

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 1

INTERVIEW IX

DATE: April 9, 1986

INTERVIEWEE: LAWRENCE F. O'BRIEN

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. O'Brien's office, New York City

Tape 1 of 3, Side 1

G: Let me ask you to first talk generally about the campaign of 1964 and discuss, if you will, the issues in that campaign as you saw them.

O: We had anticipated--we, the Kennedy people--that 1964 would be a relatively pleasant experience. We were anticipating an easy time of it. Just before the trip to Dallas we had an informal gathering of some of the old hands, some of the people who had been in the 1960 campaign. The meeting was a reminder to ourselves that we weren't going to take anything for granted, we should have in mind planning and organizing the 1964 campaign, and we should move forward no later than the first of the year. That was the extent of attention to 1964.

From the time President Johnson became president until the summer of 1964, I don't remember any serious discussions relevant to the campaign. I remember that we discussed it in some detail, including the convention at Atlantic City, and then--

G: Why was Atlantic City chosen as the convention site?

O: It was not a particularly good convention site.

G: Why wasn't it good? Was it too small?

O: Yes. Also, Atlantic City had deteriorated. The hotel accommodations were barely adequate. But it wasn't a matter of overriding significance. Perhaps one of the most significant elements of the Atlantic City convention was the reinstatement of Walter Cronkite as anchor for CBS, which seemed to draw as much attention as the upcoming convention. In any event, it was a turning point in Walter's life, because he was reinstated as anchor and proceeded with the convention.

Prior to any recollection I have regarding campaign organization, I remember Barry Goldwater's nomination in San Francisco and the controversy between the Goldwater people and the [Nelson] Rockefeller people. Following his nomination Goldwater paid a courtesy call on the President. He was early for his appointment, and as a result, asked to visit with me. We had a chat that I remember quite well, because Barry

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 2

wanted to let me know he had followed the Kennedy campaign procedure throughout, he and his people had carefully reviewed the so-called O'Brien manual and had implemented it in all respects, and he therefore felt his people had done a good job at the convention. He was quite proud of this.

We had, for the first time, in 1960 installed floor telephones and had a telephone system across the convention hall. Barry did that, but he added a new twist to it which he said was an improvement over our procedure. He went on from that conversation to spend a few minutes with the President--a courtesy call. He was going to oppose Johnson, he was the nominee of the Republican Party, but they were old friends.

I can't recall specifically when we actually discussed the 1964 campaign in the White House. I have a recollection of a meeting or two with the President and it probably involved people like Jim Rowe, perhaps Terry Sanford, some of the Johnson people on the White House staff. But I'm not sure there was anything meaningful.

We were still engaged in intensive Hill activity and it was a heavy schedule. At some point the President and I got to discussing the campaign. Now, at this point--it was either in the early fall or approaching the early fall--he felt strongly that I should plunge into the campaign, that there should be an organizational concept or at least it should be informational. We ought to determine just what it looked like across the country, what was occurring.

I was concerned, because that meant I would be out of touch with legislative progress. My particular concern was that this communication that was ongoing with Wilbur Mills, this dialogue, would be interrupted by my travels. In any event, the President was adamant. He couldn't see why I couldn't handle both aspects. I had no alternative but to try to do just that.

We put together a little group. One of the Reuthers traveled with me. Joe Napolitan, who was a long-time associate of mine and had been with me in the 1960 campaign, agreed to go along. We decided to structure some regional meetings, so that in a brief period of time we would touch base in a manner that would cover just about all of the country. It was clear that you weren't going to pursue this to the grassroots, so we thought about it on a regional basis, and we wanted appropriate representation at these meetings. We went out on a series of these, and I think I ought to review this first week's memo and it will give a feeling for it.

(Interruption)

G: You say it's worth noting that--

O: I don't think we started these regional meetings until late September.

G: The Cleveland meeting was the twenty-eighth, and that's about as early a one as I have a

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 3

record of.

O: Yes. I think that's right. So to underscore this, you have a concern on the part of the President, shared by some of us, about the current status of his re-election. How was it going along? What activity was being undertaken? What impact was being made by the opposition? Frankly, this would also indicate there was little or no information from the Democratic National Committee or other sources or if there was, it wasn't satisfactory to the President.

I note that with this start in late September, on October 4 I summarized reports that I had submitted to the President on the initial meetings. In this summary report on the first stage of this process, I advised him that I had conducted eight regional meetings involving key campaign leaders in nineteen states. That was accomplished by October 4. And it goes on to summarize the reports of each of the eight meetings that I had submitted to him previously. It was a state-by-state report, and it was basically upbeat. It did indicate that in Indiana I was saying, "You have a reasonable chance of becoming the first Democrat to carry Indiana since 1936." I go on to Kentucky and say, "Slim edge to you at this time; the issue is still in doubt." But the states I was talking about included Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Utah and Colorado. And in this summary report, I also discuss local races, governorships, Senate contests or House seats. There's an arrow on just one state, which would indicate that the President focused on that phase of the summary report, and it's the state of South Dakota. He probably narrowed it for emphasis because I say, "You are leading, but newspaper poll shows a ten-point drop in two-week period. Democratic candidate for governor far behind. I doubt he can make it."

