

C-Span 2
400 N. Capital St. NW
Washington, D.C.
Mr Brian Lamb,

Jun 2, 1992
005855 JAN1392

I enjoy your interviews very much. Would you do one with Professor Robert S. McElvaine. please? He wrote a very interesting, thoughtful biography of MARIO CUOMO. It is not written as a promotion piece, but a critical study.

The book came out in 1988 and was published by Macmillan, 866 Third Avenue, N.Y. 10022. Do you only consider new books? I promise you this would be a very interesting interview.

Thank you for considering my idea. I have also written to Governor Cuomo and suggested he say "Yes" if you ask him for an interview. Maybe the timing is wrong, if the New York Republicans are blocking the budget agreements to keep Cuomo in New York as Royko says. I will include his article from the Chicago Tribune for your information.

Yes, I am working for Cuomo for President AS A VOLUNTEER with no approval from him. I just think he would make the best President, and I care about my country. McElvaine convinced me Cuomo is very intelligent and hard working characteristics of any candidate for President and ones I knew without reading the book.

But there is proof in the book of his dedication to public service. I will include some excerpts that intrigued me. I think Cuomo has very high ethical standards and would be a President we could be proud of and have confidence in.

I also respect his judgement.
Sincerely,

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P.S. Were you Governor of Colorado? If so, I remember agreeing with you on the health issue, and I am 70. My husband had bills of about \$54,000-worth every penny if we could have had a real recovery, but it only prolonged his agony. Scripps even scheduled a MRI when the situation was beyond hope, but he refused.

P.P.S. Reading the book you understand his reluctance to walk away from his Governor's job. He doesn't need to be President, though I suspect he would like the challenge - but not for ego purposes.

He sold his diary once when he needed money. (He writes in it every morning.

I wish I had time to do a good job - it's a good book

Cuomo has always rejected. Avarice is, after all, like lust, pride, and sloth, among the seven deadly sins. And it is one of Mario Cuomo's principal purposes in life to reject those evils.⁹

For a short time Mario Cuomo's objective was making money. Then it became helping others. Both goals required long hours of hard work. And that work—plus some play—took precious time away from his family during the early years of its existence. In those first years of marriage, Cuomo simply did not treat his new family in a way that would mesh with his later ideal of the family unit as the model for society.

It is not easy, as Matilda Cuomo found out, "to be with your family and be committed as [Mario] has been. . . . I understand that—that's why they have divorces and families break up. But people have to work at it harder. There are sacrifices to be made on everybody's account."

The Cuomo family ultimately expanded to include five children. Joining Margaret and Andrew were Maria, born in 1962, Madeline in 1964, and Christopher in 1970. As in most families containing a committed man, it was the wife and children of the Cuomo family who were obliged to make most of the sacrifices. If a father is out five nights a week, there is no way that he can pay as much attention to his children as would be desirable. "The day-to-day affairs of the family," Mattone says of the Cuomos, "were left up to the wife. You just can't be in two places at once." The children have understood—sometimes. "Why can't we go on a trip like so-and-so?" they often wanted to know. "I think, more than the kids, it was I who sacrificed," Matilda Cuomo told me. "I would have liked a lot more time being with him, traveling with him. You can't have that."

Time is the most precious commodity in Mario Cuomo's world. The ways in which he chose to spend some of it in the early years of his marriage may have been understandable, in fact commonplace, but they were not always commendable. The rest of Cuomo's career leads us to expect more from him than the commonplace.

*mine
to.
Sorry
not to send
you
more*

*If you telephone,
I'll do a very
good job - i.e.
if you plan to
use my notes*

*i.e. working
long hours
& not home
for his
children.*

It is clear that Mario Cuomo did not always live up to his ideal as a family man. It is equally clear, however, that he put a great deal of energy into compensating for the lack of time he spent with his family. And it seems that all of his children have turned out well. That is a testament to Matilda Cuomo's success as a parent, but it also indicates that her husband must have fulfilled his responsibilities as a father to a considerably greater extent than would be indicated by the record that would have been created by his punching a card into a time clock when he entered and left the home.

