

A Tale of Two Cities Revisited: The Philadelphia Mayoral Election of 2003

**Jeffrey Kraus
Wagner College**

This article examines the Philadelphia Mayoral Election of 2003, which was a re-match of the 1999 contest. The author contends that while Philadelphia remained a divided city, partisanship rather than race best explains the election's outcome. By "nationalizing" the election, Democratic Mayor John Street tied his moderate Republican challenger, Sam Katz, to the unpopular Republican administration in Washington, D.C. The revelation of a recording device in Mayor Street's office, rather than damaging Street, galvanized his African-American base while bringing a number of white Democrats back into the Street camp. These factors, along with a massive voter registration drive by Democratic Party operatives, transformed the party's narrow victory of 1999 into a landslide four years later.

Introduction

The 2003 Philadelphia Mayoral election was a re-match of the contentious and polarizing contest of 1999. Democrat John Street, the African-American who had been narrowly elected mayor of this overwhelmingly Democratic city four years earlier, once again faced Republican Sam Katz. In 1999, Street became Philadelphia's 122nd mayor by narrowly defeating Katz, winning by fewer than 9,500 votes out of more than 439,000 votes cast, making it the closest election since 1911.¹ Such a narrow margin would not be expected in a city where Democrats, Street's party, constitute 75% of the electorate. Race, however, race was a significant factor in the outcome as white Democrats voted for Katz, creating a "Tale of Two Cities," where white voters, regardless of party identification, voted for Katz while African-Americans and other minorities supported Street (Kraus 2002a).

Since Philadelphia adopted its present Home Rule Charter in 1951, every incumbent Mayor who has sought re-election has prevailed. Only two of Street's predecessors faced serious

challenges. In 1987, Wilson Goode, the city's first African-American mayor, coming off the MOVE debacle, defeated former Mayor (and Democrat turned Republican) Frank Rizzo by 17,000 votes.² In 1967, Mayor James Tate defeated District Attorney (and future United States Senator) Arlen Specter by 10,748 votes.

Given Street's incumbency and the overwhelming Democratic registration advantage, Street should have been an overwhelming favorite to win re-election. However, there was still the issue of race. Would a Katz-Street re-match lead to yet another competitive and racially divisive contest?

The race issue is not confined to Philadelphia. Throughout the United States the question persists as to whether race still matters in elections. In New York City, the David Dinkins–Rudolph Giuliani contests of 1989 and 1993 demonstrated that race was an issue in the nation's largest and most diverse city.³ In 1993, the perception that Mayor Dinkins had been “soft on crime” and had been ineffective in dealing with a number of racial controversies cost him significant support among white Democratic voters, who opted to support Giuliani (Barrett 2000, Kirtzman 2000, Mollenkopf 2002). The 2001 contest in the same city saw the Democratic Party's alliance of liberal whites, African-Americans, and Latinos unravel as the result of a racially divisive primary campaign, allowing a neophyte billionaire Republican to win (Kraus 2002b).

New York was not alone. During the 1980s and 1990s a number of cities with elected African-American mayors saw those mayors succeeded by whites who often subscribed to more conservative policies than did their African-American predecessors. In the same year that Giuliani was elected in New York, Republican Richard Riordan became mayor of Los Angeles. In 1992, Bret Schundler became the first Republican mayor elected in Jersey City in 75 years. In Chicago, Richard M. Daley, the son of Richard J. Daley, was elected mayor following the death of Chicago's first African-American mayor, Harold Washington. Edward Rendell succeeded Wilson Goode, and in Baltimore Martin O'Malley replaced Kurt Schmoke. Like Giuliani, all stressed crime reduction, economic development, and fiscal discipline as prescriptions for urban revitalization (Judd and Swanstrom 2004, 397–401).

In some cities where African-American mayors have sought reelection their white support has actually increased as those voters found that their fears about a city administration led by an African-American mayor had not come to pass.⁴ In fact, a 1983 study found that African-American mayors expressed attitudes and followed policies that were not different from white mayors regarding fiscal policy (Clark and Ferguson 1983, 144–148). As Levy (2000, 65) observed, in many large American cities “leadership has swung back and forth between Blacks and Whites.”

Did race still matter to the Philadelphia electorate in 2003? To answer this question, the political landscape, the candidates and their messages, and the election campaign will be reviewed. Particular attention will be paid to the voting behavior of Philadelphians in the general election.

Philadelphia’s Political Landscape in 2003

Philadelphia is one of the nation’s most heavily Democratic cities. In the years following Street’s narrow victory, white Democrats returned to the fold. In 2000, Philadelphians overwhelmingly cast their ballots for Vice President Al Gore and Senator Joe Lieberman, giving them nearly 80% of the vote in the city and paving the way for Gore to carry the state’s 23 electoral votes.⁵ In 2001, Democratic District Attorney Lynne Abraham was re-elected with more than 65% of the vote and Jonathan Saidel was re-elected City Controller with more than 80% of the vote.⁶ In the 2002 gubernatorial election, Democrat (and former Philadelphia Mayor) Ed Rendell would outpoll his Republican opponent, State Attorney General Mike Fisher, by more than 280,000 votes in Philadelphia.⁷

While the City remained a Democratic bastion, there had been other changes in the political landscape since Street’s narrow victory four years earlier. A Republican President was elected in the closest election in American history in November 2000, depriving the City’s Democratic Mayor of an ally in the White House. In 2002, Rendell was elected Governor, becoming the first Philadelphian to hold the office since Martin Grove Brumbaugh was elected in 1914. In 2003, one of Philadelphia’s few Republican elected officials, John Michael Perzel, would become Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The presence of

Rendell and Perzel at the highest levels of state government should have given the City more influence in Harrisburg than at any time in recent history.

