

Rockefeller Steals a Reagan Flag as the Passions Rise

Special to The New York Times

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Aug. 17 — Light-heartedly, Vice President Rockefeller stole a Reagan-for-President sign from a North Carolina delegate on the floor of the Republican Convention tonight.

But this session, the show-down over a controversial rules amendment that tests

At the Convention

the strength of the Reagan and Ford teams, was not in a lighthearted mood.

In angry retaliation, a delegate from Utah stormed across the aisle to the New York seats, Mr. Rockefeller said, and ripped out the white telephone that links the delegation to the Ford control trailer.

And suddenly there was a milling mob at the edge of the New York seats. Delegates, security people and news reporters converged. The reddish, bald head of Richard N. Rosenbaum, who was appointed New York state chairman when Mr. Rockefeller was Governor, appeared above flailing arms.

Then the crowd parted and Mr. Rockefeller, grinning broadly, posed for the cameras holding the white telephone and its dismembered white cord high in the air.

'Clear the Aisles'

"Mr. Vice President, ladies and gentlemen, please clear the aisles," pleaded the convention's temporary chairman, Sen. Robert Dole.

"He held it up. He wanted me to take it," said a laughing Mr. Rockefeller, perspiration soaking his blue-and-white striped shirt. He had shed his suit jacket to join his New York neighbors in their delegation seats.

"Anyway," he said, still grinning, "I gave it back to him"—neglecting to mention that he had ripped the sign in half first.

It was, Mr. Rockefeller said after the hubbub quieted, "the light side of the convention."

But the passions had clearly risen. Signals were being called from shoulder-to-shoulder trailers in a corner of Kemper Arena as the Reagan and Ford forces fought over Rule 16-C, the rules amendment that would have required a Presidential candidate to name his Vice-Presidential

choice before the nomination roll-call.

The information that flowed by telephone and walkie-talkie between those command posts and the operatives amid the shoving crowds on the convention floor foreshadowed, but only in part, the key vote that will be taken tomorrow on the nomination itself.

"One of our biggest arguments," said F. Clifton White, the commander in the Ford trailer who was fighting Rule 16-C "was that it precludes Ronald Reagan as a Vice-Presidential candidate."

The competing message from the Reagan side, which designed the rules proposal, was, according to some targets of it: "Even if you can't go along with us on the nomination, give us a hand on this."

Some of the Ford operatives wore, for easy identification amid the floor swirl,

bright red or yellow caps. The peak of the power pyramid, for both the Reagan and Ford teams, was in the two unobtrusive trailers, their interior accommodations subtly different in tone but as similar in technical maneuvers as their mission—which was, explained Mr. White, to translate the apparent chaos on the floor into "data and fact susceptible to rational thinking."

Tonight Mr. Reagan's moon-faced, chain-smoking manager, John P. Sears, and Anderson Carter, the mountainous New Mexican who is campaign field coordinator, had posts on a slightly raised platform at the end of the Reagan trailer, facing two rows of open cubbyholes in which workers responsible for clusters of states punched buttons on console telephones that linked them to Reagan operatives on the floor. Each had his own tele-

vision monitor.

David Harris, a 28-year-old Washington stockbroker who was in charge, picked up a red "hot-line" to the telephone company to check the Reagan network. Last night it had suddenly gone out of operation for 10 minutes. "So we started ranting and raving and screaming and got them fixed," he said.

There was a slightly more slovenly feel to the decor in the Ford trailer a few steps away, where Mr. White, a man with aquiline features and the long-haired look of a Shakespearean actor, and James Baker III, sharp-faced, dark-haired, intense, had the command seats at a side table facing six telephone talkers linked to the floor.

Out there amid the floor crowds were 11 "floaters" who wore yellow hats so that their whereabouts would be apparent on the TV screens and who were in walkie-

talkie contact with the trailer. They were dispatched to potential trouble spots among the delegations. An equal number of Ford workers in red hats were area whips.

No doubt unintentionally, the color division matched that of the Lamaist religion of Tibet, where the red hats represent a lenient tradition (marriage is even permitted them), the yellow hats a fundamentalist group dedicated to celibacy, abstinence and rigid obedience.

None of the latter traits have been put to serious public test in this convention town.

The Ford trailer manager, David N. Bottoms, a 37-year-old lawyer from Pelham, N.Y., doubled on occasion as a yellow hat out on the floor.

The arrangements out there were as varied as the state-by-state level of irritation between the competing teams.

