

## Scoop!

By James Reston

The trouble with Senator Scoop Jackson, who has just entered the Presidential race, is that his name is misleading. In newspaper terms, "scoop" means being ahead of events, but Mr. Jackson somehow always seems to be more than a little behind.

Nobody who knows him well will underestimate him. He is highly intelligent, attractive, industrious, and experienced, but there is a paradox. He has been a potential Presidential candidate for many years—almost made it in 1960 as Jack Kennedy's Vice-Presidential partner. He has been ambitious and bold of mind ever since he came to Washington almost 35 years ago, but he always seems to be making the big decisions of life at the wrong time.

He married for the first time at 49—so well and happily that it almost seems a shame to mention his delay. He spent twelve years in the House of Representatives, working hard and tipping his hat to the elders, and he has now been 23 years in the Senate, almost close to the center of the major questions but never quite bringing his thought to the point of decision.

Now, finally, Senator Jackson has come forward in a carefully casual announcement for the Presidency on television, very serious, very contrived, and very persuasive. Nobody can accuse Scoop of rushing forward too soon: He will be 64 by the time the Democrats choose a Presidential candidate in the summer of 1976.

Age, however, is not Scoop's major problem. After all, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts is the only leading Presidential candidate in his forties. He will be 44 at convention time in 1976, and says he's not available. It might be wise to suspend judgment on this point.

Mr. Jackson has come to national prominence as a critic of just about everything the Ford Administration is doing. He is against Ford's Vladivostok agreement with Leonid Brezhnev on the control of nuclear weapons. He is against Henry Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy in the Middle East.

He thinks we should be tougher on the Soviets and suggests that by so doing, we can force them to make more concessions on arms control and the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. In the process, he has become the darling of the pro-Israeli faction and the protectionist labor union leaders in this country. He has also become the villain to the Kremlin big shots.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jackson has been almost nostalgic for old struggles. He has been a New Deal liberal on most domestic issues, and he has been in the Senate long enough now so that he has a prominent platform in the committees from which he can howl against Mr. Ford's economic and energy policies, scald Big Business (except the big airplane companies) and woo the voters who are sore about prices, unemployment, and the inflation in general.

All this is standard politics. It was a fairly good program for the old days of the cold war, and it is not a bad headline-catcher now. At a time when almost everybody is in doubt about everything, Scoop never seems to be in doubt about anything, so he was all over the television, fussing with Messrs. Ford and Kissinger, even before he announced what everybody knew, that one day he would be presented on TV—as he now has been—as "the man for America's future."

Maybe it will work, for the country is troubled and looking for something new that will bring it together. But this also may be precisely Mr. Jackson's problem. For his appeal is from the days of the old battles with the foreign villains and the big business devils at home, and the chances are that this quarrelsome approach will not bring the country or the Democrats together but split them apart.

Lately he has been concentrating more and more on domestic issues, and toning down his combative instincts on foreign policy. He now appears to be wondering whether it is a good idea to follow his old Pentagon line and send over half a billion dollars to Southeast Asia—a modest advance, but for Jackson, quite a change.

The outlook for the Democratic party at this point is for a deeply divided party and convention in 1976, with no one candidate coming close to a majority for nomination. If this happens, unless Jackson or somebody else breaks out of the pack in the primaries, the party elders will probably have to broker it in the back room.

If this happens, the guess here is that they will probably turn to Mr. Kennedy in the end. It would be a desperate risk, and Kennedy scoffs at it in private, but the Democrats are in desperate straits—with everything to win and nobody to win it with—and they might just go with the 44-year-old Kennedy in the pinch against the other candidates, who are in their sixties.