

Eliot Spitzer: Adrenaline Junky

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Eliot Spitzer has thrown himself into a [last-minute bid for comptroller](#) leaving himself very little room for error in collecting — by midnight Thursday — the 3,750 signatures he needs to get on the ballot.

Albany insiders who dealt with the former governor during his time there say the move is 100 percent indicative of the conflict loving adrenaline junky they worked and negotiated with for years.

Associates of Spitzer have said he had been mulling a run for months, but made the final decision this past weekend.

Those familiar with Spitzer from his time in Albany say he may have incorrectly read the tea leaves of Anthony Weiner's success in the polls and decided the time was right to challenge himself — while leaving organizing a campaign staff to the last minute.

They say the move is similar to the way he jumped from the attorney general's office to the governorship where he tried to apply the same hardcharging techniques with horrible results. In some ways, the attorney general is a dream job: It calls for taking bad guys to court and putting out press releases. It's far different from dealing with the messy politics of the state Legislature.

Spitzer didn't make it easy on himself. He notoriously clashed with legislators — seemingly thriving on combat.

He was also known for taking risks in other ways. Caught at an airport because of a blizzard during a 2006 campaign stop in Buffalo, Spitzer pushed his convoy of staff and police [to keep going even](#)

as the snow crippled surrounding areas. Spitzer even tried to move a fishtailed car off of the highway so his crew could catch a plane in Rochester.

Here is how the [Times describes](#) the events of Oct. 13:

As they set out for Rochester, the sun was coming up but the sky was essentially whited out by whirling clouds of snow. They tried Interstate 90, got stuck, turned around, then tried a local road, where they crossed paths with a fireman who advised them not to proceed. The S.U.V. got stuck again, so Mr. Spitzer got out to push.

They tried I-90 once more and crept along at 20 miles per hour or so. Mr. Spitzer's crew came across a car that had fishtailed. He tried to push that car back onto the highway, but wasn't able to. As the group proceeded east toward Batavia, the road suddenly cleared and the sun was shining ("total lake effect," a campaign aide explained). The drive to Rochester — about 60 miles — took nearly three hours.

Spitzer was also known to hit the ski trail and head down the mountain at confounding speeds.

Insiders remember Spitzer "bouncing on the balls of his feet," happy and gung-ho even after the newspapers had turned on him and Republican Majority Leader Joseph Bruno had seemingly beaten him during the [Troopergate scandal](#). "He thrived on conflict," said one state lawmaker who agreed to speak anonymously about the Spitzer years.

There was also the [risky structuring of payments](#) to avoid getting caught for soliciting high-priced hookers — certainly a major gamble for any politician but even more so for one who had made many enemies in corporate America.

Spitzer's latest risk could pay off or, like some of his other gambles, it could blow up in his face in an extremely public manner. "Maybe it works," said another Albany insider who also agreed to speak anonymously. "Maybe he gets the signatures he needs. But he has left it down to the wire and if he fails, he is going to fail big and in front of everyone. Maybe he didn't totally think

this through. Maybe he just loves the rush."

The state lawmaker recalled the momentum Spitzer had heading into the governorship: "There were a lot of people who thought this was the Bobby Kennedy of their time. They left their lives in the city and took huge paycuts to work for him cause they believed in him and, through this quirk of his, he left people hanging."

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