And his habits in this regard have improved over the years. Since he entered politics, Cuomo has tried to make it a practice to sleep at home every night, even if that means a midnight flight to Albany, and to have either breakfast or dinner with that portion of the family that remains at home on every day that he possibly can. "He really relishes the weekends here," Matilda Cuomo says. He has a great relationship with his youngest child, Christopher. They play basketball, fool around, and wrestle. Mrs. Cuomo is concerned that her husband will get hurt, since their son is six feet two inches tall and wears a size thirteen shoe.

Matilda Cuomo long ago became reconciled to her husband's work habits, and she adjusted the family to them. "There's a lot of closeness in our family, an awful lot," she told me. "I think politics can do that. We have totally absorbed the best that politics has to offer, because we are together more, we appreciate each other more. We feel a sense of purpose."

Cuomo says that it is impossible to understand him without understanding his relationship with his wife. "Matilda and I are the same age, same background, same school, same intelligence, everything," he points out. "It makes it difficult in a lot of ways because neither of us is a dominant figure. She doesn't do what Mario wants, and I don't do what Matilda wants. We've been fighting our way through thirty years of equality, which is difficult—but has somehow made for a very successful marriage."

"Matilda's as good at making policy as I am," Cuomo has said. "I will say that it has probably been hard for Matilda to be a political wife, although she never shows it. She is very supportive and works well with me. Still, I have to believe that somewhere in her psyche she knows that she could just as easily be the gover-

nor and I could be the husband of the governor." This attitude was demonstrated in the 1986 reelection campaign, when the governor aired television commercials featuring Matilda. These were the first in New York history urging voters to retain a first lady.

Cuomo's pride in and love for his children is manifest. Frequent comments in his diaries indicate his concern and affection for them. "Andrew hurt his back," he wrote in 1981. "He needed x-rays. He went to his sister Margaret. How lovely!" (Margaret Cuomo Perpignano is a physician.) "Madeline is 16 and beautiful. But 16," he wrote knowingly in 1980. "Chris did not get a good report card. He is bright but distracted in school, constantly in need of attention. I believe that he is still reacting to the inattention he suffered in the mayoralty and [lieutenant] gubernatorial campaigns. Matilda and I agreed we'll have to watch him more closely and pay as much attention to him as possible."

Cuomo is constantly aware of the danger that his career poses to his family. "All of this can be absorbing," he wrote in 1981. "It's not difficult to be consumed by the effort to serve and to win. Little wonder that there is such a high incidence of divorce and disorientation among the children of politicians. One could easily spend all one's time thinking only about the problems of the state and the next campaign. And too many days, I do." He realizes that he must alter his outlook, at least at times. "I'm not a single, unattached public servant. I can't devote myself totally to public service without abandoning other major obligations. I have a wife and children—two still at home, both badly needing and fully deserving my time, attention, advice and manifest concern," he continued. "I've tried to do the right thing by them, but too often I haven't succeeded. I'll have to try harder."

He believes, as does Matilda, that the family has come through its ordeals well. They have, he contends, "remained close, supportive of one another." The family has been through a lot—and its tribulations have not been confined to problems caused by Mario's workload. Family members have been robbed and attacked on several occasions. Margaret was accosted when she was fourteen and Maria when she was eighteen. In the spring of 1982, Matilda and Chris were accosted by two muggers. The Cuomo home has been burglarized twice, as has Immacolata Cuomo's house. Maria was nearly killed in a 1980 automobile accident. Charlie Raffa, Matilda's father, was beaten and left for dead by an assailant. His survival was miraculous, but he was left severely incapacitated.

into his office and everybody would come out smiling, as if there was this 'I don't know why I disagreed with you—well, you never explained it to me' attitude." The spell might wear off later, Curiale said, but Cuomo had an amazing talent for reconciliation. "People couldn't help feeling like, 'Gee, this guy's right,' when they sat down with him and talked and laughed, and he told stories, or whatever." He would then say to the feuding parties, "What do you say we work it out this way?" "You came out of there feeling good, no matter how you felt when you went in," says Curiale.

