



Arnold's Secret Weapons

NOW EVERYONE IS ASKING: What kind of a governor will Arnold be? Some of his admirers are hoping he'll emulate Ronald Reagan. They should be careful what they wish for. Reagan raised taxes dramatically during his first year as governor to plug a massive budget deficit. His detractors hope he'll instead become another Jesse Ventura, who gave up being Minnesota's governor after one term and was generally viewed as an opportunist and publicity-hound. Not likely. Arnold is slicker, smarter and smoother than his former *Predator* co-star.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's flaws are as life-sized as his strengths, as shown by the extensively documented record of his boorish behavior towards women on movie sets in Hollywood. But no one can deny that his supersized ego brings with it a record of accomplishment. He is known both for his meticulous planning and his ability to charm groups large and small.

Now that Arnold has pulled off a political version of his film *Commando* and captured the governor's office in Sacramento, he has to come up with a second act. The early betting is that the Democratic legislature will oppose him. Senator John Vasconcellos, a 38-year-veteran of the legislature, declared the incoming governor "a boob" and someone unfit for him to deal with. Another state senator, Sheila Kuehl of Santa Monica, told the *Sacramento Bee* that the legislature will have to save California from "ignorance" now that the new governor is in town.

But more moderate Democrats know that Schwarzenegger's victory was a repudiation of left-wing control of state government. How else to explain his ability to capture half of the union vote, carry the votes of those earning under \$15,000 a year, and get a third of gay voters. The Democratic Leadership

Council is already urging its members to cooperate with Schwarzenegger, if for no other reason than they should fear the secret weapons he brings to any confrontation with them. They are in no particular order:

Talk Radio

Harold Meyerson, political editor of the *LA Weekly*, claims the state's "little Limbaughs" did incalculable damage in spreading "disinformation" about the state's fiscal crisis and tax burdens and turned the recall into a circus. But others disagree. "The recall has led to a public discourse about the problems of California on a magnitude that I have never seen," says A.G. Block, publisher of *California Journal*, a non-partisan magazine devoted to state government.

Talk radio hosts say that they reflected and amplified genuine citizen anger at such breathtakingly arrogant moves by Gray Davis as tripling the car tax, extending job discrimination protections to the transgendered and allowing illegal immigrants to obtain valid driver's licenses.

"Talk radio stands ready to hold Governor Arnold accountable for his promises," says the talk show host most credited with spurring the recall on, Melanie Morgan of KSFO in San Francisco. "But if the legislators block real reforms we will be on their case over and over."

No one in the legislature is unaware of the power of talk radio in a state where many people are stuck in traffic for hours listening to it. If Arnold is serious about reforming state government, he will have willing and powerful allies on the airwaves.

The Initiative

California's economy is picking up, as evidenced by the fact that tax revenues came in over projections by more than \$500 million in the most recent month for which figures are available. But the state still faces a

daunting budget deficit, and if Schwarzenegger is going to avoid raising taxes he will likely have to turn to the initiative process. His aides are already talking about going to the voters next March with a bond measure that would allow the state to pay off its accumulated deficit over a long time period of up to 30 years.

The governor may have to go the initiative route in other areas. He has already promised to restore the Gann limit, a 1979 initiative that limited the growth of state government to increases in population and inflation but which was watered down during the 1990s. The legislature, in thrall to trial lawyers, may balk at his proposed reforms in the state's workers compensation system, which has seen many businesses saddled with annual increases in premiums that exceed 45 percent.

The reason why Governor Schwarzenegger will be able to use the initiative process to do an end-run around the legislature is simple: money. "This is a guy who can raise large amounts of money from non-traditional sources," says columnist Bill Bradley of the *LA Weekly*. Sal Russo, a leader in the fight to recall Governor Davis, agrees: "The business community has been decimated by the bad economy, but if anyone can revive them and get them to contribute to initiative campaigns it's probably Arnold."

And if all else fails, don't forget that Schwarzenegger contributed some \$8 million to his own campaign and could conceivably pony up some personal funds again. No one has forgotten that Arnold's political debut came last year when he contributed seed money for an initiative to promote after-school programs. It won 57 percent of the vote, carrying 50 out of the state's 53 Congressional districts.

Charisma

"One of the things about celebrities is that people like to spend time with them," says Darrell West, a Brown University professor and author of *Celebrity Politics*. "So if he draws them into his orbit, he is more likely to have success."

Schwarzenegger is likely to share the stage and the credit with state legislators if they cooperate with him. He will bring fawning coverage from the nonpolitical media that legislators can only dream of getting. "I'm sure we'll do periodic checks on how he's handling a whole different kind of pressure," says Linda Bell Blue, executive director of *Entertainment Tonight*.

