would need to act with grace and care to avoid stepping on the toes of an already seething opposition. Rational observers saw him as a responsible choice, one that fit into previous molds of thought about the candidate. If Rockefeller could make some meaningful gesture to put the past behind him or, at the very least, not do anything to rile up the far-right then it might be possible to get through another convention with his name at the top of the ticket. Among the political experts and

⁸⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 44.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

the press, Rockefeller was the frontrunner for the nomination because the northeastern Establishment had controlled the pick for at least two decades. Conservatives were not seen as an insurmountable threat, because they were active but not powerful in the early sixties.⁸⁶ Liberals and moderates alike underestimated the groundswell of support and determination that conservatives were able to conjure, but their candidate was in position to win the nomination in 1964.

1961: Kennedy and Rockefeller Face Setbacks

When the CIA-sponsored invasion of Cuba failed on the beaches in mid-April, stranding over a thousand Cuban counterrevolutionaries with no air support, the Kennedy administration took a huge blow to their new image of optimism. Detractors painted Kennedy's team as inept, easily manipulated, and lacking in the courage to do whatever it took to make sure that the operation was a success. The Bay of Pigs put the whole world on notice that the United States, with all of its military might, could not execute an invasion of a small island nation just ninety miles from its coast. It was a rude surprise for the young president that would lead to even greater danger between the United States and the Soviet Union. In a letter to the Soviet Chairman, Nikita Khrushchev, the president wrote, "I trust that this does not mean that the Soviet government using the situation in Cuba as a pretext, is planning to inflame other areas of the world. I would like to think

⁸⁶ Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah*, 54.

that your government has too great a sense of responsibility to embark upon any enterprise so dangerous to general peace.”⁸⁷ Time would prove otherwise.

A week after the invasion, Kennedy agreed to meet with Rockefeller in the hopes of maintaining a bipartisan front and taking the Cuban situation out of the domestic political arena. Afterwards, the governor released a statement that the situation in Cuba put the security of the United States at great risk, adding that all Americans should “stand united behind the president in whatever action is necessary to defend freedom.”⁸⁸ Nixon made a similar statement that was met by a harsh denunciation from some quarters of the party. Rockefeller’s words seemed to go a step further given that a shooting war with Castro’s forces was no longer as likely as originally feared in the early days of the fallout from the invasion. Kennedy tried to do political damage control by appealing to Republicans sense of patriotism while the administration worked to create a new strategy for the region. Conservatives were already angry about Kennedy’s failure to overthrow the Castro regime followed by his attempt to cloak the situation in national unity, and they saw Rockefeller either a dupe or complicit in Kennedy’s maneuvering. For Republicans, this was a political issue that could be used down the road. The majority of the party was liberal but that did not mean that they had to help smooth over every mistake that the president made.

As the summer approached, Rockefeller had to be cautious about his actions in public. He was already making moves that pleased the party faithful by keeping a

⁸⁷ "The Bay of Pigs," John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 29, 2016, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Bay-of-Pigs.aspx>.

⁸⁸ “Rockefeller Calls For All to Support Kennedy on Cuba,” *New York Times*, April 26, 1961.

somewhat low profile as he made appearances around the country with the occasional splash, calculated for national exposure. By presenting himself in this low-key manner with precision attacks, Rockefeller was beginning to put some distance between his present situation and the anger over his moves at the convention. Meanwhile George Hinman, Republican national committeeman and close political advisor to Rockefeller, ingratiated himself with Congressmen, state chairmen, and national committeemen. Hinman's smooth persona and charm were of the New York City variety making him the perfect choice for gauging interest in the governor.⁸⁹ With Hinman stirring interest in Rockefeller among Establishment members of the party above the surface, below the surface something much different was taking place. Rockefeller would have to choose his spots carefully if he wanted to build upon his previous successes. As he would come to learn, GOP voters were not just concerned with what lawyers and politicians thought of the candidate.

In June, Martin Luther King flew with Rockefeller on his private plane from New York City to Albany to address a rally at the Wilborn Temple of God in Christ. Despite the warnings of his image-conscious staff, Rockefeller introduced the civil rights leader to the crowd, telling his staff, "If it's morally the right thing, it's the politically right thing."⁹⁰ During his remarks, Rockefeller applauded King for his dedication and motivation, calling him a spiritual leader akin to Ghandi. King would later write to Rockefeller, "Your statement in the public meeting gave not only new inspiration and

⁸⁹ Robert D. Novak, *The Agony of the G.O.P. 1964*, New York, 1965, 72.

⁹⁰ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 371.

hope to us who work on the front line, but also to many people of color who are burdened by racial discrimination.”⁹¹ Rockefeller saw the visit as an opportunity to help King and show his support for the civil rights movement. To be sure, it was a political risk. The governor reasoned that the United States could not hope to maintain its prowess around the world as a defender of liberty and equality “until we have honored the citizenship of Negroes in Georgia and Alabama.”⁹² As part of his Cold War agenda, it was imperative to use liberal social policies to win the support of African-Americans to advance the cause of the free world.⁹³ Considering the other likely candidates in the Republican Party, Rockefeller, with his history of support for civil rights and Martin Luther King Jr., presented a viable option for what remained of African-American support for the GOP.

Privately, Rockefeller’s life was suffering. He had been married to Mary Todhunter Clark since he was twenty-two years old and fresh out of Dartmouth. Now, at the age of fifty-three, he was no longer in love or faithful to the woman he had been with for so long. Their marriage, like many of their generation and social status, was a formality. Mary was never comfortable being a politician’s wife, and she had never even been to Albany. She was not considered an asset on the campaign trail, was uncomfortable with voters to the point of embarrassment, and she was bored with the other wives of politicians and women’s tea receptions. In contrast, Nelson relished the

⁹¹ Martin Luther King, Clayborne Carson, and Tenisha Armstrong eds., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume VII: To Save the Soul of America: January 1961 - August 1962*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2014, 261.

⁹² Gifford, *The Center Cannot Hold*, 67.

⁹³ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011, 79-115.

physical contact with voters and admirers, and enjoyed himself in front of the camera. Their divorce was not a surprise to his staff who saw the couple's relationship up close. Nelson was a deeply flawed husband and had fallen madly in love with the wife of a microbiologist at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.⁹⁴ Happy was eighteen years younger than Nelson, and was the mother of four children. Carl Spad, an advisor and companion, recalled on a plane ride with the governor that Rockefeller had suddenly announced that he was going to divorce Mary and wed Happy. Spad went over the political ramifications of such a decision with Rockefeller, exacerbated as they were by his coming re-election campaign and his ambition for the White House. Rockefeller, however, would have none of it, "I'm telling you, Carl, not asking you."⁹⁵ Kissinger, amid his own marital troubles, remarked that Happy "would be disappointed and unhappy if she ever married Nelson; that he was a lonely man, remote and indifferent, for all his surface amiability, and that she would find herself excluded from his life as the first Mrs. Rockefeller did."⁹⁶ Other reactions ranged from subdued to disbelief. Goldwater said Rockefeller's family troubles should not be a factor in 1964, Adlai Stevenson recounted his own experience with divorce before an election, and Nikita Krushchev was baffled, thinking Rockefeller's divorce was somehow linked to U.S. troops in West Berlin. Kennedy chimed in, "I don't believe it. No man would ever love

⁹⁴ Michael Kramer and Sam Roberts, *"I Never Wanted to Be Vice-President of Anything!" An Investigative Biography of Nelson Rockefeller*, New York: Basic Books, 1980, 71.

⁹⁵ Joseph E. Persico, *The Imperial Rockefeller: A Biography of Nelson A. Rockefeller*, New York: Washington Square Press, 1983, 32-33.

⁹⁶ Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 477.

love more than he loves politics.”⁹⁷ Party leaders, not knowing the governor well, were surprised by the divorce and reached the conclusion that the divorce would not help Rockefeller, but likewise, it was not likely to cause any major political damage.⁹⁸

Then, less than two days after Nelson and Mary’s announcement, an unspeakable tragedy befell the Rockefeller family, Michael Rockefeller, Nelson’s son, had disappeared off the coast of New Guinea. Michael had gone to New Guinea to study the Stone Age Dani natives, collect pieces of primitive art and artifacts, and, in Michael’s words, to “do something romantic and adventurous.”⁹⁹ Governor Rockefeller’s spirits were lifted as he was en route to the jungle island from New York when Michael’s companion was saved. Upon his arrival, Rockefeller’s pronouncements of optimism faded with each passing day, despite the frantic search from the air and the sea, rescuers found no traces of Michael that provided conclusive evidence of his whereabouts. Heartbroken and exhausted, the governor returned to New York.¹⁰⁰

As the year came to a close, Rockefeller’s fortune and chances for the nomination needed to be recalculated. Nineteen sixty-two was an election year in New York and the outcome was seen as a barometer for the future of both parties. Kennedy’s headquarters still viewed Rockefeller as a major threat to re-election even with the events of the past year. To win his own reelection, Rockefeller emphasized his experience and

⁹⁷ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 364-365.

⁹⁸ Gould, *Republicans*, 48.

⁹⁹ Richard B. Stolley, “So Bad Even the Bloody Trees Can’t Stand Up,” *Life*, Dec. 1, 1961, 42-46.

¹⁰⁰ Carl Hoffman, *Savage harvest: A Tale of Cannibals, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefellers Tragic Quest*, New York: William Morrow, 2015, 200-300.

achievements while downplaying his personal life. His announcement to his divorce plans and Michael's disappearance could hardly be ignored by voters. It was naive to think that the public would not be interested in what had happened and it was impossible for any politician to keep such sensational personal affairs out of the political discussion. This included squelching rumors of cannibals' role in Michael Rockefeller's death.¹⁰¹ Rockefeller maintained the illusion that he was focused on the gubernatorial race but he left himself an out. During a news conference in Albany, he asked voters to reelect him on the premise that they should vote for him based on his record. His presidential ambitions, he believed, should have no bearing on his reelection campaign. Voters argued, they should have no objection and even encourage him if he had the opportunity to win the presidential nomination. Thus, a pledge to serve a full four-year term would be unnecessary to win reelection in 1962.¹⁰² He was hedging his bets, counting on a strong showing in the gubernatorial race to launch him into the race for the White House. It had been a tumultuous year with wild swings of emotion, but he was still standing and remained confident.

1962: Rockefeller on the Rise

Rockefeller's time as governor often stretched beyond the Empire State whether he was inserting himself into national issues or meeting with officials from D.C. He was

¹⁰¹ R. Stafford Derby, "Rockefeller, Wagner, Hughes: 1962 Barometers," *New York Times*, Dec. 26, 1961.

¹⁰² "Rockefeller Leaves Door Ajar to 1964 Campaign," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 28, 1961.

a powerful man with grand ambitions. A speech at the start of the year to the New York State Legislature shed some light on his conflict with both liberals and conservatives in his home state, but also served to show how he approached a situation that called for gaining liberal votes while maintaining a decent relationship with conservatives. Political observers saw the governor's chances for re-election hinging on his support among liberals. The Liberal Party had contributed in 1960 to the election of several key positions. They assisted in electing Republicans for mayor in Buffalo, the U.S. Senate, a judgeship on the Court of Appeals, and Speaker of the Assembly. In addition, they had strengthened Kennedy's hold on the electorate in his bid for the presidency. If Rockefeller was going to win the governorship in convincing fashion, he was going to have to please the Liberal Party, and liberals in the Republican and Democratic Party as well.

Since its inception in 1944, New York's Liberal Party was never large but it did have the power to provide decisive electoral margins for Republicans by swinging supporters away from Democrats. Some Republicans, like Thomas Dewey, thought that siding with the Liberal Party was more trouble than it was worth and put a candidate at serious risk of alienating conservatives. Rockefeller disagreed, believing that securing votes from liberals, whether they be from the Liberal Party or liberals from the two major parties, was more important than building a coalition with conservatives.¹⁰³ This strategy had worked before, but now, with Rockefeller facing increasing scrutiny from around the country, this ploy could be seen as Rockefeller refusal to cooperate with the interests of

¹⁰³ Leo Egan, "Rockefeller's Motives," *New York Times*, Jan 4, 1962.

the party. Moreover, with the attention on the race for Albany, if Rockefeller's strategy backfired in any way then it could give leadership, lukewarm about his national candidacy already, a reason to believe that his power was not as great as once believed.

At any rate, Rockefeller made up his mind and dismissed Dewey's argument. He had other plans. Inside the Assembly chamber, listeners may have been struck by Rockefeller's words at the conclusion of his speech that sounded more like he was talking to voters about his credentials for 1964 than addressing the state legislature, "All of us believe that New York can and should lead, by act and example, in giving proof of the creativeness, the vigor, the vision and the leadership of free government," he declared. He continued by extending his speech far beyond the state's borders, "The full meaning of this challenge reaches far beyond our boundaries. The world is filled with nations either dedicated to the destruction of freedom, or coveting and struggling for the blessings of freedom. It is the supreme task – for all Americans, in such positions of trust as you and I – to do all in our power to refute and deny those predicting the death of freedom and to assure and hearten those craving a life of freedom."¹⁰⁴ Rockefeller's speech and strategy reveal a governor with more on his mind than re-election. Based on what had already transpired in 1961, Rockefeller was optimistic that he would win in November. Once the party regulars saw him win, then they would throw their support behind him, locking up the nomination more than a year in advance. This time honored tradition spoke to the importance of New York to the nomination process. Both parties viewed the state as a crucial part of their electoral success, but this would not last as the

¹⁰⁴ "Text of Annual Message Delivered by Governor Rockefeller to 1962 Legislature," *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1962.

population of Sunbelt states began to expand, draining New York's importance in the electoral math.¹⁰⁵

Rockefeller was not the only potential candidate with a governor's race to win; there was George Romney in Michigan, Richard Nixon mounting a political comeback in California, and William Scranton in Pennsylvania. Among the three, Nixon was seen as the best candidate should he win the California governorship while Romney was a question mark, and Scranton gave no clear signal that he even wanted to be in the race. For Republicans in the West and Midwest, their choice was and had been Goldwater. Rockefeller had lost his place as a serious contender. With his pending divorce becoming final, the New York governor lost favor with voters outside of the eastern seaboard. Even liberal Republicans were speculated to side with either Romney or Nixon depending on how their races were decided. Goldwater's rallies were well attended and drew in excited crowds to hear him. Goldwater liked to criticize the Kennedy administration and relate his humble beginnings to presidents of the past, "I was born in a log cabin, which I had moved to Phoenix and except for some air-conditioning, a swimming pool, a bowling alley, a bar, a shooting range and a golf course, remains the same simple log cabin it always was."¹⁰⁶ Goldwater's stock was rising. When the party appeared weakest, Goldwater got stronger. When Kennedy appeared strongest, Republican leadership moved towards giving conservatives a chance at the nomination.

¹⁰⁵ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2015, 20-54.

¹⁰⁶ James Reston, "The G.O.P. Moves Right and West of Center," *New York Times*, Jan. 24, 1962.

In the early months of 1962, the political life of Nelson Rockefeller turned grim. A fundraising dinner was held in seventeen cities across the U.S. with brief remarks over closed-circuit TV by such party leaders as Goldwater, Eisenhower, and National Committee Chairman William Miller. When Rockefeller's face appeared on the screen he was booed from Boston to Tulsa.¹⁰⁷ In New York, Democratic gubernatorial nominee Robert Morgenthau Jr. led a strategy to smash Rockefeller's image of bipartisanship. Four years earlier, New Yorkers viewed Rockefeller as apolitical, commending him for getting into politics with no axes to grind, and running to serve the best interests of the people rather than those of a particular party.¹⁰⁸ After serving as governor and acquiring enemies on both sides of the political aisle, Rockefeller was vulnerable to attacks. With news of his divorce still filling up columns in the daily newspapers, voters in New York and around the country showed signs of being put off by the once bright star from the Northeast. Making matters worse, an overflow crowd of conservatives attended an anti-communist rally at New York's Madison Square Garden denouncing liberalism and challenging the Kennedy administration. Conservatives from across the nation attended, bringing in thousands of dollars of donations and national media attention. Goldwater's voice rang out, "We gather here tonight to celebrate recent advances, and to plot new victories...we have come far, and we are going strong."¹⁰⁹ Conservative's had come into Rockefeller's backyard and made their voices heard; he would have to respond.

¹⁰⁷ "It's the Right Thing," *Time*, June 15, 1962.

¹⁰⁸ Leo Egan, "What's Wagner Up To?" *New York Times*, April 16, 1962.

¹⁰⁹ John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 141-143.

To combat his sinking popularity, Rockefeller set out to make amends with conservatives. He eased tension in his home state by making fewer and fewer public appearances with Democrats and avoiding meetings that made him look like he was merely appeasing their interests. In May, he struck out on the national trail, making stops in the West and Midwest. At a dinner in Seattle, he received a standing ovation when he was introduced by Washington Governor Albert D. Rosellini, a reception far greater than that received by Vice-President Lyndon Johnson at the same event. A day later, at the Cheyenne airport in Wyoming, State Senate president Al Harding handed Rockefeller a cowboy hat saying, "This is either for wearing or throwing in the ring." Rockefeller then mounted a stage coach drawn by two horses, took the reins, and rode down the airport runway.¹¹⁰

By the first week of June, a Gallup Poll of rank-and-file Republicans found Rockefeller with 32%, Goldwater with 23%, Milton Eisenhower with 14%, and George Romney with 8%. Nixon was left out because he was insisting that he was not a candidate.¹¹¹ Rockefeller's efforts to support the party by speaking and raising money were paying off. He was intent on mending fences with conservatives who were still upset over the 1960 convention. The millionaire governor joked, "I have as much to 'conserve' as anyone."¹¹² Now it was Goldwater who was losing ground, with the pros questioning if a conservative could win a national election or if Goldwater was the right person to fill the vacuum left by Eisenhower's aloofness and with Nixon, busy as ever,

¹¹⁰ Warren Weaver Jr., "Rockefeller Asks Help for Party," *New York Times*, May 12, 1962.

¹¹¹ "It's the Right Thing," *Time*, June 15, 1962, 27.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

was holding off an unexpectedly strong far-right resistance within the California Republican Party.

That summer it appeared that Goldwater and Rockefeller might not clash at all quite the opposite, they could run together. “Rockefeller and I are not nearly so far apart as you might think,” Goldwater told a staffer in 1960.¹¹³ Both were ambitious and passionate and if Rockefeller appealed more to the head then Goldwater appealed more to the heart. A Rockefeller-Goldwater ticket was not so far-fetched as to be outside the realm of possibility. Both would have something to gain, but Rockefeller would benefit more. Together they had a common enemies in Nixon and Eisenhower, who could not be trusted to follow through lest another opportunity should present itself or if their ideology got in the way. When Eisenhower held the All- Republican Conference at his farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, neither Goldwater nor Rockefeller attended out of suspicion of the organizers. Goldwater had no tolerance for Eisenhower. His advisor, F. Clifton White, warned that a conspiracy was afoot to minimize the growing conservative movement and nominate someone else.¹¹⁴ After the conference, Goldwater telephoned Rockefeller and Hinman about a link between the formation of a new National Republican Citizens Committee and the Nixon and Romney campaigns.¹¹⁵ Both men were highly suspicious of treachery from above. Eisenhower’s attempt at uniting the

¹¹³ Gifford, *The Center Cannot Hold*, 52.

¹¹⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 59-60.

¹¹⁵ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 75.

candidates was a disaster. Conservatives were further alienated and Rockefeller was spooked by the moderates' attempts to find a replacement for him.

That fall, Rockefeller received an unexpected boost when Goldwater curtailed his cross-country speechmaking. Goldwater was tired from visiting rallies, business conventions, and college campuses; he wanted to focus more on his Senate duties, and he recognized that his support in New York, California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio was not as strong as a top candidate needed to win. Goldwater was encouraged by Rockefeller's moves towards the right and, if necessary, columnists noted Goldwater would be available to serve as vice-president in 1964 when his Senate term ended.¹¹⁶ Down South, southerners boiled with anger over President Kennedy's decision to send federal troops into Mississippi after segregationists attempted to block James Meredith attempted desegregation of the University of Mississippi. Kennedy's status as a villain of the old Confederacy was cemented; locals were already complaining about the rising national debt and the presence of communists off the coast of Florida. They liked the benefits of federal programs but opposed their costs and requirements to meet such federal standards as equal employment for blacks.¹¹⁷ Kennedy's decision served to drive a deeper wedge between Democrats and the South. For a brief moment, the Cuban Missile Crisis stymied any talks of the election as people around the world were on edge fearing a nuclear strike between the Soviets and the Americans. Mercifully, with the minute hand dangerously close to striking midnight on the nuclear clock, the two sides

¹¹⁶ "Boost for Rocky Seen As Goldwater Curtails Nationwide Politicking," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 14, 1962.

¹¹⁷ "How They Fight Elections in South Carolina," *New York Times*, Oct. 19, 1962.

reached an agreement, pulling the world back from the brink of annihilation. Less than a month after the events of Mississippi, a television audience witnessed Jackie Robinson name Rockefeller “Layman of the Year” at an African-American church for being “forthright in his enunciation of social, political, economic, and educational justice for the Negro.”¹¹⁸ Segregationists in the South took notice of this and now had one more reason to distrust him.

Elections that November brought clarity to the race for the nomination: Romney and Scranton enjoyed impressive victories, and Rockefeller won but by a thinner margin than in years past. Nixon, in contrast, was defeated, seemingly writing his own political obituary by announcing his retirement, punctuated with a jibe to reporters that, “You won’t have Nixon to kick around anymore.”¹¹⁹ Nixon’s defeat in California was ominous for liberals and moderates looking towards 1964. Birchers egged on by Robert Welch fused with conservatives populating Southern California proved too much for the former vice-president.¹²⁰ Scranton’s victory in Pennsylvania ended the Democrats’ eight-year hold on the governorship, while Romney’s election ended a fourteen-year drought for Republicans in Michigan. Rockefeller’s win felt more like a loss in many ways. He gained in New York City but lost ground in upstate areas. The election thus reinvigorated

¹¹⁸ Clayton Knowles, “Governor Says Re-election Will Put Him in ‘64 Race,” *New York Times*, Oct. 19, 1962

¹¹⁹ “Richard Nixon's Goodbye Speech,” YouTube, December 11, 2010, accessed January 5, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo9FIpeKKzA>.

¹²⁰ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 54-111.

the effort of segregationists in the South to jumpstart a draft-Goldwater movement while Nixon supporters began singing the praises of Romney.¹²¹

By December, with the excitement of the election returns dissipating, party leaders at a meeting of the Republican National Committee concluded that Rockefeller was back at the top for the nomination. “Romney is too new and Scranton talks like he really doesn’t want it and Goldwater can’t win, so it’s got to be Rockefeller,” reasoned one Congressman.¹²² For all of his posturing, Rockefeller remained officially out of the race and made an effort to stop grassroots support. Hinman sent letters from New York silencing supporters’ efforts to hold campaign drives for the governor who was neither declaring his candidacy nor seeking delegate commitments. Meanwhile, conservatives continued building an army, covertly working to nominate Goldwater. At the end of the year, Rockefeller had no sway among the southern-wing of the party, where party stalwarts saw Goldwater as the true soul of Republicans, but, in northern industrial states, Rockefeller was the stronger candidate and, in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states, Rockefeller’s popularity was on the rise.¹²³ At the end of the year, Rockefeller was the candidate with the best chance at winning the nomination. Only a major blunder could bring him down.

¹²¹ Robert D. Novak, “Rockefeller Still Leads For GOP Nomination But It Loses Allure,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 8, 1962.

¹²² Paul Duke, “Rockefeller Far Ahead For 1964 Nomination, Woos Conservatives,” *New York Times*, Dec. 10, 1962.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3: An End to the Beginning

1963 – Love and Politics

At the beginning of 1963, Rockefeller had two major plans for improving his chances of earning the nomination. First, attack Kennedy's record on Cuba, the economy, and civil rights. Second, convince conservatives that he was neither a radical nor an enemy of the Republican Party. Rockefeller criticized the president for halting underground nuclear tests during negotiations with the Soviets on a nuclear-test ban treaty and for being susceptible to the notion "all too popular in high places, that the public cannot be told the whole truth about the international situation, because people might panic."¹²⁴ Kennedy was not only keeping Americans in the dark, but he was also showing weakness by not pushing harder to get Soviet troops out of Cuba. Domestically, he was failing to reenergize the country through his economic policies.¹²⁵ On the issue of civil rights, Rockefeller chided the president for appointing known segregationists to federal judgeships in the South. To the governor, this was an opportunity to remind the public of the Democratic Party's roots in supporting slavery and the current support of southern Democrats for Jim Crow segregation.¹²⁶

When the topic of conversation turned to him, Rockefeller defended his decision to increase the New York state budget and pay for it with liquor taxes and auto registration fees. This allowed him to claim that he was liberal in social policy but

¹²⁴ "Rockefeller Hits U.S. Cuba Policy," *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 31, 1963.

¹²⁵ "Rockefeller Tunes Up for '64," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 9, 1963.

