



# MEN *at* Work

*The heat is on in this major election year. But the spotlight isn't only on the top players, it's on the supporting team, who are being handpicked as the next wave of greatness. We follow mayors who run three prominent cities—Mayor Kasim Reed of Atlanta, Mayor Cory Booker of Newark, New Jersey, and Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia—to get a birds-eye view into the daily (and larger) issues on their plates and get a glimpse of how they run these tough cities.*

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**I**t's 12:10 p.m. and Cory Booker is leading a revival. It may have started as an observance address on the steps of City Hall—a relatively run-of-the-mill event in the life of a mayor. But put this charismatic second-term mayor of Newark, N.J., known for his ability to effortlessly reach out and connect with audiences, in front of a mic on National Day of Prayer, and listeners don't stand a chance. He's warmed up now. The crowd is right there with him.

"Whenever two or more are gathered together, He is in our midst..." he thunders. A chorus of *amens* floats in the air.

**12:55 P.M.** The scene may have changed, but the charge remains.

Seated in his office with a framed picture of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. hanging on the wall behind him, cameras roll as the mayor continues his earlier theme of a united and supportive community, this time in response to questions about gay rights. He's moved from his preacher's cadence into an earnest pitch. "There are savage injustices being heaped upon Americans...[you should have] the freedom to love who you want. It's time we confront the ugly truth of it."

Just a few minutes before, Booker's office was rocking with laughter as Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, adviser to the stars, a television personality and the mayor's close friend since their student days at Oxford University some twenty years ago—and a Republican congressional candidate—paid an energy-filled visit.

Everything today has tied into the folksy, caring persona for which Booker has become well known. But such constituent-captivating acts like shoveling snow for the infirm, rescuing neighbors from burning buildings and becoming a sort of super-everyman aside (Need a job? Tweet the mayor. Streetlight broken? Pothole? Tweet the mayor. He'll respond.), Cory Booker has heavy subjects on his mind in this presidential election year. Behind him sits an oversized digital clock running a second-by-second countdown. A gift from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the ticker reflects the days, hours and minutes left in Booker's second term, his daily inspiration, he says, to do more, more, more.

**2:55 P.M.** After taking personal time, the mayor discusses plans for an upcoming Latino-community event with Margarita Muniz, Deputy Mayor of Neighborhood Engagement.

**5:12 P.M.** Steve Weatherford of the New York Giants shows up with his pregnant wife and a close friend, who he describes as Booker's greatest fan, hard pitches the mayor on collaborating on children's foundations and, starry-eyed, ends by presenting Booker and staff with footballs signed by his teammate Eli Manning. Ever one for inclusion, Booker insists that Weatherford add his own signature to the specially autographed football.

**7 P.M.** After a flying pit stop to open Dinosaur BBQ, the mayor strides to the podium at a fundraiser for Senator Robert Menendez in the ballroom of a local hotel. He's an instant hit.

But, even here—or maybe especially here—in his town, the mayor is under pressure. He's savvy enough to push his accomplishments, such as better programs (increased emphasis on education; prisoner re-entry), decreases in crime and increase in job opportunities. He's still weeks away from a television appearance in which he'll go as off the cuff as usual, this time to disastrous effect that has repercussions on his "golden kid" status in the Democratic Party. He is still one of President Obama's surrogates and will soon be named co-chair of the DNC platform committee, but he is also the first mayor of Newark in



several decades that hasn't been indicted on criminal charges ("I keep telling them we've still got two years left," he quips), and there's lingering suspicion from some residents.

**8 P.M.** The mayor settles in for his monthly radio appearance on WBGO.

As Booker skims his iPad and iPhone, tweeting constantly, host Andrew Meyer reads an email from a local woman, whose question for the mayor is, "Why can't you just do your job and stop showing off?" and with that, the show is off to a bumpy start. Booker fields questions about the city's ongoing legal wrangle with NJ Devils owner Jeff Vanderbeek, whom Booker recently referred to as a "high-class, high-faluting huckster and hustler." Another caller rambles on about being "a Cory groupie." Booker cuts her off quickly.