I concluded the summary report by saying, "We have a good chance of picking up nine Republican seats in the House in these nineteen states and a fair chance of picking up four more now held by Republicans." Now, that was a general observation after eight meetings covering nineteen states. You broke down the states, and this would be typical of the reports that were furnished subsequently. "Good chance: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Utah, Colorado. Fair chance: Missouri, Kansas, Iowa." No, I'm sorry. Let me go back. It wasn't by state; these were congressional districts where we had a good chance of picking up seats. So that was eight districts. In each instance, in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Utah and Colorado. Then I went on to say that we had a fair chance of picking up one seat each in Missouri and Kansas and two seats in Iowa. On the other side of the coin, I indicated I found eight Democratic seats in question. I felt that I thought we would hold them all, but there were problems in each instance. That was the two seats in Indiana, one in Kentucky, one in Arkansas, one in Colorado, and an Illinois seat in Chicago--two Illinois seats--and one in Ohio.

Then I broke down the state-by-state registration, get-out-the-vote effort as I evaluated it. And then I got to the complaints that I heard in these first eight meetings. I

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 4

list the major complaint--materials were not available. There was a lot of complaining about lack of material, lack of printed material for distribution. I go on to say this was the number-one complaint we heard on the trip, and the priority we have placed on getting materials into the field during the past week, which indicates that we had tried to move quickly on this, "should have results within a day or two." So the movement of materials out to the field obviously was in progress.

Then I point out that labor's COPE also is putting fifty million pieces of literature out which should be at state COPE headquarters across the country by Monday, October 6. Then I recommend that all materials available to the national committee be sent into the field at once without worrying about payment, because the procedure of the national committee was to secure payment for the material from the state organizations to defray the cost of printing and preparing this material. I simply say that the material has been produced, let's get it into the hands of the voters. We're going to have to pay for it eventually, whether it is being used effectively or molding in a warehouse.

Then I get to the issues, and the bomb is the biggest issue by far. Voters are frightened of Goldwater and don't want him in the same room with the nuclear trigger. That was clear in that first week of travel. The fear generally across the country was not of Lyndon Johnson or what he might do or not do. It was the fear of Goldwater.

I say, "Interestingly enough, 90 per cent of the campaign leaders we talked with were critical of the television spot." This was a very controversial matter which, frankly, I was in a sense part of, because the television spot that is referred to, [the one] showing the little girl pulling petals off the daisy, caused great controversy, and it was one of several spots that were done by Tony Schwartz, in New York. Tony is an extremely creative fellow with a national reputation. His strength was in spots rather than in half-hour shows. He was amazing.

G: Now, as long as you're on the subject of this commercial, let me ask you to discuss it. It's my impression that it didn't air very long at all, that you pulled it off the air right away. Is that [right]?

O: Yes, I ran into situations somewhat like this in a later campaign, and I think I am very much a cynic in that regard. You determine whether you are going to take one real punch, settle for the punch, get to the dressing room, leave the building. But this was but one of a series of spots, and all of them were hard-hitting. We had one, as I recall--these were all Tony Schwartz' spots--of Goldwater with a good portion of the Northeast of the United States being cut off and floating out into the Atlantic, which went to Goldwater's references to regions of the country. I can't suggest to you that we put the daisy spot on anticipating the reactions to it, but we certainly felt at the time it was a hard-hitting spot and it went to the subject and you didn't have to have an imagination to get the point.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to it, do you recall?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 5

O: I don't, except that I'm sure he reacted. I said it then and there's no reason to retract it now, just to repeat the paragraph: "Interestingly enough, 90 per cent of the campaign leaders we talked with were critical of the television spot showing the little girl pulling petals off a daisy, but it is my candid opinion that this ad did more to crystallize public opinion against Goldwater than any other single tool we are using." It was my opinion, and I think that really is what happened. We got the advantage of the impact and withdrew the spot, and the end result was it did focus a great deal of public attention on Goldwater's positions.

G: Why were your leaders critical of it?

O: I think that they got critical comments saying, "Gosh, that's too tough. That's rough, that's kind of mean." But while people are saying that, they've seen it. Even while some of your own people get a little bit nervous, feeling that it could wind up counterproductive, the impact has been made and there's no problem withdrawing it. And that way you satisfy your own workers. Now, that's a natural tendency in a campaign. Your own people are apt to react strongly to hard-hitting spots. We had that with [Spiro] Agnew and then Nixon at a later date, by the same Tony Schwartz.

G: Oh, really?

O: Yes.

G: Which spots in particular?

O: We had one in the [Hubert] Humphrey campaign? That's the one. I'm chuckling as I'm trying to answer, because we had one where a fellow was just sitting. Incidentally, these spots were made at very, very little cost. They were done by Tony in his own facilities. Maybe his son is in it or his wife and the cost factor was really minimal. For example, this one was a simple showing of a fellow sitting in a chair watching a television set. And on the set came "Agnew for vice president," and the fellow started to laugh. And he laughed hysterically. And that was the spot.

(Laughter)

And there was another one. You watched the screen, the line across the screen, and you hear the heart beating. You listen to that for a few seconds, and all of a sudden, underneath it, "Agnew for vice president, a heartbeat from the presidency."

And then we had one on George Wallace. Tony came up with the idea of a fellow going in to vote. He started talking to himself--he's standing in the line waiting to go in to pull the curtain and vote--and he is saying, "I've always been a Democrat, always voted Democrat. I think, I think I can"--what was the fellow's name that was the candidate for vice president with Wallace?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 6

G: Oh, Curtis LeMay, wasn't it?