¹²⁶ Robert A. Caro, *Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon Johnson, Volume III*, New York: Vintage Books, 2003, 132-223.

conservative when it came to economics, much like the modern Republicanism proposed by Eisenhower.¹²⁷ He had chosen the grounds on which to fight Kennedy and was ready to stake his claim. All indications were that Rockefeller was not ready to concede the White House to Kennedy for another four years, since he knew as well as anyone, how quickly fortunes could change. Unable to stand idly by while the governor bad-mouthed their party's leader, Democrats charged that Rockefeller was an "absentee governor" roaming the country "on a political sideshow of criticism of the national administration."¹²⁸ Political sniping aside, Rockefeller stuck to his strategy by touring the Midwest and appearing at a Lincoln Day dinner, where he emphasized that the terms "liberal" and "conservative" were nonsense yet proceeded to tell the audience of his "traditional" political philosophy.¹²⁹ He was talking out of both sides of mouth, but it was working. At each stop, the usual refrain became about jobs, the budget, providing tax incentives to industry, NATO, and nuclear weapons with an occasional appeal for civil rights legislation and more pressure on Kennedy to take a tougher stand on Cuba. With Rockefeller on the road, his staff insisted that it was premature to call the governor a candidate. Meanwhile, Romney and Scranton continued to indicate no desire to get into the race, and Goldwater was a reluctant as ever to run. New York Times columnist Tom Wicker wrote that experts had now concluded that America's honeymoon with Kennedy was over. The burdens of the office were weighing on his administration, that each

¹²⁷ Godfrey Sperling Jr., "Rockefeller's Record Budget," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 31, 1963.

¹²⁸ Godfrey Sperling Jr., "Democrats Move on Rockefeller," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 15, 1963.

¹²⁹ Austin C. Wehrwein, "Rockefeller Bid Pleases Midwest," *New York Times*, Feb. 11, 1963.

decision took off a bit more polish, and that he was running on star power rather than as the nation's unchallenged leader. However, Wicker concluded it was far too early to declare him finished or even that if some or any of his political troubles would prevent him from a resounding victory the following November.¹³⁰

At this point, Rockefeller's strafing attacks on Kennedy helped to build up political capital, but he repeatedly missed opportunities to do something about the infighting within his own party. In February, William Rusher penned an influential article for *National Review* titled "Crossroads for the GOP" which called on Republicans to work with segregationists and to nominate Goldwater because of his conservatism. This, he argued, would finally wrestle the South away from Democrats.¹³¹ F. Clifton White had long been in the political shark tank, feeding interest in a conservative candidate. Goldwater would later comment in his memoir that White was a "pro, much more than a mere public relations man or college instructor in political science...a very experienced technician."¹³² Conservatives like White were a minority within the party with their own agenda. Rockefeller first got a taste of conservatives' strategy during his 1958 gubernatorial campaign that resulted in a bitter feud between White and State Chairman Jud Morhouse over the latter's rough tactics.

As early as 1961, White sent confidential memos solidifying the Draft Goldwater organization, appearing at Republican National Committee meetings, raising money,

¹³⁰ Tom Wicker, "Storm Clouds of '64," *New York Times*, March 11, 1963.

¹³¹ William Rusher, "Crossroads for the GOP," *National Review*, Feb. 1963, 109-112.

¹³² Barry Morris Goldwater and Jack Casserly, *Goldwater*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, 156.

strategizing, and counting delegates.¹³³ All the while, Rockefeller's lieutenants fired off remarks to the press like, "When you're the only candidate you can afford to wait."¹³⁴ Their overconfidence blinded them to a growing threat. Party leadership was as much to blame as Rockefeller, having allowed Goldwater to become chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, which he subsequently bent to his political will. They also applauded Goldwater and I. Lee Porter's "Operation Dixie" which courted segregationist whites.¹³⁵ In South Carolina, state party chairman Drake Edens remarked, "I don't think it is any secret that the majority of South Carolina Republicans and Independents prefer Senator Goldwater." He added, "a Republican administration headed by any of the persons currently mentioned as possible nominees would be far more preferable than four more years of rule by the Kennedy clan."¹³⁶ Goldwater himself commented that because of the lagging national economy, an increase in the jobless rate, and the sour mood over the truth of the Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy was not unbeatable.¹³⁷

Less than a month after Goldwater's assessment, Martin Luther King Jr. penned a poignant message to extremists and moderates alike on the issue of civil rights in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Fed up with the NAACP's attempts to achieve equality

¹³³ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 118-133.

¹³⁴ Alan L. Otten, "Rocky Road: Troubles in New York Tarnish Rockefeller's Presidential Prospects," *Wall Street Journal*, March 1, 1963.

¹³⁵ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 61-62

¹³⁶ Harrison Jenkins, "A United GOP," *The Republican Southern Challenge*.

¹³⁷ *Battle Line*, March 14, 1963.

through the court system, and whites for a failing to properly assess the moral gravity of the situation, King wrote “I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Councillor or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice.”¹³⁸ King lambasted the moderates’ argument that law and order should preclude justice; moderates were fond of telling blacks that they agreed with their plight but then rejected direct action in favor of stability. At least, according to King, racists were honest about their beliefs and clear about their goals. Moderates, however, occupied a space that was neither in line with fundamental American values, such as equality, nor with Christian notions of brotherhood. Nonviolent protestors were not responsible for the tension that existed in the South; rather, they had brought it to the forefront for the world to see. If this made moderates or the clergy uncomfortable, that was a small price to pay for what was at stake.¹³⁹ On this point, members of both parties, including President Kennedy and vocal civil rights supporters like Rockefeller, would have to shoulder some of the blame as well as responsibility for taking action.

That May, after emerging from political hibernation, Richard Nixon gave an interview relating his advice for the Republican field. First, he insisted that the candidates should not wait to be nominated, they should seek it out. Second, candidates should start right away, and if they did not, then this implied that the candidate had no intention of

¹³⁸ Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” accessed January 6, 2017 https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf

¹³⁹ Bass, S. Jonathan. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the "Letter from Birmingham Jail,"* LSU Press, 2001, 124-126.

entering or did not think he would defeat Kennedy. Third, all candidates should enter some of the primaries and Nixon would support whoever won in California. Fourth, primaries gave voters a chance to see the candidates in action and gave the candidates a head start on the national campaign.¹⁴⁰ At this stage, Rockefeller and Goldwater were the likely candidates, but Nixon did appear to have ulterior motives for his comments. A few ideas come to mind on this: Nixon wanted Goldwater and Rockefeller to mutually destroy each other in the primaries, in which case a third candidate, possibly himself, could take the nomination. A second possibility was that Nixon did not want the nomination but did want either Rockefeller or Goldwater to get it and lose to Kennedy so that neither would be in position for 1968 if Nixon should run again. A day after Nixon's advice to the candidates appeared in print, he announced that he would seek employment as a lawyer in New York, effectively quieting if not altogether ending the speculation that he would become a candidate.

Whatever Nixon's true intentions, the race for the nomination was irrevocably changed when newspapers reported that Nelson Rockefeller wed Happy Murphy on Saturday, May 4th. Looking back on the events that transpired in the lead up to the wedding and its aftermath, the only thing that is clear is that Rockefeller became a different candidate overnight. At first, the reaction from party leaders was rather positive. Some even downplayed the marriage as a private matter while others thought that it might actually help Rockefeller. New York Senator Jacob Javits, like most of his peers, believed that the Rockefeller's divorce fifteen months earlier had larger political

¹⁴⁰ Roscoe Drummond, "Nixon Speaks Out," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 1963.

implications, “I believe that it will not have any material effect on his political future. I believe any effect there was to be came after his divorce. I don’t think this will affect his situation any further,” he said.¹⁴¹ This was not just a kind statement by another liberal; Javits had been a key supporter of Rockefeller for years, and while he had met with the governor the day before the wedding, he had not been told of it. David Rockefeller, Nelson’s brother, ultimately informed Javits, not Nelson. Hinman called other members of congress reassuring them that the fervor over the wedding would quiet down while also trying to assess their reactions.¹⁴²

Weighing in from counties and hamlets across the map, key members of the party issued warnings that the American public was not comfortable with broken homes, especially considering that Happy had finalized her divorce only a month earlier. Roman Catholics, Fundamentalist Protestants, and Episcopalian clergy around the country took the opportunity to express their disapproval and to remind their congregations of the sanctimony of marriage.¹⁴³ Large numbers of women were equally outraged over the matter. Happy had effectively given up her children to be with Rockefeller who himself had divorced his aging wife for a bride nearly two decades younger than him. After a group of women descended on his office to register their outrage over Rockefeller’s

¹⁴¹ Richard P. Hunt, “Republicans are Divided in Reactions to Wedding,” *New York Times*, May 5, 1963.

¹⁴² Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 141.

¹⁴³ “Governor's Wedding Draws Comments of Clergy,” *New York Times*, May 6, 1963.

conduct, Maryland Republican congressman Charles Mathias, Jr. began to tell friends that Rockefeller's chances were finished.¹⁴⁴

Today, it seems almost absurd that Rockefeller should be punished so severely for his marriage; after all, he had the choice of keeping the affair private while she was still married or getting a divorce and remarrying so that their love could be public knowledge. President John F. Kennedy was a known philanderer among the press and Washington regulars, but his escapades did not become front page news while he was in the White House or when he was on the campaign trail. For that matter, Happy's ex-husband remarried just as quickly as she did. Since the 1960s, historians have recounted numerous tales of the infidelity of presidents, and the public has become far more accepting of divorced candidates for office, but the American public of 1963 was not willing to accept Nelson and Happy's marriage. Many felt insecure about their own lives, and others were scandalized by a woman leaving her family to be with a billionaire. The average voter believed this simply was not something that a proper woman was supposed to do. When women got married they were expected to stay married, and women's lives were tied to their husbands in romantic and financial terms. For many women and men alike, divorce was intolerable. Nelson and Happy ventured a step too far. Rockefeller wanted love *and* power, and he was not about to choose.

If this seems to be an incomplete explanation of Rockefeller's fall from frontrunner status, then there is another explanation. Events of the civil rights movement, including recent flare ups in news coverage, combined with Rockefeller's stance on civil

¹⁴⁴ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 144.

rights added to the climate of racial hostility felt in the South. Furthermore, a desire for a conservative candidate to pair with a southern strategy made it possible for disgruntled Republicans to justify their support for Goldwater. In other words, Rockefeller's marriage was a convenient out for some conservatives. They wanted Goldwater to be the face of conservatism because he was respectable and a true believer. Rockefeller would never be that candidate so conservatives used any reason they could to distance themselves from him. Rockefeller's marriage further substantiated their claims that he was not the right fit for the Republican Party. In addition, Rockefeller's own staff may have retroactively blamed his marriage for his defeat to avoid any further controversy. This is evidenced by an unpublished chapter in Rockefeller's campaign biography by Frank Gervasi, *The Real Rockefeller: The Story of the Rise, Decline and Resurgence of the Presidential Aspirations of Nelson Rockefeller*. Gervasi explicitly states that Goldwater "ran a poor second to Rockefeller until Bull Connor catalyzed the counter-revolution to the Negro Revolution." This piece of inside information supports Joseph Alsop's reporting in the *Washington Post* singling out Rockefeller's liberal stance on race as his Achilles heel.¹⁴⁵ It is also possible that Rockefeller's liberalism towards civil rights and his remarriage combined, depending on the voter's region or religious views or gender or any number of other factors, to sink the governor's poll numbers.

Conservatives leading the Barry-for-President movements in Texas, Massachusetts, Alabama, Minnesota, California, Oklahoma, and Arizona were ecstatic

¹⁴⁵ Marsha E. Barrett, "Don't Blame Nelson Rockefeller's Wife," *Politico*, accessed January 7, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/05/happy-nelson-rockefeller-wife-barry-goldwater-gop-racist-118298?o=0>

over the marriage. Goldwater no longer made an attempt to stop the growing movement of support. Political pros were less convinced about the Senator's chances, Goldwater agreed, reasoning that wealthy eastern moderates were still unlikely to support a conservative candidate. There was the possibility that Romney would become a compromise candidate put forth by the so called "kingmakers" to avoid an either-or scenario at the convention.¹⁴⁶ Goldwater seemed to be anticipating that the convention would be deadlocked or moderates would find a way to block his nomination. Goldwater pressed on, motivated either by his desire to see the process through for the sake of the conservative movement or by the vanity that accompanies men who pursue power. His gruff public persona made him appear as if he was almost put up to all of this by supporters. He continued to appear at Republican fundraisers, including a \$1,000-a-plate dinner in New York where he received another standing ovation while Romney looked on. Rockefeller skipped the event to go on his honeymoon in Venezuela.¹⁴⁷ When Rockefeller returned after gallivanting on the beaches, a Gallup poll showed that Goldwater was leading Rockefeller, 35% to 30%.¹⁴⁸ Rockefeller was stunned by the realization that the lock he had on the nomination was no more.

Danger crept closer for Rockefeller at the Young Republicans Convention in San Francisco. Political observers viewed the event as a prelude to the primaries and an indicator of the party's feelings. At the convention, conservatives routed Rockefeller's

¹⁴⁶ Tom Wicker, "The G.O.P. and 1964: Is Rockefeller Beginning to Slip?" *New York Times*, May 5, 1963.

¹⁴⁷ Richard L. Strout, "GOP '64 Plans Put Out of Focus," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 7, 1963.

¹⁴⁸ Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 257.

supporters. Neither Rockefeller nor Romney attended it, but Goldwater did, receiving a standing ovation before lighting a fire under conservative stalwarts. Amid the banners and balloons, conservatives blasted liberals for their detriment to the party and defended members of the John Birch Society, dismissing claims that they were extremists.¹⁴⁹ It was an incredible display of enthusiasm and support for conservatism. It was a wave that had been building for some time. A year earlier Rockefeller had been asked to fund the Young Republicans, but he had declined.¹⁵⁰ Even when letters came in to his New York offices offering to help set up Rockefeller-for-President chapters they were sent a polite “no” in response.¹⁵¹ Rockefeller tried to convince himself that, despite the events of the YR convention, history would stay the course, and he would take the nomination as the rational choice for moderation. Only he could draw on the success of the 1962 elections and Goldwater’s deficiency outside of pockets of the country. Or so he thought.

Rockefeller’s campaign organization was not a helpless group of amateurs, though they may in retrospect appear to be. Ideologically, they were liberal Republicans with a few renegade Democrats sprinkled in. They were lawyers, academics, businessmen, and politicians in their own right. George Hinman was the polite, urbane spokesman tasked with selling the candidate to the party. William J. Ronan handled the governor’s state affairs, influenced his views on state government, and consulted with him on national politics. John E. Lockwood was Rockefeller’s personal lawyer, and he

¹⁴⁹ Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 175-177.

¹⁵⁰ Donaldson, *Liberalism’s Last Hurrah*, n320.

¹⁵¹ Alan L. Otten, “Rocky Road: Troubles in New York Tarnish Rockefeller’s Presidential Prospects,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 1, 1963.

played a crucial role in gubernatorial campaigns, drafted major speeches, and was a trusted advisor during times of crisis. Around the governor were an inner core of six influential regulars and outside of them was an outer seven and on and on the circles went, feeding information to the candidate whose professional philosophy was to gather as many facts as possible before making a decision. Aides and advisors felt that they were with a man who was going places. They should do all that they could to get next to him, whether it was getting on the same elevator, riding in the same limousine, or sitting next to the candidate when election returns started coming in.

Observers mocked their sycophancy and admonished Rockefeller for not assessing blame when the occasion called for a shakeup. Most damaging of all, Rockefeller tended to close himself off from outside views. In sum, his circle of advisors were too close. Trusting in oneself in limited amounts is a net positive, but Rockefeller's trust in his own abilities and instincts came precariously close to dooming him. When asked about his divorce, remarriage, and running for president, he supplied a revealing quote, "If I let events flow along, I'll know when and how I must decide these matters."¹⁵² For a man who collected facts and advisors in an almost mechanical way, this might seem out of character to the point of recklessness, but that was Rockefeller in a nutshell. He could be enigmatic, emotional, arrogant, and undisciplined like one of the works of modern art that he cared so much about.

Because of or despite these personal qualities, Rockefeller had an allure about him. He had the drive and ambition to realize a goal that was so far out of reach for so

¹⁵² Alan L. Otten and Charles B. Seib, "Rockefeller's Triple-Threat Brain Trust," *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1963.

many that people wanted to be around him. In 1963, Rockefeller had the potential to be a fantastic political figure if he could have learned to harness his energy and knowledge, and control his ego even if that meant that he would have to put his money into funding liberal causes instead of his own presidential campaigns. It is tempting to categorize him as a tragic figure. Rockefeller was unable to realize, until it is too late, that he had spent so much time collecting facts about politics and government that he missed the biggest and most damaging fact of all. His desire for love cost him the affection of voters at his moment of victory resulting in his own demise.

As the days and weeks flew by, a curious development threatened to derail Goldwater's rise. A stop-Goldwater movement organized around favorite-son candidacies put forth by liberals, moderates, and a few conservatives. Candidates included Congressman Walter Judd in Minnesota, Governor James Rhodes and Congressman Robert Taft Jr. in Ohio, and House Republican Policy Committee Chairman John Byrnes in Wisconsin. These new names added to a long list that already included Scranton in Pennsylvania and Romney in Michigan.¹⁵³ Rather than attack Goldwater directly, so as not to further alienate conservatives, Rockefeller attempted to shave off some of Goldwater's more controversial supporters. For example, he characterized the John Birch Society as radicals threatening to subvert the true Republican Party. Rockefeller warned against the party's courtship of segregationists stating, "A program based on racism or sectionalism would in and of itself not only

¹⁵³ Alan L. Otten, "Breaking Barry," *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 1963.

defeat the Republican Party in 1964, but would destroy it altogether.”¹⁵⁴ His advisors were now executing a shift in their strategy, electing to move their attacks on the far right up in attempt to stave off Goldwater’s rising poll numbers, and they made an unofficial announcement that Rockefeller would enter the New Hampshire and California primaries to prove to Republicans that he was a winner.

Members of congress were not favorable to Hinman’s marketing message. They “couldn’t find any friends for this guy Rockefeller,” and his remarriage was “still too hot and too sensitive...many of these people don’t like Rockefeller anyway and they are using it as an excuse to conceal their feelings about him.” Not only were his views on civil rights hurting him but now his attacks on the far right were even worse.¹⁵⁵ In response, Rockefeller decided against criticizing the Birchers themselves or Goldwater for not denouncing them.¹⁵⁶ From the Democrats’ point of view, Kennedy took passing shots at Goldwater for his conspiratorial remarks on the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and Rockefeller for raising taxes after pledging not to. Kennedy focused more on segregationist Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, after the governor and the president clashed over school integration. That incident concluded with President Kennedy federalizing the Alabama National Guard to ensure that the University of Alabama was peacefully desegregated.¹⁵⁷ A few weeks later, the Soviet Union and the

¹⁵⁴ Godfrey Sperling Jr., “Rockefeller Sounds GOP Alarm,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 16, 1963.

¹⁵⁵ “Rocky’s Running Again,” *Newsweek*, August 26, 1963.

¹⁵⁶ Godfrey Sperling Jr., “Rockefeller Shifts Strategy,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 19, 1963.

¹⁵⁷ Arthur Krock, “Kennedy’s Strategy,” *New York Times*, Sept. 15, 1963.

United States ratified the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Conservatives applauded Goldwater for having the courage to lead the anti-treaty forces, but for both Kennedy and Rockefeller, saw an opportunity to hit Goldwater on the issue down the road.¹⁵⁸

After his remarriage, the Rockefeller had acted like a pilot struggling to level his falling aircraft. He vacillated on whether or not to attack the John Birch Society. He reached out to conservatives by visiting them in places like Illinois and Wisconsin then antagonized them by continuing to speak out on civil rights. He courted Republican leadership's approval but gave no indication that he had squared things with voters. When asked if he would support Goldwater if the latter became the nominee, Rockefeller responded that he would but only if Goldwater ran on a Republican platform like the one in 1960. Of course, there was little reason to believe that Goldwater would accept those conditions. After all, Goldwater strongly opposed Rockefeller's liberal additions to the platform made with Nixon on the eve of the convention.¹⁵⁹ William E. Miller, Republican national chairman of New York, summed up the state of the Republican Party, "Our greatest trouble as Republicans is in becoming unified and staying unified for a national election."¹⁶⁰ Rockefeller was not interested in backing Goldwater. He intended on winning on his own, and he would start in New Hampshire. He believed that an intensive campaign matched by a folksy style, and backed by huge sums of money would earn him a victory in New Hampshire, and from there he would roll inexorably to the nomination.

¹⁵⁸ "A Grasp at Frail Hope" *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 25, 1963.

¹⁵⁹ "Big Rockefeller 'If'," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct. 29, 1963.

¹⁶⁰ John C. Waugh, "GOP Rivals Split on Road to Unity," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct. 15, 1963.

Chapter 4: The Media Acknowledges that Rockefeller is Running

Nelson Rockefeller stepped forward to the podium, looked out at the audience, and spoke into the microphone, “I am here this morning - and I shall go to New Hampshire immediately following this meeting – formally to announce my candidacy for the Republican Presidential nomination and my entry, at the proper time, in the New Hampshire primary election of March 10, 1964.” No one who had followed Rockefeller’s maneuvers for the past three years could have been surprised. Amid a throng of reporters, photographers, and television crew members for the *Today* show inside the Red Room of the Capitol building, Rockefeller officially began his candidacy. He continued his speech by listing the Kennedy Administration’s shortcomings: failure to reinvigorate the economy, failure to strengthen alliances abroad, and failure to confront communism around the world. This all seemed like standard procedure for the governor, since he had been emphasizing these exact points all over the country. He then offered up a statement that raised eyebrows, “[delegates at the party convention] will write a platform and select a candidate consistent with the basic principles of the Republican Party and the realities of the world in which we live, a platform and a candidate that will have my complete support, a platform and a candidate that will lead our party to victory next November.”¹⁶¹ Rockefeller had announced his own candidacy, offered to support another candidate and party platform that had yet to be written, and given the impression that he might fight to shape GOP policy like he had in 1960. It was a mixed message. Fielding questions immediately after his prepared statement, he reiterated that he would support another

¹⁶¹ “Rockefeller's Remarks in Albany and Nashua Announcing Candidacy to G.O.P.,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1963.

candidate but dodged a question on if he would support Goldwater. He then admitted to being an underdog going into the New Hampshire primary, but he believed voters there would not choose “extremism” over his “midstream” politics.¹⁶² After the press conference in Albany, Rockefeller boarded a plane to New Hampshire and officially began the presidential campaign of 1964.

Polls and Positioning

Rockefeller’s route to the nomination was impeded by two significant hurdles. His candidacy lacked strong, organized support, and numerous Republican leaders were leaning towards nominating Goldwater.¹⁶³ If he was to swing the momentum he would have to perform well in the primaries and raise his poll numbers. He needed to utilize his natural campaign ability, take advantage of his abundant resources, maintain his good relations with the press, and cultivate any grassroots supporters that might emerge while on the campaign trail. To understand the primaries and their importance, it is crucial to understand the importance of polling.

Elmo Roper and George Gallup pioneered scientific polling in 1936 by correctly predicting Franklin D. Roosevelt would defeat Alf Landon. When other pollsters, notably one commissioned by the *Literary Digest*, predicted the opposite, Roper’s and Gallup’s status in politics increased. Their work transformed political forecasting into a

¹⁶² Douglas Dales, “Rockefeller Opens Nomination Race; Asks G.O.P. Debate,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1963.

¹⁶³ Godfrey Sperling Jr., “Rockefeller Faces Eastern Hurdles in Race for ‘64 Prize,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 18, 1963.

valued and sought-after resource, bringing it into the modern era. Both Roper and Gallup reached their numbers by sampling a cross-section of the voting age population while taking into account undecided voters and those likely to shift their opinions. They also considered a host of other variables such as when the voter made their decision and how they answered follow-up questions. As a result, Roper and Gallup were able to accurately predict the outcome of the 1936, 1940, and 1944 presidential elections. In 1948, Roper and Gallup missed the mark by not accurately measuring attitude changes before the election and not accounting for how undecideds would swing the election in favor of Harry Truman. For the following election, Gallup and Roper picked the correct winner, but they did not anticipate a landslide victory for Dwight Eisenhower. Again in January 1960, pollsters across the country had their credibility called into question when the lead between Nixon and Kennedy switched back and forth five times prompting Tennessee Senator Albert Gore to propose a congressional investigation. Following his narrow victory, President Kennedy hired Louis Harris to conduct research as to why he won. Likewise, the Rockefeller foundation funded the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center to reinterview the same voters polled in 1956 and 1958. After conducting his own research, Republican pollster Claude Robinson concluded, "This election showed that there is no essential difference between the merchandizing of politics and the merchandizing of products."¹⁶⁴ Robinson was right, though it was Eisenhower who hired advertising executive Rosser Reeves to produce the first television commercial for a candidate. The decision to create the commercial bypassed the

¹⁶⁴ Walden, Graham R. *Polling and Survey Research Methods, 1935-1979: An Annotated Bibliography*, 425-436.

presidential kingmakers to appeal to the American public. This idea became an essential element for winning national elections. Kennedy built on this approach by mapping concentrations of persuadable voters using computers that might otherwise have gotten lost in the shuffle through a broad advertising campaign.¹⁶⁵ By 1964, the Gallup Organization issued a warning about polls conducted during the primaries and urged readers to be cautious. Polls were not be used as predictions, but rather as an assessment of the current situation.¹⁶⁶

With these changes in strategy in mind, candidates could not discount the importance of polling. For one thing, polls diminished the power of party leadership. Past candidates had to rely on leaders to tell them the opinions and attitudes of voters to know how they were doing. With the advent of scientific polling, candidates were able to hire pollsters or monitor independent organization's assessments which were in turn substantiated by scientific research.¹⁶⁷ Another consequence of polling was the effect it had on primaries and vice versa. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy used the primaries to demonstrate to party leadership that they had popular support, therefore they were the best choice to run against the opposing party. Moreover, when looking at the polls and primaries from the view of the candidates in 1964, there were no examples of poll leaders winning primaries, yet dropping in the polls. Winning primaries helped poll numbers, but it was not always so cut and dried. There was a precedent for a candidate who did not

¹⁶⁵ Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Brian Conley, and Kenneth Cosgrove. *Political Marketing in the United States*, 32-33.