Another factor to consider was that in the four years since the last municipal election the number of white non-Hispanic residents declined. According to United States Census Bureau estimates, the number of whites living in Philadelphia dropped from 644,395 in April 2000 to 615,453 (Committee of Seventy, 2003b). If the electorate was as racially polarized as it had been in 1999, Katz’s task would have been more difficult. Yet Philadelphia is also a city where no racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority. According to the census estimate, 43% of the population is African-American and 41% is white. There are approximately 75,000 Asian residents (4.5%) and 135,000 Latinos (8.5%).

While there were fewer whites, there were also fewer Democrats. Following the 2002 elections, the Board of City Commissioners conducted the first purge of inactive voters permitted under the National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter) of 1993.⁸

Voters	November 1999	April 2003	Change
All Registered	986,366	906,684	-79,682
Republicans	191,416	160,344	-31,072
Democrats	735,423	685,432	-49,991
Others	59,527	60,908	+1,381

Source: Board of City Commissioners Registration Data.

While both parties experienced declines in registration due to the purge, 19,000 more Democrats than Republicans were dropped

from the rolls. Considering that Street's first victory had come by slightly more than 9,000 votes, the loss of more Democratic voters could be a factor in another close election.

The Candidates and Their Messages

Street portrayed himself as the "Neighborhood Mayor" who had worked to improve the quality of life and quality of city services in every city neighborhood. Of particular importance, according to the Mayor, were his Operation Safe Streets crime prevention and neighborhood blight removal programs (known as the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative). These programs boarded up abandoned houses, removed 175,000 abandoned cars from the city's streets, cleaned up 31,000 vacant lots, and placed more than 45,000 children in after school programs (Athans 2003, 2A). Here Street differed from his predecessor, Ed Rendell, who in his eight years in office emphasized restoring Center City and improving the city's finances.⁹ Street took credit for balancing the city's budget and negotiating agreements for new stadiums for the Philadelphia Phillies and Philadelphia Eagles while cutting taxes by about \$200 million. He also cited his successful effort to have automobile insurance premiums lowered for city residents. However, during Street's first term the state took control of the city's troubled school district, the Pennsylvania Convention Center, and the Philadelphia Parking Authority.¹⁰

Following his narrow loss to Street in 1999, Katz became CEO of Greater Philadelphia First, a regional business association of chief executives of the area's largest employers.¹¹ In his third run for the Mayoralty (he had also lost to Rendell in 1991), Katz argued that Street had failed to address adequately Philadelphia's problems, and he insisted that "we can do better" (Fleming 2003, 1). The major theme that Katz hoped to emphasize was that the Street Administration operated in a culture that was corrupt, incompetent, and rampant with cronyism. In making this claim, Katz could point to Street's own words from 1999: "The people who support me in the general election have a greater chance of getting business from my administration than the people who support Sam Katz" (Associated Press 2003 A8).

A Democrat turned moderate Republican (he switched parties in 1990), Katz was pro-choice on abortion, supported employment

opportunities for gays and lesbians, and supported increased funding for AIDS victims.¹³ He proposed to jump-start Philadelphia's economy by cutting the wage tax from 4.4% to 3.5%, with the shortfall in revenue being made up by a \$750 million bond issue that would be re-paid over ten years.

Citing the continuing loss of population and jobs, Katz contended that under Street the city had lost the momentum of the Rendell era. According to Katz, Philadelphia faced three problems: a high crime rate and low quality of life, the exodus of the young and college-educated, and tax policies that create an unfavorable business climate. Katz said that one of his goals as mayor would be to attract 250,000 residents into the city over a 15 year period. By cutting business taxes, Philadelphia would retain businesses. As Katz explained it, "our tax structure created Cherry Hill and King of Prussia" (Siegel 2003, 13). As far as Street's crime control policies were concerned, Katz contended that crime was not going down, but moving to neighborhoods with less of a police presence. Katz's anti-crime proposals included deploying additional police during time periods when gun crimes most often occur and creating a "gun court" with jurisdiction over gun cases.

Katz may have best articulated how the election ultimately would be decided: "The extent that I can get African American, Latino and Asian votes, and the extent that John Street can get white votes, will decide the election" (Caruso 2003, A14). A March 2003 Keystone Poll showed Katz with a 44% to 40% lead over Street. This poll found that race mattered in that African-Americans and Whites had divergent views about the direction of the city, Street's performance, and the success of his policies. African-American voters were more likely than whites to think that the city was headed in the right direction, that things were better in Philadelphia than they were four years earlier, and that Mayor Street was doing an excellent or good job (Millersville University 2003).

The General Election Campaign

While the 1999 campaign was a polite, issues-oriented contest in which the candidates and their organizations avoided personal attacks, the 2003 campaign was far more contentious. Among the campaign "issues" was a photograph of Street with a convicted drug

dealer, allegations that Katz was a friend of a former City Council aide who had been convicted of extortion, charges that Katz had once been implicated in a sexual harassment suit (the accuser later recanted), and claims that Street accepted \$125,000 in campaign contributions that Katz said were illegal.

In addition to the personal attacks, the campaign became ugly in other ways. In August, an unlit Molotov cocktail was tossed through the window of a Katz campaign office in North Philadelphia. Katz suggested that the Street campaign was behind the vandalism, a charge denied by the Mayor's campaign staff. Two members of Street's Administration were charged with making terroristic threats to the building's owner on the day before the incident.¹⁴ A confrontation earlier on the day of the vandalism between the Mayor's son, Sharif, an assistant city manager, and the building's landlord, Lewis Harris, was videotaped and aired on local television newscasts.