O: --that real bomb-thrower. And "Oh, this time I think I'll vote for Wallace and LeMay." Well, anyway he went through this for a few seconds, and then it came time for him to go in and vote, and the last thing: "No, it's Wallace and LeMay." He pulled the curtain, and the whole thing disintegrated. (Laughter) That one we didn't use.

(Laughter)

G: It didn't air?

O: No.

G: Was the 1964 campaign significant in the development of this sort of media political advertising? Was there anything new in 1964 that you hadn't done in 1960?

O: Yes. There was more attention directed to spots, and there was a tendency to consider that television promotion of a candidate probably should go to a bio, a half-hour show. We did those. But the utilization of television spots was relatively new and the creative aspect was relatively new.

Tony was in the forefront. To this day Tony Schwartz is considered the most creative man in America in this area. Every election a candidate winds up with a contract with Tony Schwartz, and he must go to Tony Schwartz' office because Tony will never travel. And the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, used to sleep on Tony's sofa--as president--while Tony was doing some of his work overnight.

But in any event, we ran smack into what was a surprise to us, obviously, the degree of adverse comment regarding the girl and the petals.

G: How did the Republican campaign react to it?

O: Very strongly.

G: Did they feel it was unfair?

O: Oh, yes.

G: How was the decision made to focus on this nuclear issue, the--?

O: It was handed to us on a silver platter by Goldwater comments. Barry has the tendency to shoot from the hip and he would make some of these God-awful comments that could be interpreted as wild and woolly. Of course, we just played off it. Barry Goldwater had a constituency, it was a little like, in reverse, the constituency [George] McGovern had later. It wasn't very broad but it was very intense, dedicated, and active. He was raising a great

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 7

deal of money. And that was the emergence of Ronald Reagan, in the Goldwater campaign. Reagan went on national television to do a national fund-raising drive for Goldwater, and it was effective. I forget what was reported as raised off that half-hour, but it was substantial. But there again it was deep but narrow--Goldwater and his campaign activity and particularly his own personal approach to campaigning and the statements he was making. We just sat there and felt that we just couldn't let this go by, this was too good.

G: This was really less than two years away from the Cuban missile crisis. Do you think that the sobering impact of the missile crisis caused people to be more concerned about nuclear war than they have been since?

O: I wouldn't overemphasize that aspect of it, for what you had were the Goldwater comments. They bordered on the irrational in the view of many people; it scared people. And so we wanted to make sure that they were properly scared.

G: Do you think that these spots were exaggerated, that, in fact, Goldwater would not have been as reckless as depicted by them?

O: Probably, but that was nothing unfair, because we were just holding him to his own statements. He was like a fellow that comes charging out of the West on a wild horse, and he was going in every direction and making statements almost daily that were usable.

The interesting thing about it all is that this one spot, since the advent of television spots in American politics, remains the most remembered, to this day. I've heard it referred to within the last year. And there's a tendency to refer to it as a horror story. It became more unfair and more of a horror story as the years went on. But it was scary, the Republicans were saying, "Why are you scaring the children of America? Kids see that spot. This is terrible. They can't sleep at night. They're having nightmares." You didn't have to use the spot anymore, the discussion relevant to it became so widespread that--

G: For the record, the spot depicted a little girl pulling petals off a flower and then switched to a countdown of a nuclear explosion, is that right? And then showed the bomb going off.

O: Yes. She was a very cute little girl, too.

G: Another distinction between the two candidates that year was the role of the federal government, and particularly on such issues as social security, Medicare, the public power projects like REA and the TVA. How did these shape up as issues?

O: You could incorporate some of those in broad, general issues. For example, while I recount the reactions I got uniformly to the daisy spot, you go on to another phase. We had requests in almost every state for more positive material in our television spots. And "I have assured everyone that we'll take a positive approach in the closing weeks of the

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 8

campaign." Now that was our plan in any event. You stir the waters with the daisy spots and that sort of thing. Now you've got people talking about the campaign, and you've created interest, debate and discussion, and in some areas, bitterness.

People know now that an election is upcoming. So now you move to the positive. Now we're talking about perhaps six or seven weeks before the election. We were going to be there just once wherever we were, we were going to have one opportunity, and we wanted to cover as much ground as possible. Responsibility in government. At that point, you have a nation at peace. I think, relatively speaking, there wasn't any great controversy about Vietnam. You were in a good position. You had a nation that was basically prosperous, a nation which people felt had done a satisfactory job of preparedness, "a sense of security about you" directed to the President, "insecurity about Goldwater." Well, that goes back to Goldwater having created this feeling of insecurity, which he had done on his own.

"In farm areas, the REA issue is very strong and should be exploited more than it has been." Social security and Medicare: the fact of the matter is that while we had not gotten the job done, we certainly had succeeded in keeping a high profile on Medicare and there was a great deal of senior citizen activity ongoing. And then, "Many Republicans who normally would vote the straight ticket indicate that they are supporting you because they are frightened of Barry"--here we go again--"but will support Republican candidates in state and congressional contest."

G: Did the doctors oppose you because of Medicare? Did you get a large opposition from AMA?

O: Yes. Very strong opposition, organized opposition.

G: How did it assert itself?