¹⁶⁶ Walden, *Polling and Survey Research*, 436.

¹⁶⁷ Robert M. Eisinger, *The Evolution of Presidential Polling*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 9.

enter the primaries but rose in the polls, liberal Republican Wendel Wilkie in 1940. Also, primaries could take a candidate out of the running with a poor showing like Wilkie in 1944, Vice-President John Nance Garner in 1940, and Senator William Borah in 1936. Finally, a loss in a primary had never taken a poll leader out of contention, but a loss had eliminated lesser contenders.¹⁶⁸

Strategists for candidates with questionable appeal were obligated to participate in the primaries while managing their poll numbers. State primaries were a microcosm of the American electorate and had to be treated as such or a candidate risked losing the confidence of the party at large. At the turn of the century, political scholar and President of Harvard University, Abbott L. Lowell, argued that parties restrained extremists and “distorted” public opinion so as to appeal to voters in the ideological center. This “unreality of party lines” derived from overly simplistic public opinion polls that asked yes or no questions giving credence to the belief in a majority of voters were moderates.¹⁶⁹ Many candidates subscribed to this theory and tempered their views and strategies accordingly. What Lowell and his adherents misunderstood was that while parties are not unbiased filters of public mood, primaries are more likely to draw out a large number of extremists not voters occupying the middle.¹⁷⁰ Later political scientists would observe that moderate candidates would be better served by positioning themselves closer to their extremist opponent rather than remaining in the center. This

¹⁶⁸ William H. Lucy, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Nov., 1973, 830-848.

¹⁶⁹ A. Lawrence. Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular government*, Gale Ecco, Making Of Mode, 2010, 88-93.

¹⁷⁰ Eisinger, *The Evolution of Presidential Polling*, 29.

strategy would depend on if there was more than one key issue for voters to decide on and the strength of activist support.¹⁷¹ For Republicans in 1964, there were sixteen primaries with their own unique dimensions that would bring the candidate one step closer to the nomination or defeat.

The Assassination of John F. Kennedy

“I will say this,” Gerald Ford started to tell an interviewer, “although we as Republicans thought Kennedy’s popularity following the election of ‘60 would make him automatically reelected in ‘64, by ‘63 there was a growing anti-Kennedy political view. By ‘63, before he was assassinated, there was a feeling among Republicans we had a chance to beat him in ‘64. Now maybe we were overly optimistic. But it was a different environment from ‘62 and ‘61.”¹⁷² Leading up to the day of the assassination, the atmosphere around the Kennedy administration had changed. Democrats, like the Republicans, were split. Kennedy’s supporters were reluctant to work with Lyndon Johnson’s wing of the party on issues like civil rights, and, partisan politics had limited domestic legislation. Rockefeller was highly critical of the president on his economic policies and with his handling of communism abroad. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI agents received incredible leeway with pursuing suspected communists and infiltrating the civil rights movement and wiretapping its leaders. The Cold War was the over-arching theme

¹⁷¹ Steven J. Brams, *The Presidential Election Game*, Wellesley, MA: A K Peters, 2008, 39-40.

¹⁷² Gerald R. Ford Oral History Interview – 7/8/2003, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://archive1.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Ford,%20Gerald%20R/JFKOH-GRF-01/JFKOH-GRF-01-TR.pdf>

of the era, contributing to the tension and antagonism that was so prevalent through the ranks of government and politics.¹⁷³

When Air Force One touched down at Dallas' Love Field on Friday morning of November 22, 1963, the sun shone, there were no clouds, people were lined up to cheer for John and Jackie with Lyndon and Lady Bird trailing behind. They each waved to the crowd, more interested in the Kennedys than the Johnsons, before the Johnsons climbed into a convertible and the Kennedys got into the presidential limousine joined by Texas Governor John Connally.¹⁷⁴ When the procession reached the downtown, onlookers pushed against the police lines to get a better look at the president and his wife. Members of the press were anxious to see the reception for the Kennedys after U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had been assaulted a few weeks earlier, but there were no indications of hostility. A reporter would later recall that there were one or two Goldwater signs being held up, probably with a "Kennedy for king; Barry for President" slogan, but that was commonplace. It was a warm day, men were in their short sleeves, there were pretty girls, and people appeared happy. As the cars exited Main Street and turned onto Elm, the crowds melted away leaving only a few onlookers scattered about. For those inside the limousine, the effect was like leaving the city and coming out into a big open space.¹⁷⁵ Mrs. Kennedy, when asked about the scene, remembered that she thought there would be

¹⁷³ Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 1200-1400.

¹⁷⁴ Robert A. Caro, *Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Passage of Power*, New York: Vintage Books, 2012, 421.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Grey "Tom" Wicker Oral History Interview - JFK #2, 3/22/1966, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://archive1.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Wicker,%20Thomas%20Grey/JFKOH-TGW-02/JFKOH-TGW-02-TR.pdf>

a moment of coolness when they reached the tunnel ahead. The sound of the shots was like a motorcycle backfiring. Then she heard Connally saying, “No, no, no, no, no...”¹⁷⁶

“My recollection is that they announced his death around one o’clock” journalist Dan Rather said in 2003, “But before that, he was dead. And I remember on the radio they played the national anthem when they announced it. That sort of cracked through the zone.”¹⁷⁷ A rapid sequence of events followed: the shooter, Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested, and Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as the new president. Then Sunday morning, Oswald was shot, and on Monday a funeral was held for the slain president. Millions watched on television, and hundreds of thousands of people went to Washington D.C. to pay their respects. It was a time of deep anguish and mourning. There was a riderless horse symbolizing the fallen leader, and Mrs. Kennedy, dignified and poised, stood with her children, “Caroline – she held my hand like a soldier, she’s my helper; she’s mine now. But he (John-John) is going to belong to the men now. Caroline asked me, ‘what kind of prayer should I say?’ And I told her to say either ‘Please God take care of daddy’ or ‘Please God be nice to daddy.’”¹⁷⁸

A little over a year later in early December 1964, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Allen Dulles grappled with the events from that Friday in Dallas:

¹⁷⁶ “For President Kennedy: An Epilogue,” Theodore White, *Life*, Dec. 6, 1963, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/THWPP-059-009.aspx>

¹⁷⁷ Dan Rather Oral History Interview - JFK #1, 2/11/2003, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://archive2.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Rather,%20Dan/JFKOH-DR-01/JFKOH-DR-01-TR.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ Theodore White’s undated draft typescripts of interview with Jacqueline Kennedy, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/THWPP.aspx?f=1>

Here was a man, Oswald [Lee Harvey Oswald], who had been a failure at everything he had done. He was almost a misfit in the world, and yet he carried through successfully the intricate details of this mad act, and as I studied all that record I could see literally hundreds of instances where if things had just been a little different, if one fact had been known that wasn't known but which might have been known just as the fact of his earlier attack on General [Edwin A.] Walker... If the employees of the Book Depository had eaten their lunch in a little different place, if somebody had been at one place where he might easily have been instead of another at one particular time; the “ifs” just stand out all over it. And if any one of these “ifs” had been changed, it might have been prevented...it was so tantalizing to go over that record, as we did, trying to find out every fact connected with the assassination, and then to say if any one of the chess pieces that were entered into the game had been moved differently, at any one time, the whole thing might have been different.¹⁷⁹

Barry Goldwater and the South

Barry Goldwater had liked John F. Kennedy from their days together in the Senate during the 1950s. Goldwater liked his sense of humor and his easy-going manner, they debated with each other over partisan issues, and there were times when they agreed

¹⁷⁹ Allen W. Dulles, Oral History Interview – 12/5 and 6/1964, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://archive1.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Dulles,%20Allen%20W/JFKOH-AWD-01/JFKOH-AWD-01-TR.pdf>

on a point or two; though Kennedy was a Democrat through and through. Kennedy got along with Goldwater, participated in practical jokes, and, in one instance, went to Goldwater when he lost his voice on the Senate floor and the Senator from Arizona helped him with a speech. Goldwater was especially impressed with Kennedy's memory. Kennedy had the ability to listen to an aide on a particular subject then proceed to give an impassioned speech on a topic that only a short time earlier he knew very little about.¹⁸⁰ They were from different backgrounds, they were from different parties, and they had a different set of ideological beliefs, but they respected one another, and both men expected to run against each other in 1964. When news of the tragedy reached Goldwater, he was as shocked and saddened as anyone. People from across the country sent letters to his office accusing him of bringing about the president's demise. One particularly ugly message asked, "Are you happy now?"¹⁸¹ Republicans agreed to a moratorium on campaign operations while the nation was in mourning. During that dark period, Goldwater not only considered giving up his pursuit of the nomination, he wanted out of politics all together.¹⁸²

But, that was not to be. Before the assassination, the New Hampshire polls showed Goldwater leading Rockefeller by almost three-to-one. Voters admired Goldwater's sincerity, though, not his support of the radical right.¹⁸³ Both the far left and

¹⁸⁰ Barry M. Goldwater Oral History Interview, 1/24/1965, accessed January 8, 2017, <https://archive1.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Goldwater,%20Barry%20M/JFKOH-BMG-01/JFKOH-BMG-01-TR.pdf>

¹⁸¹ White, *The Making of the President 1964*, 100.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* 100-101.

¹⁸³ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 419.

the far right would take considerable criticism from the general public in the months to come. Richard Nixon's phone call to FBI Director Hoover after hearing that the president was mortally wounded is representative of that dynamic; "What happened? Was it one the right-wing nuts?" Nixon asked, "No, it was a communist," Hoover replied.¹⁸⁴ Goldwater's prospects before Kennedy's passing showed that he was ahead in the South. With Lyndon Johnson now the likely nominee for the Democrats, the Northeast and the Midwest were back in play.¹⁸⁵ The New Frontier was over. There was a new president. He looked and sounded much different than his predecessor. Goldwater once wrote a letter to Johnson in 1960 after the Johnson had told him that he that he would not accept the vice-presidency. When Johnson accepted the offer to become vice-president after all, Goldwater wrote, "Sitting here trying to think of how I feel about your taking the nomination and all I can think of is 'nauseated'."¹⁸⁶ It became a running joke between the two. Goldwater had never trusted or liked the new president, especially after years of watching up close how Johnson operated in the Senate.

The Young Republicans (YR), a right-wing political group that shared Goldwater's contempt for LBJ, began to write to the senator by the thousands. YR leadership urged members to help convince Goldwater to run while the YAF went a similar route and rallied supporters to defend the conservative movement.¹⁸⁷ Then on

¹⁸⁴ Nixon, *Richard Nixon*, 252.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 419.

¹⁸⁶ Barry M. Goldwater Oral History Interview, 1/24/1965, accessed January 8, 2017, <https://archive1.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Goldwater,%20Barry%20M/JFKOH-BMG-01/JFKOH-BMG-01-TR.pdf>

¹⁸⁷ Wayne Jacob Thorburn, *A Generation Awakes: Young Americans for Freedom and the Creation of the Conservative Movement*, Ottawa, IL: Jameson Books, 2010, 113.

December 5 and December 8, conservative leaders met with Goldwater in an apartment in Washington D.C. to find out what the Senator was planning to do; they needed to know his answer. Senator Norris Cotton of New Hampshire was prepared to lead Goldwater's campaign in the first primary, and former Senator William Knowland of California was already organizing support in California come June. Not only was an operation already underway, but they expressed concern that conservative grassroots supporters might not be around in another four years.¹⁸⁸ Most of all, if Goldwater did not enter the race then Rockefeller would be the most likely candidate to win, something Goldwater detested.¹⁸⁹

Less than a month later, on January 4, 1964, Goldwater declared that he would seek the Republican nomination and offer the nation a "clear choice" for conservative leadership. He made the announcement from Arizona, wearing a cast on his right foot after having a bone spur removed.¹⁹⁰ It was an unbecoming look for the candidate, not that he cared, he was intent on running a campaign based on principles not personality. Not since Taft had a conservative appealed to so many voters within the Republican Party, but he faced an uphill battle to win the White House. After reading from his prepared remarks he answered questions from reporters. He refused to denounce denounce the controversial John Birch Society, and he saw no reason for a debate with Nelson Rockefeller. If he lost he would not agree to be the vice-president, and he would

¹⁸⁸ White, *The Making of the President 1964*, 100-101.

¹⁸⁹ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 420.

¹⁹⁰ James Reston, "Goldwater Says He'll Run to Give Nation a 'Choice'," *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1964.

not “concede anything to anybody,” meaning President Johnson.¹⁹¹ Barry Goldwater, like it or not, was running as a conservative candidate for conservatives. After twelve long years, the right wing of the party were ready to make its comeback.

Southern Politics and a Second Opinion

Primary states are not the only means for assessing a candidate’s strength. They give candidates a battleground on which to fight but, to use an imperfect analogy, they are sites of a larger war. That war is fought to secure votes, to persuade the media to give favorable coverage, to sway delegates to give their support at the convention, encourage financial donors to inject funds into a campaign, and to get party leadership to convince all the others to work for a candidate. If a party strategist took a step back from looking at the New Hampshire primary and turned their attention to the South, they would see a battle between Rockefeller and Goldwater, but, more importantly, they would see a battle between Republicans and Democrats that had the potential to flip the electorate. In the grand scheme of American politics, this was far more important than what was happening between the liberals and the conservatives.

Since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, civil rights and states’ rights overlapped in the field of education. The case made headlines around the world, and made state and local politicians national figures. As of December 1963, in seventeen southern and border states, only 9.2% of African-Americans of school age attended

¹⁹¹ “Transcript of Goldwater’s News Conference,” *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1964.

desegregated schools. In Alabama, eleven black students out of a total enrollment of 287,414 blacks went to school with whites; in South Carolina, ten blacks out of a total enrollment of 258,955 blacks attended integrated classes.¹⁹² Implementing desegregation in schools cost Kennedy dearly in the South and threatened to drive away voters while segregationists like Alabama governor George Wallace and South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond bolstered their careers on the issue. For example, there was a sentiment among lawyers in the South that blacks had been “egged on” by the administration, which the president denied, and conservative southern lawyers conscientiously believed that segregation was the moral and correct basis for race relations. The Kennedy administration enlisted the help of lawyers from both the North and South to persuade them otherwise. They urged Governor Wallace to “stand aside,” and tried to get the more important and sympathetic lawyers to become more involved with their local governments.¹⁹³ It would be a mistake to think that the South’s switch from voting Democrat to Republican in 1964 was representative of the entire Republican Party; that would be a gross overestimation of the conservatives’ power at the time and would ignore pro-civil rights Republicans in the Midwest and the Northeast.¹⁹⁴ With that in mind, Republican leadership was unequivocally paying attention to the changing position in the

¹⁹² Miscellaneous clippings and statements by Marshall and others, 1964, accessed January 8, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/BMPP-014-004.aspx>

¹⁹³ Oberdorfer file on Southern business: Correspondence and miscellany, June 1963-February 1964 and undated, accessed January 8, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/BMPP-030-002.aspx>

¹⁹⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 104.

South and whether or not most voters were set on Goldwater or would entertain another candidate.

During the first week of November in Charleston, South Carolina, a thirteen state convention of southern leaders met to discuss strategy and campaigning for the 1964 election. This was an important meeting not only for the morale of the conservative movement, but also because almost everyone in attendance would go on to become a delegate at the 1964 Republican Convention in San Francisco. Winthrop Rockefeller, Nelson's brother and active party member in Arkansas, told the group that he would support his brother, though he did not promote him that day. He cited his allegiance to the Republican Party over his brother's political fortune. Attendees at the meeting felt confident about their chances in the South. "Republican growth in the South was due primarily to Democratic fiscal policies which are going to bankrupt this nation," South Carolina Republican chairman J. Drake Edens Jr. explained. Alabama chairman John Grenier and Louisiana national committeeman Tom Stagg elaborated on the Southern strategy. "Kennedy's civil rights proposals were just the straw that broke the camel's back," Grenier remarked, before adding that Kennedy appeared to be the extremist to the man on the street. Stagg saw an opportunity to turn African-American support for Kennedy into a political tool for getting the white vote. Observers sent by Rockefeller to the meeting later relayed the bad news to the governor.¹⁹⁵

Before his death, Kennedy became convinced that domestic affairs, such as the economy and civil rights, would be the decisive issues in 1964. He ruminated on the

¹⁹⁵ James Duffy, *In GOP We Trust*, 100-102. James Duffy Papers – box 16 – folder 170-179, Clemson University Archives.

dilemma for the Democratic Party during a White House meeting in early November, wondering aloud how to convince the average person without much money to vote Democrat while the people who did have money opposed him.¹⁹⁶ He worried about appearing out of touch with the common man and what the Republicans might do in response to the March on Washington and civil rights legislation. After Dallas, the political situation in the South underwent a period of uncertainty with a host of scenarios and moving parts being considered. In Charlotte, North Carolina, support for Goldwater cooled after Kennedy's assassination leading swing voters back into the Johnson camp. Goldwater remained popular with conservatives. Scranton triggered some interest, and Rockefeller remained as unpopular as ever.¹⁹⁷ Farther south in Greenville, South Carolina, Goldwater supporters had been revving up to go against Kennedy in 1964. Going into the new year, Johnson was expected to receive a higher percentage of the vote if he did not overdo it on civil rights. This was in spite of a fierce opposition that considered him to be a "turncoat" and a "traitor to the South."¹⁹⁸ Around the southern region, a narrative gained traction that the assassination erased the anti-Kennedy appeal of the Goldwater movement, businessmen were less concerned with Johnson than they had been with Kennedy. However, any other Republican candidate would struggle to garner votes, and even Johnson might be preferable because of the perception that he

¹⁹⁶ News Release: JFK Library Releases Remaining Presidential Recordings, accessed January 8, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/About-Us/News-and-Press/Press-Releases/JFK-Library-Releases-Remaining-Presidential-Recordings.aspx>

¹⁹⁷ "Carolina," David Kraslow, Jan. 14, 1964, accessed January 8, 2017) <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/BMPP-014-004.aspx>

¹⁹⁸ "Carolina," David Kraslow, Jan. 16, 1964. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/BMPP-014-004.aspx>

would be firm yet gentle when enacting civil rights legislation.¹⁹⁹ Southerners prepared themselves to act and reset party alignment in the region. James D. Martin, president of Martin Oil Company of Alabama and former Republican Senate nominee, explained at a meeting for southern businessmen, “The time has come to disavow a ‘me too’ aping of limited socialism and faint-hearted surrender to minority votes. If that attitude prevails, the battle of 1964 and, I am afraid, the battle to save America as the last bastion of free enterprise, is already lost. Give it to the Democrats now and save the campaign expenses.”²⁰⁰

Moderates outside of the South were not impressed with Goldwater nor were they convinced that a southern strategy would lead the party to victory. A growing intellectual movement was in the works to formulate a plan that would avoid carving up the nation and settling for an overly simplistic, conservative view of Republicanism. Where *Advance* magazine had once been a publication of note trumpeting the moderates’ views, the Ripon Society took its place after the assassination. Despite significant financial backing, *Advance* went out of business after pouring money into a November 1963 issue that featured how Republicans would defeat Kennedy in 1964.²⁰¹ On January 6, Ripon

¹⁹⁹ “Florida,” David Kraslow, Jan. 20, 1964. “Louisiana,” Kraslow, Jan. 21, 1964. “Tennessee,” Kraslow, Jan. 22, 1964, accessed January 9, 2017, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/BMPP-014-004.aspx>

²⁰⁰ W.D. Workman, *New Power of the Southern Vote May decide 1964 Elections*, Martin Tells Sida Meeting, W.D. Workman, Campaign Files, 1964, General, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, South Carolina.

²⁰¹ Andrew Kilberg, *Moderate Republicans in the Conservative Rise: The Ripon Society, 1962-1982*. Senior Thesis, 22, accessed January 15, 2017. <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/11919172/moderate-republicans-in-the-conservative-rise-andrew-kilberg>

published “A Call to Excellence in Leadership,” that called for a new direction for the party. Ripon charged the Democrats with offering “retreads of the New Deal”, and denounced extremists who rejected the complexities of the world in which “policies are either Communist or anti-Communist, and an “image of ‘negativism’” had too long been attached to the Republican Party. Republicans needed to fight for the middle ground. The center, it averred, was open for the taking, but that did not mean that the party had to ape Kennedy’s tactics in order to succeed. Ripon warned “against a party realignment of the small states of the West and South against the urban centers of America – or any similar realignment that would pit American against America on the basis of distrust and suspicion.” To prevail in these trying times, Republicans needed to nominate a candidate with the “vision, intellectual force, humaneness and courage that Americans saw and admired in John F. Kennedy.”²⁰²

Ripon received praise from editorial columns and moderate politicians such as Dwight Eisenhower who hailed their work for drawing attention to what he believed was the foundation of the Republican Party.²⁰³ Ripon’s open letter changed the conversation within the party about alternatives to Goldwater and the southern strategy. However, this was not a fatal strike against the Goldwater movement. As conservatives liked to point out, it was not easy to find a passionate moderate and even those who agreed with society questioned how progressive Republicans differed from moderate Democrats.²⁰⁴ The significance of “A Call to Excellence” was that it articulated a competing view against

²⁰² Lee W. Huebner, *The Ripon Papers, 1963 – 1968*, Washington, DC: National Press, 1968, 6-9.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁰⁴ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 77-78.

conservatives. It presented a general strategy for how the party might move forward into the future, and provided leaders and intellectuals a pause to reassess and reconsider their choice for the nominee. Conservatism was by no means a foregone conclusion. There were other options that were arguably more in line with the party's tradition, did not attract extremes from the right or the left, and gave the Republicans a better chance to win.

The Contenders

Moderates and liberals were by no means limited to choosing between Rockefeller and Goldwater. Alternatives did exist. Each of these other candidates brought to the table a set of strengths that uniquely qualified them as a nominee, but they also had weaknesses that could torpedo their candidacies before they got started. This is not an indictment of the chances that moderates and liberals had to win; they certainly could if they chose the right candidate. A poll conducted by *The Saturday Evening Post* demonstrates that most Americans agreed on major issues, regardless of party lines. For example, 83% of Americans in 1962 thought the U.S. should stay in the United Nations, 70% in 1961 thought that Kennedy did the right thing by sending troops into Alabama to oppose segregation, and 67% of respondents in 1955 favored an arms reduction if all other major nations agreed.²⁰⁵ Moderates and liberals could make a dent on the national

²⁰⁵ "How Republicans Can Win," Arthur Larson, *The Saturday Evening Post*, Jan. 25, 1964.

electorate by appealing towards the nation on these issues and offering a candidate with ideas on how to confront them.

A brief look at the contenders for the nomination helps to frame the election in broader terms for voters. An early dark horse contender for the nomination was Governor George Romney of Michigan. He was not readily identified with any of the party strife between Rockefeller and Goldwater, nor was he associated with the party's defeat in 1960. He had a reputation as a good salesman from his days as president of American Motors, where he sold the world's first compact car, and his strong personality made him a popular candidate in his home state and region. Romney despised raising money from large donors; he wanted to raise money through small donations, and he wanted more participation from the average person while reining in big business, big government, and big labor. His opponents labeled him egotistical, moody, and misguided in the art of national politicking. Behind the scenes, he promised Michigan Republicans that he would serve out his full term as governor and would not run for president.

Entering 1964, Richard Nixon was the leading candidate for the nomination. A Gallup poll in December showed him at 29% and the number remained the same in January.²⁰⁶ Nixon's stock within the party was trading largely on name recognition and his carefully crafted image as an amalgamation of both liberal and conservative interests. His attempt at the governorship in California brought negative attention on him from the far right, including the John Birch Society. To voters in the Golden State, he appeared disinterested in what was happening there and more interested in international relations.

²⁰⁶ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 263.

Even some of his supporters blamed him for not staying longer in California to restore order to the party. Nevertheless, voters were intrigued by the former vice-president. They saw him as a strong candidate with the chance to break the deadlock within the party.