But the real question behind the scenes is Cory Booker's future. As the ticker keeps running, the mayor wrestles, at least publicly, with the answer. Another term as mayor for the city he has said he will never leave? A run for governor? He says he may opt to leave politics behind. We tend to believe Cory Booker when he speaks. This, we doubt.

**M**ayor Kasim Reed isn't tired, although he should be. It's 8:45 p.m. and he's had a day that, for any normal person, would've been exhausting. But Kasim Reed isn't exactly normal. His post silently demands for him to be something else, something great.

After all, the intensely composed, intellectual mayor is following in the footsteps of internationally renowned civil rights legends like Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young. He's charged with rebuilding the city of Atlanta after a challenging period helmed by Mayor Shirley Franklin, who at times was as divisive as she was charismatic. Suffice to say, normalcy isn't really an option.

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**10:04 A.M.** Reed's tinted, black Yukon arrives at Rise Up Atlanta Headquarters on the south side of town. He steps out of the car and immediately begins mingling with Rise Up Atlanta volunteers. He's been at it since 8:45 a.m., when he greeted attendees of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association at the Georgia World Congress Center. To say the day is going to be busy is an understatement.

**10:18 A.M.** Reed takes to the stage after grandly being introduced by Falcons owner Arthur Blank. He quips to the small crowd of t-shirted volunteers that includes Falcons coach Mike Smith about being overdressed in his crisp suit.

It's obvious that his connection to the people around him is at the core of his appeal.

A former entertainment lawyer, Reed can converse intelligently about rapper Scarface's last album just as readily as he can about the economy.

But it's his economic policies, not his hip-hop knowledge, that have earned him praise. The day before he was in Washington D.C. being honored by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies with its Louis E. Martin Great American Award, a recognition previously bestowed on Colin Powell. He's increased the city's reserves from \$7.4 million to more than \$94 million and in working with Atlanta's unions, initiated reforms to address the city's \$1.5 billion unfunded pension liability, all in just over two years.

**10:37 A.M.** Reed arrives back at City Hall and heads to a meeting with Independent State Rep. Rusty Kidd.

Reed has regularly demonstrated the ability to work across party lines in an era in which bipartisanship is practically dead. The most notable example is his relationship with Georgia's Republican governor, Nathan Deal.

"We both share the desire to make Georgia [and Atlanta] a place that people want to visit and stay," Deal later says. To that end, they worked together to keep Porsche's North American headquarters in the Atlanta region, collaborated to help force reform in Atlanta's schools and are working together to get federal money to deepen Savannah's harbor.

**11:30 A.M.** Reed tapes a video interview and retirement greeting for Joseph R. Bankoff, president and CEO of the Woodruff Arts Center. His speechwriter (the second one hired since his term began) has prepared a statement for him to read about Bankoff, but as usual, an uber-calm Reed decides to ad lib—which is kind



of exasperating for his staff, but so impressive no one complains.

**BETWEEN 12 P.M. AND 4:30 P.M.** things get a little hectic. There are scheduled phone calls and meetings, an interview with *Atlanta* magazine and what is supposed to be a blocked time for lunch. It doesn't happen. Instead, Reed eats a fast meal of rice and cabbage at his desk that he can barely even remember having. "They feed me like a farm animal," he says jokingly, referring to his staff.

**5:17 P.M.** The mayor arrives at 200 Peachtree for Global Connect. He thinks he's there to give a short "thanks for being here" speech, but it instead turns into a ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the building. In his two-year tenure he's given well over 700 speeches, but he only counts speeches longer than five minutes, so none of the three he's already given today counts.

"I get drained, because I'm human," he admits, "but I feel [being on the scene is] necessary, it's largely attributed to the success we've had."

**5:48 P.M.** He heads to a secluded back room to do a quickie interview. He's asked about his recent trip to China, which according to Reed is now Georgia's second largest trading partner. Next up is a trip to Paris. "City officials want to consult with me about how to improve their airport infrastructure," he tells the reporter.