O: They were heavy contributors to Goldwater. They were engaged in a lot of media activity and scare tactics on Medicare. The American Medical Association was in a good position to rev up its troops, because of all groupings in society, traditionally doctors know less about politics, have less interest in it, less interest in government and are very naive. They were told that this was the communist revolution that was going to destroy them and they would no longer be able to function in a democratic society. This was the thrust of the AMA program and these doctors bought it hook, line and sinker. Some of the finest doctors in America were screaming and hollering, sincerely believing that they were going to be destroyed and the practice of medicine would be destroyed in this country, as we knew it. That was a very strong but limited area of opposition.

G: How about the public power issue and such things as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Rural Electrification Administration? How important were these as issues, either for you or against you?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 9

O: They were issues for us, but they were basically regional. The reaction, even when you are in a favored position, is not very extensive. But it's helpful, and it can be particularly helpful, obviously, in hopefully picking up some congressional seats. While it's in discussion in a limited number of areas of the country, it's very significant in those areas.

You've now tried to evaluate nineteen states. What are you concluding? You've talked about the spots, you've talked about "let's accent the positive," you've talked about a basic--that there is no material out there. How do you expect these people to arouse interest in the election and get out the vote if you don't have any basic tools? And so we take immediate corrective action, which wasn't difficult because there was a warehouse loaded with material. The DNC would not ship the material until they had received payment for it. As always, many of these party entities at the local level are not in a position to expend that kind of money. So they're not sending in the checks and they're not getting the material. We made one quick let's unload that warehouse, get it out in the field, and we'll worry about payment later on. That was a challenge that was easy to handle.

This summary of the first eight meetings brings it into focus. You've talked about the issues that favor him and that should be emphasized. You have concluded that your material is on the way and the daisy concept is being eliminated. Then you get to the issues that are negative or unfavorable. This report indicates the political climate. You are saying, "During the first two days of this trip, we had five meetings involving seven states. Nothing was mentioned in any of these meetings about hate literature. So obviously they haven't accomplished a national distribution."

The moment we moved west of Chicago, however, we began getting hit with warnings about the effect of the three hate books: *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*; *A Choice, Not an Echo*, and *None Dare Call It Treason*. "These books were mentioned by campaign leaders from the remaining twelve states we visited. The situation is worse in Oklahoma. It is safe to say that these books are being widely distributed by the Republican Party as well as by [John] Birchers and other right-wing organizations. They are available at all newsstands. They are being read and having some impact. At every meeting our campaign leaders agreed the books are hurting; you should not answer any of the charges; some weapons should be placed in the hands of our people to counteract the effect of the books."

Tape 1 of 3, Side 2

O: "I have recommended that the national committee prepare detailed profiles on the authors, emphasizing their right-wing extremist background. Also, reprint the Drew Pearson column tearing [J. Evetts] Haley to pieces"--he was the author of one of these books--"and any similar articles critical of the books. Get this information into the hands of each state organization immediately."

G: Do you know the background of the Pearson story?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 10

O: No.

So I sum it up, "Apparently a national effort is being made to get these books in the hands of voters, particularly in the non-industrial, marginal states of the Midwest, West, and South."

G: Actually, there is some irony in the Pearson expose, because some of the material in the Haley book came from Drew Pearson. (Laughter) Reflecting that roller-coaster relationship that Pearson and Johnson had all those years. Any insights on that?

O: No. I'm not too sure, frankly, when I headed out on this tour that I had focused on these books. That might have been brought to your attention, but you paid little heed, because you have other things to do that you consider more important. You don't have time to dwell on this sort of thing. So I was taken aback by the degree of comment made by "our own people," regarding the books and their concern relative to them.

G: Was there an issue-by-issue refutation of any of these books developed by the--?

O: Yes. Material was developed, but it was hastily done and it wasn't widely distributed. There was at least an effort made to counteract this: the Drew Pearson column and a little effort on the part of DNC to have discussions with selected members of media to see if they couldn't stir up some comments about the authors.

G: I wonder if there was a residual impact on this literature, this right-wing literature. Do you think it's something that conditioned the public thinking over a period of years rather than just a [inaudible] thing?

O: I doubt it. While I was taken aback with the extent of the comment and expression of concern, nevertheless I don't think I concluded it was monumental in its impact on the campaign.

G: You didn't notice the same sentiment out there in 1968 when you were working for other candidates; they were not invoking the--?

O: No.

G: How about an impact on foreign policy? Do you think any of these books caused the administration to be more sensitive to criticism from the right in foreign policy?

O: I don't think so. There again, I don't think that you can avoid the comparison. What was the aftermath of the McGovern campaign on the winning candidate? Did it have an impact on him? McGovern was in a narrow, deep, dedicated, support situation, but emphasis on narrow. Exactly the situation which Goldwater experienced in 1964. That's why you had overwhelming defeats in both instances. There are two hundred and forty million people,

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 11

there are going to be millions voting, and you have to establish the broadest base of support possible. So if you're going to repeatedly direct your attention to that base, you're talking to people that are already with you. The more you do of that, the less opportunity you have to expand your base, and consequently you're a loser. And this is exactly what was happening. And so whether you have scurrilous material, the fact is that the impact was negligible. My bet would be that four out of five people who read one of those books were committed to Barry Goldwater and it had no voter impact to speak of, because they were already in the Goldwater camp.

When you've covered nineteen states in eight regional meetings, you've listened to local and regional party leaders, labor leaders and your emphasis is on these books, it indicates that you're in pretty darned good shape. You go on to other issues which are having some effect: the Baker and Estes scandals, Bobby Baker and Billy Sol Estes. You picked up an occasional comment relative to them. In that same category, *Life* magazine's fourteen million dollar estimation of your personal wealth. Well, there were some comments in that area. Backlash in some of the border states, Arkansas and Oklahoma particularly, and you--

G: This is backlash against the civil rights legislation?