Two lesser known candidates were also under consideration: Harold Stassen and Margaret Chase Smith. Stassen was the progressive governor of Minnesota and a perennial candidate; 1964 was the fourth time that he ran for president. His gaff during a radio debate with Thomas Dewey on the issue of outlawing communism in 1948 had cost him his best chance at becoming president.²⁰⁷ Stassen received attention by polling in the top five in August 1963, but was considered a longshot to win the nomination, “The principle problem of Harold Stassen [is] that someone early on told him that he should be President and he believed it.”²⁰⁸ Margaret Chase Smith, Senator from Maine, sought to prove that a woman could run for president. Her political career started after filling her late husband’s House seat in 1940 before running for the Senate in her own right, and became an outspoken anti-communist throughout her time there.²⁰⁹ Smith insisted that the United States use counterforce to stop the Soviets advance, warning that President Kennedy’s actions would provoke a response from the communists, promote an arms race, or increase the likelihood for war. When the press corps asked President Kennedy

²⁰⁷ Alec Kirby, David G. Dalin, and John F. Rothmann, *Harold E. Stassen: The Life and Perennial Candidacy of the Progressive Republican*, Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2013, 101-104.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

²⁰⁹ Deborah Kalb, *Guide to U.S. Elections*, Los Angeles: SAGE/CQ Press, 2016, 190.

about Smith's chances at winning, he told the amused reporters, "She would make a formidable candidate."²¹⁰

If Margaret Chase Smith was not to be taken seriously then William Scranton was taken seriously by seemingly everyone but himself. As Pennsylvania governor, he was concerned with improving the state's social and business climate developing a reputation as a shrewd politician with an eye on the White House. During his time in office, Eisenhower employed him as special assistant to the Secretary of State. Afterward, state leaders pushed him to run for a seat in the House of Representatives. His standing within the party was on the rise following an impressive victory in the 1962 gubernatorial race.²¹¹ Members of the media labeled him as a Republican Kennedy. He was articulate and sophisticated; a progressive with political views on civil rights and foreign policy that were far to the left of those of Goldwater. He had opposed Kennedy on only 34% of 125 roll-call votes, and he had disagreed with the New Frontier only 6% of the time on foreign policy questions. During his race for a seat in Congress in 1960, he emphasized his friendship with Kennedy. He then ceded prime television time to Kennedy, rescheduling his own broadcast to follow immediately afterward so that he could inherit Kennedy's audience.²¹² Party leaders liked him, and he was considered a progressive who conservatives would be willing to accept. He was one of several candidates

²¹⁰ Patricia Ward Wallace, *Politics of Conscience: A Biography of Margaret Chase Smith* Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1995, 155-156.

²¹¹ John Bird, "Bill Scranton, a Reluctant Candidate," *The Saturday Evening Post*, Jan. 18, 1964.

²¹² Stan Evans, "Scranton: How Liberal is He?" *The Indianapolis News*, Feb. 21, 1964.

Eisenhower pushed.²¹³ After fourteen months as governor of a major industrial state, Scranton had made huge strides towards improving conditions around the state that increased his appeal to industry, labor, African-Americans, and voters in the Northeast.²¹⁴ He was highly dubious of Goldwater, and told both him and Rockefeller not to contend for Pennsylvania delegates under the guise of party unity. The ploy worked inasmuch as it kept Rockefeller out of the state and resulted in the weakening and conversion of Goldwater's forces.²¹⁵ As his opponents in Pennsylvania already knew, Scranton could be a fierce competitor. However, he refused to participate in the primaries, offering instead to be the nominee if drafted.

Another candidate tempting voters was Henry Cabot Lodge. He had lost his previous two bids for office: in 1952 he lost his Senate seat in Massachusetts to Kennedy, and in 1960 when the Nixon-Lodge ticket lost the White House to Kennedy and Johnson. Lodge was in a quandary. Eisenhower pushed him to become an active candidate, but as ambassador to South Vietnam, he was barred from promoting himself as a political candidate per State Department regulations and the Hatch Act.²¹⁶ Supporters placed his name on the New Hampshire ballot despite repeated declarations that under no circumstances would he return to the United States and campaign for the nomination.²¹⁷

²¹³ Stewart Alsop, "The Logical Candidate," *The Saturday Evening Post*, Jan 18, 1964.

²¹⁴ Theodore H. White "Squire Scranton Bides His Time," *Life*, Feb. 28, 1964.

²¹⁵ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 274-275.

²¹⁶ Stanley Karnow, "The Quandary of Henry Cabot Lodge," *The Saturday Evening Post*, Feb. 8, 1964.

²¹⁷ Robert David. Johnson, *All the Way with LBJ: the 1964 Presidential Election*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 75.

Lodge had experience in campaigning, his record as ambassador to the UN was mostly good, and his Cold War experience made him a strong candidate to oppose the Russians. In his words, he offered something for both wings of the party, “I’m a conservative like all of us, in the sense that I want to conserve the good things we have. I’m a liberal, like all of us, in the sense that I want to go on to even better things.”²¹⁸ Conservatives were not impressed. They viewed Lodge as another member of the northeast Establishment that had let down the party like so many before. His appeal to certain kinds of voters was not unlike Scranton, but he lacked the personal charm and fiery political skill that the governor possessed. Lodge’s failure to add much of anything to the ticket in 1960 was unpardonable to many Republicans, and his refusal to take to the campaign trail, few political observers and members of the media thought that he would win.

Let it Begin in New Hampshire

One of the more telling images of the New Hampshire primary campaign appeared in the *New York Times* on Saturday, January 25, 1964. At the top of the page was a picture of Nelson Rockefeller eating ice cream with a group of young men who were too young to vote, and to the right of that picture was another of Mrs. Rockefeller reaching across the hood of a car to sign autographs. To the left of Rockefeller was an article about Barry Goldwater. Goldwater was described as having received an “uproariously enthusiastic welcome” from one thousand Young Republicans in Washington, D.C. At the event, he lashed into President Johnson’s relationship with

²¹⁸ Karnow, “The Quandary of Henry Cabot Lodge.”

notoriously corrupt Senate aide Bobby Baker, calling Johnson “a highwayman of the bureaucratic system trying to buy votes by the most deceptive budget of our time.”²¹⁹

These two images and Goldwater’s article are indicative of a sharp contrast between the two candidates. Rockefeller had flown into Laconia, New Hampshire on a turboprop airliner to be greeted by well-wishers. He then ventured into town on a campaign bus, stopping to shake hands outside of a grocery store and barber shop, before delivering a speech on doing more for small business and supporting a strong civil rights bill. He and his wife received a warm welcome by the voters, eliciting sympathy for the way his divorce affected his candidacy. Still, most voters admitted they were uncommitted.²²⁰ Meanwhile, Goldwater spewed his fire brand conservatism to the faithful, pausing for standing ovations, and waving to supporters as they chanted “We Want Barry.”

Rockefeller could be a tremendous campaigner, drawing people to him with his magnetism and style, but Goldwater had something that he could not buy. Goldwater was at the helm of an impassioned, dedicated movement that he was redirecting away from its previous anti-Kennedy position to an anti-Johnson position. Whether Goldwater could transfer his appeal into votes in New Hampshire had yet to be seen. Rockefeller, for his part, was counting on person-to-person politicking, backslapping, and glad-handing to carry the day. As the *Times* articles demonstrated, the choice between the two could not be clearer.

²¹⁹ Charles Mohr, “Goldwater Sees Johnson as Lax,” *New York Times*, Jan. 25, 1964.

²²⁰ Robert H. Phelps, “Rockefeller Gets Warm Response,” *New York Times*, Jan. 25, 1964.

Goldwater's style became an issue in New Hampshire.²²¹ He had never publically been known as a warm man, and he was not the kind of politician that could light up a room when he walked in. He was an ideologue with bit of gruff and tough. His appearance might be described as stern or hardened, he was not fashionable but utilitarian in dress, and his features were marked by the cutting angles of his face, squared off by black glasses below his silver hair. Magazines liked to depict him in blue jeans with a cowboy hat, and they sometimes photographed him on horseback to show the rustic qualities that politicians in the Northeast did not possess. To voters in the New Hampshire, he came across as uncomfortable and awkward. For example, when he made a campaign stop at a lunch counter in Laconia, he refused to answer some of the questions that the audience posed and invited them to write a letter to his office instead.²²² If a candidate will not answer a question when you come out to see him in the flesh, then there is hardly a reason to mail a letter that a secretary may or may not decide to read. On his trips over to Salem and Woodsville, he avoided shaking hands with voters. Other times he would greet as many people passing by as he let go without saying a word. In the line to shake hands, voters could hear him mumble to them through a slight smile without introducing Mrs. Goldwater.²²³ For those paying attention, the Senator looked like he was terribly uncomfortable by the whole ordeal and wanted nothing more than to go back to Arizona. His speeches, on the other hand, were polished, accented by

²²¹ Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 265-299.

²²² John H. Fenton, "Candidates Step Up Campaigns for New Hampshire Primary," *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1964.

²²³ Joseph W. Sullivan, "Nelson vs. Barry," *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 26, 1964.

sharp attacks on the Democrats. There was no doubt that Goldwater believed in what he was saying, but the problem was whether he could get enough people to buy into him so that he could follow through on his intentions.

Rockefeller set out to prove that there was more to him than style. During a speech to the Young Republicans in New Hampshire, he made it clear why he had entered the race. He declared that he was not in the state as part of a stop-Goldwater movement. That was certainly part of why he was there, but it was not the basis for his candidacy. He was running because of deeply held patriotic principles and the belief that the Republican Party should be a responsible force for good government. As he told the audience, "I'm in this race all the way."²²⁴ Rockefeller shined during his speeches, he was animated, poised, confident, and well informed. He liked to use statistics to back up his points or historical analogies to underscore how imperative the situation with the Soviet Union had become. Footage from the campaign showed him bouncing down the sidewalk, smiling, and shaking hands. He displayed an easiness with voters who at first were not sure how to act around the millionaire, but they then relaxed as they chatted with him.

No matter how good he was at campaigning there were those in the audience that were somewhere between curious to witness his charm and ready to tell a reporter how much they disapproved of his remarriage. Instead of hiding Happy, Rockefeller decided to make her into an asset by having her attend rallies, appear at photo opportunities, sign autographs, and go to fund-raising dinners. Amongst voters, there was much debate about

²²⁴ "Rock on Why He's Running," accessed March 15, 2015, https://www.footage.com/stock-footage/85355/Rocky_On_Why_Hes_Running_-_HD/ Jan. 4, 1964.

how important their remarriage was for selecting a candidate. Goldwater supporters liked to remind people that Nelson cast aside his first wife for a younger woman who subsequently abandoned her children.²²⁵ Editor and publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader* William Loeb was major political force in the state, and he wrote, “We have never had a wife swapper in the White House and...we believe...the people will not accept a wife swapper as president.”²²⁶ Barbs from an editor like Loeb, no matter how cartoonish and untrustworthy he was, hurt Rockefeller around the state. His newspaper had a circulation of 50,000 in a state with around 600,000 people, giving him and his conservative politics a weighted importance.²²⁷ New Hampshire was undergoing a battle of its own between conservatives and liberals. Republicans lost the governorship after holding it for forty years and Senator Styles Bridges subsequently passed away, leaving a power vacuum. Observers suspected that Rockefeller’s remarriage was a cover for his opponents. They were willing to exploit the issue for political reasons, not so much because of their outrage, which some of them genuinely felt, but because they wanted control of the party.

New Hampshire voters by and large did not rank the governor’s remarriage as a top priority within the state. Sure, it served as juicy gossip, as it was national news, but it did not rise to the highest level of voters’ interests. Republicans in the state tended to be professional and business people, had a slightly higher income than the national average,

²²⁵ “Rockefeller’s Wife Gets a Major Role in His Campaign,” Robert H. Phelps, *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1964.

²²⁶ *Life*, Nov. 1, 1963.

²²⁷ Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 416-417.

and they were better educated. Voters in the state tended to be older as well, with just under half the total population fifty years old and older compared to just 12% between the ages of 21-29.²²⁸ Most important for Rockefeller's candidacy, they wanted a candidate who could bring jobs to the state, specifically to the shoe and textile industries. As more and more information flowed back to the campaign, it became clear that he needed to talk about improving the local economy, which would be bolstered by talking about his record while in office. Eisenhower won the state in 1952 against Taft by focusing on his knowledge of foreign affairs, an area that the governor knew well.²²⁹ Voters needed to get to know the candidate better, and reversing their ignorance of him became a priority.

From there, Rockefeller went on a tear trying to improve his image. His speechwriters crafted speeches entitled "We Need 20 Million New Jobs" and "How to Meet the Communist Challenge." He also began a regular column called "How Rockefeller Sees It" explaining why he was running and how he could breathe life into the state. He made speeches at Keene State College, then he flew back to Albany lest the voters there grow too accustomed to life without him. Then he went off again to Concord to speak at a hotel dinner, then to Laconia to meet with small business owners. Later he visited Dover, and Nashua to speak with the local Chamber of Commerce. Members of the campaign distributed information packets to locals on how to hold a fundraiser at

²²⁸ Profile of Republican Voters in New Hampshire, Dec. 13, 1963, RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire, Primary, Loeb, Press Releases, Polls, Clippings, September 21, 1963 to March 11, 1964, Rockefeller Archives.

²²⁹ Issues in New Hampshire; Post-Moratorium Progress, December 6, 1963, RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire, Primary, Loeb, Press Releases, Polls, Clippings, September 21, 1963 to March 11, 1964, Rockefeller Archives.

their home, what issues to discuss, basic background information on the candidate, and rebuttals to Goldwater supporters. As Rockefeller's staff worked to get their candidate in the best position before the primary, William Loeb made sure the headlines in his newspaper made it clear who voters should elect. The song became incessant: "Barry is Runaway Favorite," "Rising Tide for Goldwater," "Enthusiasm for Barry Tops Nixon in '60 Lure," and "Barry Looms as Party Choice". Some of the columns made their way into the back sections of crowded Boston newspapers, casting doubt on the outcome of the election. Loeb took it upon himself to take swipes at Margaret Chase Smith, and he referred to Eisenhower as "Dopey Dwight." Before his untimely death, Kennedy often got compared to a mental patient; he was, according to Loeb, a "silly rich boy" inviting "insanity in the White House." Goldwater, on the other hand, became a symbol of "determination to return to national sanity," and he was able to free the nation from "sleeping under the leadership of left-wing professors impervious to the freedom loving demands of Chiang Kai-shek, Francisco Franco, and H.L. Hunt of Texas."²³⁰ This was an interesting line of attack calculated to resonate with residents of a state with the motto "Live Free or Die."

Their campaign styles, along with their supporters, remained decidedly different. Goldwater kept an unassuming, reserved attitude while Rockefeller bounced, boasted, and rollicked on the campaign trail. Nevertheless, neither candidate was without flaws. For every repetitive comment from Rockefeller on the "leadership gap in Washington,"

²³⁰ The Press and the Primary, Report from New Hampshire, Box 60, Folder 622, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial Hugh Morrow, Contents: Subseries 1. Campaign Files, Presidential, Rockefeller Archives.

Goldwater rattled off a quote that misconnected with voters making him look indecisive. For example, in Portsmouth he railed against the civil rights bill, warning of infringements on freedom of religion before commenting, “I am not certain of that position yet.” Later, the widow of popular New Hampshire Senator Styles Bridges praised him for supporting a “voluntary” Social Security system only to have the candidate say that Social Security “may need some looking into about 1970, but I’m not for breaking contracts.” On the other side, Rockefeller’s crowds tended to be larger, but they were less enthusiastic. He liked to rattle off statistics, deliver adages and terms that did not resonate with shivering onlookers in the February cold. Lingering whispers about his remarriage continued to be heard, proving that the governor’s ceiling could only go so high. By the end of the month, neither side expected a majority of the total vote.²³¹ In the run-up to the primary election on March 10, both Goldwater and Rockefeller could be seen glad-handing potential voters, trying to turn the screws of the local power brokers, and promising all that they could to make the state a better place.²³²

To say that the New Hampshire primary was a two man race would not be entirely inaccurate, though it would be an incomplete answer to why neither candidate in the end carried the state. Both of the aforementioned leading candidates captured headlines and produced quite a bit of buzz around the state, but despite their best efforts, voters could not commit themselves to either side. Other candidates, among them Richard Nixon, George Romney, and William Scranton proved that a candidate did not even have

²³¹ Joseph W. Sullivan, “Nelson vs. Barry,” *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 26, 1964.

²³² Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 416-428.

to appear in the state or even have his name on the ballot to be considered. All three candidates withdrew their names from the ballot, though each one, especially Nixon remained a favorite among party factions. Scranton kept one foot in the race by insisting that would only be a candidate if drafted by the people, but his candidacy in the primary never gained traction.²³³ Ostensibly, the three Republicans did not want to be a part of a large field of contenders which would potentially hand a fluke victory to Goldwater. From another perspective, they wanted Rockefeller to win if not to bolster his chances but to increase their own chances should Goldwater lose momentum. A win for Goldwater did not sit well with progressives within the party who feared a nuclear exchange with the Soviets should he win the general election, Social Security becoming optional, and equal rights being demoted from the national agenda.²³⁴

Still, for New Hampshire voters, another option seemed viable, writing in Henry Cabot Lodge on their ballots. Few voters had a clear understanding of the ambassador and his positions. Compared to Rockefeller and Goldwater he was an unknown. A vote for Lodge was a vote for a phantom. His absence from the campaign trail only served to propel his campaign that was operating without his public approval on a subterranean level. In the election's postmortem, political observers cited Lodge as a favorite-son candidate; after all, many New Hampshire voters lived on the border with Massachusetts and worked in Boston. They felt comfortable voting for someone that they knew from past experience, regardless of how the situation had changed since his defeat in the

²³³ Robert H. Phelps, "Rockefeller Voices New Confidence," *The New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1964.

²³⁴ "The Real Choice in New Hampshire," Advance Notice: Newsletter of ADVANCE Magazine, March, 1964, Box 8, Folder 263, Graham T.T. Molitor papers, Rockefeller Archives.

Senate to Kennedy years earlier.²³⁵ In 1964, Nixon looked like a two time loser after loses in 1960 against Kennedy, and in California in 1962. While Goldwater tried unsuccessfully to tone down his bellicose rhetoric, Rockefeller satisfied no one with his campaign biography, *Nelson Rockefeller, a Political Biography* which failed to put to rest his marital issues. Making matters worse, a week before the election, a prominent Baptist minister in Manchester spoke with Rockefeller about his remarriage, and afterwards he refused to give his endorsement. With Margaret Chase Smith and Henry Stasson failing to seize the opening, Lodge became the choice candidate.²³⁶ When the final results came in, the numbers showed Rockefeller with 21%, Goldwater with 22%, and Henry Cabot Lodge with 35%. A surprise indeed.

Following the election, Rockefeller had to lick his wounds and keep moving as he was already campaigning in preparation for the Oregon and the all-important California primary. In a letter to the governor dated March 23, retired Ford Motor Company executive and PR man Charlie Moore laid bare the dilemma facing the campaign: the New Hampshire primary resulted in a stalemate. Lodge was in the impossible position of being a candidate while serving overseas for a democratic administration. Opinion polls before the election failed to accurately take the temperature of the electorate, and the press moved against the governor at the exact wrong time. Goldwater survived because Rockefeller did not win. This was not because of Goldwater's campaign, although, his numbers in California went up, thus setting the

²³⁵ Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah*, 78-94.

²³⁶ "Rocky Might as Well Speak Up Now," *Eugene Register-Guard*, March 16, 1964, Box 61, Folder 635, Nelson A. Rockefeller, in Gubernatorial Hugh Morrow, Contents: Subseries 1. Campaign Files, Presidential, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire to Mayoral Campaign 1965-1966, Rockefeller Archives.

stage for a future showdown between the two sides. Within Rockefeller's campaign, an argument over how the governor should proceed threatened stability moving forward. According to Charlie Moore, he needed to make civil rights an issue in Oregon and California. Goldwater, he argued, was an extremist who could not win the national election, and there was no place for him in the party of Lincoln and Roosevelt. Goldwater had the potential to wreck the party, and drive voters into the arms of the Democrats. Moore advised the governor that while no other Republican needed to be attacked, Goldwater had to be brought down.²³⁷ With the first primary in the long winding road to the nomination in his rearview mirror, Rockefeller pressed on.

Chapter 5: Primary Season

A Vacuum in the Republican Presidential Race

Presidential primaries can cause immediate changes in national party preference. There are a host of factors to consider: whether the candidate won or lost the primary, media attention, expectations for the candidate, and where the election took place since certain states carry more weight than others. There are many losers in primaries, and each contribute to the winner's gain. Each primary brings a chance for a new direction in the polls leading to the next primary.²³⁸ Adding to the confusion for the Republican field following New Hampshire, Goldwater and Rockefeller combined for less than 50% of the

²³⁷ Letter from Charlie Moore to Nelson Rockefeller, March 23, 1964, Box 3, Folder 120, Nelson A. Rockefeller – Gubernatorial, Series 27, Public Relations, Rockefeller Archives.

²³⁸ James R. Beniger, *Winning the Presidential Nomination: National Polls and State Primary Elections, 1936-1972*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1, Spring, 1976, 22-38.

total vote. Nixon finished fourth thanks to a half-hearted write-in campaign, and Scranton did not even run a campaign and received a miniscule 77 write-in votes. Essentially, Lodge won the primary for being the least unpopular candidate after the Republicans failed to move the needle.²³⁹ New Hampshire did not decide the likely nominee so much as show the candidates that they needed to adjust their campaign strategy before the next major primaries or else their supporters might abandon them for another.

At this point in the race, three distinct possibilities for the remaining primary season seemed plausible. First, the early favorite, in this case Rockefeller since Nixon refused to launch a formal campaign, might rally from defeat and regain the lead in the polls. This happened twice in the decade prior. In 1948, Thomas Dewey, another former New York governor, lost his lead to Harold Stasson in April after dropping the Wisconsin and Nebraska primaries. Dewey turned his campaign around by splitting four more primaries with his opponent and maintaining an advantage in the popular polls before securing the nomination. Four years later, Eisenhower staved off Robert Taft after he pulled ahead in the polls with a narrow victory in New Hampshire followed by a strong second place showing in Minnesota. Both candidates dominated the public opinion polls, and won the final poll before the convention. Goldwater proved in New Hampshire that he could not win the nomination on the ground by shaking hands or giving speeches. He would have to go another route if he wanted to stand on the podium at the convention in California. Winning the public opinion polls was not going to happen for him. Rockefeller, on the other hand, enjoyed this kind of politicking. He lived for the polls –

²³⁹ Novak, *Agony of the G.O.P.*, 328-329.

some would say he paid too much attention to them – he was the best pure campaigner that the party had. Winning the polls would take a series of deft moves, he would need to confront Goldwater’s supporters before exposing them as extremists to the rest of the Republican Party.²⁴⁰

A second scenario involved an eleventh hour challenger. This possibility would require a challenger not necessarily winning the primaries or dominating the public opinion polls. A candidate rising to the top at a late stage in the primaries had happened before, but under unusual circumstances. For example, Wendell Wilkie in 1940 defeated Dewey in only the last poll of the race. In another instance, Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver took over the lead position in 1952 after Truman dropped out of the race. He then lost the nomination after Democrats drafted Adlai Stevenson as a compromise candidate at the convention. An outcome like this was exactly the kind of nightmare that conservatives thought might happen. Their candidate had a hardcore base of supporters, but his lack of national political prowess might nudge key members of the Republican elite to seek someone else. Liberals would most likely have the upper hand in this situation as most their support lay in the Northeast, the traditional base of power for the party. Rockefeller would not be seen as a compromise candidate at a late stage in the campaign. If he wanted the nomination he would have to win it on his own. Moreover, while liberal and progressive Republicans could take some comfort in a third candidate, conservatives knew another option would spell disaster. Enlisting a third choice for the general election would torpedo even the remotest chance of a Republican returning to the

²⁴⁰ Beniger, *Winning the Presidential Nomination*, 22-38.

White House. Few candidates could be called upon to balance the ticket. Namely, Richard Nixon would be asked to fall on his sword for the party making him a three time loser with little hope of continuing a once promising political career. Any other nominee would risk a similar fate: the party would be ripped in half, and the nominee's chances of success would pale in comparison to the negativity felt among rank-in-file Republicans.

A third scenario would be a horse race to the finish line with each candidate jockeying for position along the way. This happened only four years earlier when Democrats John F. Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson switched leads in the polls five times before Kennedy took the lead for good in January 1960. Two months later, the primaries began resulting in a sweep for Kennedy in each of the eleven contests that he entered.²⁴¹ For the Republicans in 1964, several candidates took the lead at the start of the race beginning with Nixon then Rockefeller then Goldwater, and then Lodge after the first primary. No one had a steady command of the front position. If this scenario continued at its current pace, then it would be hard to predict who would come out on top at the convention.

Republican moderates and liberals alike had to like their chances should this possibility come to fruition. For starters, most of the candidates could be labeled as progressive or at least left-leaning raising the odds that one of them would be the winner. Rockefeller would have to act fast. His image problem would come up again, a serious handicap for a challenger trying to win because of his ideals, his record, and chance at winning in November. Other candidates would also have the opportunity to move up in

²⁴¹ Beninger, "Winning the Presidential Nomination," 22-28.

the polls, win a few primaries, and curry favor with the party establishment. At first glance, Goldwater's chances would not be better than even given his aforementioned troubles with voters. That of course depended on him following the traditional path to the nomination. If he focused not on capturing voter's support, but gathering delegates, the real prize of each primary, then his chances would improve. Understand that under this scenario, the horse race, custom and procedure get altered. This is the wildest path for the candidates to take precisely because there is so much uncertainty brought with it, by its nature, it would be unpredictable. If a candidate could start a genuine movement heading into the convention there would be no way to block him by nominating a compromise candidate. On this point, the left wing of the party underestimated their competition. They did not foresee how much the race would change if Goldwater continued unimpeded.²⁴²

Like a Prairie Fire

Perhaps Barry Goldwater would not be in the race if not for the activities of South Carolinians. At least, he might not be as prominent a figure in the party. Goldwater first came to South Carolina as a politician in 1958 thanks in part to National Committeewoman and member of the Greenville County Republican Party Patricia M. Barnes. She headed a last minute fundraiser in Greenville that allowed him to speak to a statewide TV audience. Two years later, she worked with Spartanville industrialist Roger Milliken at the National Convention in Chicago on what was dubbed "The Historic Platform Committee Upon Which the Voice of the South was Clearly Heard." She also

²⁴² Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 72-96.

served as a member of a small group at the convention that was instrumental in placing the Goldwater's name in nomination.²⁴³ Former Democratic governor James F. Byrnes did his part to turn the South towards a conservative candidate by continually supporting Republicans in presidential elections. Two months before the 1960 election, he sided with the delegation from South Carolina in their rejection of the Democratic platform and nomination of Senator Kennedy.²⁴⁴ On a micro level, conservatives sprouted up almost at their own will. In Anderson, South Carolina, president of the University of South Carolina Young Republicans David W. Rice wrote to James Duffy for guidance on how to better organize other high school and college students interested in giving their support. Many of them already spoke the language of the conservatives but wanted to be a part of a movement.²⁴⁵ These figures, leaders at various levels, played a pivotal role in the creation of what would become known as the "southern strategy." A stratum of support built upon layers of passionate and often times disgruntled members of an ignored social group, predominantly whites, bent on uniting to voice a common set of beliefs that could be heard from the low country to the state capital. A voice that had for too long been muted by outsiders, content with issuing directives while taking a key bloc

²⁴³ Political Activities of Patricia M. Barnes, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, Box 3, Folder 24, Clemson University Archives.

