

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Gracie Mansion

Jerry Krase (January 07, 2014)



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that he has received more negative press attention than Michael Bloomberg did during his three terms (12 years). Much of this chatter concerns Bill's less than perfect New Year's Day Inauguration extravaganza on the always slippery (*sempre scivoloso*) steps of City Hall. I kinda new something bad was going to happen when I wasn't invited to attend the historic inauguration of the second half-Italian Mayor ever in history. In contrast, I had been invited to all three of Bloomberg's and was even thanked three times by him, along with some A.I.P.s (Actually Important People) in his printed inauguration programs for the use of my photos of diverse city neighborhoods. I wondered whether Bill might recycle them like the Bloomberg staffers he is retaining, I think, because he hardly expected to win. Had Bill Thompson or Christine Quinn won, every open position would have been filled the day after the election by what's left of the Democratic Party patronage machine. The toothless county Bosses would have lined up at least three (more or less qualified) candidates for each show and/or no show jobs. Being out of power for twenty years makes for hungry political club members.

However, I did receive an invitation for the Gracie Mansion Inauguration Open House and went with my wife and two of my five grandchildren. My friend Michael stood in line for three and half hours in the freezing drizzle with his two grandsons before getting photographed with Bill. Michael also got one; like the one he got when Bloomberg left City Hall. Michael and I were pleased to see so many black and brown faces at Gracie, obscured as they were by hats, scarves, and earmuffs. I spent much of my foul weather ordeal conversing with an Indian (from India) American architect Staten Islander who said that Staten islanders are very "opinionated." I told him he should be proud to be one of the three people who voted for Bill on l'Isola Bella. As my wife, grandsons, and I have better things to do during the NFL Playoffs, we voted (4-0) to leave after an hour on line and a cup of hot apple cider.

There have been so many complaints about Bill De Blasio's inauguration in the right-wing (*di destra*) mass media and apologies in the left-wing (*di sinistra*) mass media that I thought I should take a look/listen at his speech. My friend, and mega-Bill supporter, James Anthony, who I trust more than both Chris Hayes and Matthews, was there and came away disappointed, having expected expressions of unity, not division. To be honest, not only hadn't I been invited to the inauguration, I didn't listen to De Blasio's speech or even read it until asked to do so for this column. Having been treated to Bill's rhetorical flourishes and oratorical prowess on several pre-victory occasions he would not be on my "oldies but goodies" i-Pod playlist.

As I spent three years in the U.S. Army Security Agency, before both Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning were born, I figured I'd put my training to good use and decipher Bill De Blasio's inauguration address as might The New York Times's Charles Blow. First of all, his talk lasted a little less than twenty minutes and the written text was 1888 words long. For the analysis, I watched and listened to it in its entirety on The New York Times [webpage](#) [2] while making notes of what sounded like more emphatic phrasings as well as expressive facial and bodily movements that might give special meaning to the words. Given his rather ligneous (*legnoso*) performance, this yielded rather little additional intelligence. For most of the text, I did a simple content and contextual analysis, looking especially at the most frequent words used and grouping them together when appropriate into meaningful categories. These were then placed in descending order of frequency. For example the most frequent expected category was "ethnic." And, among "Ethnic Things: Latino" there were 24 words but all but one were in his reasonably well-uttered Spanish translation of his thanks to his New York brothers and sisters. The second most, "Ethnic Things: Italian" received 13, but these included the names of his children Chiara and Dante as well as LaGuardia and Cuomo. So we should conclude it was not especially ethnic speech. Politicians like to present their ideas as "New" and as might be predicted it was used 14 times; but most were in reference to "The" city or newspapers, so it wasn't especially "new" either.

Work and derivatives of the term were used 9 times, followed by Family (8), and of course Progressive at 6. Children and Neighbor(hood) got 5 mentions while People and Taxes both got 4. One of the 3 Parents mentioned were "grand," and Justice was pronounced twice along with



Bloomberg and Cuomo. The rest were equivocated once: American and Mother without the Apple Pie; God got as many as each of the Clintons on the stage with equal billing for Wall Street, One Percent, (middle) Class, Tale of Two Cities, and Stop and Frisk. Jews, Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants were indirectly intoned as "Rabbi," "Imam," "Monsignor," and "Rev.", so only Hindus, Buddhists, et alia., should feel slighted as well as Agnostics and, God Forbid (Dio non voglia) – Atheists (most of whom probably voted for De Blasio).

Grouped together, the core keywords of Bill's, less than stirring but solidly hopeful, positive, and forward-looking (Progressive?) oration concerned Family and Neighbors and emphasized what we owe to each other as fellow New Yorkers. Who, other than Hannity & Co. and arayan Ayn Rand Paul could be nauseated (nauseato) by that sentiment? His tenderest tones and most genuine smiles were reserved for his wife and the least of those affectations for his ex-Mayor, but all this is to be expected. Had the other Bill on the dais given De Blasio's speech, it wouldn't have received a better rating even as we slave on alongside [Letitia James, hand and hand with Dasani](#) [3], [Harry Belafante](#) [4], and the [Rev. Frederick A. Lucas, Jr](#) [5]. on the Dickensian plantation of Gotham.

To live or relive the whole [William Warren, Jr. Bill De Blasio Inauguration](#). [6]

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[2] http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/02/nyregion/complete-text-of-bill-de-blasios-inauguration-speech.html?_r=0

[3] <http://www.ny1.com/content/news/201217/new-public-advocate-letitia-james-critical-of-bloomberg-years-in-inauguration-speech>

[4] http://www.democracynow.org/2014/1/2/harry_belafonte_urges_de_blasio_to

[5] <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/04/nyregion/chaplains-plantation-reference-at-de-blasio-inauguration-gains-defenders.html>

[6] <http://www.wnyc.org/story/bill-de-blasio-inauguration-march-toward-fairer-more-just-more-progressive-place-full-transcript/%20%20>