Cuomo has strong values and high ideals, but he has always been a practical man. He appreciates that different people can have different views of things—and can be equally sincere in their positions. The first task in finding a way through an impasse is to determine what each of the two sides believes to be essential. "The facts generally suggest the solutions," Cuomo has said. "But first you must air the facts." The opposing sides in a dispute are likely to do a good deal of posturing. Some of the items that each claims are essential may not be. So if the mediator can find out what is really essential to each party, a solution can be fashioned by including those items and working out the others on which mutual agreement is possible. John Gerity sums up Cuomo's approach to reconciliation by saying: "Many times people think a solution is giving this person half of what he wants, and the other person half of what he wants, but it's not so much that as it is not denying to either side that which they really feel they require, [and] then making the solution up out of what's left over."

Cuomo often says that in most situations "the truth lies somewhere in the middle." On several occasions he has employed the image of finding the way between Scylla and Charybdis.* These references do not imply any simple "splitting of the difference." The best course may be much closer to one side than the other. In his report on the Forest Hills housing dispute, Cuomo quoted Edmund Burke's statement that "all government—indeed, every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act—is founded on compromise." But there is a difference between

*This image provided Sal Curiale with his only opportunity to win an argument with Cuomo. When Curiale made reference in a brief to being "between Scylla and Charybdis," Cuomo said, "Oh, the two whirlpools." "No, you're wrong," Curiale said. "One was a rock and one was a whirlpool." They bet a dollar on it, and Curiale won. Thereafter, Curiale said, "he made me sorry, because every mistake I made, grammar, whatever, was corrected at every opportunity." MMC doesn't like to lose.

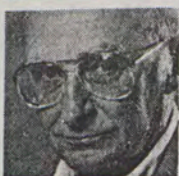
practicality and expedience. Cuomo never favors the latter. Similarly there is a difference between compromising in order to advance basic principles and compromising basic principles. Again Cuomo strenuously opposes the latter. He knows that it is impossible to completely satisfy both sides in a dispute. "But," he asks, "can't we be helped by a good summary of his view of conciliation, 'can't we be helped in at least defusing the situation? There must be some intermediate plan that will give something to everyone; that will at least reduce the roar to a grumble.'"

In situations where Cuomo is trying to bring conflicting parties together, he almost never gets angry, even if the opponents in the dispute start yelling at each other or at him. He understands that in the heat of the moment, antagonists are likely to lose their tempers (as he has been known to do when *he* was on one side of a conflict). But when his role is that of mediator, he generally remains above the fray and keeps calm.

The ability to mediate disputes may, in fact, not be such an odd talent to combine with an intense competitive nature. As long as one is not personally involved on one side of a controversy, compromising does not in any sense imply defeat. The one who drafts a compromise and persuades both sides to accept it can actually be seen as the victor over *both* of the original contestants. If a compromise solution helps those who were being crushed by government power and seems also to serve the public interest, the situation seems tailor-made for Mario Cuomo: the need for legal skills and reasonableness, identification with the underdog, the opportunity to taste victory and at the same time to serve others. It is small wonder that Cuomo found this sort of public law mediation so much to his liking.¹

By the early sixties Cuomo was itching for greater involvement in serving others, especially the poor in need. His pro bono work helped to meet this need, but he wanted more opportunities to help. At the same time, he had just read *The Divine Milieu* and his Church was beginning to encourage its communicants to leave the walls of the fortress and go out to try to ease the world's problems. Cuomo needed little encouragement in this direction.

Although Cuomo as yet showed no interest in politics, some of his activities in the sixties were the sort that might be expected



**Mike
Royko**

Maybe this guy can draft Cuomo

In a few months, Phil Krone might look back and say: "What ever possessed me to try something like this?"

But right now he doesn't have time to think about possible regrets. He's having too much fun and some surprising success.

What Krone is trying to do is get Mario Cuomo back in the presidential race.

To do this, he has to overcome Republican slyness and Democratic stupidity.

The slyness is the way the Republicans in the New York legislature—following orders from the White House—have tied Cuomo up in a state budget battle to keep him out of primaries.

