

## Is Dukakis the new Senator Eagleton?

*Here is the text of the National Democratic Policy leaflet that sparked the international uproar about Dukakis's mental state, as it was printed and circulated at the Democratic Party National Convention in Atlanta July 18-21. In the "Documentation" section that follows, we quote the sources on which the leaflet was based.*

Before you, as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, make any final decision as to whom to support for the party's presidential nomination, you should give careful consideration to evidence available in the public domain which casts serious doubt on Gov. Dukakis's ability to carry out the duties of the presidency. The sources for such evidence include two biographies of Gov. Dukakis. These are *Dukakis: An American Odyssey*, by Charles Kenney and Robert L. Turner (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988) and *Dukakis: The Man Who Would Be President*, by Richard Gaines and Michael Segal (New York: Avon Books, 1988). Some details are also corroborated by the profile of Dukakis published in *Time* magazine (June 20, 1988), and by a three-part profile which appeared in the *Washington Post* (July 10, 11, 12, 1988). Since all of this material is widely known, we must assume that the Bush campaign is fully aware of it, and that Bush may be planning to use these questions as a weapon against the Democratic ticket later in the campaign. In view of the vast potential damage to our party, Gov. Dukakis must respond to these questions before his name is placed in nomination for President.

First, there is strong evidence that Michael Dukakis suffers from a deep-seated mental instability that could paralyze him, and decapitate our government, in the event of a severe economic or strategic crisis. This is a tendency for psychological breakdown in a situation of adversity and perceived personal rejection. This tendency appears to be linked to his family background. In 1972, Senator Eagleton of Missouri was disqualified as our party's vice-presidential nominee because of his history of depression and electro-shock treatments. The evidence strongly suggests that Michael Dukakis ought to disqualify himself for the same general order of reasons.

Secondly, there is persuasive evidence that Dukakis is not qualified to make economic policy as President in a time of economic depression and financial panic. The record suggests that Dukakis is a cruel, ruthless, technocratic elitist whose instinct and pedigree incline him to policies of savage austerity at the expense of the unemployed, welfare victims, and others among the poorest and most defenseless members of our society. There are indications that Gov. Dukakis's cognition of human suffering and of the human price of the austerity he proposes has been brutalized by his mental disorder.

By pedigree, Mike Dukakis is a puppet of "the Vault," a group of Boston Brahmin banks and insurance companies grouped around the Hill and Barlow law firm. In his first term as Governor of Massachusetts, Dukakis cut \$311 million from the welfare program, throwing 18,000 long-term unemployed off the welfare rolls. On those still receiving payments, Dukakis sought to impose workfare, forced labor at pay scales below the minimum wage. At the time, Congressman Barney Frank attacked Dukakis as "a governor who, since the day he came into office, has been waging war against the poor. This workfare program is a disgrace." Dukakis repealed the state's commitment to help the needy and indigent who had no place else to turn. The symbol of Dukakis's first term as governor became the murderous meat cleaver he used to hack away at social programs. Don't let anyone convince you that Dukakis is a humane liberal. And don't let anyone tell you that the new, post-1982 Dukakis is any different from the old one. The new Dukakis has continued to promote 12, quasi-public semi-autonomous agencies which he calls "job-creating public-private partnerships" but which are in reality a carbon copy of the Mussolini fascist corporate state. The Democratic Speaker of the Massachusetts House said in 1978 that the prospect of a second term for Dukakis made him want to "throw up." The Democratic State Senate President Kevin B. Harrington called Dukakis "a chief executive who is unable to govern effectively." Rep. Barney Frank said of Dukakis that "by his own conscious, deliberate choices he exacerbated that situation and inflicted social damage far beyond what had to occur."

Dukakis was resoundingly defeated in the Democratic primary of Sept. 19, 1978 when he sought renomination as governor. This was the most significant moment of adversity in Dukakis's life, and can be regarded as a crucial experiment to give insight into the strength of his character. Dukakis reacted to defeat with a virtual nervous breakdown. Andrew Sutcliffe, Dukakis's appointments secretary, recalls that the governor became "very dejected. . . . He would spend long periods sitting in his office, introspectively staring out the window." Close aide Alan Johnson described Dukakis as being "depressed and sullen. . . . He was stunned." Kenney and Turner write that Dukakis "was obviously in shock." The same authors recount that "Don Lipsitt, also a friend and

psychiatrist, says that the process of recovery was a slow one." Kitty Dukakis has stated that the experience was "horrible," "horrendous," "a public death" and a "period of mourning." Kenney and Turner quote Kitty Dukakis that "her husband became so depressed, she recalls now, 'that at one point I was really worried about him.'" The same authors refer to the period as "an episode of horror" and "nightmarish." Gaines and Segal write that Dukakis was "somber, hurt, and distraught." The *Washington Post* described this time as "like shock treatment" and "a mid-life change."

