



Move Over Mayor Daley: Here comes Frank Rizzo

IT WAS MAY 18, 1971, IN PHILADELPHIA and the huge man with the slicked-down hair and the wide smile was addressing a television camera and talking about his victory in the Democratic mayoralty primary race. The candidate, the former police commissioner of Philadelphia who had resigned in February to seek the Mayor's chair, was Frank Rizzo, the man who had used the media to build so powerful an image that now, when he was seeking the highest post in the nation's fourth largest city, he literally did not have to wage a campaign. He spoke with the media only in tightly controlled situations; his campaign appearances were limited only to favorable audiences in friendly neighborhoods; he granted interviews only to "friendly" writers and commentators; he refused to address the city council on financial matters; and he refused all debates and joint appearances with the other three candidates. What Frank Rizzo did, was tell the faithful about the civics books and how he had learned at a very early age that "Only in America" could a man without a high school or college degree or a personal fortune become the Mayor of a city like Philadelphia.

To appreciate the irony of that moment and of the Democratic primary in Philadelphia, one need only reach back

a few years in Philadelphia history when Rizzo was constructing his image by staging heavily publicized raids on center coffeeshouses, by running longhairs out of Rittenhouse Square, by trying to close down the local rock hall, the Electric Factory, by boasting about his file of 1800 subversives, by detailing "revolutionary" plots aimed at him, the city and the country, flamboyant plots which local reporters loved but which mysteriously never seemed to produce any convictions once the cases reached court.

Shortly after Rizzo's resignation as Police Commissioner, two officers were murdered within a five-hour period on a Saturday night and early Sunday morning. The new commissioner, Joseph O'Neill, a tough, silent type, conducted the search for the killers in an unemotional, professional manner. Tom Fox, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, and one of the major architects of the Rizzo image (Fox being a gifted writer), walked into O'Neill's office to discuss progress in the case.

"A helluva way to break in a commissioner," Fox said.

O'Neill stared blankly at Fox.

Fox, lunging for an angle, laughed somewhat nervously, then said, "You're a lot different than Rizzo. . . . If Rizzo were here, he'd be storming around . . . ranting and raving."

Indeed he *would* have, leaving a trail of quotes and half-charges hanging in the air for the ever-present mob of reporters, who would dutifully trot back to typewriter or television studio, carrying Rizzo's double-negatives (an "earthy man," they called him) and deep voice into the row-homes of the working-class neighborhoods and the neat semi-suburbs of the city's residential Northeast section. It was there and in the middle-class Irish and working-class Italian neighborhoods of Kensington and South Philadelphia that Rizzo's strength was so great.

IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED. There was—as the Democratic City Chairman, Peter Camiel, so casually said on election night—only one major issue in the mayoralty race. And Frank Rizzo didn't have to say a word about it, because the issue was law-and-order. In Philadelphia this has a very simple definition—it means no riots from the black and Spanish-speaking residents; it means containing problems of minority residents; it means keeping the blacks and browns out of white neighborhoods; and it means stifling any individuality or dissent from longhairs, militants and activists.

Camiel said that Rizzo represented the "father image" to the people from the neighborhoods, that he gave them a sense of security, that at this time in the city's history (in the country's too) with so much change, so much turmoil, Frank Rizzo would somehow keep things safe and simple. Ignored by Camiel and Mayor James Tate, also a Rizzo follower, and the powerful Democratic machine was the fact that violent crime in Philadelphia was triple that of the urban rate (up 19 percent) between 1969 and 1970, that drug traffic in the city was desperate, and that the police department had recently released statistics showing that crime was overwhelmingly committed by black upon black. Between January 1, 1969, and June 30, 1970, 77 percent of the murder victims were black or of Spanish-speaking descent. Blacks and Puerto Ricans committed 82 percent of the murders. During the same period 89 percent of the rape victims were either black or Puerto Rican, as were 69 percent of the victims of aggravated assault and battery.