The stupidity is the way Democratic Party Chairman Ron Brown gave Cuomo a deadline—enter the New Hampshire primary or withdraw as a candidate.

So Cuomo reluctantly withdrew. And that, as far as most politicians and the media were concerned, ended Cuomo as a factor in next year's elections.

But Krone, a Chicago-based political consultant, wouldn't accept it.

"Every poll shows that Cuomo is the most popular Democrat in the country," Krone says. "He's got more support than the other six guys put together. And he's the only candidate the Republicans fear. Richard Nixon will tell you that. So why should Cuomo get out? It's ridiculous."

So Krone took it upon himself to form a committee to draft Mario Cuomo.

That was only a week ago. Since then, he's accomplished the following:

"I've opened our headquarters. It's at 36 S. State St., Suite 1524. Mention the zip, huh? It's 60601. That's so people can send money. And we need money. Anybody who sends \$10 or more will get a Cuomo poster, buttons, bumper stickers and a membership card.

"We have a committee phone number: 312-629-9296. And beginning Jan. 2, we'll have a national 1-800 number. It's a great number, too: 1-800-92-Cuomo.

"Now to get back to money. The biggest reason we need money now is because I've obtained a computer tape of every registered Democrat in New Hampshire. About 100,000 of them.

"That means we can do a mailing to all of those Democrats telling them that they don't have to ~~told their noses~~ vote for any of the six Democratic no-names. They can write in Cuomo.

"But the mailing will cost about \$15,000. And right now, I'm about \$15,000 short of that goal."

(Actually, he's only \$14,975 short. Jack and Martha Fox, of Chicago, have already sent me a \$25 check after reading about Krone's efforts. "Of all the Democrats," they wrote, "only Cuomo has presidential potential.")

"What else?" Krone said. "Even before we got our Cuomo Committee phone, people got my home number from information and called. I've had more than 200 calls from people who want to get involved. And not just Chicago. Some from New Hampshire, New York and other places.

"I've already had Chicagoans tell me they want to run as delegates to the Democratic Convention. They will be uncommitted delegates, but they will be for Cuomo.

"So I'm having our first rally. Actually, it won't be a rally so much as a meeting of volunteers.

"It will be next Saturday, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the headquarters. Anybody who wants to run as a delegate or work on the campaign should come.

"And people from other states can phone us or write, and we'll help them get started organizing.

"This is strictly grass roots. In fact, I had a big-money Democrat tell me: 'Wise up. Cuomo's out. Our money is going somewhere else.'

"I told him that he should wise up. Maybe his money is for someone else, but most Democrats are still for Cuomo. And they vote; his money doesn't."

If you think about it, there aren't many grass-roots movements in politics anymore. As in many sports, the grass isn't real. It's artificial, factory-produced. Like most political campaigns.

So what Krone is trying to do deeply offends the political packagers. He's actually asking ordinary people to give the middle finger to people like Ron Brown, the Democratic chairman who set the stupidly arbitrary deadline for Cuomo; to the professional media wizards who shape the message as well as the hairstyle of the candidates; to the Washington pundits who take it upon themselves to say who the people like—without bothering to ask the people, since the people don't hang out at the Washington Press Club.

For the conspiracy-minded, I know what you're thinking. And the answer is no. This isn't something secretly orchestrated by Cuomo and his people. Krone, whom I've known for years, is doing it on his own.

He's doing it because he has a sense of logic that seems to be lacking in the weak characters who claim to run the Democratic Party.

"What they've done to Cuomo is something like this. It's as if Ryne Sandberg missed the first week or two of spring training because of personal obligations and the manager said: 'Sandberg has lost his starting job and will have to sit on the bench; we are making this kid from Peoria our second baseman.' That would be nonsense. The fans would go crazy. But that's what the Democrats did when they gave Cuomo the New Hampshire deadline. I think grass-roots Democrats should have a chance to go crazy, and I'm trying to give them the chance.

So if you share Krone's views, and have some time on your hands, here's a chance to do something.

And in this economy, more and more people have time on their hands.

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