²⁴⁴ James F. Byrnes statement at Columbia, South Carolina, in James F. Byrnes Papers, Series 8: Post-Gubernatorial – MSS 90, Box 43, folder 5, Clemson University Archives.

²⁴⁵ Letter from David W. Rice to James Duffy, February 4, 1964, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, box 3, folder 24, Clemson University Archives.

of voters for granted. Goldwater would not have to tap into their support so much as dig in and reap the rewards.²⁴⁶

Other Republicans carried this message throughout the South. In Alabama, president of the Martin Oil Company and G.O.P rising star James D. Martin spoke on this issue in late January. He urged southern businessmen to become involved in politics with wholehearted support and not look for a “guaranteed winner.” He speculated that the main issue in the South in the election would not be the economy or foreign policy; instead, he believed that the issue at hand would be the power of the federal government to impose its will upon the states and individuals. He stressed the immediacy of action, “The time has come to disavow a ‘me too’ aping of limited socialism and faint-hearted surrender to minority votes,” he stated. “If that attitude prevails, the battle of 1964 and, I am afraid, the battle to save America as the last bastion of free enterprise, is already lost. Give it to the Democrats now and save the campaign expenses.” Democrats needed the South more than the South needed Democrats. Without the South, the Democratic Party would be a minority party made even weaker if border states like Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia followed suit. He insisted that his listeners not simply give their approval, but participate. He believed that the time for change had arrived. “The solid, one-party South is gone; it is, at this very hour, in a state of flux; in a state of change. The impressive victory we won on November the 6th, 1962 by shattering the fixed idea of Democratic invincibility may not yet have established the two-party system

²⁴⁶ Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2013, 143-165.

in the South – but the South is ready.”²⁴⁷ Martin’s words expressed a deep sentiment, a current running through the region. Democrats no longer held sway at the precinct-levels, and these businessmen, lawyers, and politicians were bannings together to thwart what they saw as government overreach approved by a political party that no longer spoke for them.

A poll conducted by the Democratic National Committee in late 1963 indicated that the Democrats would lose an estimated six of seven Southern states that Kennedy carried in the previous election, including Texas, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Georgia.²⁴⁸ While the poll represented voters at a particular moment, a month before Rockefeller became the first Republican to formally declare his candidacy, it is indicative of a looming shift in the habits of the region. Furthermore, election returns in 1963 confirmed the steady development of a Republican trend into Democrat strongholds, but progress did not only come in Dixie either. A Republican candidate in the Philadelphia mayoral race, a city that Kennedy carried by over 300,000 votes, polled at 47% in a close loss. For the first time in sixteen years, a Republican became mayor of Baltimore. Special elections in California and Texas both produced Republican victors, while in Indiana the party took control of a majority of its cities including a majority of its most populous municipalities. Republican gains also included

²⁴⁷ New Power of the Southern Vote May Decide 1964 Elections, Martin Tells Sida Meeting, January 21, 1964, in John Workman Papers, W.D. Workman, Campaign Files, 1964, General, box 7, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, South Carolina.

²⁴⁸ “Secret Demo Poll Shows JFK Losing South,” The Republican Southern Challenge, October, 1963, in W.D. Workman, Campaign Files, 1963, Parties, Republican, Newsletters, Republican Southern Challenge, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, South Carolina.

the Virginia General Assembly and the New York mayoral races. Mississippi had its first two-party gubernatorial contest since Reconstruction, and one-third of the voters opted for the Republican candidate.²⁴⁹ As conservatives saw it, a backlash had materialized. These elections took place before Kennedy's death, but Lyndon Johnson did not have the support of many southerners either.

At this stage, it would be an overstatement to say that a conservative victory in the primaries was inevitable, much less that they would be able to win in the general election. It is clear that Republicans were on the upswing, but that does not mean that they could be assured of even having their candidate nominated. Cracks in the South became clearer as time moved on, which would not have been a surprise to a politician weighing his chances in the early to mid-1960s. A better question would be how much did this matter to them? Consider that in 1960 the states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi combined for a total of 70 Electoral College votes. Compare that to Ohio with 25, Illinois with 27, Pennsylvania and California each with 32, and New York's enormous number of 45. Maintaining dominance in the industrial Northeast, along with a few key districts in the Midwest and California, had to take precedence for the party at large.²⁵⁰ National Republican leadership looked at the electoral map and wanted a candidate who best appealed to those states deemed most valuable. For most voters in America that meant a candidate who swayed to the left of center on specific issues or so Republican leaders thought. In 1964,

²⁴⁹ A Look at the 1963 Elections, November 21, 1963, in W.D. Workman, Campaign Files, 1963, Parties, Republican, South Carolina, General, box 7, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, South Carolina.

²⁵⁰ Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 358-405.

Lyndon Johnson was often described as a conservative even though he would go on to expand some of the most important “liberal” policies of the 20th century. A far-right candidate like Barry Goldwater had an uphill battle to convince the “kingmakers” that he could be a viable candidate in a political climate that indicated otherwise.

Before 1964, the way to gain delegates depended on courting county and state leaders who would then support the candidate. This was exactly the campaign style that George Hinman angled for Rockefeller to employ, which he did until his remarriage and opening defeat in New Hampshire wrinkled his prospects. Winning in the primaries would show the state and county leaders that Rockefeller had public support, thus higher ratings in the polls would come, followed by more victories up until the convention. F. Clifton White saw another way to the nomination. Goldwater could take advantage of the conservative network already taking shape by using their passion to appoint delegates outside of the norm, many of whom would not be party regulars loyal to leadership. They would not go to San Francisco to vote for anyone else, and no matter what they would vote for their candidate. When Phyllis Schlafly, author of *A Choice Not an Echo*, became a delegate for Illinois there could be no doubt that she would vote Goldwater. White’s strategy depended on getting conservatives into the lowest levels of party positions. This included at the precinct level as well as county and state positions, all of them needed to be put in play for conservatives to have a chance. Winning these positions would draw little attention from either larger party affiliates or from the public. At the precinct caucuses, winning depended on a commitment to see the process through.

Conservatives had waited in the wings for years to have their opportunity, now was the moment to pull together at their opponents weak points. As William Rusher,

editor of the *National Review*, made clear to Goldwater himself, “Our project was designed from the outset to build up conservative strength at the 1964 convention, and was not centered on a particular candidacy.”²⁵¹ Conservatives harbored a resentment towards party leadership stretching back to at least 1952 after the drama surrounding the nomination of Robert Taft. Rockefeller and Dewey, and others on the Council on Foreign Relations had earned the reputation of working the levers of power to force Eisenhower to the top of the list of candidates. Over a decade later, resentment among members of the right wing of the party kept them watching for another coup – especially the nomination of Rockefeller or Nixon over their nominee. Conservative newspaper columnists floated the idea of starting a new Conservative Party in the event that either of them should rise to the top of the ticket.²⁵² Paranoia would not be an apt description for their emotions since strong evidence existed that Republican leadership had a history of deploying such tactics. In 1964, the prevailing view held that the results of the primaries were by no means binding; they could even be supplanted by the will of key members of the party.

With their eyes locked on the convention from the start, regional directors John Grenier in the South and Stephen Shadegg in the West rallied their foot soldiers to get into precinct meetings so that delegates favorable to Goldwater could be sent to the county conventions.²⁵³ Consider the example of Fairfax County, Virginia. Located across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., more a northern than southern city, and not a

²⁵¹ Andrew, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah*, 181.

²⁵² Kent Courtney, “Suppose Goldwater is Denied the Nomination,” *The Independent American*, RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, Goldwater, Barry Miscellaneous Files January 1964 to April 1964, box 55, folder 577, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁵³ Rae, *Decline and Fall*, 55.

place that Goldwater might be expected to win. Jack MacDonald, a former member of the Republican National Committee's staff, led the Republican organization and saw the threat that Goldwater posed. He wrote and called other Republicans to stop the Goldwater forces from taking over the precinct conventions, but no one came to his aid. In fact, in Virginia any registered voter could participate, thus even Democrats could vote in the Republican election. Still, only about one hundred people participated in each district election. At the most crucial election in the Lake Barcroft District, Goldwater supporters won by *one* vote, giving them two Goldwater delegates to send to the convention in San Francisco.²⁵⁴ A conservative victory came by a razor thin margin.

White's political brilliance lay in the way that he thumbed his nose at the traditional methods of winning an election. His strategy did not rely on winning over the Jack MacDonald's of America. Instead, he captured the hearts and minds of a group that could not be bought. Goldwater supporters shared his views on pushing a stronger laissez-faire economic policy, weakening the power of the federal government to enforce broad mandates, and standing up to the rising tide of communism. McCarthyism may have been gone, but the after-effects still lingered. It is ironic to note that the tactics that the Goldwater people used, such as infiltrating meetings or using voting procedures to delay and eventually vote out their opposition, came from the communists. White witnessed the communists' loyalty to their cause, a loyalty that did not begin during the

²⁵⁴ Novak, *The Agony of the GOP*, 346-347.

campaign or end on election night.²⁵⁵ Conservatives had to show determination to survive when they did not possess the finances or the blessing of party leadership.

From out of the countryside, letters streamed into political offices expressing their antipathy. From Texas, a hotel owner charged that Democrats no longer stood for the ideas of Jefferson and Jackson. Roosevelt's New Deal put the country on the path to socialism by opening the floodgates of peak spending and government intervention. Delving further into the conspiratorial, the author accused Truman of giving too much money to the rest of the world, then firing a heroic general, while engaging in a war in Korea to keep the country from sinking into an economic recession. Kennedy picked up the mantle, weakening America with a misadventure in Vietnam, a fiasco in Cuba, and rupturing society by pushing an agenda that defended minorities. He ruined the image of America abroad in the face foreign affairs that required more resolute leadership.²⁵⁶ This particular letter, though highly combative in tone and accusations, should be noted for coming from a small business owner in a burgeoning region of the country who committed himself to changing his party affiliation.

Another less aggressive letter, serves to highlight the gap in leadership that many rural voters felt. Describing himself as not having much education, a voter from Dillon, South Carolina wondered if anyone could make sense of the actions of the government. Kennedy's tragic death shocked and saddened him, but Johnson had to carry on. To his

²⁵⁵ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 57-66.

²⁵⁶ "Some Fatal Business of the Democrats (Or Why I Bolted the Party after Fifty Years)," H.S. Creger, October 13, 1963, in Thurmond Collection, Subject Correspondence 1964, MSS 100, Box 22, Folder 8, Clemson University Archives.

dismay, elected politicians seemed to be giving in to the State Department and Supreme Court, preferring to send money abroad to communist countries who wanted to buy guns to kill Americans and their allies. He closed his letter by asking Senator Thurmond to “tell a God-fearing man who also loves his America as you, what he can do to bring America back to us and what our forefathers died for.”²⁵⁷ A woman in Pasadena, California wrote to defend Goldwater as a genuine visionary, someone ahead of the mainstream. She stressed that conservatism did not mean a return to pre-modernity. On the contrary, she stated, Goldwater was modern. Mainstream politicians attacked him because he proposed an alternative and he had grassroots support that they did not. “That’s why you can’t keep those grass roots from growing high to the sky, spreading like a benign prairie fire across our nation,” she stated.²⁵⁸ Consider these letters together, and a portrait takes shape.

Conservatives longed for a candidate that they could get behind in large numbers. The John Birch Society and the YAF symbolized the disenchanting, the outsiders considered too square to be anything like the kind of outsider that society began to embrace by the end of the decade. It cannot be understated the significance these groups played on the election, without them White’s plan would likely have come to a halt short of completion. They are often described as the radical right or as extremists. The word “radical” is Latin for “root,” therefore a radical is someone who takes political ideas to their roots. They are committed to changing fundamental political structures, not only

²⁵⁷ Letter from C.B. Hussey in Dillon, South Carolina to Strom Thurmond, February 26, 1964, in Thurmond Collection, Subject Correspondence 1964, MSS 100, Box 22, Clemson University Archives.

²⁵⁸ Letter from Margaret Monroe Brown to Strom Thurmond, in James Duffy Papers, 1964, July, MSS 69, Box 3, Folder 30, Clemson University Archives.

superficial ones. Labeling someone a radical suggests that the person is not being rational, that they are operating outside of acceptable social standards of either thought or action. After the war, industrialization and rapid economic growth occurred within an abnormal climate of anti-communism propelled the growth of the radical right. As a consequence of changes in the population, Americans spread out to the far corners of the country. In places like California, Texas, and Arizona small-town conservatives jelled. A new business class began to emerge in the Sun Belt states, drawn to conservatism by their distrust for the eastern elite, their animosity towards the hoarding of resources in the industrial states, and the use of the federal government to maintain the establishment.²⁵⁹ Some of these radicals became members of the John Birch Society or the YAF, and at least many of them were familiar with their ideas or knew someone who was a member. Goldwater's campaign called forth these iconoclastic voters. They understood their alienation could be the spark for burning down tradition and starting something new.

Segregation, Reinvention, and Other Primaries

One month after the New Hampshire primary, Rockefeller operatives sent word to Albany of a change on the campaign trail. Barry Goldwater was no longer acting like the Barry Goldwater from before. After New Hampshire, he reassessed and improved his campaign strategy. During the last few weeks of March, each speech that he made focused on a single issue whether it was Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Baker or Agriculture or Civil Rights. He kept his focus for that particular audience and moved on.

²⁵⁹ Rae, *Decline and Fall*, 49.

He spoke with confidence using catchy phrases, taking difficult themes and packaging them into short descriptive words, making it easier for the average person to understand his emotionally packed language. He did not talk about isolated ideas or controversies or abstractions, he stuck to a script that avoided academic language and hammered home his point on important national issues.

After speeches, a host would allow a few questions, many of which appeared to be planted. While in Portland, newsmen travelling with the candidate were not allowed to ask questions so that local reporters could be given an “equal opportunity.” Local reporters complained that they were made to participate in a Goldwater commercial without prior notification or consent. They objected to questions appearing on TV before being published in their local papers. They objected to possible editing by a political candidate resulting in a distortion or alteration of what actually happened. An entire thirty minute conference telecast on a Portland TV station aired in the afternoon, and then was repeated again later in the week on a second TV station with a paid political broadcast label. The latter time was paid for by the Oregon Goldwater for President Committee. Steve Sattig, Goldwater’s Oregon Campaign coordinator, defended the decision by claiming that editing was “not planned” for the conference. This did not mean it was not done, since newsmen knew it was televised. Sattig admitted he did have some reporters ask specific questions, but as he claimed, he wanted to clear up some misunderstandings and that others were free to ask whatever they wanted.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ April 9, 1964, RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, in Gubernatorial 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, Goldwater, Barry Miscellaneous Files January 1964 to April 1964, Rockefeller Archives.

After a meeting with Eisenhower, Goldwater began to claim that the former president approved of his message on key issues like the Bobby Baker investigation, missile defense, extremism, and the need for party unity. To him, anyone who raised the issue of the John Birch Society was being “hysterical.” He soft-pedalled his extreme positions so as to change the dialogue in the national conversation. Most damaging to Rockefeller, Goldwater continually emphasized that he was still married to the same woman for over thirty years, that he campaigned with his family, and spoke on the issue of family solidarity. He called Rockefeller a “hot-dog eating, blintz-eating, back-slapping candidate” who increased New York government expenditures by 67% during his two terms, implying he would do the same as president.²⁶¹ The race had shifted, and Rockefeller’s opponent grew stronger.

Goldwater’s shift in presentation was matched by his shift in tactics, and it gave the appearance of a candidate seeking to redefine himself. Unconvinced, Rockefeller’s people managed to compile a list of his opponent’s extremist views. They crafted a number of issues on which to attack Goldwater on that they believed could help the governor’s campaign recover. They did not have to go back too far to find quotes. At a press conference in Concord, New Hampshire in January, Goldwater responded to the question of whether “He (Supreme Commander of NATO) should be able to fire an atomic tactical weapon without reference to the White House,” by saying, “That’s my opinion.” When asked on *Meet the Press* two days earlier, whether he would renounce

²⁶¹ Memo to Roswell B. Perkins from Graham T. T. Molitor, Goldwater’s Changed Campaign Style, April 4, 1964, RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, in Gubernatorial 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, Goldwater, Barry Miscellaneous Files January 1964 to April 1964, Rockefeller Archives.

the nuclear test-ban treaty if the he were President, Goldwater replied, “If it appeared to be to our advantage to test in the atmosphere, yes, I would do it.”²⁶² Hanging the extremist label on Goldwater like an albatross would not be a problem for Rockefeller should he decide to go forward with the idea. For years, Goldwater made speeches, published books, and answered questions with the same rhetoric. People either loved him or despised him for it. He spoke his mind and he appeared genuine; voters often cited his authenticity as one of his most admirable characteristics. If anything, he was consistent. He sang the same tune over and over again. In *Conscience of a Conservative*, he wrote, “Accordingly, we should withdraw diplomatic recognition from all Communist governments, including that of the Soviet Union.”²⁶³ Again in *Why Not Victory*, “the government of the United States should declare that if the United Nations votes to admit Red China, our government will, from that moment until the action is revoked, suspend its political and financial support of the United Nations.”²⁶⁴ Goldwater might be able to deceive someone not privy to the Senator’s career, but for campaign watchers, he could not undo his reputation overnight. Of course, he did he intend to do anything so dramatic. His campaign staff realized that if he won a few key primaries before winning the

²⁶² “Goldwater Extremist Quotes,” 21.2 Hugh Morrow General Files, Goldwater – Barry Domestic Policies October 1963 – May 1964, Box 55, Folder 573, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁶³ Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, New York: Hillman, 1961, 120.

²⁶⁴ Barry Morris Goldwater, *Why Not Victory?: A Fresh Look at American Foreign Policy*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962, 141.

nomination, he would need to shift to the center to appeal to a larger base. They insisted that was not a regional candidate or simply a candidate of marginal support.²⁶⁵

Complicating the matter, a bill that would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964 reached the Senate floor at the end of March. As part of the bill, discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin was prohibited, including in schools, places of employment, and public accommodations. Southern politicians such as Georgia Democratic Senator Richard Russell lined up to oppose the legislation, “We will resist to the bitter end any measure or any movement which would have a tendency to bring about social equality and intermingling and amalgamation of the races in our [Southern] states.”²⁶⁶ Goldwater agreed with the southern opposition, holding firm to his view that the federal government could not remedy the issue of race relations through the passage of law. He would go on to equate the passage of the bill and its enforcement to the creation of a police state. On this particular issue, Rockefeller continued to refer to the Republican Party as the party of Lincoln with a heritage of freedom and equality for all men. Under Eisenhower, the first two civil rights bills since Reconstruction had passed into law. According to a poll in February, 80% of House Republicans supported the final passage of the bill while 61% of House Democrats supported it. Over in the Senate, 71% of Republicans gave their approval compared to 54% of Democrats. During the first and second attempts to kill the bill when it reached the Judiciary Committee, Goldwater failed

²⁶⁵ F. Clifton. White and William J. Gill, *Suite 3505: The Story of the Draft Goldwater Movement*, New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1967, 93-135.

²⁶⁶ Noah Remnick, “The Civil Rights Act: What JFK, LBJ, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X had to say,” *The Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 2014, accessed July 19, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-oe-civil-rights-quotes-20140629-story.html>.

to vote with the majority of Republicans.²⁶⁷ It is tempting to say now that he was on the wrong side of history, but such phrases are not apt for the situation because the phrase implies that history follows a linear path, invoking another term like “progress.” This is a slippery slope, for the past is riddled with moments when progress turned on itself, leading to a horrific outcome. For example, scientific and technological progress helped lead to both World Wars and the slaughter of millions of people. Instead, it can be concluded that Goldwater, by opposing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and assuming the argument of protection against the federal government, became, whether by design or by consequence, a candidate that bigots and genuine racists saw as their leading man amongst the Republican field. To be sure, Goldwater took a principled stance against the Civil Rights Act based on the Constitution rather than racism, and he maintained his initial stance on the issue throughout his candidacy. As he described it, “The federal Constitution does not require the States to maintain racially mixed schools. Despite the recent holding of the Supreme Court, I am firmly convinced – not only that integrated schools are not required – but that the Constitution does not permit any interference whatsoever by the Federal Government in the field of education.”²⁶⁸ In 1957, Goldwater voted to kill Part III of the Eisenhower civil rights bill, which would have permitted the Attorney General to institute civil suits to protect 14th Amendment civil rights. A short time later, he supported nineteen controversial proposed amendments to the Eisenhower

²⁶⁷ Statements and Record of Nelson A. Rockefeller, Summarized January 1, 1964, Civil Rights, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow General Files, Goldwater – Barry Domestic Policies October 1963 – May 1964, Box 55, Folder 573, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁶⁸ Goldwater, *Conscience of a Conservative*, 33-34.

1960 Civil Rights bill, voting with the die-hard Southern bloc 67% of the time.²⁶⁹ These are only a few examples that speak to the Senator's public position on race, and there would be others in the run up to the nomination.

After New Hampshire, the next primary came in Wisconsin. For the Republicans, this became a minor affair as favorite-son candidate, congressman John Byrnes won over 99% of the vote. On the Democrat's side, a curious development took place. Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama went into the supposedly liberal and progressive North campaigning on a platform of states' rights and segregation, and found a stunning number of sympathetic voters. Wallace won over a quarter of a million votes, about 25% of the total in his race with Johnson. This was notable not for the president's inevitable victory but for the timing of the primary and the turnout. The governor believed that his showing in Wisconsin indicated that both parties would have to "conservatize" their party platforms, and in defiance of stereotypes, a Northern strain of sympathy for the southern opposition to the Civil Rights Bill existed. "We have shaken the eyeteeth of every liberal in the country," Wallace boasted. Columnists around the country fretted over the emergence of a grassroots campaign aimed at resisting civil rights. Where observers thought that civil rights had traction, they found that voters balked at the notion of equality. Northerners seemed to be saying that they supported a toned-down version of civil rights which did not impede on preexisting social norms. There were even disgruntled Republican voters who considered Goldwater to be too liberal and cast their

²⁶⁹ Best issues vs. Goldwater, January 4, 1964, Civil Rights, School desegregation, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow General Files, Goldwater – Barry Domestic Policies October 1963 – May 1964, Box 55, Folder 573, Rockefeller Archives.

ballots for Wallace. In a survey of voters, they viewed Goldwater as “too soft on the Peace Corps,” he needed to “abolish the income taxers,” “abandon the UN-ers,” and “drop the bomb on the Communists now.”²⁷⁰ Wallace’s brief outburst on the national election scene caused a stir for campaign watchers. His ability to articulate the zeitgeist of an unknown number of voters harkened back to the days of Louisiana Governor Huey Long in his bid to amass power before his planned run against FDR.

Attempting to wield control over the white opposition to civil rights would prove to be a dangerous affair. With each sit-in, demonstration, and protest march, angry white voters became convinced that social change would lead to their decline as the government continued to side against them. A backlash may have been inevitable, but politicians like Wallace inspired violence. His famous declaration, “Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever,” gained him an audience with hatemongers bent on violent means to reach an uncivil end. Wallace, like Goldwater, opposed a powerful central government, exaggerating his opposition to civil rights by warning that the bill would mean a loss of personal freedom. Unlike Goldwater, Wallace gained a deserved reputation as a bigot. Often times he shielded himself under the argument of states’ rights only to retort with a discriminatory remark or downplay the cruelty of a church bombing. Over his career, he faced other segregationist opponents, some even more hardline than himself. By 1964, he seemed poised to make the leap into presidential politics by riding the backlash against civil rights. Time would tell how much strength the

²⁷⁰ Harold H. Martin, “George Wallace Shakes Up the Political Scene,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 9, 1964.

segregationist governor possessed, but in the meantime, his performance rattled the leadership of both parties.

A week after Wisconsin, Goldwater squared off against Margaret Chase Smith in Illinois. Rockefeller dared not challenge Goldwater in a Republican primary dominated by conservative downstate voters, nor did anyone else of much consequence. Lodge and Nixon remained undeclared. Goldwater needed to prove to Republicans that he could win, and Illinois, with 26 electoral votes, was a coveted prize. Women's groups put Smith's name on the ballot, hoping that she could elicit the kind of challenge that made her famous when she spoke out against Senator McCarthy. For Goldwater, her campaign would bring a level of prestige to the race without risking a defeat. More importantly, a write-in victory like the one in New Hampshire would not be possible as the Illinois Lodge group soon discovered. Under the Illinois state election code, county officials did not need to count write-in votes. In the end, Goldwater won with slightly over 500,000. Reporters jumped on the disparity in totals, noting that Smith received 25% against his 60%. They labeled the contest a "defeat" for Goldwater for not reaching a higher tally. Goldwater responded acidly to reporter's inquires, "I'll settle for 60 percent any time." As a footnote, the official canvass indicated that he won 49% of the total Republican vote meaning that over two hundred thousand ballots did not enter the record. Also noteworthy, of the forty-eight delegates at stake, thirty-three could be counted on as Goldwater supporters with the remaining few edging towards him in the delegate count.