Frank Rizzo really solidified his strength in Philadelphia and took over the bogus law-and-order issue during two tense weeks last summer at the end of August when the city was preparing for the Revolutionary People's Congress which the local press so graciously translated into the "Black Panther Convention." A week before the congress was to convene, a police sergeant was shot and killed in an isolated guard house in the remote Cobbs Creek section of the city. The next night, a Sunday, two police officers were wounded in another shooting incident. As the tension became stifling, Rizzo was suddenly all over the papers and television screen talking of "revolutionary" plots to assassinate policemen. Later, of course, it would be seen that there was no connection between the first shooting on Saturday evening and the second on Sunday. But for a while, Rizzo was able to make the fear of a "plot" real and in Philadelphia, mainly through ignorance, any black man with a "natural" hair style was regarded as a revolutionary and a threat to the peace. The Panthers thus became the prime suspects in the collective mind of the city and its police department.

Monday morning at six, the police staged a series of raids on three Panther headquarters in separate sections of the city. Rizzo had alerted the press—as he usually did in such cases—and representatives of papers and television stations rode with the police.

Rizzo claimed that an informant had told him of arms caches in the Panther headquarters as a way of justifying a raid on one of the Panther headquarters, where reportedly the police chopped down the door and then announced their presence. Rizzo claimed he had "tons and tons" of probable cause for the raids. "Don't we have the right to defend ourselves?" he asked. "Must we use a double-standard on them because they're Panthers? These people are dangerous to the city and the country."

RIZZO NEVER EXPLAINED THAT THE Panthers actually were a different group from the "revolutionaries" he had originally claimed were responsible for the death of the police sergeant on Saturday night. But this would have been an academic point in the weird series of events that continued during that chaotic week.

Rizzo held several press conferences, referring to the Panthers as "yellow dogs," "imbeciles," and challenging them to send their best men against fewer of his best for a shootout anywhere and anytime. During one of the raids, a number of Panthers were lined up against a wall by police and forced to strip. News photographers were invited to record the scene, and Rizzo was quoted as saying, "Imagine the big Black Panthers with their pants down."

"It's sedition, it's treason," Rizzo said during a press conference. "We're confronted by a revolution, this is no longer crime. It must be stopped, even if we have to change some laws to do it. . . . It's happening in New York, in Chicago, on the West Coast. This is well-planned, well-organized. It's centrally controlled. They want to overthrow the government, and the government is doing nothing about it. The federal government has got to act. It's gone beyond the police. Local government can't do it. We're bound by the rules of the U.S. Supreme Court. These imbeciles who are doing the killing are instructed by the Black Panthers. They're set off by the trash that the Panthers are putting out under the guise of newspapers. . . ."

Later in the week, when Rizzo arrived at the scene of a non-related shooting in an all-white neighborhood, he was cheered by 200 persons who urged him to run for Mayor. That weekend, as the Revolutionary People's Congress was convening, a plane carrying a "Rizzo for Mayor" banner flew past the New Jersey shore areas where many white Philadelphians spend their summers. In Camden, New Jersey, a printer said he could not supply all the requests for "Rizzo for Mayor" bumperstickers. This fever continued until February 2 when Rizzo finally announced his candidacy at a press conference in the police administration building. Rizzo promised an open campaign so that Philadelphia would know his exact position on all issues. "There will be no glib talk from Frank Rizzo," he said.

Two months later, he still had not spoken before a black or a moderately liberal audience. And if he did later in the campaign, it was a greater secret than a CIA operation. It

was only during the final weeks of the campaign that his staff began sending out sterile, uninformative "position papers."

IT WAS AN EASY WIN FOR RIZZO. Three liberal candidates, Bill Green, the U.S. congressman; Hardy Williams, the black Pennsylvania assemblyman; and the former city councilman David Cohen destroyed themselves. Rizzo won by 49,000 votes, but the three liberal candidates polled 483 more votes than the former police commissioner.