The Street campaign's strategy was to mobilize Democrats by asserting that a Katz victory would mean a city controlled by President George W. Bush and a loss of patronage jobs. To reinforce the message, the campaign brought in Democratic heavyweights including Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, and Governor Rendell to make the case that a Street victory would improve the Democratic Party's chances of carrying Pennsylvania in the 2004 presidential election. Street also tried linking Katz to President Bush. At a campaign rally, Street said:

My opponent has a tax plan that looks so much like the George Bush tax plan that I sometimes say that Sam Katz wants to do for Philadelphia what George Bush is doing for the country. And if that makes you nervous, you ought to be out there voting Democrat and working for all of our Democratic candidates. (NPR 2003)

The Street campaign was the beneficiary of a massive voter registration drive conducted by Congressman Chaka Fattah's political operation.¹⁵ More than 86,000 new Democratic voters were added to the rolls between April 2003 and the general election (Meyerson 2003, A23). By comparison, 7,636 new Republican voters registered during the same period (Committee of Seventy

2003c). This gave Street a tremendous advantage. By expanding the electorate to this extent, Fattah's operation virtually guaranteed a Street victory unless these new voters stayed home. Since Fattah's operatives had registered them, it stands to reason that they would have found most of them on Election Day and brought them to the polls. Later events would make such a "pull" unnecessary.

As he had in 1999, Katz downplayed his Republican label in this Democratic city, going so far as to skip a number of events when President Bush visited the Philadelphia area. Instead, Katz emphasized Street's failings as a leader. According to Katz, the city faced a fiscal crisis, suffered a mismanaged convention center, and had a poor relationship with the state government in Harrisburg. Even Street's vaunted neighborhood blight program was, in Katz's words, "stuck in the mud" (Bulletin's Frontrunner 2002).

This was also a campaign where race, an unspoken issue in 1999, would break into the open. Street was criticized for a 2002 speech to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) where, noting that Philadelphia had a black mayor, a black managing director, a black fire commissioner, and a black police commissioner, he boasted that "the brothers and sisters are running the city, we are in charge." Katz was attacked for a Republican City Committee mailing that urged white voters to help Katz "take back Philly" (Getlin 2003, A20). Despite Katz's claim that he had not authorized the mailing, Street supporters accused him of "race baiting."

Labor unions, which had almost unanimously backed Street in 1999, were divided in this contest. While most unions remained with Street, about a dozen endorsed Katz. Among those backing Katz were the Teamsters; Gas Workers Employee Union Local 686; Philadelphia Firefighters Union Local 22; Communications Workers of America Local 13000; the Fraternal Order of Housing Police; the Philadelphia Regional Council of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; and District Council 33 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

While Katz questioned the Street Administration's shortcomings with a television commercial using the phrase "when a mayor fails," Street's campaign responded by touting the Mayor's accomplishments. A spot featuring actor Bill Cosby acknowledged the Mayor's reputation for personal aloofness with Cosby saying

that “some politicians, they hug people and kiss babies....Mayor Street – his way of kissing and hugging is to put more policemen on the streets.” Accompanying Cosby’s voice-over were images of police officers on patrol, abandoned cars being removed from city streets, and children at computers. The positive tone of the Cosby spot contrasted with the negative tone of Katz’s advertisements.

Street, already ahead in the polls, opened up a huge lead after it was revealed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had bugged the Mayor’s City Hall office. The listening device was discovered in the ceiling of the office during a routine check by the Philadelphia Police Department.¹⁶ FBI officials then acknowledged that the device belonged to them, but declined to discuss what they characterized as an ongoing investigation. Newspaper reports suggested that the device was part of a federal investigation into possible corruption in the awarding of contracts, including \$13 million in maintenance contracts awarded for the Philadelphia International Airport.¹⁷ Some of those contracts were awarded to a company that had a relationship with the Mayor’s brother, T. Milton Street, Sr.¹⁸

After his lawyer had conferred with the United States Attorney’s office, Mayor Street said he was not a “target” of the investigation. He would admit later that “target” was a specific legal term used by the Justice Department when a person was likely to be indicted, and that he might still be the “subject” or “focus” of an investigation. Federal officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed that the Mayor was the “subject” of an investigation (which meant that he was being investigated, although he might not be suspected of breaking the law). Asked if he understood the difference between a target and subject, Street replied, “I understand the target is the really, really bad one” (Schamberg 2003, 11). Street also confirmed that he had turned over his “Blackberry” to the FBI Katz called upon Street to make public exactly what he had been told regarding his status in the investigation.¹⁹ Street assured his supporters that he had engaged in no wrongdoing, stating that those listening to the conversations recorded on the listening devices would hear “no corruption, no sex, and no profanity. Not one word” (Loviglio 2003, A3).

While federal authorities denied that their surveillance of Street’s office had anything to do with the election, Democrats portrayed it as a Republican plot to defeat Street and help President

Bush carry Pennsylvania in 2004. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Leader in the United States House of Representatives, questioned the timing of the investigation, stating, “That they would announce it’s not campaign-related raises even more questions about whether it’s campaign-related” (Associate Press 2003b, A13).²⁰ Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe said, “serious questions arise when the Democratic mayor of the fifth-largest city in the country discovers, just before a close election, that senior Bush administration officials approved a plan to bug his office” (Getlin 2003, A20).

Street suggested that party politics might be related to the bugging: “I believe that people are very, very concerned about this, and I think they have a right to be concerned....The timing of all this is very suspicious” (Gibbons 2003, A1). For Street’s supporters, the probe was perceived as yet another Republican dirty trick, reminiscent of the 2000 election debacle in Florida when thousands of black voters were allegedly disenfranchised.

Katz tried to downplay the allegations of political and racial bias. In an interview on the Fox News Channel, Katz said:

I don’t know anything about the timing. I do know that we’ve learned that this has been going on for two years. And there is an attempt being made now to create a certain victimization of the focus of these investigations. The real victims here are Philadelphians, the people who pay the taxes, the people who need help from the city government, the people who are the employees of the city, city workers who can’t get health care, senior citizens who can’t get police on their streets, children in a public school—in a charter school who are shivering in the cold while the head of that school, who received a four million dollar grant, is riding around in a Mercedes. (Gibson 2003)

Katz’s effort to deflect the dirty tricks charge while focusing on his campaign-long theme that Street ran a corrupt and patronage-filled administration failed. Joining Democratic partisans in the

attack were the NAACP, the Urban League, and black clergy, who echoed the Democrats, likening the investigation of Street to J. Edgar Hoover's probe of Martin Luther King, Jr.²¹ U.S. Attorney Patrick Meehan defended the inquiry, stating that "Federal law enforcement in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has a very long history of doing its work without regard to partisan politics" (Einhorn 2003, 8).