O: Yes. You were finding a little of that.

G: Well, surely there must have been some of that in the Deep South as well.

O: Yes, but really at this point I'm not in the Deep South.

G: Oh, you hadn't gotten there yet.

O: I specifically mentioned Arkansas and Oklahoma because they were included in these meetings.

G: How about in any of the northern states or midwestern states?

O: No.

G: No backlash there. Was LBJ disturbed about the hate literature?

O: I guess.

G: You don't recall his reaction?

O: When it happens to you, it isn't overreaction at all.

G: One of your notes from one of the meetings indicates that this literature was targeted specifically at Protestant ministers and airline personnel. Did you find this to be true?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 12

O: Yes. We were interested to find their distribution procedures--they had gotten it into some of the airlines; they had gotten it as a pass-out, through some airline employees, to travelers. And, of course, they went to the conservative, Birch-leaning ministers, from their point of view an appropriate place to achieve dissemination of the material.

G: Did you do anything to counter these particular distribution points?

O: No. This one paragraph, "No one questions your legislative record or your ability to serve as president." And I think that sums up the generally prevailing public attitude at that point. And then the other sentence in that same paragraph: "Their attacks are based solely on emotional issues, and it is difficult to fight emotion with logic." So you are talking about a little touch of civil rights backlash. The Republicans' latest campaign device, quote, "Well, at least Barry's honest," so they were trying to personalize the campaign, they were lacking anything substantive in terms of attacking his record or his capacity to be president.

And I go on: "In the labor section"--and I was tremendously impressed, and it's worth noting that. We're talking about 1964 and the job labor had done in that past year and a half on voter registration, and the inherent strength of COPE as a political entity, the political arm of labor. That was toward the high water-mark of labor's impact on national elections, and--

G: Was it more than it had been in 1960?

O: As much. They were riding well. Labor's impact began to deteriorate in 1968. It was the labor membership that deserted to George Wallace, and from then on they were never able to recoup, to deliver their membership en masse. It became segmented. The tendency of any member of organized labor today has been to make his or her mind up and not consider that he she owes some allegiance to a leader that tells them what they should do.

But Roy Reuther, who was traveling with us--Walter Reuther's brother, an extremely able and active fellow in the labor movement--was purposely on the team that traveled with me, because we were going to have labor representation at all these meetings.

G: The organization in the field that you would work with in these various states, to what extent was it Johnson's own grassroots organization? To what extent was it the old Kennedy organization? To what extent was it a new organization made up of labor as the foot soldiers?

O: It was basic state-county-local organizations that would run the gamut as to competency and ability. It was not a Kennedy organization or a Johnson organization. It was supposedly the party structure. We were not enamored with the party structure in 1960. That's why we went out and organized as we did in the Kennedy campaign, which

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 13

paralleled--that's at least what we claimed--the party structure. We enhanced the party structure, we claimed, but in actuality we created our own structure. We had done that in Massachusetts initially. That was the only way that Jack Kennedy could ever have defeated Henry Cabot Lodge, because dependence on the Massachusetts state committee or city and town organizations in Massachusetts would have doomed you. And it's true in the country, there were just spots of really good, solid organization. In my years in national politics, I found that to be the case and I'm sure it's the case today.

If Lyndon Johnson was seeking election in 1964, and you had a tough contest and I was his campaign director, I would have insisted early on, two years before an election at least, that we put in place a national grassroots campaign organization, utilizing the existing organizations where they were viable, but implementing them or supplanting them, depending on the requirements, so that you truly would be directing a national presidential campaign through the campaign's national headquarters and in concert with the Democratic National Committee, but you would control the Democratic National Committee. Everything would be under the direction of the campaign team of the candidate. Now, you're trying to determine where you can take some immediate and direct actions that might be helpful.

One of the advantages was the role of labor, because labor had been engaged in a major registration drive. The Democrats who were meeting with the county chairmen were quick to tell us how impressed they were with what labor was doing in their area. So labor was carrying on a great deal of the leg work, and it was working out well. There was a close relationship between COPE and the Democratic National Committee.

I notice I make specific reference to Matt Reese, who was responsible for this coordination between the DNC and COPE. Matt Reese was a long-time Kennedy hand, who had surfaced as an important member of our campaign organization in West Virginia in the West Virginia primary in 1960.

G: What happened to the Kennedy organization in 1964?

O: You try to bolster the Democratic National Committee, which has now become yours if you win the election. The Democratic National Committee is under the direction of the party leader, who is the president. And that would be the source of continuity because you would meld, which did not happen. Historically you'll find that's the failure, that you succeed after a massive effort and you don't ensure the permanency of that success. You go about your business of governing and you leave the DNC pretty much to its own devices. All politics flows from the White House. In the final analysis, the DNC is designated to implement wherever you feel is appropriate.

If you're the out-party, you have one terrific problem, because the titular head does not have the muscle to ensure improving organization or maintaining organization. Consequently, I have never seen the Democratic Party, through its nominal national entity, the Democratic National Committee, in a position of strength, financial and otherwise. I

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 14

was national chairman twice, and I saw what happens when you're the chairman of the party and it's the out-party. That was much more challenging to be chairman under those circumstances [than] to be chairman when your party is in the White House.

