

## A Dirty Campaign's Dirty Laundry

When William F. Todd joined the staff of the Manhattan borough president's office earlier this month, the people who hired him were only vaguely aware—they say—of his political connections.

They definitely knew about his work with Cora Shelton, the East Harlem district leader. They say they didn't know he was the paid campaign manager of the recent scurrilous and abo-tive Civil-Court judgeship campaign of Helen Goldstein.

And I'm sure Andrew Stein and his aides didn't know that William Todd has been receiving public-assistance payments since 1976. As of last week, Todd's file at the St. Nicholas Welfare Center was still "active," according to a clerk there.

William Todd lives in Central Harlem, which is one of the reasons Stein decided to hire him. Stein's relations with the black community are poor, especially on the sensitive issue of filling jobs in the office with blacks. Now thinking of running for city comptroller should Harrison Goldin become state comptroller, Stein must combat this bad image among minorities because his chief opponent is likely to be Herman Badillo. But Stein and his aides have had trouble finding blacks to hire who are not already loyal to another politician.

Helen Goldstein's campaign chairman was one Gary Nicholson, who ran Marie Lambert's more successful campaign for Manhattan Surrogate last year—in which Todd had served as a volunteer. Nicholson is a political associate of Roy Cohn, a lawyer for mob leaders and former Joseph McCarthy counsel, and of Bronx Democratic boss Stanley Friedman.

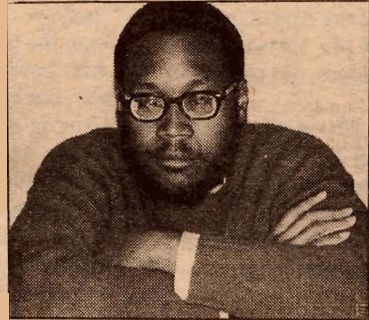
By his own account, Todd has worked in a number of political campaigns besides those of Lambert and Goldstein. He was a volunteer in Bella Abzug's mayoral and senatorial races and in a few local races as well. But, with his work in the Lambert race, Todd became involved with Nicholson. In turn, Nicholson brought him into Goldstein's campaign, which some opponents have denounced as "the dirtiest campaign in Manhattan in 20 years."

Goldstein is a 46-year-old lawyer from Brooklyn who decided she could buy her way onto the Civil Court in Manhattan with the help of Todd and Nicholson. She produced a large number of leaflets, shopping bags, and other campaign paraphernalia and radio and newspaper ads. The dirty part came in anonymous leaflets distributed in the heavy-voting Jewish community in Washington Heights and Inwood. The worst leaflet, which Todd says he "had nothing to do with," was attributed to a nonexistent "Manhattan Chapter of the Zionist Committee for Israel."

The leaflet calls this non-committee a "nonpolitical, nonpartisan organization that has been involved in every aspect of both secular and Jewish community life." Then follow warnings about PLO terrorism, Soviet repression of Jews,

# RUNNIN' SCARED

By Joe Conason



FRED W. MCDARRAH

William Todd

and ANTI-SEMITISM (sic).

Having gotten the elderly Jewish recipient good and paranoid, the leaflet's authors evaluated the Civil Court candidates. Alex Colgan was rated acceptable though lacking experience—but the kicker was: "Mr. Colgan has deep roots in the Hispanic community. . . ." Nuff said. Dino Zamuner was also rated acceptable, though also insufficiently versed in law. Another handicap: "Mr. Zamuner is active in the Roman Catholic parish of the Good Shepherd in Inwood."

These obvious appeals to bigotry were only the start. Shirley Fingerhood, the reform candidate, got five paragraphs of vitriolic abuse and was rated unacceptable. Why? "A careful reading of her resume shows her membership in the National Lawyers Guild." From there the authors extrapolate that Fingerhood supports the pro-Palestinian policies of the guild, and that she is anti-Semitic. The leaflet also falsely associates her with "Skokie-type Nazi demonstrations." No explanation of what this has to do with the Civil Court is offered. It is simply McCarthy-style redbaiting, updated.

Encomia to the virtues of Helen Goldstein ("highly qualified") cover the rest of the leaflet, along with a flattering picture. And on primary day, Goldstein's campaign workers handed out a shorter version of the same piece as a palm card, with the flip side entitled "official Democratic sample ballot." This listed the names of Goldstein and the members of her slate of delegates to the Manhattan judicial convention. Including William Todd. The Goldstein bio and picture were identical on both pieces.

Another black member of the slate—former assemblywoman Marie Runyo—denounced Goldstein and endorsed Fingerhood after she saw the literature described above. Fingerhood won.