The Street campaign also responded by attacking Katz's integrity, bringing attention to a lawsuit brought by some of Katz's former business partners who were accusing him of embezzlement. The lawsuit developed from a criminal investigation in which Katz was cleared of any criminal involvement while some of his associates were convicted.²² In television commercials aired by the Street campaign, the Katz embezzlement case was equated with the FBI investigation of the Mayor. In a radio debate between the candidates, Street challenged Katz to open up the files related to the criminal investigation and civil action. When Katz replied that he might ask to have the files opened, his lawyers filed a motion to keep the documents sealed (National Public Radio 2003).

The effect of the bugging on the election was significant. In September 2003, a Temple University/CBS 3/KYW poll showed Mayor Street had the backing of 74% of African-American voters. Overall, Katz held a 46% to 40% lead (Smith 2003, 15). In early October, Street had taken a lead, with a Philadelphia Daily News/Keystone Poll having him ahead by eight percentage points, 42% to 34% (Center for Opinion Research 2003, 1). By late October, after the surveillance had been disclosed, Street continued to lead Katz, 48% to 41%. The bug appeared to galvanize Street's support in the African-American community, as 93% of African-American respondents indicated that they planned to vote for the Mayor (Goldenberg 2003, 22). Professor Randall M. Miller, of St. Joseph's University, explained the effect of the bugging on African-American voters: "To many blacks, this seems like another example of someone coming after one of our own.... Even if they don't like Street, there is a sense of collective violation that works to the mayor's advantage" (Dao 2003, 14).

As Election Day neared, each side accused the other of planning to intimidate voters. Both campaigns used the newly-opened National Constitution Center for their media event. Local Democratic Party Chair Brady and DNC Chair McAuliffe warned

that Republicans would attempt to keep African-Americans from voting, as they allegedly had done in other states. Katz supporters, who had crashed the Democratic press conference, charged that union members backing Street would intimidate Katz voters and Republican poll watchers. Carl Singley, a one-time Street partisan who now supported Katz, said that “the last thing these men you just heard from want is a fair election” (Bulletin’s Frontrunner, 2003).

On Election Day, Katz supporters claimed that supporters of Street beat up or intimidated Katz campaign workers on at least half a dozen occasions. They also claimed that Street supporters had tampered with voting machines. Street’s organization counter-charged that the Katz campaign had intimidated African-American voters outside of several polling places by illegally demanding that they produce identification. The District Attorney’s office reported 171 serious complaints, quadruple the number reported four years earlier (Benson 2003, A20). The Philadelphia Police Department received 110 complaints (Daughen 2003,11).

The Outcome

Unlike their first contest, the 2003 contest ended with a decisive Street victory.

Table 2			
Philadelphia Mayoral Election Official Results			
Candidate	Party	Vote	Percent
John F. Street	Democrat	267,276	58.35
Sam Katz	Republican	189,357	41.34
John Staggs	Socialist Workers	1,292	0.28
Write-In		164	0.04

Source: Philadelphia City Commissioners.

A City Still Divided By Race and A Little Bit More By Partisanship

The 2003 results revealed that Philadelphia was still two cities, with a majority of white (and normally Democratic) Philadelphians casting ballots for the Republican while members of Philadelphia’s minority communities voted overwhelmingly for Street. On election

night, Street said, “Frankly speaking, I think the election here today belies some of the speculation that this city is as racially divided as some people say.... I got more votes out in areas of the city that people traditionally don’t expect” (Fleming 2003, 1).

There was some truth to Street’s comment. While losing in the city’s white neighborhoods, Street’s electoral performance there improved, as he picked up greater percentages of the vote in all of the city’s white neighborhoods. In 1999, Katz’s margin over Street in the city’s white neighborhoods had been 134,145. His margin in those same neighborhoods, four years later, was 96,366, a difference of nearly 38,000 votes. Some white Democrats, who had deserted Street four years earlier, returned to the Democratic fold. For example, Street’s vote in South Philadelphia increased from 22.73% to 31.35%. In the Far Northeast (Philadelphia’s only solidly Republican neighborhood), Street’s vote inched up from 11.75% to 15.20% (Committee of Seventy 2003d).

Table 3
Philadelphia Mayoral Vote by Neighborhood, 1999 and 2003
 (in percents)

Neighborhood	1999 Katz	2003 Katz	1999 Street	2003 Street
South Philadelphia	76.67	68.21	22.73	31.35
Roxborough, Chestnut Hill, Manayunk	75.39	68.44	24.16	31.01
Center City, Fairmount, University City	68.16	60.69	31.20	38.54
Southwest, Grays Ferry, Point Breeze	32.37	23.00	67.15	76.73
Overbrook, Wynnefield, East Falls	26.45	17.02	73.39	82.73
West Philadelphia	8.10	4.97	91.55	94.73
Kensington, Fairhill, Juniata Park	29.04	18.07	70.27	81.68
North Philadelphia	5.43	3.31	94.05	96.56

Mt. Airy, Germantown, Logan	13.89	7.32	85.82	92.31
Oak Lane, Cedarbrook	13.72	8.42	85.91	91.39
Port Richmond, Kensington, Bridesburg	76.12	63.53	23.20	36.15
Mayfair, Frankford, Holmesburg	84.32	78.83	14.32	20.88
Lawncrest, Rhawnhurst, Oxford Circle	78.19	64.05	21.20	35.69
Far Northeast	87.16	84.75	11.75	15.02

Source: The Committee of Seventy.