Illinois did not inspire the inevitability of victory nor did it extinguish the hopes of dedicated supporters. It simply ensured that the battle was far from won.²⁷¹

According to a survey conducted by the Associated Press (AP) beginning in April, Republican county chairmen, town leaders, and other party leaders believed that Nixon would prevail to become the party nominee at the convention. This was the third such poll taken by the AP with Goldwater winning the first poll in October, but the second in December after Kennedy's assassination caused a sharp decline in his position. Rockefeller remained as the preferred candidate for county leaders, but they no longer held an optimistic view of his chances. Most interesting of all, while most respondents believed Nixon would likely win the nomination, Goldwater was the overall preferred choice. However, 223 of the 1,006 respondents replied "no opinion" to the question of who was most likely to win the nomination. For both sides, the conservatives and the liberals, New Hampshire did not mean much to them or so they said, though confidence in Goldwater's campaign abilities varied based on ideology.²⁷² Their concern lay in the mega primary state of California, a winner-take-all contest. Till then, they would have to wait while the other primaries captured the spotlight.

As the candidates hopped from one primary to the next, the lens on the outcome of the nomination flared in and out of focus. Lodge won New Jersey on April 21 then Massachusetts a week later in which no presidential contenders appeared on the ballot. It became a write-in contest with Lodge carrying the day. Goldwater finished second,

²⁷¹ Novak, *Agony of the GOP*, 356-364.

²⁷² "GOP Leaders Expect Nixon to Win, Prefer Goldwater," *New York Herald Tribune*, in Campaign Polls, Box 5, Folder 178, Rockefeller Archives.

Nixon third, and Rockefeller fourth proving nothing for any of the leaders. That same day in Pennsylvania, another write-in primary, Scranton claimed victory. Goldwater supporters in the state wanted to place his name on the ballot, but the pro-Scranton State Chairman Craig Truax, with orders from Scranton, bluffed Goldwater supporters from trying to rally voters to their side. Clif White dared not risk a duel with them, though the final count indicated that Scranton's support was less than expected, resulting in only three out of sixty-four delegates going to Goldwater. This result lent further credibility to the idea within the Conservatives' ranks that opposition to Goldwater from third candidate would be futile. With the primary season in full swing, Goldwater continued to pick up delegates in non-primary states. Delegates in South Carolina, Oklahoma, and Louisiana each pledged their support to him. Delegates in Georgia, Kansas, and North Carolina followed suit by committing their votes.²⁷³ On May 2, Texans threw their support behind Goldwater in his best showing of the primaries. Rockefeller knew that he would not come close to contesting in Texas, so he stayed away. Afterwards, the press underscored Lodge's write-in, noting that before the primary, Goldwater's strength should put him close to 100%. When he came up short, it did not look impressive. On May 5, Ohio governor James Rhodes won his state as a favorite son in an election all but ignored by the press and the other candidates. Goldwater won Indiana with two-thirds of the vote, but his victory came only against perennial candidate Harold Stassen. Again, Goldwater failed to impress as a vote for Stassen translated to dissent for the

²⁷³ *Goldwater Freedom Special*, April 27, 1964, Freedom Special, Box 5, Folder 159, Rockefeller Archives.

conservative's views despite being considered a stronghold for his movement.²⁷⁴ By now, liberal Republicans could see that their main opposition would not stumble on his own. Goldwater proved that he could win in various regions of the country, and clearly he had a following behind him. Exactly how robust his following could not be determined until a later date. With the California primary looming ahead, liberals would need a candidate to step forward.

Rockefeller Makes his Move

William Rusher once mused, "Every movement needs a villain. For the GOP Right, Nelson Rockefeller was it."²⁷⁵ Even in Rockefeller's home state of New York, a Conservative Party emerged in 1962 to thwart his reelection. Conservative Party members opposed his stance on civil rights, among other things. There was no love lost between the two sides. Rockefeller was often quoted as expressing his dismay at having his party loyalty called into question. He believed that it was the other way around, that the Far Right were the ones that did not belong in the G.O.P. After all, liberals believed they had more in common with the roots of the Republican Party; namely, Hamilton, Clay, Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt who in turn inspired Wilkie, Dewey, and Eisenhower. Goldwaterites claimed Jeffersonian roots, and they subscribed to a broader definition of liberty. It would not be a stretch to call either one an extremist to the degree

²⁷⁴ Novak, *The Agony of the GOP*, 364-367.

²⁷⁵ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 84.

that both represented almost logical opposites of each other. Javits and the liberals were on one side and Goldwater and the conservatives on the other.

From the outset, Rockefeller misunderstood his status within the Republican Party. He did not understand or want to understand that he was the bane of the Far Right. His supporters were the Establishment that key elements of the Republican Party wanted to move away from. By courting lawyers, businessmen, bankers, ethnic minorities, and the professional class, he encouraged further scorn upon his campaign. His tactics may have worked in the 1940s and 1950s, but by 1964 the path to the nomination no longer hinged on winning over state officials. In the past, it made sense to lean towards the New Deal, which millions of Americans did. For the Republican Party to survive during the 1930s and 1940s, it needed to link up with the popular program. Clif White pivoted away from this outmoded approach, away from the Eastern Establishment, and understood that delegates mattered most. They could not be turned against the Goldwater movement. George Hinman charmed the wrong people. He thought he could pull the right strings at the appropriate time and balloons would drop on the governor's head at the convention. Worse still, because of the lack of primary victories, various crises going on in New York, and sagging enthusiasm there was a perception that their presidential campaign did not match the sophisticated nature of their state organization. Rumblings within the inner circle placed the blame on the wonkish approach taken to move Rockefeller forward in the polls. Too many resources, too many experts, too many opinions, and not enough leaders or instinct.²⁷⁶ Rockefeller liked to be seen as a man with ideas, a grand vision for

²⁷⁶ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 426-428.

the nation. He moved too far ahead, concerning himself with running against Johnson when he needed to start with rest of the Republican field. Considering him in this fashion could lead to the conclusion that he was an egotistical playboy pouring money into a doomed campaign when he should have spent his time, money, and energy on guiding the Republican Party through its own coming of age.²⁷⁷ Rockefeller did not want to do that.

Only four years earlier in 1960, Robert Kennedy judged Rockefeller as most likely to win the White House had he decided to run.²⁷⁸ Rockefeller did possess the qualities that someone needs to become president, but he had horrible timing and was never able to pull it all together. He exited the 1964 Presidential campaign season a changed man, but before the malice in San Francisco, his beliefs, background, and funding made him a formidable leader. By May 1964, his chances of winning the nomination seemed overly optimistic at best and delusional at worst. For all intents and purposes, he no longer had a reasonable chance of getting his name at the top of the ticket. Too much time had passed without moving the needle. Only the remotest possibility remained for him to lead the Republican Party in November. All was not lost, however, even if he along with those closest to him suspected the worst. The finale was not cast in stone. Goldwater could have lost. He underwhelmed in his victories in Illinois, Texas, and Indiana. Plus, the issue of integration and states' rights clouded his prospects given that one of the main strikes against him was his inability to appeal to the nation at large. He could argue that he settled the debate over whether his campaign only had

²⁷⁷ Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 76-96.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

regional appeal, but he most certainly did not show an ability to contribute to the expansion of the Republican Party. On the contrary, the extremist label stuck to him so easily because of his views, which, in turn, stunted his growth. If Rockefeller or any other candidate for that matter wanted to block Goldwater's way to the nomination, they needed to act fast.

Nixon took the next shot at the Goldwater campaign in Nebraska. Considered home territory for Goldwater, most of the state's top Republicans backed the candidate, trumpeting his political good fortune. Much to his delight, initially no major candidate revealed themselves as wanting to contest the primary. That changed after the election in Texas proved once again that a write-in candidate could make waves in the press. Lodge's second place finish, matched by his initial success in New Hampshire and strong showing in Pennsylvania, gave Nixon pause to consider his own candidacy. Nixon's notoriety among key officials and resonance with Republican voters in the past gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his talent for getting votes. Moreover, Nebraskans could be relied upon to execute a write-in strategy as evidenced by the 75,000 write-in votes Nixon received in 1960, and in 1952 when Taft netted 79,000 and Eisenhower 66,000 write-in votes to finish ahead of the only candidate on the ballot that year. Under the guidance of former Secretary of the Interior and newspaper publisher Fred Seaton, Nixon organized a mail campaign to drum up support. Their tactics emulated Lodge's New Hampshire effort by explaining how to implement their plan on Election Day. After officials counted the last ballot, they declared Goldwater the winner with 49%, Nixon

came in second with 35%, and Lodge rounded out the top three with 16%.²⁷⁹ As before, Goldwater disappointed only this time he did not even earn a majority of the votes. Political observers expected him to win, but they wanted him to crush his competition. Neither Nixon nor Lodge had a formal campaign, but combined they out-producedly the supposed mighty conservative in a deep red state.

West Virginia also held its primary on that same Tuesday, and it resulted in a Rockefeller victory. His people were considering the idea of repackaging his image in an effort to distinguish him from the competition without appearing haughty or out of touch. Advisors suggested that he position himself as the down-to-earth optimist, someone who faced problems realistically, yet knew something could be done about them.²⁸⁰ As the policy wonk, he failed. While watching him on a television show, viewers could see a strong, confident figure with a sound memory, but during speeches he got too caught up in the multitude of facts that his staff presented to him. From the start of his tour of the state, he tried to connect with the people. He visited a coal mine in McDowell County, gave a non-political speech in Morgantown, and toured with Governor Cecil Underwood through the northern part of the state. His venture to the southern part, a heavily Democratic coal-mining region, was the first for a Republican presidential candidate since the New Deal.²⁸¹ From there, he zeroed in on creating jobs for small businesses and

²⁷⁹ Novak, *The Agony of the GOP*, 367-368.

²⁸⁰ Memorandum from Harry Paxton to Hugh Morrow, 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, Literature, 1964 Campaign (Brochures & Memos), box 56, folder 584, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁸¹ "Rocky 'Captured' West Virginia During Two-Day Campaign Swing," *Campaign Express*, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, Literature, 1964 Campaign (Brochures & Memos), box 56, folder 584, Rockefeller Archives.

in the construction industry while trying to dispel the negative aspects of the state's reputation. He declared, "I have seen more pride in West Virginia than I have poverty."²⁸² It worked. Goldwater leaders in the state urged Republicans to boycott the primary. Goldwater did make appearances in the state, but his nor anyone else's name was placed on the ballot.

Rumors began to circulate that Goldwater had suffered a nervous breakdown before the primary, causing him to skip campaigning to relax. As documented by his wife in an article for *Good Housekeeping*, her husband suffered a nervous breakdown in 1937 while working at the family department store, and again later under the same conditions.²⁸³ Adding to the speculation, Goldwater vastly cut back his campaign schedule before taking time off in a West Virginia hotel. Similar stories of him taking medication during a 1958 campaign and before major rallies in 1964 hinted that the rumors may have some basis in fact.²⁸⁴ Whether or not the rumors were true, and if so, how much this affected his later campaign, is unclear.

During his assessment of Rockefeller, the influential editor of the *Beckley Post-Herald* noted that the governor seemed more interested in "slapping Goldwater" than winning the nomination. Based on his talks with the Rockefeller's supporters, he concluded that remarriage continued to be an issue with voters and that without that issue

²⁸² "Rocky Captures West Virginia," *West Virginia News Digest*, Vol. III, No. 13, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign West Virginia, Press Releases, memos, editorials, September 1963 to May 1964, box 61, folder 641, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁸³ Drew Pearson Memo, Graham T.T. Molitor Papers, Personal –Nervous Breakdowns, box 8, folder 278, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁸⁴ BMG Nervous Breakdown, in Graham T.T. Molitor Papers, Personal –Nervous Breakdowns, box 8, folder 278, Rockefeller Archives.

he probably would be the nominee.²⁸⁵ Rockefeller's late arrival into the winner's circle did not create much buzz in the media nor did his resounding tally add much in the way of lending credibility to the notion that he could win the nomination. It did however give the appearance of momentum heading into the next primary.

Oregon mattered. With the most coveted state still to go, Rockefeller needed a win. Unlike the other primaries, the Oregon secretary of state placed the names of each candidate on the ballot, declared or otherwise meaning Nixon, Lodge, Scranton, and Romney all appeared on the ballot. The only way to remove a candidate's name was to sign an affidavit pledging not to become a candidate in November. Romney pulled out of the race so that he could keep his promise to the Republican insiders who got him elected in Michigan.²⁸⁶ Seeing a potential legal battle ahead if he did decide to run, Scranton decided not to sign the pledge, but insisted that his staff not promote him because he wanted a legitimate draft campaign. Craig Truax, Scranton's state party chairman, ignored the instructions and began to promote him anyway. When Scranton found out, he squashed the effort. Scranton did not want to campaign in Oregon, period. Meanwhile, Nixon eyed another write-in opportunity. He reasoned that he would do well based on his victory over Kennedy in the state four years earlier and his connections to state leaders. He authorized a public relations consultant to gage interest among the locals. Unfortunately, Nixon's supporters could no longer help him: they had divided themselves

²⁸⁵ "Can Rockefeller Stop Goldwater?" *Beckley Post-Herald*, in 21.2 Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign West Virginia, Press Releases, memos, editorials, September 1963 to May 1964, box 61, folder 641, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁸⁶ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 432.

into the Goldwater and Rockefeller camps.²⁸⁷ After looking like a winner after Nebraska, his political heartbeat flatlined.

Reporting from the state, Rockefeller's staff summed up the experience for the governor. Oregon voters seemed to be low intensity people who lacked personal involvement in politics had little interest in the issues. Interviewers had to prod them to even mention any issues during their interviews. They liked Nixon for his strong knowledge of foreign countries and international affairs. Voters liked Goldwater, but the more he said, the more they began not to like him. Real enthusiasm for him did not exist the same way it did in New Hampshire, and his movement did not have the backing of the locals in the same way it did in other parts of the country. Researchers noted that after New Hampshire, Lodge did not have a bandwagon effect, he was like a "2-D knight in shining armor." People tended to idealize him, but most people did not know anything about him, and many did not know where he stood on the issues or cared to learn about him. Based on this research, Rockefeller's slogan in Oregon became "He Cares Enough to Come." Researchers recommended that the campaign should educate the voters on Lodge, he was not their knight nor was he all that smart to begin with. Once, after being complimented by a fellow ambassador for how he handled himself on a recent trip abroad, ambassador Lodge remarked, "Well, I've got a shallow mind, but I can usually think of a quick answer." Reading the tea leaves, Rockefeller's staff foresaw both Lodge and Goldwater falling by the wayside. There would be little to gain from criticizing them. For Rockefeller, a bit of good news showed up in the report. While his family troubles

²⁸⁷ Novak, *Agony of the GOP*, 369-371.

did hurt his chances, few people saw him as too liberal. Before the election, the majority of interview respondents said that the remarriage did not bother them. Where New Hampshire voters often referred to Happy as “that woman,” Oregon voters did not.²⁸⁸ They believed that he could beat Johnson in the general election, but they wanted him to show interest in their concerns without coming across a slick politician. Campaign advisor George Hatzes told Hugh Morrow, “It would behoove the governor to speak over their heads in lofty tones because this is the image which the Rockefeller’s enjoy throughout the country. When the governor utters statements and speeches which have the professional taint, it removes him from that pedestal and becomes another politician.” Goldwater on the other hand, reserved his abuse for Rockefeller in a stately fashion, but kept his attention on the administration giving him a more elevated tone than the others. By their calculations, the candidate needed to “return to the pedestal enjoyed by the Rockefeller legend.”²⁸⁹ This debate within the governor’s campaign gets to the crux of his appeal, hence the difficulty of pulling all of the different parts together to vault him into a higher echelon. He was a compelling figure with a pedigree unlike any other in America; yet, his advisors often times wanted him to straddle the line between being a man of the people and a cut above the rest.

Less than twenty-four hours before voters went to the polls, Rockefeller told a television audience, “The Republican Party faces the danger of being dominated by a

²⁸⁸ Confidential Memo: Intensive Interviewing in Oregon, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in Hugh Morrow, Contents: Subseries 1, Campaign Files, Presidential, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire to Mayoral Campaign 1965-1966, box 61, folder 635, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁸⁹ Letter to Hugh Morrow from George A. Hatzes, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in Hugh Morrow, Contents: Subseries 1, Campaign Files, Presidential, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire to Mayoral Campaign 1965-1966, box 61, folder 635, Rockefeller Archives.

radical extremism out of tune with the time and contrary to the very principles upon which the party was founded.”²⁹⁰ Another slug to the chin of his opponent, but Goldwater was nowhere to be found, having decided that he would not fight back in the state after all. His absence left room for guesses on his mental condition, though nothing could be confirmed. Rockefeller’s campaign had crisscrossed the state. In the four days leading up to the election, he gave twenty-four speeches in nine communities, and his hands had become swollen and calloused from shaking so many hands. He looked exhausted, thinner, and generally worn-out, but it was not in vain.²⁹¹ He won with 33%, Lodge finished second with 27%, with Goldwater and Nixon earned 18% and 17% respectively.

In the immediate aftermath, it appeared that Lodge, a longshot to begin with, would not be able to get the nomination. Pollsters overvalued his chances: the Harris poll missed badly in the weeks before the election by seeing an upswing for Lodge and only a minor turn for Rockefeller. Lodge never did have the resources, the money, or the insight from political pros that his opponents did. He was a phantom born out of a vague notion that he would swoop in and save the day when in actuality, he was nothing of the sort. Nixon’s absentee write-in campaign came up lame ending his bid for the nomination should a brokered convention take place. Oddly enough, because he did not campaign at all and despite finishing with a miniscule 2% of the vote, Scranton, in the weird logic of politics, was still alive with a shot at being the nominee as a compromise candidate. Goldwater performed fairly well considering his decision to skip the state in favor of

²⁹⁰ Remarks for Television (Oregon), Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in Hugh Morrow, Contents: Subseries 1, Campaign Files, Presidential, 1964 Campaign New Hampshire to Mayoral Campaign 1965-1966, box 61, folder 635, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁹¹ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 432-436.

keeping his mojo going in California. The problem for him became that he lost badly to Rockefeller who he would run against in the next primary. After Oregon, the field shrunk, but the enthusiasm on the campaign trail was about to reach a crescendo. California would become the battleground for control over the heart of the Republican Party.

Chapter 6: California and the Republican National Convention

You Don't Have a Kingmaker without Someone to Make a King Out Of

Rockefeller's win in Oregon emphasized the fractured nature of the Republican Party. As his campaign slogan made clear, he visited the state when no one else would. Lodge remained silent on whether or not he would formally join the race. He opted instead to stay thousands of miles away in Vietnam to brood over the impending American escalation with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. A few weeks before the primary, Nixon traveled to Saigon for a picture with Lodge, inspiring one observer to comment that Nixon had "a fantastic talent for muscling in."²⁹² Upon discovering that he stood no chance in Oregon, Nixon promptly went on vacation. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Scranton continued to execute his strategy of giving speeches and talking about the election with no plans to run without a draft campaign. After recovering from his reported mental exhaustion in West Virginia and sensing that Oregon would not aid

²⁹² John Skow, "Lodge Faces his Big Test in Oregon," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 16, 1964.

him in his path to the nomination, Goldwater attended a raucous event at Madison Square Garden. Amidst a colorful display of balloons and “Goldwater Girls” dancing in the aisles, Goldwater rose to the podium as a crowd of over 18,000 whistled, stomped, and cheered. He warned of the threat against states’ rights, offering up the line, “You can’t pass a law that will make me like you or you like me. This is a problem of the heart and the mind, not the problem of the lawyer, the problem of the Senator, the Congressman or the President.” Applause followed with each barb whether against “Yo-Yo McNamara” or the Democratic Administration intent on turning the states into “50 pigeonholes in a new Washington bureau.” The next day, he made his case against the federal government in a half-hour nationwide taped television program. Afterwards, he set off to California to take part in a \$10-a-person “Cruise with Goldwater” from Los Angeles to Catalina Island, twenty-four miles off the coastline.²⁹³ Rockefeller may have won in Oregon, but Goldwater was literally cruising into the California primary.

California in 1964 was a case study in how America grew and transformed following World War II. In the post war period, the state’s population almost doubled. Since 1929, it more than tripled in growth. During the war, broad-scale industrialization revolutionized the state thus providing a basis for its expansion. Huge aircraft and other defense plants and their suppliers changed the state’s prerogative from light consumer goods to heavy products. This accounted for the rise in steel and chemical markets along with an increased focus on consumer durable and nondurable products. Any decline in defense or space activity would wound the local economy. In 1962, defense became the

²⁹³ “Republicans: Lessons from the Lone Ranger,” *Time*, May 22, 1964.

nation's largest business, and between 1946 and 1965, 62% of the federal budget went towards defense.²⁹⁴ Federal government contracts were the bread and butter of the economy. National defense and government spending became major components of prosperity.²⁹⁵ It is ironic to note that these industries, which built the communities, came out of the New Deal, and yet received unbridled criticism from conservatives. They adhered to an anti-communist, libertarian ethos that railed against some the institutions that made their ascent possible. This is not to imply that conservatives did not have allies in government as there were always sympathizers and instigators who championed their cause within Washington D.C. For example, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's book *Masters of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It* influenced likeminded conservatives who also enjoyed reading Robert Welch. To their credit, the Far Right brought together various strands of people ranging from the ordinary to the elite, and from the conspiracy driven to government structuralists. Their ideology bound them as America underwent change on a large scale; changes in international status, changes in societal relations, and changes in demographics. California became a political setting for all of this to take place.

Three days after Oregon, a memo came across the Rockefeller's desk with a strategy. The author called for Rockefeller to not only win California to have a chance at the nomination, but Rockefeller needed to make a play for other delegates outside the

²⁹⁴ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 50.

²⁹⁵ "General Background on California Including Income and Employment," in Nelson A. Rockefeller – Gubernatorial, Series 27, Public Relations, California Campaign Trip, May 1964, box 3, folder 108, Rockefeller Archives.

state. This would include reaching out to delegations in favorite son states like Wisconsin and Ohio. He also needed to make frequent contact with uncommitted delegates. During the remaining weeks, he should push for maximum television and magazine coverage with an eye on raising his national position in the polls. Furthermore, supporters should be instructed how to carry out off-the-floor activities at the convention such as voting on the party platform. As a model for success, they should follow Wilkie's 1940 experience.²⁹⁶ Campaign advisor Roswell Perkins pressed the governor to make civil rights a critical issue in the state. Civil rights presented an opportunity to end discrimination and promote equality as part of the American dream that the nation's founders, and Republican forefathers, set out to achieve. Opponents like Goldwater created fear instead of understanding, and Democrats were more divided than many realized on this issue.²⁹⁷

With that in mind, the overarching issue during the campaign needed to be about the power of the federal government. Rockefeller represented a vision of America that placed its faith in institutions. A notion that the government could be trusted to do the right thing for the people. This idea won considerable praise in the aftermath of the war. America proved its leadership to the world by being the best organized, most disciplined nation, and by avoiding the devastation of its rivals as each one of them destroyed the others economy. Rockefeller's fundamental beliefs in the power of the government through spending and enacting social change cut to the heart of the dilemma that

²⁹⁶ In Nelson A. Rockefeller – Gubernatorial, Series 27, Public Relations, California Campaign Trip, May 1964, box 3, folder 108, Rockefeller Archives.

²⁹⁷ In Nelson A. Rockefeller – Gubernatorial, Series 27, Public Relations, California Campaign Trip, May 1964, box 3, folder 108, Rockefeller Archives.

Americans faced during the Cold War. As he often said, the problem was not a social issue. The cultural conformity of the 1950s had made way for the slow and steady progress that emerged during the early 1960s. The problem lay on the economic side. Democrats spent money, but they did not spend money well. They put their faith in institutions, as evidenced later by such public works as the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression and later still by the Great Society. Only Rockefeller believed that Democrats were not up to the task of continuing the financial boom of the post-war era.

To articulate his message and improve his standing among voters, Rockefeller hired a Los Angeles firm called Spencer-Roberts & Associates. William Roberts and Stuart Spencer ran the firm and made their business by managing political campaigns. Started in 1960, a string of success brought the firm national attention. Liberal Republican Senator Thomas Kuchel hired Spencer-Roberts for his campaign in 1962. A year later, the firm helped elect a Republican congressman in a heavily Democratic district of Los Angeles. On election day, they located and brought registered Republicans to the polls who had not voted by midafternoon.²⁹⁸ Drawn to their success, George Hinman visited Spencer-Roberts during the summer of 1963 to ask for their help. They had a gift for turning a politician's negatives into positives. Hinman desperately wanted them to do the same for the governor. The problem was that the firm only wanted to work for candidates that they believed could win. When Hinman asked, they refused. That October, Rockefeller flew out to their offices and presented them with a \$2 million

²⁹⁸ "Crisis for Goldwater," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 29, 1964.

operating budget if they would work for him. They agreed. Right away, they snatched up key advertising space for billboards and posters. From there, Hinman took up residency in L.A.'s Ambassador Hotel, and got to work convincing the power structure of the need to stop the Goldwater campaign. He warned them that they could be witnessing the end of the Republican Party, the two-party system, and the economic strides made during the post-war era. Californians would go to the polls to elect a slate of delegates pledged to a candidate, not a candidate directly, so the delegates had to be convinced first. Hinman targeted San Francisco mayor George Christopher, Hollywood tycoon Jack Warner, and owners of the *Los Angeles Times* and Firestone tires.²⁹⁹ Rockefeller's campaign strategy wanted to work the powerbrokers, not the voters themselves, a strategy at odds with the kind that Clif White envisioned for his candidate. The idea was not to ignore voters all together, but it was a two pronged strategy aimed first at the delegates and then at the voters.