**6:19 P.M.** Arriving at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, the mayor recites his speech aloud for the momentous opening of the Maynard Jackson International Terminal. He pops a mint before heading inside.

**6:47 P.M.** Reed receives a standing ovation before he gives his speech. Of course, he ends up changing it.

**8:01 P.M.** Finally, he gets food, which he sneaks off to eat quickly.

**8:02 P.M.** His standing meal is interrupted, and he shakes a few hands. It will be another couple of hours before he leaves, not that he cares. It's just another day in the life of one of the nation's busiest mayors.

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**M**ayor Michael A. Nutter is a hard man to keep up with. Literally. He takes swift steps when he walks—long strides down the corridors of City Hall as he greets his staff and security team, quick hops in and out of his black Chevy Tahoe Hybrid, oftentimes tackling staircases two steps at a time in a mad dash to his next speaking engagement. But as the mayor of Philadelphia, the largest city in the country with an African-American mayor, he's expected to lead the way, and he does so with a natural ease that's both inherent and hard earned.

Born, raised and educated in The City of Brotherly Love, the life-long resident is as much a part of the fabric of Philly as the Phillies baseball team he adores so much. And it shows in his hands-on leadership style and unwavering commitment to the people he serves. It's no wonder his peers elected him the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, a bump that puts him in a prime position during a crucial presidential election year. Every morning, Nutter hops out of bed eager to use each meeting, interview, speech and press conference as a podium to trumpet the city's achievements, spread the gospel about the challenges it's up against and offer solutions needed to elevate Philadelphia from good to great—and today's no different.

"It's an action-packed day," says Nutter to his assistant, Lauren Walker, as he heads toward the door at **8:50 A.M.** "Let's roll out."

**9:16 A.M.** Nutter takes the podium at the Philadelphia Convention Center to deliver remarks at the 11th Annual Philly Trans-Health Conference.

He was a driving force behind the Gender Identity Protection Bill, an ordinance that has protected the LGBT community against discrimination in Philadelphia for ten years. Moments after declaring May 31, 2012, Transgender Health Awareness Day in Philadelphia, the mayor lets his stance on gay marriage be known: "It is time to allow people who want to be in a loving, caring relationship—regardless of who they are, what they look like, where they came from, what gender they may be—to be in love, care about each other and look after each other—and for everyone else to just mind their business." The crowd erupts into applause.

**10:06 A.M.** The mayor records a robocall for the Philadelphia school system, wishing students a fun and safe summer.

Education and public safety are hot-button topics for the mayor. Philadelphia has a 61% high school graduation rate (it was in the mid-50s when he took office in 2008), and the school district currently faces a \$1.1 billion five-year plan deficit. Additionally, the murder rate continues to spike. (In 2011, the city had the highest homicide rate out of the nation's ten most populous cities.)

**11:07 A.M.** Nutter speaks at the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's Alternative Fuel Vehicles Forum at Drexel University. The mayor loosens up a stiff crowd of vehicle manufacturers and energy infrastructure experts discussing the future of electric cars. "This is a serious room," says Nutter. "You folks need to lighten up a little bit. Go outside and walk around. The weather is really great today."

He has a knack for lacing his rhetoric with humor. Even while delivering a sobering speech about serious issues, he still manages to elicit a chuckle or full-out guffaw from the audience.

**11:23 A.M.** Back in the car, the mayor keeps the mood light by playing "Single Ladies" and "Crazy in Love." When asked if he's an admirer of the pop singing ti-



tan, he says, "Yeah, I like a little Beyoncé." He's also a fan of her better half, Jay-Z, who'll headline the already sold out Made in America festival on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philly's Fairmount Park in September.

**12:08–12:27 P.M.** Nutter eats a few forkfuls of salmon in his office from his favorite eatery in Reading Terminal and polishes off a yogurt on the ride to his sixth appointment of the day.

"The only thing that's not on the schedule is