The finding that Dukakis suffered a debilitating mental breakdown is buttressed by a history of frank mental illness in his only sibling, his deceased elder brother Stelian. Stelian suffered a breakdown in 1951, in the course of which he was institutionalized for three to four months at Baldpate Hospital, a private mental hospital in Georgetown, Mass., where he was subjected to insulin and shock treatment. According to Euterpe Dukakis, Stelian attempted suicide on one occasion. According to published sources, Michael Dukakis cannot remember this. Stelian received psychiatric treatment for much of his adult life. During one of Mike Dukakis's election campaigns, Stelian distributed leaflets urging voters to vote against his own brother, Michael. No copies of this leaflet survive in the public domain. On March 17, 1973, Stelian was struck by a hit-and-run driver while riding his bicycle. Stelian never regained consciousness and died on July 29, 1973, after more than four months in a coma. The hit-and-run driver was never apprehended. Michael Dukakis says there is much he does not remember about his brother Stelian, including his suicide attempt. Dukakis also claimed to be unaware of his wife Kitty's twenty-six-year amphetamine dependency. Such ignorance of those around him gives a clue to Dukakis's cold aloofness, and may be psychopathological. George Bush has been rightly ridiculed for his "I didn't know" defense on Irangate-Contragate. What then can be said about Gov. Dukakis, who simply ignored the acute suffering of his own wife and brother? If the suffering of a wife and brother is a matter of such indifference, how can poor and needy citizens far away from the Dukakis family hope for compassion?

Michael Dukakis has a documented, long-term personal and family pattern of mental instability. That pattern makes questions like the following ones mandatory: If President Dukakis were to undergo a severe setback under stress, such as a new "Black Monday" financial panic or confrontation with an external enemy, would he go to pieces? Would he withdraw into himself? Would he become catatonic, as certain indices suggest he did in 1978, and leave this nation leaderless and adrift? Does Dukakis exhibit a psychological dependency on certain figures of the Kennedy School at Harvard who helped shepherd him out of his crisis? Why are psychiatrists so prominent a part of his personal circle of friends? In short, is Michael Dukakis his own man, or is he a

broken man? Given the crises this nation must overcome between 1989 and 1993, no delegate dare vote for Dukakis until these questions have received a satisfactory answer.

- Dukakis's call to collect \$110 billion in unpaid taxes is a thinly veiled call for an IRS police state.
- Dukakis is committed to implement the austerity targets of the Bob Strauss-Drew Lewis National Economic Commission in a "hundred days" of genocidal austerity.
- Dukakis is considering Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Frères, the elitist technocrat who wrecked New York City in 1975, as his Secretary of the Treasury.
- Dukakis is the tool of foreign bankers who hold U. S. Treasury bonds and control the public debt of the U. S. A.

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## Documentation

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# The facts of the case

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The entire contents of the NDPC "Eagleton" leaflet was drawn from material readily available in the public domain. One of the most useful sources is *Dukakis: An American Odyssey*, a very laudatory biography written by two *Boston Globe* reporters, Charles Kenney and Robert L. Turner. *Dukakis: The Man Who Would Be President*, by Richard Gaines and Michael Segal, is also useful, as are profiles of Dukakis published in the July 25, 1988 *Newsweek*, the June 29 *Time*, and the July 10, 11, and 12 *Washington Post*.

### I. Dukakis's mental instability

*The NDPC leaflet reads: "First, there is strong evidence that Michael Dukakis suffers from a deep-seated mental instability that could paralyze him, and decapitate our government, in the event of a severe crisis. This is a tendency for psychological breakdown in a situation of adversity and perceived personal rejection. . . . Dukakis reacted to [his 1978 gubernatorial defeat] with a virtual nervous breakdown. . . ."*

#### Sources:

1) *Dukakis: An American Odyssey*, by Charles Kenney and Robert L. Turner (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), 1988.

Chapter 6, dealing with Dukakis's 1978 election defeat, is entitled "Rejection," and reads, in part (pp. 129-131):

"The defeat was an episode of horror, the kind from

which one would awake and, recalling the details, shudder. It was nightmarish, but it was no nightmare. There was nothing in his past to prepare Dukakis for the pain of this experience. It was true that he had lost elections before, but he had never been turned out of office. It was crushing. He had achieved his lifelong dream—he was governor of Massachusetts—and now it was gone, rudely, swiftly ripped away from him. . . .

“The sickening knowledge that he had run a one-horse, complacent campaign became all too clear. . . . He had blown it. He would later characterize it as ‘the worst day of my life.’

