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Oh Haddad, Poor Haddad

By Nora Ephron

“... Last year Bill Haddad earned well over \$100,000—which is not bad for a boy in the poverty business...”

It has been more than two months since Bill Haddad said what he had to say on the subject of this city's public schools, and the mail is still coming in. It has been more than two months since Haddad, newly appointed to the Board of Education, appeared on television one Sunday afternoon and said, “I wouldn't put my kids in the public school system. I'd hock my suit, my car and my shoes to get them into a decent school.” Two months, and Bill Haddad still hasn't quite figured out how to answer all those angry letters. Letters from parents who are outraged because Haddad, who runs a \$5 million business and is married to the adopted daughter of millionaire John Hay Whitney, does not have to hock

he sits in his office on the 61st floor of the Chrysler Building, he pulls pieces of Scotch tape off a dispenser and sticks them together. He smacks a ruler against his thigh. He bites at his glasses. He doodles arrows and squares on a scratch pad. He stands, hitches up his pants, tucks in his shirt, tugs at his socks, loosens his tie, unbuttons his collar, rolls up his cuffs, and sits down to tell you about this new calm. “It's on the inside, not the outside,” he says, and proceeds to explain how it works. In the old days, he says, he would have been troubled to hear that a couple of the Mayor's assistants had argued against his appointment. In the old days, he would have gotten upset at being attacked in a

But then he stands, scratches his scalp, starts pacing the room, and the impression passes.

Ever since—well, probably ever since the beginning, but certainly ever since he came to New York—Bill Haddad has fascinated those he has come in contact with. His friends talk about him incessantly; he plays a far larger role in their conversations than he does in their lives. At the *New York Post*, where he was a first-rate investigative reporter, everyone knew he would be the first Arab president. Or the first Arab governor. Or at least the first Arab something-or-other. In those days, his name would come up over cock-

runs a \$5 million business and is married to the adopted daughter of millionaire John Hay Whitney, does not have to hock anything—including that old Mercedes Benz his father-in-law gave him for a wedding present—to keep his kids in decent schools. Outraged because it is not bloody likely Haddad ever even considered sending his children to public school. Outraged because, as a *New York Times* editorial put it some days later, "For the parents of a million New York youngsters, there is, no alternative to the public schools—not even the pawnshop Mr. Haddad demagogically suggests."

One of these days Bill Haddad will get around to finishing his draft letter of reply. He has been meaning to for weeks. But you know how things have been. The strike never ends. His newspaper, the *West Side News*, is about to come out reincarnated as the *Manhattan Tribune*. The business—which has made Haddad one of the country's leading poverticians^{*}—is booming, so much so in fact that Haddad is in a quandary over whether to buy a company jet or merely a company Turbo-prop.

And in the meantime, the mail comes in and Bill Haddad rolls with it. He can take the criticism. Yes, sir. It's all because of this new calm he has developed. You might not know about this new calm if Haddad didn't talk about it so much. As

Mayor's assistants had argued against his appointment. In the old days, he would have gotten upset at being attacked in a *New York Times* editorial. Not any more. In the old days, it would have bothered him to be accused of using his position on the Board as a stepping-stone to the Mayoralty. Not any more. It's all because of this new calm. He knows he is going to be controversial; for the first time in his life, he is able to live with it.

"I'm a provocateur," said Haddad. "I can't seem to let one go by. I learned that from Estes Kefauver. I used to ask him, 'Why do you get into all these battles?' and he would say, 'Never let one go by.' I wish I could, I wish I could learn to keep my mouth shut. But I can't."

And the thing is, Bill Haddad must be doing something right—even if his mouth is wide open—because people don't say nasty things about him as often as they used to. He is still abrasive, they say, but less abrasive. Still ambitious, but less obvious. Perhaps it's because he's 40—men always seem less brash at 40. Perhaps it's because he finally has a legitimate platform to speak from—two platforms, in fact, if you count the newspaper. Whatever it is, all that business you used to hear about his being just like Sammy Glick, about his being a hustling operator—"You hear all that a lot less than you used to," says Bill Haddad. He smiles and relaxes. He seems thoroughly ingenuous. And for a moment, just for a moment, you understand what he means about this new calm.