Rizzo's campaign was classic. "Pornography is so bad you can't take the family to the movies," was one of his stock lines. Another was "We've got men riding in one-man patrol cars where you need a marine division." And then there was the familiar, "All you have to do to get a job on the school board is to be a militant. Scream outside the administration building, and they'll hire you for \$20,000."

He spent more time at his campaign stops signing autographs than discussing the issues. The people, however, did not mind. One day in the Northeast, a man approached him and asked, "Frank, you gonna do something about the schools?"

"You bet," Rizzo said, returning to his autograph session.

A pause of several seconds followed. Then Rizzo returned to the man who asked the question and said, "You know Frank Rizzo don't go back on his word." It was the typical Rizzo approach to the issues.

For 28 years Rizzo had been a policeman, known lovingly by his fans around the city as the "Cisco Kid." He became commissioner in 1967 and often spoke of his men as his "Army." When he resigned in 1971, his police force had 7200 men compared to 6000 when he took over, and the department's budget had climbed from \$60 million to \$92 million in 1971 and a projected \$100,199,994 for fiscal 1972. The police budget was the largest single item in the city budget.

In a city where the school system ran out of money four weeks before the scheduled June 24 closing, Frank Rizzo campaigned vigorously for an increase of 2000 more policemen. To the retiring Democratic Mayor and the Democratic City Committee, Rizzo was a vote-getter, a "sure thing." He was the man who once showed up at a racial clash in South Philadelphia with a nightstick in his cummerbund. He was the man who warned civil rights demonstrators or anyone else who would listen that "for every one of my men that gets hit with a brick, there are going to be some broken arms and legs."

THEY LOVED IT IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS. And why not? Frank Rizzo was one of them, a South Philadelphian who observed their rules, who shared their upbringing. "My dad," Frank Rizzo said, "set tough rules and you played the game by his rules or you didn't play. I remember as a young man there was no question as to who was right or wrong. There were no democratic formulas. Boom, you got knocked down. It was the system."

In private, Rizzo would sit and drink beer with reporters and tell stories about his career. One day he recounted having to chase a man. When he caught up with the man, Rizzo threw him to the ground. "Then I come down with the old

number 12," Rizzo said, stamping his foot on the floor in a City Hall corridor. "And that guy ain't walking right today." Rizzo followed that with an imitation of a man unable to walk correctly.

And then there was the time at a Philadelphia Press Association dinner when Rizzo recognized one of the waiters as a young man who had been involved in some racial problems at a South Philadelphia high school a few months earlier. "Just about the time we'd get them settled down, he'd be out stirring up again," Rizzo said. "So this one day, I called him over, got him behind a paddy wagon and gave him two quick shots to the gut. He didn't make any more speeches after that."

Frank Rizzo's Republican opponent in the mayoralty race is another former city councilman, Thacher Longstreth, a former Princeton football player, and a former President of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Longstreth, like Rizzo, is 50. He said he looks forward to the campaign and feels he has an excellent chance to fuse the liberal democrats with at least two thirds of the registered Republicans. That would give him a base of about 350,000 votes. Of course, pre-election figures tend to sound like spring-training predictions in baseball. Even the last-place teams think of themselves as contenders. But right now, things look dim for anti-Rizzo forces.

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN," said Bill Green, who finished second to Rizzo in the Democratic primary. "All I know is that we turned out more independent voters (127,000) than ever before in this city, and we still lost by 49,000. How much of my vote will go to Longstreth, how the blacks will see the election, I just can't predict it. Against Rizzo, you just don't know because it's not the usual campaign. I ran against an image, a legend. The man did not campaign, he didn't talk about the issues. How can you tell?"

And so Philadelphia waits for November, the liberals fearful, the conservatives overjoyed. The city is split, the polarization evident everywhere. "The whole nation is watching. . . ." Frank Rizzo said several times before the primary. "They're asking: 'Can a police chief become the mayor of a big city?' It's not even enough to win big. We've got to crush them. We've got to make sure characters from the left don't take over this town."