On the other hand, Schwarzenegger will also have

the ability to visit the districts of recalcitrant legislators and make his case before their local media. If his agenda is blocked, Schwarzenegger could go around legislators much as fellow actor Ronald Reagan did when he was governor. "Ronald Reagan knew he was far more popular and well-known than anyone in the legislature," Reagan biographer Lou Cannon told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "Those guys [lawmakers] knew Reagan had the power to go to the people and they didn't. Schwarzenegger has that, too."

The culture of Sacramento will also change with the return of major news coverage of politics by Los Angeles and San Francisco TV stations. None of them has had a bureau in Sacramento for decades. A news director of one L.A. station once told columnist Michael Barone, "I suppose if anything happens up there, we could send a crew up for the day."

Those days are over: "The state legislature will have to live with a new reality that the days when they can operate under a rock without any real coverage are over," says Tony Quinn, a co-author of the non-partisan *California Target Book*, an analysis of state government. "Governor Schwarzenegger will attract coverage like a magnet."

True enough, but it begs the question: What will he do? He enters office having issued only general position papers on issues, having made both promises not to raise taxes and not to cut education funding. "He could use his great power to move things in a conservative direction or become a RINO—a Republican In Name Only," says former State Senator John Lewis.

Perhaps the best stance for conservatives to take is to watch and verify, giving the new governor the benefit of the doubt in the early rounds but always with the understanding that they will place principle ahead of celebrity. For his part, Governor Schwarzenegger has made some good early moves. The director of his much-touted audit of the state budget is Donna Arduin, the budget director for Governor Jeb Bush of Florida, who is best known for squeezing enough out of state government to allow her boss to keep his commitment to not raise taxes. Like Ronald Reagan, Governor Schwarzenegger appears to be a man who knows how to find talented people to carry out the details while he tames the media and communicates with the public. Given his success in life so far, I certainly wouldn't bet against his succeeding. *

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Arianna of Brentwood

HOW DID ARIANNA HUFFINGTON, one-time conservative Republican, become a liberal?" asked the press during the California recall. Very easily: She began her public career as one.

In the early 1970s, as president of the Cambridge Union, Huffington appeared in a debate on free market economics with William F. Buckley, Jr., and socialist John Kenneth Galbraith—on Galbraith's side. The irony of her vociferous opposition to Arnold Schwarzenegger during the California recall election is that he represents the same threadbare, gimmicky liberal Republicanism that she once did.

Reporters in search of the "real Arianna" troubled themselves too much. There is not much to find. They scrutinized a mind that had nothing on it save stale liberal nostrums she cobbled together at Cambridge and has been repackaging ever since.

The media assumed Huffington suddenly became a liberal flake. The truth is that she always was one. Though she wrote a few books with pretentious titles like *After Reason*—two of which drew charges of plagiarism—she has always preferred celebrity to seriousness. The Greek daughter of a cigar-smoking mother and an AWOL father, described in the press as a gambler and womanizer, she has a need for attention that appears bottomless.

After Cambridge, Huffington waded into celebrity culture, on both sides of the pond. Her oft-cited affair with *London Times* columnist Bernard Levin didn't begin in a library; they met on a game show. When not appearing on British entertainment shows, she hosted them. She served as hostess of "Saturday Night at the Mill" but only lasted for four episodes. The gig was up when viewers complained to the sta-

tion about her undecipherable Greek accent.

She then moved to New York and ingratiated herself with America's elite, earning a reputation as the "most upwardly mobile Greek since Icarus." She befriended *Cosmo's* Helen Gurley Brown; exercised with Barbara Walters; dated Mort Zuckerman, Jerry Brown and est guru Werner Erhard; and became a minister in the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness founded by the checkered guru John-Roger.

Her Cambridge forensics training proved useful in misleading Republicans. At the Union, she learned to argue both sides of a position. She was a liberal one day, a conservative the next. As Republicans rose to congressional power in the 1990s, her liberalism conflicted with her desire to climb with them, so she revised it and turned her forensics skills toward currying favor with Newt Gingrich, whom she lionized so long as he was riding high.

Not all conservatives were gulled by Huffington's right-wing cocktail-circuit act and paens to moral renewal (a posture that didn't stop her from supporting Hollywood libertinism). In a review of her Picasso-bashing biography, the *New Criterion's* Hilton Kramer dismissed her as a lightweight who had written a book that was mini-series material. He concluded that, on the subject of art, "Mrs. Huffington clearly knows nothing."

William Dannemeyer, after debating Arianna Huffington in her husband Michael's stead during the 1994 California Senate primary, also sized her up as a faker. He told the press, "I'm running against a missing person. His wife is the one with the ambition, who wants to buy this Senate seat on the way to the White House." The Huffingtons were liberals masquerading as Republicans, he argued. Why didn't his opponent "re-register, as a Democrat?" he asked.

All of the flip-flopping and flakiness characteristic