In a survey from the middle two weeks in April conducted by his staff, Californians laid bare the obstacles that Rockefeller would have to overcome. Goldwater rated highest with southern Californians, men, and older voters. Rockefeller rated highest with northern Californians and lower income voters. Voters most strongly in support of Goldwater liked his conservative views on states' rights, his idea of a decentralized federal government, and his promise to have less government control over businesses. Those on the opposite side referenced him as being too extreme or too conservative. One respondent said, "He's too biased and opinionated – a Republican version of Harry

²⁹⁹ Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 339-340.

Truman. I think he'd get us in war too fast." Another, "Because I think, as far as foreign policy (is concerned), our President has more power in using the nuclear bomb. He is too much for using it to suit me." Close to 40% of respondents showed strong disapproval of Goldwater's campaign. They responded that he was too critical, too negative, he talked too much, and said the wrong thing. Southern Californian Republicans, his biggest supporters, did not like the way he carried himself on the campaign trail.

On the opposite side, respondents liked Rockefeller's experience and ability, but detractors thought him too liberal. They frequently mentioned his personal life, his wealth or ties to big business, and considered him too ambitious. Most discouraging, Californians approved of Goldwater's conservative positions and disapproved of Rockefeller's liberal stance more so than voters in Oregon. Overall, Rockefeller's liberal views received more negative attention than his personal life. On the issue of Rockefeller's remarriage, almost two-thirds of respondents said they considered it his personal business and it would not concern them when deciding how to vote. However, his divorce would be a factor among women, middle-age voters, and among Republicans in southern California.³⁰⁰ It is clear that the subject would be unavoidable come election time. Too often it remained on the minds of voters. Right or wrong, it came to define how Rockefeller would be viewed in 1964, both as a politician and as a person. His image became like the Duke of Windsor, Edward VIII, who set off a constitutional crisis in the United Kingdom upon announcing that he wished to marry Wallis Simpson. As head of

³⁰⁰ "A Re-Survey of Likely GOP Primary Voters in California," RG 15 Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign California (Memos, press releases, survey), box 50, folder 616, Rockefeller Archives.

the Church of England, he could not marry the twice divorced Ms. Simpson because of disapproval from the Church. Seeing the conflict ahead, the Duke of Windsor abdicated the throne after less than a year as king. He chose love over power. Rockefeller did not. Within his campaign, there continued to be nervous chatter over how the governor's personal life would affect the election. He needed to stay out of the headlines. Though, unlike in New Hampshire, Happy was noticeably pregnant. By this point, she no longer campaigned with the governor and to stay within the confines of New York. His candidacy depended on everything going according to plan. There could be no let up, no disruptions. Little did he know, his nomination would not be for his campaign to decide.

They're Already Here

Southern California, particularly Orange County, proved to be a stronghold for Goldwater. Since the early 1960s, conservatives had opened numerous right-wing bookstores, and worked within their churches, schools, and communities as a countermeasure to liberal policies sweeping the country.³⁰¹ Robert Welch's far right ideas on the dark side of the government turned heads. Conservatives, already partial to distrusting either party's administration in the post-war era, converted to a more cynical and paranoid brand of right-wing politics. Women played an integral role in the early days of John Birch Society in California by mobilizing within their communities and volunteering. A "ladies auxiliary" organized at the beginning of the decade to recall a "known communist" from the school board, which inspired the formation of the first

³⁰¹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 76.

Anaheim chapter of the John Birch Society.³⁰² Before then, many of the activists led a quiet suburban life. It was not until the heady days of the early 1960s that many of them became involved in preventing subversion. With each new layer piled on, the organization grew in size. Housewives were known to join the organization first and then bring their husbands into the group.³⁰³ In keeping with the times, they wanted more political participation. Other members of the John Birch Society included retired military officers, business executives, young people, and a smattering of haters and race baiters. They held regular meetings, expanded national membership, and had a continuing action program. Not all of the chapters preferred Goldwater. Some liked Strom Thurmond and others liked General Edwin Walker, a staunch conservative known for being the only U.S. general to resign in the 20th Century after angering both Republican and Democrat administrations.³⁰⁴

By 1963, the John Birch Society had grown to between 20,000 and 100,000 members. In addition, the society boasted 124 full-time paid employees, 40 full-time paid organizers, and 200 section leaders while also publishing a monthly magazine named *American Opinion*.³⁰⁵ Membership tended to include middle and upper middle class Protestants who were financially secure, educated, and had families and children. Large numbers of Catholics could be counted on as well. They were drawn to the organization's

³⁰² Ibid., 78-79.

³⁰³ Ibid., 102.

³⁰⁴ "John Birch Society Background, The Governor, in Goldwater Positions," box 3, folder 119, Rockefeller Archives.

³⁰⁵ Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 64.

stance on fighting communism in Eastern Europe articulated by Catholic journals in Los Angeles and New York. Cardinal Richard Cushing endorsed the John Birch Society bringing credibility and support to the organization. Cushing had been a close friend of the Kennedy family and had shared the stage with the late president at his inauguration.³⁰⁶ Welch's opposition to the civil rights movement kept African-Americans a minority within the group as black leaders such as Martin Luther King would later be labeled as a "troublemaker" and "favorite of the communists".³⁰⁷ Birchers believed themselves to be the true defenders of patriotism, opponents were either conscious or unconscious agents of an international communist conspiracy.³⁰⁸ Their society demanded their time, energy, and dedication to educating Americans on the dangers of communism. Birchers equated the United States with ancient Rome adopting a pessimistic attitude that warned of the death of civilization if the lessons of history were not heeded. Communism was seen as the worst evil in the world while capitalism was championed as the greatest system civilization had ever produced. As a result, communism and capitalism were destined for a showdown. It was the job of the Birchers to use their political leverage to stop the advances of communism. They perceived communism as the central conflict of their age. If someone was not fully in agreement with the John Birch Society, then they were either a "dupe" or a communist agent.³⁰⁹ Welch created a permanently organized movement at the grassroots level focused on righting social turmoil brought on by

³⁰⁶ Pierce, *The Megastates of America*, 528.

³⁰⁷ Robert Alan Goldberg, *Grassroots Resistance: Social Movements in Twentieth Century America*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1996, 132-133.

³⁰⁸ J. A. Broyles, *The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, 6.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 140-146.

communists. A crucial element of the movement was the use of mass propaganda. Not only were Welch's books made available to the general public through the organization, but Birchers also had an approved reading list that included Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* as well as *American Opinion* and *Review of the News* which shaped the perspective of members.³¹⁰ Pamphlets and reprints of magazine articles were distributed on subjects ranging from communism to race relations. Members appeared on television talk shows, discussion panels, and radio shows to propagate their opinions before a larger audience. Birchers spoke at college campuses, local civic associations, service clubs, veterans' organizations, and state and county fairs.³¹¹

Goldwater appealed to Southern California conservatives and far-right organizations with his stance on economic and social issues as well as his hardened views on communism. His campaign drew on preexisting mobilization and advanced it, thus expanding conservative grassroots influence.³¹² In June 1963, the 12th annual report of the California Senate Fact-Finding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities found that the John Birch Society was influential on American culture but not subversive. Based on its investigation, the subcommittee concluded that the society was not secret, fascist, subversive, un-American or anti-Semitic. Also noted in the report were reasons for joining the organization, "it simply appeared to (new members) to be the most effective, indeed the only, organization through which they could join in a national movement to

³¹⁰ Goldberg, *Grassroots Resistance*, 127.

³¹¹ Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966*, New York: Random House, 1967, 60.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 136.

learn the truth about the Communist menace and then take some concerted action to prevent its spread.”³¹³ Goldwater reached the same verdict. He wanted their support and they fit in naturally with his firebrand conservatism. Best of all, they were organized, committed, and connected enough to have a real impact on the outcome of the election. Without them, he would likely lose.

Meanwhile, Republican leadership showed ambivalence or hostility towards the organization. Former president, Dwight Eisenhower feigned interest in the group, commenting, “I have no interest in the Birch Society. I know nothing about its organization. In my experience, I have handled other such movements as the Birch Society and I ignored them. I think that's the best policy.”³¹⁴ Richard Nixon went in a different direction from his former running mate by repeatedly condemning the group despite his loss of political alliances.³¹⁵ Influential conservative and intellectual William F. Buckley locked himself in a bitter ideological dispute with the extremist wings of the Republican Party, specifically Robert Welch, and continued his criticism in newspaper columns and in the *National Review*. Buckley pleaded with Goldwater to distance himself from the group to no avail. Goldwater reasoned that there were too many influential members in Phoenix. An outright denunciation of the group would put his presidential campaign and Senatorial seat at risk.³¹⁶ These early bouts between entrenched leadership

³¹³ “Birch Society Influential But Not Subversive, Senate Report Says,” *Madera Tribune*, June 13, 1963.

³¹⁴ “Ike Ignores Birch Group,” *Desert Sun*, April 5, 1963.

³¹⁵ Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, 241-243.

³¹⁶ James A. Savage, *Save Our Republic: Battling John Birch in California's Conservative Cradle*, University of Kentucky, 2015, 245.

and the Birchers are emblematic of the struggle that conservatives and the far-right faced. While some top Republicans like Rockefeller and Javitis pushed back hard against the group, others like Eisenhower wavered on their opposition. Buckley, while supportive of Goldwater, could not stand Welch or his theories. Nixon's loss in California in 1962, proved the power of the Far Right in the state. They could not single-handedly beat him, but they could tip the scales.

In late January 1964, Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* premiered in theaters. After a delayed release because of Kennedy's assassination, the film's satirical take on geopolitical events poked fun at conspiratorial elements of American politics. In the film, a cabal of crazed generals work to prevent a nuclear doomsday with the Soviet Union as an ultra-nationalist Air Force general sets in motion a chain of events culminating in the destruction of both nations. A Russian ambassador is depicted working closely with the top echelon of the American government. Mad bombers follow their orders without question, and a general discusses fluoridation as a communist plot. All while Dr. Strangelove comments on the brilliance and simplicity of the end of the world, applauding the government for its rationalism. Events are shown as being triggered automatically and impossible to undo. Paranoia and commitment mixed with madness and the perversion of ideals bring about the apocalypse. At the end of the film Vera Lynn sings "We'll Meet Again" over footage of nuclear explosions flashing on screen. Critics of the John Birch Society saw traces of the organization in the events on screen. Audiences were presented with a movie that spoke to the fear that the nation was feeling. Sixteen months earlier, the Cuban Missile Crisis had proven how close the world was to a collision between capitalism and communism.

Extremists working within the John Birch Society saw the conflict as inevitable. Their message attracted more members to the group who saw a communist conspiracy at work either in their schools or offices or in a broader context relating to the civil rights movement and the Cold War.

During the election cycle, Goldwater supporters used the slogan “Do You Want a Leader or Lover in the White House?” to remind voters about Nelson and Happy’s marriage. Rockefeller’s supporters countered with, “Do You Want a Leader or Loner?” in an attempt to cast the governor as part of the mainstream and Goldwater as an extremist. This latest division within the Republican Party did not begin in 1964. Nixon’s campaign for governor in 1962 and the fallout that divided the two sides heavily influenced the political climate for the California Primary. In 1962, Nixon refused to endorse any congressmen or congressional candidates, including liberal Republican Senator Thomas Kuchel. Neither one of them wanted much to do with each other because each believed the other would hurt his campaign. Instead of uniting the Republican Party, factions appeared. Furthermore, Nixon’s hostility towards former governor Goodwin Knight coupled with a liberal-conservative split that conservative leader Joseph Shell did not try to fix created a standoff.³¹⁷ Nixon did not win the governor’s race in part because he never convinced voters that he wanted the job badly enough. He failed to court middle of the road voters, and bite back at his opponents. Democrats organized themselves more efficiently than in years past knocking Nixon off of his pedestal. Angry and bitter over his loss, Nixon headed off to New York leaving newly elected governor Pat Brown and

³¹⁷ Lyn Nofziger, Analysis of California Election Results, in Election Analysis & Notes, box 5, folder 61, Rockefeller Archives.

the Democrats in charge of California. At the time, Democrats outnumbered Republicans in California three to two. With the Republican Party in disarray, someone needed to come into the state to fill the void.

At the statewide convention of the California Republican Assembly (CRA) in March, moderate Republicans clashed with conservatives. Both Rockefeller and Goldwater saw the assembly as a key moment in the primaries. Victory for either candidate would all but guarantee the Republican nomination. The CRA met in Fresno to choose a slate of leaders for the coming year and endorse a candidate for election. For some time, the CRA had been under moderate Republican control. After spreading grassroots fears of liberalism, the conservative wing of the party was able funnel in an incredible amount of support for their cause. Following a hard fought and bitter debate, the conservatives outmaneuvered Rockefeller's supporters in parliamentary procedure winning the CRA's endorsement of Goldwater as well as the election of conservative candidates. It was an important and influential decision for the Goldwater campaign and for the right-wing of the party. An organized voice of the right-wing had spoken. Such a decisive victory shaped the nation's politics by helping to bring conservatism onto the national political stage.³¹⁸ President of the CRA, William Nelligan, responded acidly, saying that the debate had been "a fight with extremist guerrillas sniping at our flanks. The fanatics of the Birch variety have fastened their fangs on the Republican Party's flank and are hanging on like grim death."³¹⁹ Alarmed by the result, moderate

³¹⁸ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 124.

³¹⁹ Kurt Schuparra, *Triumph of the Right: The Rise of the California Conservative Movement, 1945-1966*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998, 86.

Republicans around the country started a “stop Goldwater” movement. In the South, moderates attempts to paint Goldwater as an extremist failed because his opinions were either not seen as radical by the vast majority of Republicans or were deemed necessary to remedy the ills of and threats to the nation.³²⁰

Leading up to the California primary, the power struggle within the Republican Party continued as the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) and the John Birch Society competed for influence. Members of the YAF had worked closely with Republican strategist William Rusher to gain support for conservative candidates in the Senate but they were met with stiff competition. A membership drive led by local Birchers in the state topped off by the opening of a six-state headquarters in San Marino put the John Birch Society in a strong position. In addition, several positions within the California Young Republican organization were also captured by Birchers.³²¹ Volunteers for the Goldwater campaign were asked point blank if they were members of the John Birch Society in an effort to dislodge the most hardened supporters. F. Clifton White reasoned that the society’s influence with its rising membership, strong representation in California, and litany of voter information could be weakened if it could be merged with his own organization. This idea failed as Birchers continued to establish maverick clubs, shift volunteers, and increase cash flow.³²²

³²⁰ Ibid., 86-88.

³²¹ Donaldson, *Liberalism’s Last Hurrah*, 178-179.

³²² Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 415.

Conservatives working within the Goldwater campaign perceived Birchers as loyal and patriotic while liberal Republicans and liberal Democrats characterized the movement as extreme. Still, it would be a mischaracterization to equate the John Birch Society with the larger Republican ideology. Many conservatives did find that their interests at times overlapped with Birchers. They were however put off by the movements leadership and unsubstantiated accusations. It would have been harmful to Goldwater's image if he endorsed the John Birch Society, but the organization campaigned for him anyway. Welch made clear that the purpose of the society was to "supply information from which our members can decide for themselves. There are places where Goldwater's philosophy coincides with mine and others where it does not," but the organization maintained that they would not endorse any candidate.³²³

Attacks from both the liberals and the Far Right on their opponents made a reconciliation at the convention less and less likely. Conservative radio host Fulton Lewis Jr. circulated a smear sheet titled, "The Nelson Rockefeller Story," painting the governor as associating with communists in New York. In it, an African-American lawyer serving as chairman of New York's temporary state commission on low incoming housing was tied to the "communist front" and "subversive" groups. Lewis charged that "the only possible conclusion that can be reached is that governor Rockefeller doesn't care about these communist and communist front connections and is not disturbed about them." Lewis's remarks fell under the umbrella of extremists lending their support to Goldwater. The fear amongst liberal Republicans became that if Goldwater became the head of the Republican Party that the Birchers would follow behind him. Attacks on liberal

³²³ "Birchers Support Nobody," *The Desert Sun*, July 3, 1964.

Republicans did not only come from the fringes. Goldwater spoke in Fresno on how Senator Kuchel policies did not fit into “the mainstream of the whole Party.” An odd accusation when considering Kuchel overwhelmingly voted with Republican Party leadership. Goldwater himself wanted to end Republican National Platforms seemingly because he was a minority within the G.O.P.³²⁴

Meanwhile, the Rockefeller campaign produced a short film entitled “The Extremists” to be aired one week before the primary. In the film, a narrator explained that the extremists were pushing a communist conspiracy. Their appeal was melodramatic, they were neither reasonable nor realistic, and they presented an oversimplified world from the fringes of the political scene. After this expository, three witnesses to the tactics of the extremists were brought in front of the camera. Reverend John Simmons relayed how he received hate mail and threatening phone calls after he said he supported the U.N. He then recounted the night he and another speaker had their homes bombed. Next, a local Republican described how thirty members of the John Birch Society disturbed a meeting of over 400 Republicans, and took control of Young Republican clubs in the south bay area. Last, a former school teacher told how Birchers infiltrated the local assembly by voting themselves in as members.³²⁵ Before the film could be aired, Rockefeller halted its distribution, seeing the film as McCarthyism in reverse.

³²⁴ Jack Craemer, “Radical Right is Threat to GOP in California,” *The Daily Independent Journal*, April 25, 1964, in Hugh Morrow Files, 1964 Campaign California Memos, Briefs, Press Releases, box 59, folder 615, Rockefeller Archives.

³²⁵ Unaired film, “The Extremists,” in Nelson A. Rockefeller Gubernatorial Records, Audiovisual materials, Series 39, FA 756, box 2, reel AV 1155, Rockefeller Archives.

His decision to not air the film speaks to the inner conflict that plagued his campaign. In September of 1964, months after the primaries, Lyndon Johnson's campaign aired the famous "Daisy" television advertisement. In the ad, a young girl is shown in a field picking up daisies, then counting as she plucks them one by one. When she counts to nine, another voice from an intercom begins to count down from ten, it is a missile countdown. She turns to look off screen and the image freezes. The camera then zooms into the little girl's eye as the countdown reaches zero, then a bright flash along with the sound a nuclear explosion can be seen as a mushroom cloud rises to the heavens. A narrator comes on, "These are the stakes. To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die." At the end of the ad a voice reads the words on the screen, "Vote for President Johnson on November 3rd. The stakes are too high for you to stay home." This is perhaps the most famous political advertisement ever. Johnson essentially used the campaign that Rockefeller crafted in California, but to a much larger effect. A primary is different than running a national election. The value of the election is smaller and what is important in one primary may not be important in the next. Also, because there are fewer voters and they are predominantly from one party, unless it is a closed primary, then the message may not resonate the same way as it would in a national election where more people can participate and may be swayed. California Republicans were predisposed to supporting the military and the use of nuclear weapons. Some of Goldwater's supporters and those to the right of him wanted him to use nuclear weapons immediately or at the very least use them as a means to force the communists to capitulate. National voters would not see it

that way. They saw *Dr. Strangelove* and the “Daisy” ad, when the Goldwater people saw a tough, no nonsense approach to a threat to national security.³²⁶

Rockefeller’s people grappled with this view. Early on in his campaign he pushed the extremist issue, then he backed off once he faced criticism for dividing the Republican Party into further divisions which would hurt his chances in the primaries. He then reversed course late in his campaign by attacking conservatives and extremists with ferocity. Rockefeller believed that their position within the Republican Party represented a major obstacle to the healing process. Republican leaders had a choice. They could either allow the extremists along with the conservatives to have their candidate, thus avoiding further fracturing of the Republican Party or have a vicious feud, possibly ending in the creation of a Conservative Party only to have the Republican candidate lose in November as had been expected all along. Extremists were taking over the Republican Party, both Birch and pro-Birch forces. They captured full or partial control of the Young Republicans, the United Republicans of California, the California Central Committee, and the Republican Assembly. Birchers in San Francisco and other areas used the Citizens’ Committee of California as a front for members wanting to work behind the scenes for Goldwater. At numerous Goldwater headquarters, enthusiasts could walk in and receive John Birch Society literature or reactionary materials.³²⁷ This kind of tactic could be seen in other parts of the country not only among members of the John Birch

³²⁶ Donaldson, *Liberalism’s Last Hurrah*, 247-248.

³²⁷ Memo from Wes Willoughby to Nelson Rockefeller, “Goldwater, the Extreme Right Wing and the California G.O.P.,” April 20, 1964, in Memoranda re 1964 Campaign, box 3, folder 120, Rockefeller Archives.

Society, but also among would be Goldwater supporters looking for other outlets for their views. A delegate to the Maryland Republican convention pledged to Goldwater arranged a rally for Governor Wallace in Rockville for him to spread his message of states' rights and segregation.³²⁸ While Goldwater could not be expected to control all of the people supporting him. Nevertheless, it became another example of the kinds of people voting for him.

Goldwater's supporters were the most enthusiastic of the campaign, not only in California, but throughout the primaries and before. Goldwater gave speeches to thousands of admirers in New York and around the country. His advisors gave a passionate effort to get him to run in the primaries after Kennedy's assassination when he considered getting out of the national spotlight altogether. There were also the small district elections decided by a single determined voter in some cases. In California, organizers gathered over three times the number of signatures needed to get their candidate on the ballot in a single morning while Rockefeller employed pay-per-signature professionals to get the necessary number only one week before the deadline.³²⁹ This momentum kept building and building throughout the primaries. It was not a smooth process. His candidacy was part of a larger social movement that chose him, not the other way around. Kennedy's death brought serious doubts to whether or not Goldwater would run and under what circumstances. He lost several primaries, and underperformed and underwhelmed in the ones he was supposed to win. Along the way to the nomination, the

³²⁸ Ben A. Franklin, "Maryland Effort by Wallace Ends," *New York Times*, in Memoranda re 1964 Campaign, box 3, folder 120, Rockefeller Archives.

³²⁹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 136.

civil rights bill and Governor Wallace's campaign threatened his standing in the Republican Party. This raised a fundamental issue of whether or not he even belonged in the party considering its historical roots and the support of civil rights by the majority of Republicans. On top of that, his nervous breakdown before the West Virginia and Nebraska primaries called into question his ability to finish the campaign. Had this happened in a different era, it could have destroyed him. Thomas Eagleton in 1972 lost his spot on the Democrat ticket with George McGovern after it was discovered that he underwent electric shock therapy. Members of the press in 1964 had a reverence for the office of the presidency and the men vying for their place in it that did not exist in later campaigns.

In the final days of the election, the California primary was too close to call. With one last push, Goldwater's campaign supporters managed to get their candidate over the top. It was a culmination of factors. Goldwater's preaching about clamping down on "lawlessness" elements of society, in reference to the civil rights and student movements, resonated with Californians. Not to be confused with a white backlash necessarily, if that were true then he would have won more votes than he did, but it did strike a chord with a number of voters. Likewise, his campaign drew on the mobilization of supporters at various rallies and events that brought in movie stars John Wayne and Ronald Reagan. Even religious conservatives joined along with the local press to spread his message. This was not a bottom up movement either. Powerful businessman already supporting regional anticommunist candidates added financial support. After earning their wealth in the post-war boom, they wanted to have a say in presidential politics. Their money and leadership

was a major contribution to the campaign.³³⁰ Then, a political gift dropped into their laps. Mrs. Rockefeller gave birth on the Saturday before the election. On Sunday, baby Nelson's picture appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* next to full-page pictures of Goldwater and his family. There was a deluge of paid advertisements in the press that day. Asked a week prior how the birth might affect the outcome, Spencer-Roberts told Rockefeller's staff to muffle the announcement until after the election. Stu Spencer recounted the event saying, "The New York people thought that this was going to be a plus – that he become a father and the whole thing."³³¹ On Tuesday, the results told the story: Goldwater 51% and Rockefeller 48% respectively. Californians had made their choice. They preferred the hard-talking, extremist courting Arizonian to the millionaire divorcee from New York.

Laughing and Crying at the Same Thing

Rockefeller campaign advisor Lloyd Free sent a message to the governor giving him the California post mortem. Free believed that the companies hired to do the polling, Opinion Research of California and Merv Field's California Poll had been correct in predicting that Rockefeller was ahead going into the election. Only, he was ahead at that moment. After re-interviewing most of the participants, Opinion Research of California concluded that most of the undecideds did vote in the end, and voted 2 to 1 in favor of

³³⁰ Ibid., 143-148.

³³¹ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 446.