G: Was Kennedy's attitude toward the DNC after he was in the White House roughly the same as Johnson's or did they have different--?

O: About the same. I remember somebody saying, "Gosh, maybe we ought to have the national chairman attend cabinet meetings." Well, it never happened. There should be some support emanating from here for the DNC and there should be a recognition that the president is on top of it. He is the party leader; that's one of his hats, and as party leader he assumes responsibility to ensure that there's a strong Democratic National Committee. You're well-meaning; nobody purposely says, well, let's forget the Democratic National Committee. Never have I seen a situation where I would be comfortable with the Democratic National Committee on an ongoing basis. Now, if somebody made reference to the fact that Jim Farley attended cabinet meetings; he was postmaster general as well as national chairman. After all, my first and primary interest, that got me into politics, was organization: the ability to put together groups of people who in turn could put together other groups of people who in turn could get people interested in the process and get them registered and vote. That's the name of the game. But organizationally I've never seen it, in even our best times, as it should be in terms of a national organization. And I don't think it's any different today than it was then.

G: Was there an actual campaign manager for Johnson in 1964? Was there someone who had overall authority over the campaign?

O: No, I think that I probably came the closest to it, because I was the only one that was engaged nationally in any activity in the campaign. (Laughter)

G: How about Dick Maguire, or Cliff Carter or anybody?

O: Well, they were around. I guess both of them--I don't know whether Carter and Maguire were both over at the national committee or Dick was still in one of the agencies. But the answer is that--and it's no reflection on anybody--I was charged to take over. It wasn't President Johnson saying to me, "Why don't you call in the people that are running the campaign and take their measure." Not at all. He was saying, "Nobody has advised me on what the state of the campaign is. Do everything you can, and in a relatively brief period of time see if we can't maximize whatever is available to us." It was as simple as that.

But, you see, we did try to get it into an aspect of coordination even at that late stage.

G: How much of a problem was the financing in 1964?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 15

O: Well, there shouldn't have been any problem. Whatever monies were necessary for media were there. You've got an incumbent president, and why should there be any financial problems? The chief concerns on funds were that the states wanted to know if they're going to receive any DNC money and if they were, when would they receive it. Now, that indicates clearly on October 4 that there hasn't been any coherent distribution of funding for campaign activities. If they are not going to get any, they want a quick answer. "I have emphasized that chances are remote," because clearly there was no provision for this. "We have serious deficit problems, too," I would say. That's part of the reverse sales pitch.

G: But you really did have plenty of money, is that right?

O: No, I don't think so. There had been no attempt to garner money. The DNC didn't have any money.

G: But for the President's campaign, was that well financed?

O: There wasn't any campaign.

G: Well, he traveled around the states, you had TV spots.

O: Yes, well, we financed them as the need arose, and that's all you were doing.

G: You had all the costs of materials.

O: I am saying to these people in late September, "Don't anticipate any flow of money of any significance. We're going to expect you to handle this at the local level." Then I get into something that refreshes my memory. I go on to say, "Release of funds tied up within the state." In several states money that has been raised in the state is tied up within the state. Now, that was fund raising undertaken in some states in the interest of the national ticket, probably local candidates, too. And it was laying there. Now these campaign leaders who felt that this money in reality belonged to the national campaign were asking me for permission to spend this money on their state campaigns. The money was tied up. Apparently there wasn't a coherent policy of funneling this money back to a national campaign organization.

Then I say, "I talked with Maguire on this before starting this trip. He advised me to make judgments and recommendations, and I plan to sit down with him when I return to go over the financial problems of each state on a state-by-state basis. In the meantime, I have one recommendation to which I should like you to give serious consideration. And that is, immediate cash assistance to congressional candidates in close races that might well be the impetus needed for unseating several Republicans. If the money comes from you, these candidates unquestionably will feel some obligation to you for your help. I recommend a budget of approximately two hundred thousand dollars"--that's pretty modest--"and pumping this cash directly into selected congressional campaigns. The

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 16

money could be delivered to the candidates in your name. This procedure is anticipated by the DNC and should move immediately to be effective." And, incidentally, that was implemented.

G: Did it affect his relations with the Congress, particularly any of these members that were elected?

O: Yes, it's helpful. We sent couriers to distribute these funds appropriately to the districts that I selected. They were advised the President was aware of their campaign and wished them all the best and wanted to be able to be of help.

G: Do you know how many of those people won?

O: In our records somewhere we had an evaluation of this.

G: Let me ask you to compare fund raising during this time in 1964 as opposed to 1960, [for] the same time period. Did Kennedy and Johnson have different ways of raising funds? Did their monies go for different things? Did they come from different sources?

O: Well, it'd come from basically similar sources. You're still in the era of the fat cat. Most of your fund raising came from those sources. What's the motivation of a fat cat? With Kennedy, if he becomes president, I'll know him. With Johnson, it's a much stronger position. He is president, and he's going to be re-elected, so I'd better make an effort. It was much more difficult to raise money in 1960 than it would be in 1964.

G: Did a fear of Goldwater make fund raising easier for you? Did you get Republican funds?

O: The fear they'd have is that they might not be on the record with the President as he continued in office and it might be noted that they hadn't been participants to the degree that we thought they should be. For the Democratic Party, it's always been much more difficult to raise money than the Republican Party, under any set of circumstances, for a national campaign. That was the heart of the motivation for the dollar check-off.