Philadelphia is a town with deep social and economic problems, and like all the other large cities in the nation faces a future which is puzzling. A former reporter for the *Inquirer*, Eric Blanchard, writing to the *Washington Post* about the primary results, said, "Philadelphia is an undiscovered Newark: physical squalor resting on a dungheap of municipal corruption, fed by the cowardice of its news media. . . . Rizzo trades on fear, and that, in its verities, is what rules Philadelphia. . . . The news media refused out of their own racism and corruption to warn the city about (Rizzo). . . . He is no longer a backstage figure, a legend, a slogan for the fearful . . . of Kensington . . . South Philly. He is out front. Watch him. His eyes, his hands. Particularly, the people who are sitting on his side of the table."

Sandy Padwe is a news columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

My Jewish Problem—and Ours

Israel,
the Left, and
the Jewish Establishment



by Sol Stern

THERE ARE ALL THESE STRANGE Bob Dylan stories passing around New York these days: that he is studying Hebrew with a hip, radical Rabbi out on Long Island; that he attended the debate between Meir Kahane and Abbie Hoffman and offered to give some money to the Jewish Defense League; that he told Huey Newton he couldn't support the Panthers because of their stand on Israel; and lastly that he didn't come out to attend the spontaneous birthday demonstration organized outside his East Village apartment on May 24, because he was turning 30 in Tel Aviv.

Is there a Jewish Bob Dylan, a reincarnated Robert Zimmerman? Is the poet of rebelliousness and universal liberation of the '60s who was Bar Mitzvahed in the '50s now trying to bear witness to a lost Jewish identity? It happened to Moses Hess, to Herzl, Freud, Chagall and countless others. And if Bob Dylan has a Jewish problem, there are a lot of Jewish radicals newly concerned about their Jewishness and its relation to revolutionary politics who could be sympathetic.

MY OWN JEWISH PROBLEM FIRST SURFACED at a meeting I attended about a year ago at one of Berkeley's political communes. I had gone to hear a report from members of San Francisco Newsreel about their trip to Palestine guerrilla camps in Jordan and Lebanon. The principal speaker was a leather-jacketed, hip-talking, thirtyish radical named Chuck, who was Jewish, had graduated from the City College of New York and called himself a Marxist-Leninist and a revolutionary internationalist. Chuck told a livingroom full of Berkeley radicals that he had originally been "up-tight" about meeting the guerrillas because he was Jewish. When he got to Jordan, however, he discovered that the guerrilla struggle was aimed only at the Zionists, not the Jews—and he was welcomed as a "revolutionary brother."

"The program of Al Fatah," said Chuck, "is to create a democratic socialist Palestine where Jews and Arabs can live together, and where Jews will enjoy full civil and political rights. They are not fighting the Jews—only the Zionists, and the Zionist political structure." Chuck didn't have much more to say about the moral and political aspects of the Palestinian conflict; the rest of his talk was a rhapsodic account of the military aims of the guerrilla program, delivered in "movement hip," a self-conscious vernacular picturing the guerrilla cadres as "heavy dudes" and "brothers off the block," and describing the Fatah program as "right on."

To my question about the rights of the Jews to self-determination, Chuck answered, "The Jews are not a nation. They ought to fight for progress in whatever country they happen to live." The Jews "ripped off the land," and the Jewish state was racist and imperialist; therefore Israel was illegitimate and Fatah was correct in calling for its destruction. Later on he added another of the charges often levelled by Movement people, a gem apparently picked up in the guerrilla camps as the gospel truth: that the Zionists had been in cahoots with the Nazis. "Don't you know," I was asked, "that Theodore Herzl had discussions with Hitler?"

Newsreel had also brought back a pro-Fatah propaganda film that for sheer falsification of recent history has to rival

Illustrations by Uval Golan