Or the first Arab governor. Or at least the first Arab something-or-other. In those days, his name would come up over cocktails, linger through dinner, then brandy, until finally someone would say, "Why are we spending so much time on him? He's only a reporter." Not for long. In 1961, after working in the Kennedy campaign, he joined the Peace Corps as associate director, and his name began to come up at and linger through Washington dinner parties. In 1964 he took a brief job at his father-in-law's *Herald Tribune*; he was discussed into the small hours by the boys at Bleeck's. Then he ran for Congress in a messy 19th C.D. primary against Rep. Leonard Farbstein, where he finally admitted—to the public and to his old friends at the *Post*—that he was 100 per cent Jewish; to this day, his behavior over his religious background tantalizes his friends. And now, as a financially secure businessman with somewhat mysterious political aspirations, he continues to fascinate. Why?

"Bill Haddad is a type," says one man who has known him since college. "There are people who have some quality that we ourselves possess but are unwilling to accept. They may be social climbers, or sexual philanderers, or, as in Bill's case, wildly ambitious. The difference between them and us is that *they're* transparent. We talk about them as much as we do to reassure ourselves that *we're* not transparent, that we haven't been found out. Talking about someone who has been

^{*}povertician, n. 1. one who deals in the politics of poverty. 2. one who profits thereby.

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found out is a way of relieving our own anxieties.”

One of Bill Haddad's former colleagues has a simpler theory: “Like Zsa Zsa Gabor, Bill has a great talent for publicity. He has an extra gland that produces publicity instead of sweat.”

It is generally assumed that people who know Bill Haddad either like him enormously or hate him. This is not quite accurate. It would be truer to say that people who like him seem to dwell on his shortcomings, and people who hate him dwell on his virtues. Thus, you will speak with Dave Gelman, who likes him and works for him, and he will say, “I always thought of Bill as a juggler. He would throw up twelve dishes into the air, keep them all up somehow, and if something came along that interested him, he would walk out from under them and let them all go smash.”

Or talk to William vanden Heuvel, a Kennedy man who is reliably reported to be less than admiring, and you hear: “I admire Bill's spirit and energy and capacity to make things happen. He's willing to put things together that others don't think are possible.”

liver—but occasionally he takes on larger responsibilities and ultimately . . . well, ultimately lets them all go smash. Like his Citizens Committee for Metropolitan Affairs. Formed following Mayor Lindsay's election, the committee was to be an informal citizens investigative force; its members, excited by Haddad's enthusiasm, came up with provocative information on overtime payment for city employees and practices in the auto repair field. But then Haddad's involvement petered out, and the enthusiasm he had generated dried up.

For some, Haddad's lack of follow-through is inexcusable. They chalk it off to his inability to wear less than ten hats at once and claim that he wears none of them well. “He just doesn't know what he wants to do,” said a Mayoral assistant, “so he does everything.” For others, the fault is redeemed by his energy. Fantastic, incredible energy. Bill Haddad works a 16-hour day and takes Gelusil, and so does just about everyone who works for him. “It's like constantly being involved in a political campaign,” said Bonnie Lefkowitz, who, along with her husband Gary, worked for Haddad until a year ago. “You have the same hours, the same pressure of a no-

men to evaluate the effectiveness of poverty programs; also, USRD will take over the planning and administration of such programs for both government and private industry. In return for its services as administrator, USRD is paid 10 per cent of the administration costs of the project—off the top—a figure Haddad insists works out to a bare one per cent profit after expenses. “The private accounts carry the company,” says Haddad. “We don't make money from poverty.” Among USRD's involvements: setting up the first industrial education centers for training hard-core unemployed ghetto adults; running a public school in California; operating the California Employment Bureau; consulting and evaluating poverty-related government programs. It also hires out its employees to political campaigns. Haddad worked as head Hessian in the primary campaigns of Jerome Cavanagh, Detroit mayor who won the Senate nomination (and later lost the election), and Robert King High, former Miami mayor who failed to get the gubernatorial nomination. And then there is the *Manhattan Tribune*.

Last spring, USRD bought 90 per cent of the *West Side News*. “For fun,” says Haddad. “Certainly not for profit. The

to make things happen. He's willing to put things together that others don't think are possible."

