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Paladino Rout of Lazio Jolts New York Republicans

By **DAVID M. HALBFINGER** and **MICHAEL BARBARO**

Carl P. Paladino, a Buffalo multimillionaire who jolted the [Republican Party](#) with his bluster and belligerence, rode a wave of disgust with Albany to the nomination for governor of New York on Tuesday, toppling [Rick A. Lazio](#), a former congressman who earned establishment support but inspired little popular enthusiasm.

Mr. Paladino became one of the first [Tea Party](#) candidates to win a Republican primary for governor, in a state where the Republican Party has historically succeeded by choosing moderates.

The result was a potentially destabilizing blow for New York Republicans. It put at the top of the party's ticket a volatile newcomer who has forwarded e-mails to friends containing racist jokes and pornographic images, espoused turning prisons into dormitories where welfare recipients could be given classes on hygiene, and defended an ally's comparison of the Assembly speaker, [Sheldon Silver](#), who is Jewish, to "an Antichrist or a [Hitler](#)."

Yet Mr. Paladino, 64, energized Tea Party advocates and social conservatives with white-hot rhetoric and a damn-the-establishment attitude, promising to "take a baseball bat to Albany" to dislodge the state's entrenched political class. He also outspent Mr. Lazio, pouring more than \$3 million of his fortune into the race, while Mr. Lazio spent just over \$2 million.

"We are mad as hell," Mr. Paladino said in a halting but exuberant victory speech in Buffalo shortly after 11 p.m. "New Yorkers are fed up. Tonight the ruling class knows. They have seen it now. There is a people's revolution. The people have had enough."

Referring to criticism from what he said were liberal elites, he added: "They say I am too blunt. Well, I am, and I don't apologize for it. They say I am an angry man, and that's true. We are all angry."

Mr. Paladino, a first-time candidate who roamed the state with a pit bull named Duke and stayed late after campaign events to hug supporters, swamped Mr. Lazio by a ratio of nearly two to one, lifted by strong showings in Erie and Niagara Counties, where his message of economic populism was especially resonant.

His defeat of Mr. Lazio, 52, raises the possibility of a lopsided general election contest with Attorney General [Andrew M. Cuomo](#), a Democrat, who has amassed a \$24 million war chest and whose commanding lead in the polls has lent him an air of invincibility.

Still, Mr. Paladino's unpredictability and devil-may-care approach to campaigning, coupled with his willingness to say almost anything and to spend millions from his fortune, could pose unwelcome challenges for the exceptionally risk-averse Mr. Cuomo.

Mr. Paladino's platform calls for cutting taxes by 10 percent in six months, eliminating cherished public pensions for legislators, and using eminent domain to prevent the construction of a mosque and community center near ground zero. Those proposals could make Mr. Cuomo's farthest-reaching reform ideas seem meek by comparison.

The sweeping agenda caught fire with Republicans, especially those far from New York City and distrustful of the party's moderate wing.

"Grass-roots conservatives were energized in tidal wave proportions," said former Representative Thomas M. Reynolds of New York, an influential leader in the state party. But more moderate Republicans said they feared that Mr. Paladino's rhetoric could alienate swing voters and independents, and doom other Republican candidates in November.

At Mr. Lazio's election-night gathering, just after Mr. Paladino's victory was declared on television, gloom filled the room.

"We just handed him the governorship," said Bryan Cooper, 43, a teacher and a Republican district leader from Manhattan. "We handed Cuomo the governorship."

The victory capped a topsy-turvy race in which the Republican state chairman, [Edward F. Cox](#), doubting Mr. Lazio's chances, tried to recruit a Democrat to carry the party's banner, but

then found himself outflanked by an insurgent whom he and much of the party's leadership had denounced.

A businessman who made millions in real estate in the Buffalo area, Mr. Paladino entered the race in April and mustered only 8 percent of the party's support at its convention in May, after reports of his e-mails drew condemnation from Republican and Democratic leaders alike.

But with [Roger J. Stone Jr.](#), the flamboyant former Nixon operative, advising him, he circumvented the party leadership, petitioned his way onto the primary ballot by collecting 30,000 signatures and quietly cobbled together a coalition of disaffected groups.

Mr. Lazio, resting on double-digit leads in polls, refused to debate Mr. Paladino, seeing no gain in giving him the exposure.

"It was a clear mistake not to engage Paladino," said John J. Faso, the Republican nominee for governor in 2006. "He allowed Carl Paladino to speak to the voters in 30-second ads."

Mr. Paladino unleashed a barrage of direct-mail advertisements and cable television commercials, pouring \$650,000 into his campaign the first week of September, and by the weekend, one poll showed the race in a dead heat. Mr. Lazio and his allies responded with last-minute attacks on Mr. Paladino's fitness to be governor, but by Tuesday many party insiders were wringing their hands over whether Mr. Lazio had erred by not doing more to counter Mr. Paladino earlier on.

Both candidates mounted all-out efforts to get their supporters to the polls, with Mr. Paladino relying on a huge turnout upstate.

In Orchard Park, a Buffalo suburb, Darryl Radt, who described himself as a regular primary voter, said he had come to the American Legion post to vote for Mr. Paladino "because he's mad as hell and so am I."

Ron Wojcik, 67, a retiree, said he was frustrated with Albany and Washington and wanted someone different. "I want somebody who's honest and hasn't been sucked into the system already," Mr. Wojcik said. "The system always seems to change people."

It is not clear how quickly, if at all, Republicans will unite around Mr. Paladino. In his concession speech, Mr. Lazio, who won the nomination of the smaller but influential Conservative Party on Tuesday, fell short of embracing Mr. Paladino's candidacy.

"I am going to be part of the public dialogue," Mr. Lazio said as some in the crowd fought back tears. "I am going to contribute to this effort."

Democrats on Tuesday night were already discussing ways to exploit Mr. Paladino's vulnerabilities, and they questioned whether he could truly call himself an outsider. They noted that he was a landlord for state agencies and had poured tens of thousands of dollars into the campaigns of Democrats and Republicans in Albany.

In his victory speech, Mr. Paladino alluded to the uphill climb he faces in taking on Mr. Cuomo and repairing the state's battered finances.

"Tomorrow morning begins the toughest part of this campaign, the longest haul, the heaviest lift, and I am going to need every single one of you," he said to a room that was a sea of orange, his campaign's color. "We are going to have to work harder and fight harder than we have ever fought before. We are going to rebuild New York together."

He demanded that Mr. Cuomo meet him as an equal. "I have a message for Andrew Cuomo tonight," Mr. Paladino said. "I challenge you to a series of debates. We have so many questions to ask you, Andrew.

"Let's stand toe to toe in an exchange of ideas and let the people decide."

With that, Mr. Paladino's daughter Danielle took the microphone and led the crowd in singing "God Bless America."