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Speaking "In the most humble way possible," Rudy Giuliani disclosed on the campaign stump in Iowa last summer that "I'm very good at doing the impossible. I am." Indeed, he's made a career of slaying dragons, including winning the convictions of prominent Wall Street and organized crime figures as a federal prosecutor in the 1980s and overseeing a huge drop in New York City's crime rate as its mayor from 1993 to 2001.

So what does this 63-year-old dragon slayer make of science? That's hard to determine because his campaign successfully discouraged key advisers from speaking to Science about specific issues. But his public career suggests that Giuliani is a pragmatist with a quick grasp of issues, a lover of statistics, and a firm believer that most tasks can be done better by private institutions than by government.



On social issues, Giuliani stands out among the Republicans for what he has said about abortion: With reservations, he would let the woman decide what to do. On a linked topic, research on human embryonic stem cells, he said in May that "as long as we're not creating life in order to destroy it--as long as we're not having human cloning ... I would support [federal funding]." David Carmel, a biotech executive and member of the board of the New York Stem Cell Foundation, made the case for embryonic stem cell research in a private debate last fall that the candidate staged to explore both sides of the issue. Based on Giuliani's questions, Carmel says he believes Giuliani, if elected, would reduce federal restrictions.

Giuliani's record as mayor and author add few clues about his outlook on science. Rodney Nichols, former president of the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS), gives him high marks for his interest in two city-backed projects involving science and somewhat lower marks for follow-through. Nichols recalls how the mayor agreed to host an NYAS award to honor scientific excellence, even though it "would not win [him] votes." At the same time, Nichols says that "not much came" of a panel on how to bring biotech companies into the city, as the mayor lost interest once local medical institutions began to jockey for concessions.



*Red team. The Republican candidates during last month's debate in Johnston, Iowa.*

In his 2002 book *Leadership*, Giuliani wrote, "I loved learning biology" as a premedical student at Manhattan College. But in the end, he says that he chose law school and politics because "I liked ideas better than science." New York City invested heavily in crime statistics--a system called CompStat--to help command a burgeoning police force. The model has been copied in many cities, and Giuliani has proposed clones for other tasks, which he calls JobStat, SchoolStat, EnergyStat, and HealthStat.

The technical issue that proved most controversial for Giuliani this fall, in fact, involved his use of health data. An ad in New Hampshire claimed that people diagnosed with prostate cancer (as he was in 2000) in the United Kingdom are more likely to die of their disease because of its system of "socialized medicine" than their U.S. counterparts. The ad cited survival rates of 82% for the United States and 44% for Britain. This provoked a flurry of criticism. A spokesperson for Giuliani revealed that the candidate found the data in the journal of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a conservative think tank to which he has close ties.

Experts say it's easy to misread the numbers. Recent data from the U.S. National Cancer Institute and an international survey called Eurocare indicate that the 5-year survival rates are about 77% for Britain and 98% for the United States. What this shows, according to biostatistician Donald Berry of the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, is that U.S. doctors screen and diagnose more patients, finding prostate cancer in people not at risk of dying from it, and that "there is no credible evidence that screening decreases prostate cancer mortality." The Giuliani campaign has said it won't stop using the original ad data.

Giuliani's campaign has skated lightly over most issues with scientific and technological components. On energy, for example, he would boost all domestic energy sources, emphasizing coal, nuclear power, ethanol (with a goal of 20% more output), and renewable sources such as windmills, but he has not spelled out how this would work. Likewise, his pledges to "promote science and mathematics through technical certification or an associate degree" and "expand the number of H-1B visas for skilled foreign workers" come with few details. The League of Conservation Voters reports that Giuliani has "no articulated position" on most of the environmental issues it tracks. Giuliani has said, "I do believe there's global warming," but he has not spelled out his response to the problem.