Or listen to a Manhattan district leader who was close to Robert Kennedy and is a friend of Haddad's. "I know all his weaknesses," he said. "I know all the things that drive everyone crazy, but I really am fond of Bill. You know, his behavior during the Kennedy vigil was sort of a joke. At five o'clock the day Bob died, we realized we wanted some of his friends to stand vigil, so we began to frantically round them up. We called Bill. He got there, and suddenly, he became a big cheese. He welcomed everyone, shook hands at the door—he stayed all night, in fact. Then afterwards, he told people he was *in charge* of the vigil." He laughed. "But everybody operates that way. He's no worse than anyone else. And I think anyone who doesn't like him can't do things as well as he can."

There are two things everyone who knows Bill Haddad agrees on. First, the energy. (More on that later.) Second, that he takes on too much. Once, in fact, Haddad had to find a ghostwriter to ghostwrite a book which he'd promised to ghostwrite himself. "He just can't say no to anything," says his secretary Denise Morrissey. Because Haddad overcommits himself, he occasionally lacks something in follow-through. Usually, he fails to do the small things—political favors he promises to perform, phone calls he promises to make, speeches he promises to de-

along with her husband Gary, worked for Haddad until a year ago. "You have the same hours, the same pressure of a political campaign, but without the definite goal at the end."

Does Bill Haddad overwork his staff?

"I'm like Sargent Shriver," said Haddad. "I expect others to do what I do."

Even if they're earning less than you are?

"I used to give that to Shriver," Haddad replied, "and you know what he used to say? 'Nobody asked you to work here.' We're not the best-paying place, but we're not the worst. And this is a rather exciting company."

The United States Research and Development Corporation (usrd) was started three years ago by Haddad and his partner Robert Clampitt. They began it without a penny of help from Jock Whitney; today usrd takes up an entire floor of the Chrysler Building and spills onto several others.

Last year Haddad earned well over \$100,000—which is not bad for a boy in the poverty business. For although usrd makes its big money from developing computer systems for private industry, its reputation derives from its work in the poverty field. Just as burgeoning Defense Dept. activity created the need for companies like Litton Industries, the rapid expansion of the poverty program has meant there was room for companies like usrd.

Essentially, usrd's work in the poverty field falls into two areas: consultation and administration. Haddad hires out his

Last spring, usrd bought 90 per cent of the *West Side News*. "For fun," says Haddad. Certainly not for profit. The *West Side News* is an almost legendary financial calamity. As its new publisher, Haddad announced that he planned to turn the paper into an investigative publication serving both the West Side and Harlem. He gave an interest in the operation to CORE and named its director, Roy Innis, co-publisher. The result of this alliance will be called the *Manhattan Tribune* and will have a black editor and a white editor and a black editorial (by Innis, a separatist) and a white editorial (by Haddad, an integrationist). Haddad expects the *Tribune* to make its formal appearance this month. Its informal debut, and an unimpressive one it was, took place at the Republican and Democratic conventions, where it appeared with bylined articles by Jack Newfield and Dick Tuck and pseudonymous ones by Andrew Kopkind and David Halberstam.

In addition to working together on the paper, Haddad and Innis are also opening a journalism school to train young blacks and Puerto Ricans. Its operating budget of approximately \$100,000 will be supplied by the Ford Foundation. Plans for the school were drawn up by journalist Pete Hamill, who reportedly got out of the operation when he discovered that Innis insisted on having a one-week indoctrination course in black power for the students, and that Haddad planned to use what the trainees wrote in school in the *Manhattan Tribune*. "Pete really got up tight about



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that,” said one insider. “Apparently Haddad had never told him the school was connected with the paper, and Pete was furious. He thought he’d been lied to—or at least that he hadn’t been told the whole truth—and he felt the arrangement was unsavory. It got very tense. Pete said to Haddad, ‘You mean to tell me that the Ford Foundation is going to underwrite your commercial enterprise by giving you free reporters? Incredible. That’s not running a newspaper—that’s running a plantation.’” The journalism school will have a black director, a white director, a black assistant, a white assistant, a black secretary and a white secretary. According to Haddad, it will not be a plantation: he has decided, he says, to sell what the trainees write to publications like the *Village Voice*, as Hamill originally suggested.