“So great was the pain of the defeat for Kitty Dukakis that almost seven years later, during an interview with a reporter from the Associated Press, Kitty said, ‘Oh, it was horrible. It was just horrendous. That was terrible, I mean, it was like a public death.’ Her husband became so depressed, she recalls now, ‘that at one point I was really worried about him.’

“‘It was a terrible loss,’ she says. For two to three months after the defeat he went through what she describes as a ‘period of mourning,’ when ‘he was quieter at home, preoccupied more than usual.’ He didn’t know what he would do in the short run and was by no means sure that he would ever again seek public office. . . .

“Andrew Sutcliffe, Dukakis’s appointments secretary at the time, recalls the governor’s being ‘very dejected. . . . He would spend long periods sitting in his office, introspectively staring off into space.’

“Normally, Dukakis was the most optimistic man around the governor’s office, always looking on the bright side. But there was no pretension now that there *was* a bright side. Alan Johnson, who was deputy chief of staff and had been one of Dukakis’s closest aides since 1970, describes Dukakis as being ‘depressed and sullen. . . . He was stunned. We were all just incredulous. . . . For the several months afterward, a lot of that time was just a painful blur. We had been the crusaders, the righteous heroes in ’74 and ’75, and it was inconceivable that we could possibly lose.’

“Although Kitty and others worried at times that he would become seriously depressed, Dukakis says he didn’t seek professional counseling. In fact, he says, he has never consulted a psychiatrist, not after his defeat, not after Stelian’s breakdown or death.

“Dukakis says of himself that he is not very introspective, and most of his responses to the defeat were brief, but there were times when he did air his personal thoughts in public. Dr. John E. Mack, a Brookline neighbor and distinguished psychiatrist, remembers Dukakis’s speaking to the International Society of Political Psychology some months after the primary. ‘It was a rare event,’ Mack says. ‘He was reflecting out loud on his own pain, his own hurt, his own mistakes. . . . He was still trying to grow from in—not just as a shrewd tactician but really taking it in. . . .’

“Don Lipsitt, also a friend and psychiatrist, says that the

process of recovery was a slow one, partly because the setback was such a stunning surprise. ‘He was grieving,’ says Lipsitt.”

2) *Dukakis: The Man Who Would Be President*, by Richard Gaines and Michael Segal (New York: Avon Books, 1987; published in hardcover as *Dukakis and the Reform Impulse*).

From Chapter 16, “The Out-of-Office Campaign,” pp. 217-218:

“Mike Dukakis had been a lame duck for less than twenty-four hours on September 20 when he met with his senior staff in Room 360, the governor’s office that would be his for another three and a half depression months. He was somber, hurt and distraught about what had happened. . . .

“Dukakis withdrew to recall and examine four years in the progression of a career built on lofty, if not faulty, assumptions that had led to failure. His self-confidence was destroyed. All his assumptions—about human nature, about the rewarding of virtue, about the way to lead a democracy—had been shattered. How wrong he had been about so many basic things. His hubris gone, he was humbled. He stopped Mike Widmer after the primary. ‘Am I really that awful? Am I really that cold? Am I really that bad?’ ”

3) *Newsweek*, July 25, 1988, p. 39:

“The story of Dukakis’s pain at that humiliating rejection is firmly fixed in Massachusetts political lore. He brooded over what Kitty called ‘a public death’; he apologized to his staff; he went off to rethink his life and career. He and Kitty took a couple of vacations, one on Nantucket with John and their two little girls . . . the other with Kitty alone in Jamaica. Neither was a happy escape. Dukakis had to wait out the dreary months between his loss and [Democratic rival Ed] King’s inauguration [as governor]. After that, his friend Hale Champion, a former Harvard administrator, called the dean of Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government to offer an endorsement of Dukakis for a teaching job.”

4) *Newsweek*, July 25, 1988, p. 37:

Quoting Dukakis’s stepson, John: “Losing was pain of the most personal kind. . . . Off and on after that, Dad was either impassive, or else he was kicking himself around any room he was in. He wasn’t sleeping. I’d walk into their room and find him on his back, staring at the ceiling. All the wheels were turning.”

5) *The Washington Post*, July 10, 1988:

“For a politician known for a stubborn belief in his own inerrancy—as a child, he would stay in his room for hours rather than wear the socks selected by his mother—the realization that his career in elective office might be over functioned like shock treatment, prompting a mid-life change in character and policy.”

## II. Stelian Dukakis’s breakdown

*The NDPC leaflet reads: “The finding that Dukakis suffered a debilitating mental breakdown is buttressed by a*

*history of frank mental illness in his only sibling, his deceased elder brother, Stelian. Stelian suffered a breakdown in 1951."*

**Sources:**

1) From Kenney and Turner, *Dukakis: An American Odyssey*:

"Stelian, a junior at Bates College in Maine, had a severe attack of depression. He returned home and shortly thereafter tried to kill himself. Family members are extremely reluctant to discuss the incident, and usually refer to it as a 'nervous breakdown.' But Mrs. [Euterpe] Dukakis confirms there was a suicide attempt. Asked what happened, she replies: 'Do we have to talk about it?'