Street's dominance among minority voters was even greater than it had been four years earlier. In 1999, Street's margin of 143,226 in the city's minority neighborhoods gave him a narrow victory over Katz. Four years later, Street attained a plurality of 173,502 votes in Philadelphia's heavily Democratic minority neighborhoods, resulting in a comfortable citywide victory for the incumbent. In West Philadelphia, Street's vote increased from 91.5% to 94.7%. In North Philadelphia, his share went from 94% in 1999 to 96.5% in 2003 (Committee of Seventy 2003d).²³ Another factor favoring Street was that turnout in the neighborhoods where he did well increased (13,358) by more than the increase in his opponent's strongholds (5,848). The Fattah voter registration effort was probably a significant factor here.

The Dramatic Impact of the Investigation

There is no question that the disclosure of the electronic listening device in the Mayor's office had a dramatic impact on the campaign. While the revelation of the investigation was consistent with Katz's characterization of Street's administration as sleazy, this "October Surprise" worked against the challenger. Public opinion polls already indicated that Street had taken the lead, and the news of the bugging of the Mayor's Office insured that the race would become a blowout. It curtailed any serious discussion of issues in the campaign. Katz had contended that the measures taken by Street to deal with the problems of the city's neighborhoods had

failed. He also had argued that the Mayor's contentious relationship with politicians in Harrisburg had hurt the city. For Katz to win, he needed to convince Philadelphians that Street had failed as mayor. The controversy over the investigation meant that Katz's message was being overshadowed by the question of whether the probe was politically motivated.

The investigation also gave Street the opportunity to energize his base. The timing of the investigation, and the federal authorities' reluctance to discuss its scope, caused many African-Americans and partisan Democrats to question the government's motives. Invoking the Florida ballot debacle of 2000, the California recall effort, and Michael Bloomberg's plan to bring nonpartisan elections to New York City, Street's supporters spread the message that the Republicans would stop at nothing to win elections, and defeating Mayor Street was part of a Republican plan to re-elect President Bush in 2004. The African-American electorate, which Street needed to win, turned out in larger numbers than four years earlier. It also gave him a 98% plurality, up from 94% four years earlier (Fitzgerald 2003, A1). In the city's white neighborhoods, more Democratic voters stayed with the Mayor than four years earlier, insuring a comfortable margin for Street. This is a reflection of the intense partisanship that has gripped the national electorate since the 2000 presidential election.²⁴ By "nationalizing" the contest, the Mayor was able to win. Katz may have summed up the turn of events best when, in his concession speech, he said, "This is a very strange business, and the ball bounces in very strange ways" (Fleming 2003, 5).

Postscript

On May 20, 2004, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Philadelphia Daily News* reported that a Delaware state court had ruled that Sam Katz had "fraudulently" misrepresented key information used to attract investment in a failed skating rink development project and ordered Katz to repay \$2.1 million to his partners. Katz has appealed. On June 3, 2004, a federal grand jury returned indictments against six people for defrauding the Community College of Philadelphia of \$224,000 in public funds by setting up an adult education program with nonexistent teachers and students, and claiming to offer classes that never took place. Indicted on

conspiracy, mail fraud and wire fraud were Faridah Ali; Delores Weaver, Director of the Adult Basic Education Program at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP); Weaver's son, Eugene D. Weaver, III; and Ali's children, Azheem Spicer and Lakiha Spicer. A sixth person, Zaynah Rasool (Ali's sister), was charged with making false statements to a grand jury. That charge was dismissed by a federal judge a month later.²⁵

On June 29, 2004, Street fundraiser, Ronald White and former City Treasurer Corey Kemp were among 12 people indicted in a 150 page indictment detailing a "pay-to-play tradition" in which campaign donors received favorable treatment on city contracts.²⁶ Street, who was not charged in the indictment, denied an assertion that he had instructed his staff to provide White with advance information about government contracts and to award contracts to firms White recommended if those firms were qualified. At the press conference announcing the June 3 indictments, U.S. Attorney Meehan stated, "We have a very developed, continuing investigation" (KYW 2004). Kemp's lawyer, Michael McGovern, suggested that "indications are that the government has not closed the door on higher targets" (Lounsberry, 2004).

On October 27, 2004, Ali, her two children, and Eugene Weaver III were found guilty of all 26 counts of defrauding CCP of \$224,000 in public monies for adult basic education. On November 4, 2004, Ronald White, died of pancreatic cancer. A day earlier, the United States Justice Department had released a revised indictment in which it alleged that White had convinced Commerce Bank to approve loans for White and his friends without standard underwriting review. Kemp's attorney, L. George Parry, responded to the revised indictment by asserting his client's innocence, stating "my defense of Corey Kemp is going to sound like a prosecution of Mayor Street" (Lounsberry, Fleming, and Gelbart 2004).

On May 9, 2005, Kemp was convicted on 27 charges, including extortion, fraud, and filing false tax returns. Four others were convicted with Kemp: Commerce Bank executives Glenn Holck and Stephen Umbrell, who were found guilty of conspiracy and wire fraud; LaVan Hawkins was convicted for wire fraud and lying to a grand jury; and Janice Knight, who was found to have lied to a grand jury and to the FBI Mayor Street has not been implicated in any of these cases.

Notes

1. In 1911, Rudolph Blankenburg, Keystone-Democratic candidate, defeated Republican George H. Earle, 134,680 to 130,185.

2. On May 13, 1985, Goode ordered the Police and Fire Departments to bomb the headquarters of a radical group known as MOVE. The action destroyed not just MOVE's building but also 61 neighboring homes in Philadelphia. For more on the bombing of the MOVE headquarters, see Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission (1986), Anderson and Hevenor (1987), Harry (1987), Bowser (1989), Boyette (1989), Assefa (1990), and Wagner-Pacifici (1994).

3. The CBS News/New York Times New York City Mayoral Election Exit Poll from November 1989 offers data on the effect of race on that election. See CBS News/New York Times (1989).

4. Los Angeles, Atlanta, and New Orleans are all cities where white support for black incumbents increased. For a discussion of Tom Bradley in Los Angeles, see Sonenshein (1993). For Atlanta, see Stone (1989).