Roy Innis, huge, handsome, bearded, sits in his West End Avenue apartment wearing only a pair of slacks. “Both Haddad and I had a coincidence of needs,” he explained. “Both of us were passing through the same position in time and space. He had a need for a journal on the

worked his way through nights as a radio-man, graduated, and moved to Washington to work for Kefauver. In 1957 he came back to New York to work at the *Post*, and in three years there, he won every journalism award except for the Pulitzer.

Haddad married Kate Roosevelt (her father is Congressman James; her mother’s second marriage was to Whitney) in the Church of St. Matthew’s and St. Timothy’s in 1959. The Rev. James Gusweller, a cleric well known for his involvement in social issues, performed the ceremony in his West 84th Street church. No one who has met Kate Haddad believes her husband married for money. “She’s a fantastic girl,” said one friend. “Bill would have married her even if her name had been Slotkin.” Kate Haddad—“She’s fabulous,” says her husband, and everyone agrees—is now the mother of “Tweaky” (Laura), 6; “Bebo” (Andrea), 3; and “Scrumpty” (Camilla), 1.

In 1960, following the Democratic convention, where he worked for Stevenson, Haddad returned to the *Post* and began to write a series of stories on the Wagner administration. Bobby Kennedy, who at

heading an investigative team at the *Tribune* and then announced that he was entering the primary campaign against Rep. Farberstein. His campaign was run with all the slickness of a Kennedy Presidential blitz, with glossy literature, much talk of the man fresh from the New Frontier, and national publicity. But Haddad had two big problems, according to his campaign manager, Assemblyman Al Blumenthal. “First of all, he spent so much time as his own public relations man he didn’t have enough time on the streets,” said Blumenthal. “Second, the question of his religion caused him great injury, particularly as it was misused by the opposition on the Lower East Side.”

The confusion over Haddad’s antecedents apparently began with the candidate himself. Though both Haddad’s parents were Jewish, said Haddad, “culturally we were Arabic, and we were raised in the Middle East culture. My father felt one religion was as good as another.” Today Haddad claims he always identified himself as a Jewish Arab, but friends from the *Post* remember distinctly that he admitted to being only half-Jewish. In any case, when

"Are you using him or is he using you?" Innis was asked.

"We're both using each other," Innis replied. "We have a symbiotic pragmatic relationship. That's quite different from a parasitic relationship. **Haddad** and I have a lot in common. We're both pragmatists. Of course, he prefers to think of himself as a do-gooder. He has a lack of distinction between what he wants for himself and for the general good. He couldn't be a bank robber unless he was going to play Robin Hood." Innis paused. "What did you say this article was going to be about?"

"**Haddad**," came the reply. "Who he is, what he wants."

"Well," said Innis, "when you find out, let me know."

William Frederick **Haddad** was born in Charlotte, N.C. He grew up moderately poor in New York and New Hampshire. When his parents separated, his sister stayed with his Russian-born mother in New Haven and **Haddad** and his two brothers moved to Miami to grow up extremely poor with their Egyptian father. At fifteen, he enlisted in the Merchant Marine and spent the better part of five years at sea, returning home each year to help his family run a small Arab restaurant. After two years of St. Petersburg J.C., where he led a couple of civil rights scuffles, he enrolled in the class of 1954 at Columbia,

might prove a source of embarrassment. He called William Walton—then Kennedy liaison with the New York Democrats—and told him to get **Haddad** off their backs. Walton inquired around about **Haddad**, found out that he was bright, young and ambitious, and invited him up for a chat. They spent an afternoon talking, then another afternoon. Shortly thereafter, Kennedy called Walton.

"Did you get **Haddad** off our backs?" he asked.

"I think we've got him under control," Walton replied.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I don't think he's going to write any more nasty stories for the *New York Post*," said Walton.

"What is he going to do?" Kennedy asked.

"He's going to come down to Washington Monday," said Walton. "I gave him a job as your assistant."

After two years in the Peace Corps, **Haddad** left. For one thing, Sargent Shriver had resigned, to be replaced by Bill Moyers; for another, **Haddad** explained, "It was just time to get out." ("You know Bill Moyers is smart," Murray Kempton is reported to have said at the time, "because he's the only guy who ever beat out Bill **Haddad** and kept Bill smiling.") **Haddad** spent several months

or backslider from his religion—**Haddad** issued two biographical flyers. One said his parents were both from Jewish backgrounds; the other, slightly vaguer, said his father was "born into the small Jewish community of Cairo." Then, **Haddad** announced that he had filed a complaint before the Fair Campaign Practices Committee charging that Farbstien was raising the religious issue.