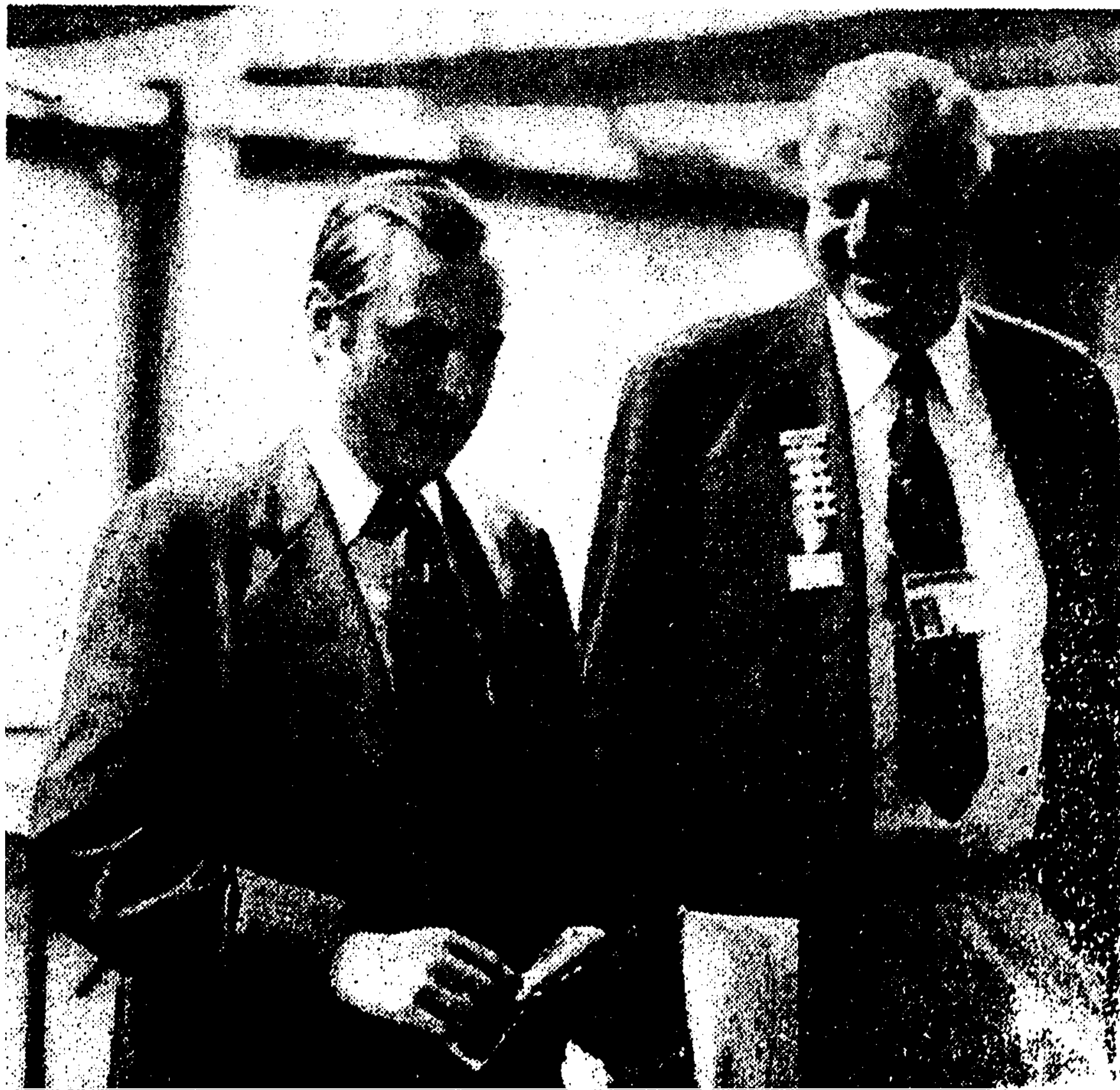
The Reagan forces in the New York delegation, just across the red-carpeted aisle from Pennsylvania, had to use Nevada's telephone. Richard C. Rosenbaum, the state chairman, has been conducting a bare-knuckles battle against Brooklyn's George C. Clark, the Reagan man, and he would not let a Reagan telephone be installed amid the New York seats.

But that sort of squabble reflected a local feud that—oddly, given the stakes—did not seem to translate to the peak of the power pyramid.

"Let's make sure we share Coca-Cola," Mr. Bottoms, the Ford trailer commander said to Mr. Harris, the Reagan trailer commander. Mr. Harris nodded.

Outside the trailers the other night, workers emerged now and again for a cigarette, a stretch, a breath of the hot and humid air, which was somehow more human than the sinus-plaguing air-conditioned fridity inside.

In the glow of the spotlights protruding from the white-painted wall of the arena, the workers mingled. Veterans of old campaigns against the Democrats, now temporary competitors, they talked and joked. Mr. White stepped out of the Ford trailer and looked over at Lynn Nofziger of the Reagan team. He grinned toward the Reagan trailer. "Half of my old gang is in there," he said.



Rogers C. B. Morton, right, President Ford's campaign manager, and John Sears, his counterpart for Ronald Reagan, meet before making separate interviews for television.

The New York Times

Published: August 18, 1976

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