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How Pataki Can Make Giuliani's Life Miserable

THE REPUBLICANS finally did it. Twenty years after Malcolm Wilson lost to Hugh Carey, the Republicans have won the governorship - and they did it the hard way, beating the tag-team of Mario Cuomo and Rudy Giuliani, coached by Dave Garth.

But this is a new cast of Republicans, different from the Rockefeller bankers who once controlled the GOP. Al D'Amato and George Pataki are ideologically allied with the Conservative Party and its enormous base of white Catholic voters and guided by backroom professionals such as State Republican leader Bill Powers, Suffolk County leader Howard DeMartini and Bronx State Senator Guy Velella.

Now that the GOP has finally won control of the state, it has some tough decisions to make - which have little to do with policy. Rather, Pataki and his patron, Sen. D'Amato, must decide the future direction of the party. Three questions to consider:

1. Will Pataki and D'Amato seek revenge on Rudy Giuliani, who abandoned them to campaign for the "ultra-liberal" three-term Democratic Governor Mario Cuomo?

Giuliani - who during the campaign never resisted an opportunity to attack Pataki and D'Amato - could soon discover the many ways a governor can make a mayor's life miserable. Pataki could revitalize the State Financial Control Board, an agency that determines whether the municipal budget is balanced. Under Gov. Hugh Carey, Steve Berger was the executive director of the board, and he, not Mayor Abe Beame, controlled city spending. In recent years, the Financial Control Board has evolved into a paper tiger, issuing intelligent reports, but never embarrassing the mayor - be it Ed Koch, David Dinkins or Giuliani.

Pataki could also forge an alliance with Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines, the mayor's favorite whipping-boy. The Board of Education, technically under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Education, could be reorganized with the authority to raise its own revenue. This would give the parents of school children a direct voice in the financing and governance of the city's schools, just like suburban parents. And Giuliani's role would be diminished.

Or, Gov. Pataki could emulate Nelson Rockefeller, who appointed the Scott Commission to assess the performance of city government. A similar commission perhaps led by George Marlin, former Conservative Party mayoral candidate could criticize the Giuliani administration. And Pataki would not have to say one harsh word.

Pataki also doesn't have to play the heavy when it comes to state aid. There is absolutely no

reason for Pataki to reject the mayor's request for additional state monies, because his hands will be tied. The governor-elect's promise to cut personal income taxes will make it virtually impossible to help the mayor out of his fiscal crisis.

Pataki, however, should resist the temptation to punish Giuliani by cutting state aid the city. It is both too obvious and too politically mean-spirited. And besides, it would not hurt Pataki to expand his base by being kind to New York City.

2. Will Pataki punish Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino? During the gubernatorial campaign, Marino appeared publicly with Cuomo and took his time endorsing Pataki.

Ralph Marino may be worried about his job as Senate Majority Leader, but the governor-elect should act like a statesman and let him stay on. There is no need to kill your enemies within the legislature; it's more effective to be generous in victory. Someone has to persuade the Senate Republicans to cut spending as well as taxes. Why not let Marino do it?

3. Will Pataki build a new Republican party, which will seriously lower taxes and reduce regulations - rather than just nourish GOP county leaders with patronage and pork?

To be an effective governor, Pataki must transform the Republican Party from a collection of individual fiefdoms into a coherent party that can run state government. He must attract a new cadre of energetic, bright staffers who will prune state government and privatize where it makes sense. This will be difficult, since many Republican politicians - just like Democrats - believe that the purpose of state government is to provide jobs to the faithful and state contracts for their contributors.

Pataki must disabuse them of this notion. That could be tougher than winning the election - especially when Republicans have been out of office for 20 years. Now that the GOP has broken the Democratic lock on the state capitol, they've got to learn to break their own bad habits.