Goldwater. In Los Angeles and Orange County, Goldwater won 3 to 1. Goldwater's campaign reached out to the undecideds in the final days before the election which flipped their vote. Rockefeller's campaign, perhaps the most expensive primary campaign ever, fell silent in those final days. They did not want to rock the boat. Volunteer work along with a barrage of T.V. and newspaper advertisements resonated with undecideds. They claimed that because of those ads, they knew where Goldwater stood on the issues. Amazingly, voters claimed that they did not know much about Rockefeller until the end of the campaign. Free believed that the media blitz and personal contact, not the birth of Nelson Jr., accounted for the loss.³³² Whether or not that is in fact the case may never be known for sure, given that people tend to bend the truth when speaking to pollsters or may not necessarily know or understand their own reasons for pulling the lever for a candidate.

There can be no doubt that the birth of Rockefeller's son impacted the election. However, Free believed that it did not have as a great an impact as other elements of the Goldwater campaign. Possibly he wrote that report to make his boss feel better, but it is clear that Rockefeller got the wrong advice right up to the end. He should never have allowed his team to relax or give the impression that they were going to win and did not need to fight for the election. Rockefeller should have known that his remarriage was still an issue for voters, he should have made a speech about the issue, however uncomfortable it might have been for him, and he should have known that the birth of his son would create waves before election day. Stu Spencer strongly believed that the birth

³³² Lloyd Free to Nelson Rockefeller, "California Post Mortem," June 5, 1964, in Hugh Morrow Campaign Files, 1964 Campaign California (memos, briefs, press releases), Rockefeller Archives.

of Nelson Jr. caused the loss in California, but he also believed that Rockefeller could not have won the nomination even if he had won the state.³³³ Both Free and Spencer were probably right, Goldwater simply was the man of the hour. His supporters were an entrenched opposition. They had the motivation and the wherewithal to know that they needed to battle until the last vote was counted. Moreover, the power structure within the campaign knew the right notes to play to bring out anyone left on the fence.

On June 6th, the Republican governors met in Cleveland for the annual Governor's Conference in what would become yet another battle for the nomination. There were only sixteen Republican governors that year. They governed over 58 million Americans, but they showed no signs of unity. With Lodge and Rockefeller out of the race for the nomination, and Nixon no longer thought of as a possibility aside from a few outliers believing he could get in on a second or third ballot, Scranton became the choice to stop Goldwater. Mrs. Scranton, along with friends and staff, began to put pressure on him after seeing Goldwater gain more of a following during the election cycle. Scranton even met with Eisenhower in Gettysburg in what was interpreted by the press as the old general giving his blessing for his candidacy. In reality, Eisenhower did nothing of the sort. He pushed Scranton to accept a nomination if a majority of the delegates wanted him to run. Sensing a double cross, Clif White met with Scranton upon his return to Cleveland to gage his interest in being the Vice-Presidential nominee. Within the conservative block, he would be an acceptable nominee. They needed an alternative

³³³ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 447.

choice in case of an open convention.³³⁴ Scranton would then be in position to heal the Party before making a run in 1968 with the backing of a realigned base of support stemming from the conservatives.³³⁵ White thought he could stop the Pennsylvanian before he got started except Scranton did not want the second slot, he wanted to be top billing.

That Sunday, Scranton took a call in his Sheraton hotel room from Eisenhower. He told Scranton that did he not support a cloak and dagger assault on Goldwater. Press reports of his meeting with Scranton had the story wrong. He did not want or want to appear as if he was masterminding an eleventh hour stop-Goldwater movement. Scranton hung up. He then decided not to tell his staff about the Eisenhower's message and went downstairs for a breakfast meeting with the other governors. Much to everyone's surprise Romney entered the meeting, declaring that he would lead the stop-Goldwater movement. The other Republican governors did not have an affinity for Romney. He irritated them on a host of issues ranging from his sanctimonious attitude to his decisions to not attend other functions involving the governors in years past. If anyone was waiting for a white knight, George Romney was not it. After he announced his intentions, declaring that the fight was not over, the liberal governor of Mark Hatfield asked Romney, "Where were you George when Nelson here was trying to stop Goldwater? Were you helping him then?" At his seat, Rockefeller sat in silence with his hands

³³⁴ Letter to John E. Grenier from James E. Duffy, June 3, 1964, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, folder, box 3, Clemson University.

³³⁵ Letter from James E. Duffy to Thomas Spackman, June 3, 1964, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, folder, box 3, Clemson University.

masking the smile on his face.³³⁶ Hatfield continued, “George, you’re six months too late. If you can’t add, I’ll add it for you.” Scranton chimed in to support Romney thus prompting Hatfield to retort, “Rockefeller has been working his head off day and night for the past six months, while both of you have remained gloriously silent. Any stop-Goldwater movement now by you eleventh-hour warriors is an exercise in futility.”³³⁷

Around midnight, Nixon arrived in Cleveland. On the way to the hotel, he learned that Ohio governor Jim Rhodes, Romney, Rockefeller, and Scranton aimed to stop Goldwater. Bleary eyed from his travels, Nixon listened to Rhode’s staff as they recounted the events of the weekend until two o’clock Monday morning. After a brief rest, he attended a breakfast for the governors to discuss the campaign against Lyndon Johnson. Nixon told the crowd that he wanted to hammer Johnson on the Bobby Baker scandal. Rockefeller sat unmoved by his oratory. He knew, based on his own researchers’ investigation, that if the Republicans opened the file the Bobby Baker case then a number of Republican senators would become collateral damage. It would not work. An opening to attack Democrats did appear, but few saw the opportunity. Democrats were divided on the upcoming civil rights vote, and when two reconnaissance planes were shot down over Vietnam, a Walt Rostow of the State Department told the *New York Times* that the American military should be prepared for all options, “up to and including all-out nuclear war.”³³⁸ On both of these points, Republicans could have positioned themselves to make

³³⁶ Novak, *Agony of the GOP*, 416-417.

³³⁷ Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 459.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 461.

a united stand on civil rights as they pacified concern over the extremist wing of the Party and their support of the nuclear option. Instead, they busied themselves with blaming each other for the outcome of the primaries and posturing for control. After the breakfast, confusion reigned.

A series of meetings held in hotel suites with and without key players, including one in which Rockefeller refused Nixon entry, took place. Newsmen crowded the hallways trying to make sense of the story. Meanwhile, Nixon informed his aide that he wanted the next plane out of Cleveland. Before he could bolt, he met with Romney. Accounts differ on what happened. Romney claimed afterward that Nixon urged him to become an open candidate. Nixon claimed that he merely wanted Romney to barnstorm the country for moderate principles, and that he, Nixon, would remain neutral. After leaving the suite, Romney announced to the press that Nixon had urged him to run. Nixon then got into a car heading to the airport. Unbeknownst to him at that moment, his chances in 1964 ended there. From Goldwater's vantage point, it looked like Nixon was attempting to orchestrate a hostile takeover by using Romney as his pawn. If Nixon wanted to deadlock the convention, then the conservatives would give him no quarter. Any hopes of him healing the Republican Party ceased. A day later, he boarded a plane to London leaving the mess behind.³³⁹

³³⁹ White, *Making of the President 1964*, 150-161.

At the Convention

When Republicans gathered at the Cow Palace in San Francisco for their convention beginning June 13, it soon became a convention unlike any other in presidential politics. From a historical perspective, it changed the direction of the Republican Party. Only eight years earlier, Republicans met at the Cow Palace to reelect Dwight Eisenhower, a center-right representative of the power structure. Now, that branch of the party would be laid to rest by the conservatives and the extremists bent on seizing control. Their struggle, between the Northeastern elites and the Midwest conservatives, had raged for years. Candidates like Wilkie and Dewey had reluctantly taken the nomination in years past and time and time again they lost. Even Eisenhower's unpopularity within the party was muffled by the fact that he won the White House. He had been able to do what no other candidates could do since the onset of the Depression. The convention in San Francisco represented a gateway to a new era, an opportunity to right the wrongs of the past. This was the moment when, after all the begging and pleading, the discipline and unbending devotion paid off. For once, conservatives would have their moment underneath the glow of the television lights from the major networks, and the country would see the new face of the Republican Party.

Television coverage of the national conventions began in 1952, since then, the commitment from the networks mushroomed into a spectacular display to be beamed out to the tens of millions of Americans watching around the country. Estimates suggest that the three major news networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS, would go on to spend between 25 and 30 million dollars on covering the 1964 presidential election. On the California

Primary alone, they spent 1.25 million dollars, followed by another 15 million dollars spent on both conventions. The Republican convention became the basis for modern television convention coverage. Nearly 5,500 credentials were issued to over 1,000 news organizations with the networks doubling the size of their staffs from 1960. They packed hotels, transportation terminals, and the streets of San Francisco with close to 200 tons of equipment, twice as much tonnage as before, but with advancements in technology, this represented a far greater amount of equipment. To make sure that they covered every angle, the networks used wireless cameras and microphones, along with mobile units in cars and trucks capable of almost instantaneous broadcasting.³⁴⁰

Inside the Cow Palace, thirteen radio and television booths sat high above the convention floor to preserve floor space for the 14,500 in attendance. A forty foot high pool camera platform faced the speaker's rostrum, itself blocking the view of hundreds of delegates, forcing them to watch the proceedings on strategically placed monitors. As part of the network build up to the nomination, newsmen conducted hundreds of interviews to be recorded, edited, and broadcast for mass consumption. They pieced together montages of the history of the party, backed by expert analysis, predictions, debate, and hype. After the bitterness of the California Primary, producers expected the convention to be of considerable interest to the audience. To bring the action to their living rooms, each network assembled a broadcasting team of stars: Walter Cronkite, Robert Trout, and Roger Mudd for CBS, David Brinkley and Chet Huntley for NBC, and Edward P. Morgan and Howard K. Smith for ABC. Helping them sort through the

³⁴⁰ Herbert Waltzer, "In the Magic Lantern: Television Coverage of the 1964 National Conventions," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 30, no. 1, 1966, 33-53.

confusion, networks enlisted the help of Theodore White, Louis Harris, and computers from IBM. Each night, they competed for ratings, getting feedback on audience size and distribution, but viewership was not their only goal. In fact, fewer viewers watched the Republican Convention than would for a regularly scheduled summer broadcast.

Networks competed for prestige and an indirect return on their investment. “It’s an intangible,” NBC News Chief William McAndrew commented, “but sales people say that our news image definitely makes sales for the whole network schedule.”³⁴¹ Money and politics could not be separated. With television cameras peering over their shoulders, politicians entered into a new arena where they would be scrutinized and observed in ways unlike anything else before.

On the eve of the convention, networks got a preview of the mayhem that would become synonymous with the next week of activity. Forty thousand protestors marched towards City Hall Plaza carrying signs reading “DEFOLIATE MISSISSIPPI,” “GOLDWATER FOR PRESIDENT – JEFFERSON DAVIS FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.” Other signs read “GOLDWATER ’64, BREAD ’65, HOT WATER ’66.” Organized by church and labor groups to challenge the conservative’s on civil rights, the march absorbed other interest groups such Women’s Rights protestors and peaceniks calling for a halt to the arms race. Only a few short weeks had passed since three civil rights workers in Mississippi disappeared. They would later be found executed by the Ku Klux Klan after being assisted as to their whereabouts by the local police force. Rockefeller appeared before a rally with baseball superstar Jackie Robinson, attempting to speak to

³⁴¹ Ibid., 33-53.

the masses about the Republican Party's pro-civil rights past only to be met by jeers and sarcastic laughs.³⁴² Conservatives moved past the crowds, flocking towards their own heroes like Phyllis Schlafley, William Buckley, and Ronald Reagan. They did not come so far to be deterred by the opposition, even if it was the largest protest since the March on Washington.

New York Senator Jacob Javits published his book, *Order of Battle: A Republican's Call to Reason*, pleading with party members, "I would fervently hope that [conservatives] would slam the door shut against the Trojan Horse of nihilism which the Radical Right, in the name of conservatism, has been trying to introduce into the inner citadel of the Republican Party. I would hope that they would do so in unmistakably clear terms."³⁴³ Scranton's ran his brief five-week campaign with this sentiment in mind. He loved the Republican Party, but the events in Cleveland humiliated him. In spite of this, he felt a conviction to run against Goldwater for opposing the Civil Rights Bill. Scranton along with the other moderates and liberals feared that Goldwater's upcoming vote on civil rights would bring in the white backlash voters that Wallace appealed to on the Democratic side. They feared that Goldwater would become a surprise winner like Harry Truman in 1948. When Rockefeller ended his run for the presidency on June 15, he donated his entire nationwide professional organization to Scranton. A week later, Lodge resigned as ambassador to South Vietnam to join in on the campaign. Then on June 28, a

³⁴² Nelson Rockefeller Transcript of Civil Rights Rally, July 12, 1964, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Gubernatorial, in Hugh Morrow Papers, Subseries 1. Campaign Files, Presidential, folder 560, box 54, Rockefeller Archives.

³⁴³ Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah*, 195.

Gallup Poll pairing Scranton and Goldwater head to head showed a 55 to 34 advantage for Scranton. On the weekend before the opening proceedings of the convention, Scranton met with Rockefeller, Javits, Kenneth Keating, Hugh Scott, and Lodge. Together, they thought and plotted for a way to stop Goldwater. Scranton wavered between an attack on his record on civil rights to his threats of using nuclear weapons. Rockefeller pitched the idea that they should follow his lead in the primaries by denouncing Goldwater as an extremist thus forcing him to admit his true feelings on the John Birch Society. Upon his arrival, Eisenhower was presented with a resolution signed by former seven of his former cabinet members by Scranton rebuking Goldwater's nuclear policy. After weighing the desperate act to force a convention fight, the ex-President declined citing the secrets of national defense as unfit for a former commander-in-chief to discuss in public.

By Monday conservatives had closed their ranks after learning of another attempt to bring down their candidate coupled with a scathing letter from the Pennsylvania governor describing delegates as "little more than a flock of chickens whose necks will be wrung at will."³⁴⁴ Scranton would not be able to alter the convention. Barry Goldwater would be their nominee. Conservatives had been down this road before. They recounted stories to each other about Robert Taft going to the convention in 1952 with enough delegates to win on the first ballot only to have Eisenhower's picture spread across newspapers and magazines before he took the nomination and the White House. Writers called Taft "a sure loser" much like the press in 1964 called Goldwater. Lodge was in

³⁴⁴ White, *Making of the President 1964*, 205-208.

Chicago that year stretching banners across hotel lobbies with Taft's initials, gloating that they spelled "RAT."³⁴⁵ They believed that the national media blanketed their candidate and the truth, portraying him as a foot-in-the-mouth politician in order to save the "international-socialist Establishment," and their monopoly on control. California voted to revive the two-party system, the primary preserved democracy.³⁴⁶ An Associated Press survey revealed that 694 delegates intended to cast their vote for Goldwater, 39 more than necessary for the nomination. Meanwhile, Scranton carried 138 votes or 303 if he gained all the Rockefeller, Lodge, and Smith votes, well short of the required number. Syndicated Liberal Republican columnist Joseph Alsop wrote, "The reading is grim at the moment. The trouble is that there are just too many hot-eyed fanatics in the uncommitted delegations that ought to stand up for Scranton. If the Republicans give the nomination to Goldwater the most grisly fate threatens the Party in these delegates' states; but their emotions rule them and they could not care less."³⁴⁷ Remarks like that only strengthened the resolve of the opposition. Conservatives warned that the Establishment wanted liberal domination, they warned that liberals threatened to dominate both parties; that was why they did not want Goldwater.

³⁴⁵ Morrie Ryskind "But Just Keep Hands Off Bob Taft," *Los Angeles Times*, 1964, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, folder, box 3, Clemson University.

³⁴⁶ Deon Clarence E. Manion, "The Bipartisan 'Establishment' Loses in California: The Conservative Chance for a Choice is now in the Balance," *Manion Forum*, Weekly Broadcast No. 506, June 14, 1964, in James Duffy Papers – MSS 69, folder, box 3, Clemson University.

³⁴⁷ *Exclusive*, June 24, 1964, in Gregory Shorey Papers, Shorey, Topical, Issues, Conservatism, 1960s, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, South Carolina.

Soviet officials observing the election took a different view of the outcome. The Soviets viewed the struggle between the two sides of the Republican Party as a struggle between the Wall Street financiers leading the internationalist wing of the party and the Chicago and Cleveland financial groups leading the isolationist wing of the party. The Soviets believed that profound economic and political currents had altered the character of the Republican Party. The nouveau rich Southerners and Midwesterners had aligned themselves against the old patrician families. This reactionary, militant, and racist coalition adopted Goldwater because he lined their pockets and they preferred his “small town, bourgeois, locker-room personality.” Goldwater’s nomination would further increase the need for an arms race. This would in turn make his financial donors wealthier, particularly those in southern California who had a vested interest in the growth of the military-industrial complex. His connection to pro-fascist ultra-groups concerned the Soviets so much that a Soviet news article called Goldwater’s “understanding of international affairs frighteningly primitive.” According to their sentiments expressed in both Russian and American media outlets, the Soviets preferred a Democratic candidate because they preferred the Democrats rhetoric on freedom from action to Goldwater’s extreme reaction.³⁴⁸ In their eyes, Goldwater posed the greater threat to global stability. The choice in November should have been obvious for voters.

On Tuesday, the final battles for control of the Republican Party commenced. That day, the platform committee produced the most conservative party platform in decades. Opponents, led by Scranton, proposed an amendment that would condemn the

³⁴⁸ Morton Schwartz, "The 1964 Presidential Elections through Soviet Eyes," *The Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 4, 1966.

extremism of Ku Klux Klan, the John Birch Society, and the communists. Also, they called for a stronger civil rights plank and a plank that would allow only the president to authorize the use of nuclear missiles, a highly contested point that the Goldwater forces opposed. For the liberals and moderates, time was running out. There would be little chance of getting the amendment approved, they simply did not have the votes to do it. That night, Eisenhower gave his speech to the convention. He highlighted the internecine struggle within the party and asked each side to reflect, "This means that only for a moment I must ask you to bank the fires of personally competitive intra-party politics and contemplate with me the whole of this big party." He continued by appealing to the conservative's rhetorical defense of freedom, "We have ever sought to create an atmosphere of liberty and to sustain its substance." Then, he recalled the history of the Republican Party dating back to Lincoln and the sweeping changes made to America under Republican leadership. He began to speak about the outsiders threatening the Republican Party, "So let us particularly scorn the divisive efforts of those outside our family, including sensation seeking columnists and commentators, because, my friends, I assure you that these are people who couldn't care less about the good of our party." From there, he took a turn, aiming his remarks at the fear brought on by the far-right, "Let us not be guilty of maudlin sympathy for the criminal, who roaming the streets with switchblade knife and illegal firearms seeking a helpless prey, suddenly becomes upon apprehension, a poor, underprivileged person who counts upon the compassion of our society and the laxness or weaknesses of too many courts to forgive his offense."

Audience members groaned, they did not want to hear the former president lecture them on their nightmares.³⁴⁹

Afterwards, convention officials muscled to have the party platform read, giving the convention ninety minutes to cool off. By 9:00 San Francisco time, it was 11:00 in New York late enough that the majority of Americans would not bear witness to the most dramatic of the Republican war amongst themselves. First, Hugh Scott came to the podium to propose the extremist amendment, which was applauded by the delegates from the East. Then he introduced Nelson Rockefeller. An applause went up from parts of the crowd. Camera bulbs flashed as Rockefeller raised his arm in acknowledgement. At once, a mixture of clapping and boos competed followed by jeering and horns. The governor pointed and grinned at his cheering section. When the chairman banged his gavel for order, a chant of “We want Barry” came down from the rafters. From his trailer outside the hall where he could see and communicate with his staff positioned inside, Clif White pushed a button to radio his men on the convention floor, demanding that they quiet their delegates. White radioed that they should not boo or appear unseemly, but the delegates were not making the noise. The chanting came from the people in the stands. Rockefeller began his speech by supporting the extremist amendment with everyone in the building at full attention to see what would happen next. “The time has come for the Republican Party to face this issue realistically and take decisive action.” After each sentence, a hail of cheers and jeers rained down on him. Each time he spoke, Rockefeller paused and looked out into the crowd before making his move, “It is essential that this Convention

³⁴⁹ White, *Making of the President 1964*, 208-210.

repudiate here and now any doctrinaire, militant minority, whether Communist, Ku Klux Klan or Bircher which would subvert this party to purposes alien to the very basic tenets which gave this party birth.” The crowd screeched in anger and discontent, but he continued by warning that “the Republican Party is in real danger of subversion by a radical, well-financed and highly disciplined minority.” Rockefeller and the other moderates were trying to embarrass Goldwater. There were at least ten delegates who were members of the John Birch Society there in the hall. If Goldwater agreed to the amendment, then he would have to reject them. If he disagreed, then it might look like he supported communists or the Ku Klux Klan. A smile ran across Rockefeller’s face.³⁵⁰

Rockefeller continued to poke and jab at the hostile audience, using words like “liberalism,” “middle course,” and “mainstream” to describe the kind of party that he believed Republicans represented. Members of the audience begged to differ. “During this year, I have crisscrossed this nation fighting for those principles, fighting to keep the Republican party of all the people - and warning of the extremist threat, its danger to the party.” At this moment the chants of “we want Barry” became so overwhelming that he stopped his speech. Again, the chairman banged his gavel to bring order. Anyone watching on television could hear the two men at the microphone bickering about quieting the crowd and keeping the remarks to five minutes in length. After order was restored, Rockefeller began again. With each comment, he riled up the crowd further, goading them into behaving as exactly the kind of extremist reactionaries that the liberals believed them to be. As they yelled in defiance, he unmasked the ugly truth to the

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 211-215.

cameras, “This is still a free country, ladies and gentlemen. These things have no place in America. But I can personally testify to their existence,” his voice firm and steady, “and so can countless others who have also experienced anonymous midnight and early morning telephone calls, unsigned threatening letters, smear and hate literature, strong-arm and goon tactics, bomb threats and bombings, infiltration and take-over of established political organizations by communist and Nazi methods. Some of you don’t like to hear it, ladies and gentlemen, but it’s the truth.” He stood before them with moxie and poise determined to make his point. If it looked self-serving, that would be all right with him if it also meant exposing the opposition in front of the cameras. Rockefeller appeared like a man calling for civility when the audience wanted to wander in the darkness. It was a career defining moment for him.³⁵¹

Towards the end of his brief speech Rockefeller gathered momentum for a final attack, “There is no place in this Republican Party for those who would infiltrate its ranks, distort its aims, and convert it into a cloak of apparent respectability for a dangerous extremism.” The crowd rocked in their seats hardly able to control their emotions. Then with an emphatic denunciation, “And make no mistake about it - the hidden members of the John Birch Society and others like them are out to do just that!” Audience members yelled and screamed with great fury. Hammering away, he pummeled them again, “These people have nothing in common with Republicanism. These people have nothing in common with Americans.” With one final wallop he struck his last blow, “The Republican Party must repudiate these people!” The crowd had booed and catcalled

³⁵¹ “Rockefeller at the ‘64 Convention,” C-SPAN, March 3, 2016, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4583565/rockefeller-64-convention> (accessed November 2, 2017).

mercilessly throughout, but he withstood their indignation and vitriol. It was a magnificent performance captured on every major network. When he walked down the stairs from the platform, he walked away having given his all to roll back the tide of extremism.³⁵²

On Wednesday, Goldwater watched the roll call vote from his suite at the Mark Hopkins hotel. One by one, his loyal delegates and those who saw the writing on the wall did as they came to do and nominated him for the presidency of the United States. Goldwater sat in his chair, contemplating his fate as his advisors shook hands and congratulated one another. “I couldn’t have done it without you,” he told them. When one of his aides informed him that Rockefeller was on the line to offer his congratulations, Goldwater barked, “Hell, I don’t want to talk to that son of a bitch.”³⁵³

On the following night, Nixon gave a short speech describing himself as a “simple soldier in the ranks” before introducing the nominee. It was Goldwater’s turn to address the convention. New York Congressman William E. Miller would be his running mate, the first Catholic nominated to the Republican presidential ticket. Goldwater strode to the rostrum in a hail of applause. Under the lights he looked out on a patchwork of Republican supporters, tense with excitement. He stoked the flames of their passion by declaring, “It is the cause of Republicanism to remind ourselves, and the world, that only the strong can remain free – that only the strong can keep the peace!” He buoyed his remarks with words like “freedom,” “balance,” and “destiny.” His supports roared in

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 451.

agreement as his vision materialized. Then he turned his speech to echo the divisions within the party, further alienating conservatives from the liberals, “Anyone who joins us in all sincerity we welcome. Though those who don’t care for our cause, we don’t expect to enter our ranks in any case.” Half of the audience cheered as the other half sat in stunned silence. Goldwater could have used his nomination speech to change his image; instead he lifted his voice to the rafters proclaiming, “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!” With that, the crowd broke into a thunderous applause.³⁵⁴

As delegates, reporters, admirers, fanatics, and the vanquished emptied out of the Cow Palace, they were left to ponder the maverick now representing the Republican Party. His speech writers had composed a bouquet of words to justify the inescapable drama of the past year, but they had failed to account for the lack of unity that followed. There would be no way to put the party back together where the pieces had become jagged and crumbled. There would be too much bitterness and too much anguish for many to join again. The initial reaction became that the conservative movement represented a deviation from the norm, the puzzle would realign itself, and return to some recognizable form. In time, that theory would fall by the way side. Thus, on that warm July night, an era of Republican Liberalism began to fade further into the darkness, returning in sporadic intervals, but never again in the 20th century to reclaim its former glory. Such is the ebb and flow of politics in America, not to be held up as divine when

³⁵⁴ White, *Making of the President 1964*, 226-228.

they are in power and not to be mourned too deeply when they pass from it. Their end signaled the beginning of another.

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