"Of Stelian's breakdown, Michael says, 'It came out of the blue, just bang-o. . . . He called up and said he was coming home. He was deeply depressed, couldn't function. It was a total breakdown, almost. . . .'

"Incredibly, Michael says he does not remember whether Stelian tried to kill himself. He remembers the breakdown, but recalls few details. Asked specifically whether his brother tried to take his own life, Michael replies, 'He came close.' But then, whether it was kept from him or he has repressed it,' he doesn't elaborate. 'I don't quite remember what happened,' he says. 'I remember my dad was involved. I remember a doctor being called. . . . This was at home, after he came home.' Asked if Stelian took pills, Michael answers, 'Might have, but I remember something happened and my dad brought a psychiatrist in and the decision was made to institutionalize him. It was obvious something was *very* wrong.' " (p. 32)

"For Stelian had been disturbed, had experienced periods of odd behavior and unbalanced emotions, ever since his breakdown in 1951. After Stelian went home from school that spring, he was institutionalized for three or four months at Baldpate Hospital in Georgetown, a private facility north of Boston, where, according to Dukakis, he got the basic recognized treatments for mental illness at the time, insulin and shock treatment. He responded, returned to Bates, and graduated in 1953 with a major in government. His yearbook notes that he was called 'Duke,' that he was a classical music lover, that he was on the cross-country and track teams and a member of the International Relations Club for his first three years, and that he 'took a short vacation.' Stelian received psychiatric treatment for much of his adult life, but his recovery from the original trauma was sufficient that he lived on his own. . . .

"After Stelian's breakdown, situations began to arise in which he seemed to compete with Michael's record—and usually fell short. In 1958, seven years after Michael ran the Boston Marathon, Stelian entered the race, but dropped out after 16 miles. In 1960, Stelian was at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles supporting Adlai Stevenson; Michael was there favoring John Kennedy. Later, Stelian's political efforts became more personal.

"In the most bizarre and hurtful episode, Stelian went

around Brookline one evening, dropping off leaflets that urged people to vote against his brother. The details are sketchy; no copy of the leaflet apparently survives. There is even some uncertainty about when the incident occurred, though [Dukakis ally Fran] Meaney is sure it was during Michael's first campaign for re-election to the House, in 1964. According to Dukakis, Meaney and Cohen, the leaflet was not simply supporting another candidate. It was clearly from Stelian and it argued against Michael. Meaney believed that Stelian asserted in the leaflet that he intended to run against Michael himself. When word of the flyers got out, Dukakis's supporters quickly followed Stelian's trail, trying to retrieve them before they were read. . . .

"When he is asked about Stelian, Dukakis frequently mentions the increased public understanding of youthful depression. 'In those days,' he says, 'we were, I think, less open about this kind of thing. These days you have [groups] led largely by the parents of children that have had this problem. I remember a group of them coming to see me, and I was so impressed by the fact that they were very open about it, they weren't blaming themselves.' Now, Dukakis does not shrink from questions about his brother, but there is much he doesn't remember, including Stelian's presence at the Los Angeles convention, his role as a member of the Democratic Town Committee in Brookline, and even, so he says, the very fact of his suicide attempt. And there are a number of intimate friends who say Dukakis has never shared such details. Even Don and Merna Lipsitt, a psychiatrist and his wife who had been close to the family for twenty-five years, were kept in the dark. Merna believes that, since Stelian was very close to Michael, 'possibly he has repressed that because it's so painful that he really doesn't remember.' Don says that frequently, while Stelian was still alive, 'Michael would ask me questions of a professional nature.' He says Michael wished for improvement in Stelian so earnestly that he was somewhat unrealistic. 'He thought you should be able to go to a physician and it should be fixed up,' Don says. 'He had a tendency to want to diminish the seriousness.' " (pp. 73-77)

2) *Newsweek*, July 25, 1988:

"His [Stelian's] breakdown happened after the breakup of a romance in his junior year. The diagnosis was vague; he was hospitalized for insulin and shock treatments. Stelian was never quite the same again. He had good and bad periods, in and out of therapy. . . . In his bad times the family didn't see him; he kept to himself, brooding, and there were occasional reports of heavy drinking, overpassionate political arguments and eccentric behavior. One night in 1973, riding his bicycle in the dark, Stelian was struck by a hit-and-run driver. He was in a coma for four-and-a-half agonizing months. Michael and Kitty visited daily at first, then every other day. Hopes would rise when Stelian's grip would tighten briefly, or he seemed to respond to a word, but it was an illusion. One day he was gone."