5. The Philadelphia vote for President in 2000 was as follows:

George W. Bush/Dick Cheney (Republican)	99,234
Al Gore/Joe Lieberman (Democrat)	441,834
Howard Phillips/J. Curtis Frazier (Constitution)	1,859
Harry Browne/Art Olivier (Libertarian)	1,221
Ralph Nader/Winona LaDuke (Green)	8,514
Patrick J. Buchanan/Ezola Foster (Reform)	782

Source: City Commissioners of Philadelphia.

6. The 2001 citywide election results were as follows:

District Attorney

Lynne M. Abraham (Democrat)	124,823
Joseph N. Bongiovanni III (Republican)	27,155
Richard A. Ash (Green)	11,341
Leon Williams (Education)	21,941

City Controller

Jonathan A. Saidel (Democrat)	133,274
Joseph A. Gembaia (Republican)	23,941

Source: City Commissioners of Philadelphia.

7. In Philadelphia, Rendell received 339,697 votes; Fisher received 59,223. Source: City Commissioners of Philadelphia.

8. 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-5 (a), (b).

9. While Rendell was considered to have been successful in revitalizing Center City, not all of his plans were achieved. Notable failures included Penn's Landing and Disney Quest. For an account of Rendell's tenure as Mayor, see Bissinger (1997).

10. Street and Governor Mark Schweiker agreed to a plan whereby the nine-member Board of Education appointed by the Mayor in March 2000 would be replaced by a School Reform Commission. This new commission included three appointees of the Governor and two by the Mayor. In April 2002, the Commission decided to turn over management of the district's 70 lowest performing schools to a number of Education Management Organizations (EMOs), including Edison Schools and community groups. In June 2002, the Commission appointed Paul Vallas, highly regarded for his reforms in the Chicago Public School system

(where he was the School District's Chief Executive Officer from 1995 to 2001), as the School District's Chief Executive Officer.

The Parking Authority, created by a local ordinance in 1950, operates off-street parking facilities, maintains on-street parking meters, and enforces parking regulations. It had long been a patronage mill for the Democratic Party, although Republicans held a small percentage of the jobs even before the takeover. In 2001, the Speaker of the State House of Representatives, John Perzel, orchestrated a state takeover of the Agency, whereby a majority of the Board of Directors would be appointed by the Governor. Republicans now control the Authority. Between the time of the takeover and December 2002, the Authority's staff increased by more than 200 employees, most of whom were assumed to be Republicans (Barg 2002).

The Convention Center, opened in June 1993, was plagued by mismanagement, union problems, and high labor costs that were driving convention business out of Philadelphia. In 2001, Perzel, with the help of Representative Dwight Evans (an African-American Democrat from Philadelphia) pushed Senate Bill 1100 through the legislature changing the composition of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority Board from one balanced between the two parties and between the State, the City, and the suburbs, none of which had a majority, to one controlled by Republican political appointees. Mayor Street filed suit, claiming that the bill overhauling the Authority's management violated the state Constitution because it covered more than one subject (the Constitution stipulates that legislation cover one subject). In November 2003, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled against the General Assembly, and ordered it to revise the legislation by February of 2004 or restore control of the Authority to the previously constituted board. In February 2004, legislation was enacted (House Bill 1733) turning the convention center over to a 15-member board: two Philadelphia mayoral appointees (one of whom must be recommended by the hospitality industry); four appointed by the General Assembly; four appointees from the Philadelphia suburbs (one from each of the suburban counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery); an appointee of the Philadelphia City Council President; one appointee by the minority leader of the Philadelphia City Council; two appointed by the Governor (who must be confirmed by the State Senate), and a Chair selected by the other fourteen members.

11. Shortly before Katz announced his candidacy, the group agreed to a merger with the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Governor Mark Schweiker, who had not sought election after replacing Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge as Governor, was named to head the merged organization.

12. Katz's supporters raised the nepotism charge when Street's wife, Naomi Post, an attorney who had worked on children's services and juvenile delinquency issues, was briefly appointed to the position of deputy managing director in the City's Social Services Department. After the charge was raised, Post withdrew her candidacy for the position. His brother Milton, a former state legislator, was consultant to a company responsible for maintenance at City Hall and had made an unsuccessful attempt to take over the city's animal control service. He later became involved with a company that successfully bid on the maintenance contract at the Philadelphia International Airport.

13. By contrast, Street was perceived in some quarters of Philadelphia's gay and lesbian community as anti-gay. In June 1996, while City Council President, Street filed a court challenge against then-Mayor Rendell's executive order that

granted domestic partnership benefits to municipal employees. At the time, Street said that “taxpayer dollars should not be used to support relationships such as these that mimic traditional family relationships” (Duffy 2003, 1). In 1997, Street opposed gay marriage in a debate sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia. By 2003, Street had become a supporter of domestic partnerships and had appointed gays and lesbians to high-ranking positions in his administration, notably Alba Martinez as the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services in 2000.

14. Assistant City Manager Tumar Alexander and Joey Temple, an employee with the Recreation Department, were charged with misdemeanors. Alexander was suspended from his position for a week without pay for violating a Philadelphia Home Rule Charter provision that prohibits municipal employees from engaging in any political activity on behalf of a candidate. Temple resigned from his position in the Recreation Department. In May 2004, Temple was convicted of misdemeanor harassment and making terroristic threats and sentenced to two years of probation. In June 2004, Alexander entered a program for first-time offenders where, following six months of unsupervised probation, his record was cleared.

15. The drive was a pilot project of the Partnership for America’s Families, a voter outreach organization formed following passage of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, which prohibits the national party committees from funding voter registration campaigns. The Partnership’s \$12 million budget was underwritten by a number of labor unions. It had similar projects in Cleveland and St. Louis, cities, like Philadelphia, located in what would be “battleground” states in the 2004 presidential election.

16. The sweeps were conducted every three or four months by the Department’s Impac Unit, a division of the Internal Affairs Bureau. One of the FBI agents who would be sent to retrieve the listening device was Mark Johnson, son of Philadelphia Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson.