G: Johnson had been a friend of Israel for a number of years. Did he do better with the Jewish vote than Goldwater?

O: With the vote?

G: Well, the fund raising, excuse me, than otherwise?

O: I don't recall, either, in that area. The fact of the matter is that the Jewish community is of paramount importance to the Democratic Party in terms of fund raising as well as basic support. There's a Republican constituency out there that makes money readily available to Republican candidates, and it overwhelms a Democratic candidate nationally. I've never attempted to break down the list of major contributors to the Democratic Party or

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 17

the Johnson campaign or Kennedy campaign in terms of whether they're Jewish or non-Jewish. But I can say this, that it's of overriding importance to the Democratic Party--the financial support of the Jewish community. It's substantial; it extends way beyond their numbers. And that is all the way back to Roosevelt, if not before.

The Jewish American is apt to be a Democrat, a liberal by nature. Large numbers of them are in position to be financially supportive, and they are most willing to do so. If you're taking the list of major contributors, start at ten thousand and up. Today I guess a major contributor wouldn't be a ten-thousand-dollar contributor, but in 1960 and 1964 you would clearly put in your little private file the name of a fellow that contributed ten thousand or more. There's no question in my mind that the Jewish representation in that file would far exceed their numbers in terms of vote.

The Jewish population is probably 3 per cent. They vote in strength. You take that small community of six million or so in a population of two hundred and forty million, and the economic level of that group is far higher than the economic level of the country. Then you add their interest in liberal programs, and the Democratic Party's traditional position in terms of Israel. You add that up, and that's a major source of the financing of the Democratic Party campaign activities; always has been.

G: What was the role of the President's Club in fund raising in 1964?

O: I have never been enamored with fund raising. I resisted all through my years in politics being directly involved with fund raising. I never liked that aspect of politics, but I recognized it was an essential element of it.

G: How could you keep from being involved?

O: I never solicited funds. If I was directing a national campaign, I would expect there were those in the campaign that I would look to for the necessary financing to carry out my programs. But they were not to look to me as a source of financing. That was the same when I was national chairman and Bob Strauss was treasurer. Bob and I had an understanding. Bob's job was to raise the money to keep that office moving, and I made the decisions on how we expended it.

If you were to select one person, I think the fellow that emerged in 1960, again in 1964, was Arthur Krim. Arthur Krim was an able, innovative fellow. He has a tremendous reputation as a fund raiser in the academic community, particularly at Columbia, and in all kinds of worthy causes, as well as a political fund raiser. He was the catalyst for fund raising that extended through 1960, 1964, and 1968. That was a role that Arthur was willing to accept. He was looked to by people who were in a position to contribute substantially. They would react to Arthur's pleas, and he was able to structure fund raising events that were extremely productive.

There were any number of people that were major contributors to the Democratic

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 18

Party. In 1968 in a desperate situation in the Humphrey-Nixon [campaign], you wound up with probably twenty-five people who carried the burden of the last three weeks of that campaign, which represented 50 per cent of the budget we had planned. Consequently, we lost it with Nixon. I was intimately involved because it was a desperate financial situation, tough from the outset.

But you have been talking about 1964, and Lyndon B. Johnson could call on Arthur Krim at any hour and Arthur Krim would respond positively and with enthusiasm. Now there are others who are known in the party. In 1968 the major source of fund raising was Dwayne Andreas. He was a close personal friend of Hubert Humphrey's. They knew each other forever. He was a tremendous admirer of Hubert's. He was directly involved in every aspect of the Humphrey campaign, and he was responsible for a great deal of the fund raising. Twelve or so people met perhaps three or four weeks before the election in 1968. I attended that luncheon with Hubert, where a plea was made to these people to defray the three million dollar cost of the remaining three weeks of the campaign. That was the minimal that would allow us to have a campaign for the remaining three weeks, and that meant cutting your six million dollar budget for the last three weeks in half. It was in Dwayne Andreas' suite at the Waldorf and Dwayne hosted the luncheon. From that luncheon came the funding of the three million dollars.

G: That's an expensive lunch.

O: Yes. But these were dedicated people. They loved Hubert. They were wealthy Democrats and they did it. If they hadn't, we wouldn't have been on television the last three weeks. There would have been no campaign.

In the financing of campaigns, the fund-raising aspect, I was never intimately involved. I didn't sit with finance committees or develop strategy in soliciting money. That was always left to others.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 1

G: This is a good point.

O: Over my years in national politics, the inadequacy of political organization always hit me. You would constantly hear from media about party organization, party structure, party bosses and all this sort of thing, and how well organized elements of the party were across the country.

But I can say, having traveled this country extensively in many elections and in my role as national chairman, the most impressive organization was Philadelphia, chaired by Bill Green, who had statewide influence in Pennsylvania and had an organization in Philadelphia that actually registered voters every day of the year. It had a budget, had a headquarters building, and had complete control of the Democratic Party in Philadelphia.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 19

I remember being asked by Bill to address a luncheon of the party organization one day in Philadelphia. Everyone in that luncheon meeting signed his or her name at the door. There were two people, one on each side of the door, to log them in. Every judge in Philadelphia was present, every congressman, every officeholder of any kind. Bill Green made all of the decisions, and when it came to election day you can be sure that the maximum vote for Democratic candidates in Philadelphia was at the polls. That was organization.