Todd admits that he and Nicholson printed the palm cards but asserted that there were no factual errors in the material. When I pointed out that certain facts—such as Goldstein's Brooklyn residence—had been omitted, he shrugged and accused Fingerhood of claiming endorsements she

Todd refused to discuss his status with the Welfare department when I interviewed him in his office at the Municipal Building. He is to receive a \$14,000 salary from Stein as a "business development" specialist, but if he was getting home-relief payments while on Goldstein's payroll at \$150 a week, he may be guilty of fraud.

Meanwhile, the man who did the graphics for the Goldstein palm card is still waiting to be paid for his work by Nicholson. The night before the primary, Nicholson and Todd showed up at his studio and practically begged him to put together two pieces: one for Goldstein, the other for the East Village Community Democrats, led by Lambert contributor and friend Charles Bayor. (The latter piece was a denunciation of Carter Burden.) The graphic designer was wary of the last-minute request, but Nicholson paid him on the spot with a check. After the primary, on the check was stopped.

## Gary Nicholson, Republicanrat

There was a time when socialists used to refer to our two major parties interchangeably as "the Republicanrats"—but it is unlikely they ever dreamed that a Gary Nicholson would someday take the epithet so literally.

Readers may recall having seen Mr. Nicholson's name in this space recently, when I told the story of William Todd, the Andrew Stein aide who was paid to manage a judicial campaign while receiving public-assistance checks at the same time. Todd was later fired by Stein, in part because the literature Todd produced in that campaign was so repugnant. Todd's captain in that endeavor—Helen E. Goldstein's campaign for Civil Court judge—was Gary P. Nicholson, who was paid by Goldstein as a "consultant." Goldstein is a Democrat; so is Marie Lambert, the successful Surrogate candidate whose campaign Nicholson managed in 1977. So, indeed, are the East Village Community Democrats, whose last-minute leaflet attacking Carter Burden's primary candidacy was produced by Nicholson.

Nicholson now lives in Chelsea, where he makes no secret of his ambition to run for district leader next year, as a Democrat, of course. Why, then, is Nicholson—a young man who is said to be studying at Columbia—on the payroll of lame-duck Assembly minority leader Perry Belmont Duryea?

Nicholson picks up a \$510 check every two weeks at Duryea's quarters in the state office building at 270 Broadway. He's been getting it for the last six months. I went down there looking for him one afternoon last week, only to be informed by receptionist Joy Tannenbaum that Mr. Nicholson was not in at the moment. Tannenbaum, who is a leader of the Republican Party in New York County, didn't know exactly when he would be in, and acknowledged that Nicholson—a "research coordinator"—had neither a phone nor an office at 270 Broadway, although he is supposedly employed there "full time." I left my name, hoping that Nicholson would get the message the following payday.

Out in the hall, I met an adviser to Duryea. We swapped small talk about the tragedy of Perry's defeat and the wisdom of David Garth. Before moving on, I asked the man if a Gary Nicholson worked in Duryea's office. "No," he replied. "There's no one here by that name."

I finally got Nicholson's home phone number from the New York Republican county committee, but whenever I called he wasn't in.

When I asked some astute people why they thought Democrat Nicholson was on the payroll of the Republican Duryea, the answer went as follows: after Marie Lambert won the Democratic primary for Surrogate, certain reformers attempted to get a Republican-Liberal fusion candidacy started. But this was derailed by New York County Republican leader Vincent Albano—the

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would-be Comstock of Manhattan—whose passion for clean-up campaigns is confined to porno parlors rather than court houses. Albano refused to join the anti-Lambert crusade, thus assuring himself a cut of the Surrogate Court patronage. Somewhere in the workings of the deal, Lambert's manager Gary Nicholson got what seems to be a no-show, or rarely show job.

Stepping back from the squalid scene of Nicholson taking Republican booty, one can see Roy Cohn and Bronx Democratic boss Stanley Friedman lingering around the edges. Nicholson is no more than an operative of a group led by Cohn and Friedman which is seeking to revive the old Tammany machine in Manhattan. Nicholson's candidacy for district leader is to be one step in that campaign, whose elder statesman is none other than the great Carmine DeSapio. Cohn and Friedman's plan to control the Manhattan-Bronx judicial convention was frustrated earlier this fall, when their delegate slates in Manhattan were resoundingly defeated. But they haven't given up. The placement of William Todd in Stein's office was another part of the scenario that backfired. It can be hoped that Nicholson will likewise be dumped from the Assembly payroll, offering DeSapio's heirs another setback. The reformers now in control of Manhattan are a mixed and sometimes sordidly conservative bunch—but they are far preferable to their would-be rivals.