17. During the summer of 2003, the FBI had subpoenaed records from the Philadelphia School District concerning the Liberty Academy Charter School, which had received \$4 million for courses taught at the Community College of Philadelphia even though the school was not scheduled to open until 2004. The school had been founded by Faridah Ali, whose husband, Shamsud-din Ali, is a prominent Muslim leader in Philadelphia and an ally of Mayor Street. The FBI raided Keystone Information and Financial Services, a tax collection business with ties to Ali that had received a no-bid contract from the city to collect delinquent real estate taxes.

18. In 2001, Philadelphia Airport Services (a subsidiary of Enron) hired Street as a consultant. The firm successfully bid on a \$13.6 million airport maintenance contract for Philadelphia International Airport, beating out Elliott-Lewis Corporation, which had performed maintenance at the airport for eleven years. Shortly after winning the bid, Street became the CEO of Philadelphia Airport Services. In June 2003, T. Milton Street, Jr. resigned as CEO of Philadelphia Airport Services to form Notlim Service Management Company. Notlim was then given a \$1 million a year contract to make repairs and maintain baggage conveyor systems, passenger bridges, and airport buses at the Airport. Notlim had been designated as a disadvantaged, minority-owned company by the City’s Minority Business Enterprise Council, and Philadelphia Airport Services

defended the awarding of the contract to the firm as part of their commitment to expanding minority participation. Following public criticism, Mayor Street revoked the contract.

19. The FBI subpoenaed the financial records of Mayor Street, his wife, their oldest son Sharif, and Ronald A. White, a Street advisor and fundraiser. Documents were also subpoenaed from the City Finance Department, the City Treasurer's Office, the Minority Business and Enterprise Council, the Municipal Board of Pensions and Retirement, and the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

20. While publicly supporting Street, some Democrats were considering replacing him if he had been the target. Among those considered potential replacement candidates were State Representative Dwight Evans, City Councilman Michael Nutter, and John Dougherty, president of Local 98 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

21. Among the African-American Mayors who have been subjected to federal investigations are Bill Campbell of Atlanta, Coleman Young of Detroit, and Marion Barry of Washington, D.C. In the early 1980s, during an investigation of municipal contract fixing, the FBI bugged Young's home. While Young was not convicted, a close friend, Darralyn Bowers (the owner of Vista Disposal, Incorporated, the successful bidder on a sludge hauling contract) and the City Water Department Director, Charles Beckham, were convicted on fraud and bribery charges. In 1992, Detroit's Police Chief was convicted of embezzling. Young's reaction was that "the Chief was indicted because he got caught in a trap that was set for me" (Swickard 1997, 1). In 2000, Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell announced that he was being investigated as part of a corruption probe in Atlanta and Fulton County. A county commissioner, a county administrator, and a contractor had already pled guilty to taking or offering bribes. Federal authorities refused to comment on Campbell's statement. In 1990, Marion Barry was convicted of drug possession. His arrest had been videotaped as part of a sting operation undertaken by federal authorities.

22. Katz would eventually lose this lawsuit.

23. Based on 2000 census data, I have identified the following Philadelphia neighborhoods as "white" (having majority-white populations): Bridesburg, Center City, Chestnut Hill, Fairmount, Far Northeast, Frankford, Holmesburg, Lawncrest, Manayunk, Mayfair, Oxford Circle, Port Richmond, Roxborough, South Philadelphia, and University City. "Minority" neighborhoods (more than 50% of the population is nonwhite) included: Cedarbrook, East Falls, Fairhill, Germantown, Grays Ferry, Juniata Park, Logan, Mt. Airy, North Philadelphia, Oak Lane, Overbrook, Point Breeze, Southwest Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, and Wynnefield.

24. For a discussion of the polarized electorate, see Ceaser and Bush (2005), Nelson (2005), and Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (2005).

25. U.S. District Court Judge John P. Fullam dismissed the perjury charges against Rasool, concluding that it was impossible to determine whether she had intentionally lied to the grand jury or was simply confused by the prosecutor's questions (Caruso 2004).

26. The others indicted were Denis Carlson, an investment banker who was eventually acquitted; Rhonda Anderson, an attorney; the Reverend Frank D. McCracken, pastor of the St. James Chapel Church of God in Reading, Pennsylvania; Janice Renee Knight, described in the indictment as White's

“paramour”; Glenn K. Holck, the President of Commerce Bank Pennsylvania; Commerce Bank Regional Vice President Stephen M. Umbrell; Detroit businessman La-Van Hawkins; Charles LeCroy and Anthony C. Snell, former officials of the J.P. Morgan Bank; and Jose Mendoza, an employee of McCracken. McCracken agreed to plead guilty to fraud charges and a charge of tax evasion in November 2004.