In fact, of course, it was **Haddad** himself who had raised it. And in so doing, he brought the whole unpleasant business out into the open, thus giving the whispered rumors a legitimate place in the campaign. "If the issue was to have been raised at all," said a politician who advised **Haddad** against it, "it should have been raised by the opposition. Then it could have been condemned. **Haddad** would have done better to keep his mouth shut."

"I never did figure out what to do about the Jewish thing," **Haddad** recently admitted. And if some of his best friends were surprised to discover that he was Jewish, **Haddad**'s own mother, now Mrs. Esther Dubin, was flabbergasted that it should have come up at all. During the closing days of the campaign, she bumped into a downtown district leader and blurted out, "I don't understand this. Could my boy not be Jewish?"

What everyone comes back to is the en-

ergy. Especially the short-term energy. In political campaigns, he can be counted on to get things moving, to get out the literature. In the Peace Corps and the Poverty Program, his enthusiasm and abhorrence of red tape were essential to programs just beginning. He infuriated the bureaucrats. He would appear for senior staff meetings in his shirt sleeves, his tie carefully undone, uttering a stream of obscenities; he wanted the fact as well as the appearance of being anti-bureaucratic.

In the Kennedy administration, Haddad was a Shriver man. In Kennedy elections, he worked for Steve Smith. Robert Kennedy never quite grew to like him, but he respected his ability to get things done. In Kennedy's Senatorial campaign, Haddad laid out and distributed the famous flyers on the myth of Keating's liberalism. He played a critical part in the surrogate's campaign and leaked information on the court to New York reporters. His mark on campaign literature is clear: he always lays it out in exactly the same way, and it usually begins, "Six Reasons Why You Should Vote For . . ." whenever he is working for.

Within days of his going to work in the Lindsay campaign, anyone familiar with Haddad's style knew he was there. The literature showed it, even before he produced the famous flyers on the myth of Beame's liberalism. But Haddad denied he had anything to do with the Mayoral cam-

"I was going to offer you a job in the Beame campaign," said Smith, "but I gather you're working for Lindsay."

"Who told you?" asked Haddad.

"Justin Feldman," said Smith.

The next day, Feldman's telephone rang. It was Haddad. "Why did you tell Steve Smith I was working for Lindsay?" he asked.

"Because you are," said Feldman.

"No, I'm not," said Haddad. "Why would I do that? With my father-in-law, why would I have to work for Lindsay to get a job in his administration?"

"Look, Bill," said Feldman, "I know you're there because Wynn Kramarsky is working down the hall from you, and he told me you were there."

A couple of days later, Lindsay's campaign manager Bob Price called Feldman. "I know you're not for Lindsay," said Price, "but why are you making me spend money?"

"What are you talking about?" Feldman asked.

"Because of you, we've had to move Haddad up to the eighth floor and run telephone lines up to his office so no one will know he's here."

Father-in-law notwithstanding, Bill Haddad did not get the job he wanted in the Lindsay Administration. Instead, he started usad; to keep from going into total political eclipse, he formed his Citizens

after it. I used my political know-how. I'm not ashamed of that. I wanted the job." And now do you regret having taken it? "Sometimes I do, but when it boils down to it, I'm not."

He continued: "I've really aged in this job. I'm sure people are saying I took it because I'm ambitious, but let me tell you, if you have political ambitions, the best advice is don't get involved in anything that involves education. Hide until it blows over. If you're smart, get out." Haddad's first few months on the Board have not been easy. Saying he would hock his coat didn't help. But, he says, "I want to say what I want to say when I want to say it. I don't want to think twice about it." His ties to the black community have not worked out as well as the Lindsay administration had hoped. He has also made an enemy of Rose Shapiro, whose re-election as president of the Board of Education he blocked. "What Rose is angriest about," he said, "is that I put my feet up on her table." Somewhat sheepishly, he added: "I don't put my feet up any more." And because Haddad was not on the five-man negotiating team in the strike, he has been in the papers somewhat less than in the beginning of his term.

But he'll be back. That gland that generates publicity will start working again. The juggler will throw another ball into the air. Why, just the other day, at a City Hall meeting where the Mayor was present,