References

- Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2005. *Change and Continuity in the 2004 Elections*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Anderson, John, and Hilary Hevenor. 1987. *Burning Down the House: MOVE and the Tragedy of Philadelphia*. New York: Norton.
- Associated Press. 2003. “FBI Probe of Bugged Mayor Unfolds.” *Newsday*, October 27.
- Athans, Marego. 2003. “In Philly, Gaffes Close the Gap.” *Baltimore Sun*, October 3.
- Barg, Jeffrey. 2002. “Space Invaders.” *Philadelphia Weekly*, December 11, 31.
- Barrett, Wayne. 2000. *Rudy!: An Investigative Biography of Rudolph Giuliani*. New York: Basic Books.
- Benson, Clea, Cynthia Burton, and Jacqueline Soteropoulos. 2003. “Chaotic Day Marks End of Campaign.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5.
- Bissinger, Buzz. 1997. *A Prayer for the City*. New York: Random House.
- Bowser, Charles W. 1989. *Let the Bunker Burn: the Final Battle With MOVE*. Philadelphia: Camino Books.
- Boyette, Michael, with Randi Boyette. 1989. “Let It Burn!” *The Philadelphia Tragedy*. Chicago: Contemporary Books.
- Browning, Rufus P., Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, eds. 2002. *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman.
- Bulletin’s Frontrunner. 2003. “PA: Backlash Against FBI Investigation Boosting Street.” *Bulletin Broadfaxing Network, Inc.*, November 4.
- _____. 2002. “Katz Says He Wants to Challenge Street for Philadelphia Mayor.” *Bulletin Broadfaxing Network, Inc.*, December 13.
- Caruso, David B. “Charges Dismissed Against One in Corruption Probe.” Associated Press, July 27.
- _____. 2003. “Welcome to Urban Elections—Racially Split Voting Divides Philadelphia.” *Commercial Appeal* (Memphis, TN), June 29.
- CBS News/New York Times. 1991. *CBS News/New York Times New York City Mayoral Election Exit Poll, November 1989*. New York: CBS News.
- Ceaser, James W., and Andrew E. Busch. 2005. *Red Over Blue: The 2004 Elections and American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Center for Opinion Research. 2003. *September 2003 Philadelphia Mayoral Keystone Poll*. Lancaster: Floyd Institute for Public Policy, Franklin and Marshall College.
- Clark, Terry Nicholls, and Lorne Crowley Ferguson. 1983. *City Money*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Committee of Seventy. 2003a. “Municipal Primary Election on May 20, 2003.” Accessed at www.seventy.org/stats/503 results.html.

- _____. 2003b. "The Tale of the Tape." Accessed at www.seventy.org/nycu/2003.
- _____. 2003c. "The Great Flood." Accessed at www.seventy.org/nycu/2003.
- _____. 2003d. "Much Anticipated Sequel Ends in the First Scene." Accessed at www.seventy.org/nycu/2003.
- Dao, James. 2003. "Bugging Case Raises Racial Issues/Philadelphia Divided Over Devices Found in Mayor's Office." *Houston Chronicle*, October 12.
- Daughen, Joseph R. 2003. "Violent Ending to Campaigns." *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 5.
- Duffy, Shannon P. 2003. "Allocatur May Boost Support for Street." *The Legal Intelligencer*, October 22.
- Einhorn, Erin, and Dave Davies. 2003. "A Bug's-Eye View of First 72 Hours...and How Probe Helped Ensure Street Re-Election." *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 7.
- Fitzgerald, Thomas. 2003. "Street Coasted To Victory on Back of A Bug." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5.
- Fleming, Leonard N., Angela Couloumbis, and Michael Currie Schaffer. 2003. "Street Triumphs." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5.
- Getlin, Josh. 2003. "A Bug Worsens the Fever Pitch of Politics in Philadelphia." *Los Angeles Times*, October 12.
- Gibbons, Thomas J., Jr., L. Stuart Ditzen, and Joseph Tanfani, 2003. "Street Computer Seized." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 10.
- Gibson, John, and Heather Nauert. 2003. "Interview With Philadelphia Mayoral Candidate Sam Katz." *The Big Story With John Gibson*. Fox News Network (Transcript #102005cb.263), October 20.
- Goldenberg, Suzanne. 2003. "Dirty Tricks Claim Boosts Democrats' Election Chances in Philadelphia, but at cost of a deeper race divide: FBI bugging debacle gave the kiss of life to Mayor's Campaign." *The (Manchester) Guardian*, November 1.
- Harry, Margot. 1987. *Attention, MOVE! This is America!* Chicago: Banner Press.
- Hizkias Assefa. 1990. *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Judd, Dennis R., and Todd Swanstrom. 2004. *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy*, 4th ed. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Kirtzman, Andrew. 2000. *Rudy Giuliani: Emperor of the City*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Kraus, Jeffrey. 2002a. "A Tale of Two Cities: The 1999 Philadelphia Mayoral Election." *Commonwealth* 11: 71–82.
- _____. 2002b. "Mark Green and the Collapse of the Urban Democratic Coalition," paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, September.
- KYW-TV. 2004. "Seven Plead Not Guilty in Federal Indictments." 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. newscast, June 4.
- Levy, John M. 2000. *Urban America: Processes and Problems*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Lounsberry, Emille. 2004. "Kemp and White Face More Charges in Corruption Probe." Accessed at www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/special_packages/fbprobe.

- Lounsberry, Emille, Leonard N. Fleming, and Marcia Gelbart. 2004. "2 Key Pleas of Not Guilt." Accessed at www.philly.com/ml/d/inquirer/news/special_packages.
- Loviglio, Joann. 2003. "Echoes of Abscam Swirl Around Philadelphia Mayor FBI Probe Spurs Speculation." *Boston Globe*, October 12.
- Meyerson, Harold. 2003. "Harvesting Voters." *Washington Post*, November 12.
- Millersville University, Center for Politics and Public Affairs. 2003. "The Philadelphia Mayoral Race: Differences in Black and White." *Keystone Poll*.
- Mollenkopf, John. 2002. "New York: Still the Great Anomaly." In *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 3rd ed., eds. Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb. New York: Longman.
- National Public Radio. 2003. "Morning Edition." October 30.
- Nelson, Michael, ed. 2005. *The Elections of 2004*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission. 1986. *The Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission*. Philadelphia.
- Schamberg, Kirsten. 2003. "Brotherly Love? Not in this Election; In a plain nasty contest for mayor in Philadelphia, racial undertones and revelations of an FBI bug at City Hall have put the campaign 'off the charts.'" *Chicago Tribune*, October 13.
- Siegel, Harry. 2003. "The Streets of Philadelphia: Will the Mayor's Race Be a Dinkins-Giuliani Replay?" *Weekly Standard*, October 27, 13-14.
- Smith, Elmer. 2003. "The Bug Didn't Win Election For Street." *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 7.
- Sonenshein, Ralph J. 1993. *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stone, Clarence N. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Swickard, Joe. 1997. "Young Felt Targeted." *Detroit Free Press*, December 5.
- Wagner-Pacifici, Robin Erica. 1994. *Discourse and Destruction: the City of Philadelphia versus MOVE*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.