In Chicago, Cook County, the [Richard] Daley organization was certainly comparable. In addition, you had Daley as mayor, and he wore two hats as county chairman. I met with Dick Daley in his office of county chairman; I met with Dick Daley in his office as mayor. It was organized to the hilt.

Another organization which I had exposure to over the years emanated from Albany, Upstate New York. It was a county-wide organization. The mayor of Albany and county leaders maintained that organization, and that was a full-time, broadly structured, well-financed organization.

The fourth organization was not in that context of a so-called party organization with all the patronage aspects. It was an issue-oriented organization, extremely impressive, and that was the D-F-L [Democratic-Farm-Labor] in Minnesota.

G: Really?

O: That organization was most impressive. It did a lot of organizing around the issues, meetings across the state consistently that were issues-oriented. While I'm sure patronage existed, that didn't seem to be pre-eminent. There was this commitment to social progress.

There were in other parts of the country organizations which had measures of control. The party organization in Indiana, for example, where licensing and registration of cars was the party province. Across Indiana, if you won the election the licensing office [would] receive a fee from every license. And every employee of the state contributed 2 per cent of his or her salary to the organization every year. So in that context it was organized.

I'm sure I've overlooked some pockets of organization. I'm talking about my observations and pointing to Philadelphia, Cook County in Illinois, one county in Upstate New York, and the Democratic-Farm-Labor organization in Minnesota.

G: During what time in Minnesota? The sixties?

O: Yes, the sixties. Think of the governors that they'd had in Minnesota and the members of Congress from Minnesota. When I first met Fritz Mondale he was a county chairman in Minnesota, and he came up through the organization, just as a fellow in Philadelphia or

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 20

Chicago, but it was a different type of organization. There were existing entities all over the country, but we're talking about organization as I would conceive it.

G: Was Bill Green's as personal an organization as Daley's was?

O: Yes.

G: What happened to it after Green's death? Did it continue to work effectively?

O: Yes. There was a successor to Green who then became mayor. Green's son became mayor later and he served a couple of terms. Bill, Jr., succeeded his father in Congress.

You would always know in your head counts how to list the members of the Philadelphia delegation or the members of the Cook County delegation to Congress. There was the rare exception of a fellow who went off the reservation at the time of the civil rights legislation in the House Judiciary Committee and he was summarily retired by Mayor Daley.

I think it should be in terms of issue orientation. That's why I particularly admired the Minnesota organization and enjoyed the relationship with them, because they fulfilled, as I saw it, the true function of a party organization--constantly enlisting support, registering, get-out-the-vote but at the same time placing focus on the issues, on the goals and aspirations of the party, on the welfare of the people of Minnesota, focusing on national issues. Their financing would not be fat-cat. They would have lunches or picnics or what have you to raise the necessary funds to maintain this activity.

I think you have to be concerned about a two-party system. Always when I was active, I would have loved to have seen a well-organized Democratic and Republican Party across this country. I think it would have enhanced voter participation and contributed to a reduction in the widespread cynicism, if done properly, as the Democratic-Farm-Labor Party did in Minnesota. And I think we'd have all been better for it.

But that isn't the case. Oftentimes we're talking at a time when there's been a series of scandals in the city administration here in the city of New York, and clearly a contributing factor to all of that is a one-party system--the fact that these boroughs in the city of New York are overwhelmingly Democratic, the fact that the officeholders and leaders in the city, elected, are elected through a nominating process and generally through a selection process of county leaders. There is just a charade of a voting process. Once that selection is made, or the designation is made--and that includes judges and everything else in this city--the voters then go to the polls and there's no choice. And the arrogance that results from all of that. People know that they have complete control, and they don't have to go to the voter. The tendency then is to consider it your prerogative and you do as you please. And that leads to all this taking place here in New York right now.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 21

I never accepted the premise that under our national two-party system it serves the public interest to have one party extremely weak. The Democratic Party is the majority party. I think the worst thing that could happen is to be a Democratic Party activist and not ever have to be concerned about election.

But having said that, we were talking about party structure. What was the motivation of my father to be active in politics in Springfield, Massachusetts, as an immigrant? He became a citizen and a voter, battling as a minority for opportunity. I, as a kid, ringing doorbells and doing all the things that I did to motivate people to register, vote and participate, recognized the power of the ballot.

It was like the Democratic-Farm-Labor Party in Minnesota that I observed in later years. The healthy aspect of it was that you used the ballot box. There have been times in recent history where people tried to shortcut that. You don't do it by burning and bombing.

You look at the figures and you find that 50 per cent of those eligible to participate in the process go to the polls to select a president. It's a poor voter turnout compared to other democracies. We've done everything possible on the Democratic Party side: the postcard registration, opening the polls for longer hours and voter education. Why is it one out of every two people haven't interest or concern or feeling of citizen responsibility? You don't have to participate by virtue of some law that compels you, but if you have any sense of responsibility you should be a participant, even to the minimum degree of going to the polls. But it doesn't happen, and this gets back to what we were talking about earlier on, and that is who represents John and Mary down in Washington? Who lobbies for them?

(Interruption)

G: I was asking you why you picked someone from out of state to coordinate a state's activity. In this particular case you'd selected Eddie Boland, from Massachusetts, as the coordinator for Ohio.

O: Yes, we established that procedure in 1960 after we left Los Angeles--a procedure that was basically the same as utilized in Massachusetts in the Kennedy-Lodge Senate contest. We called them "Kennedy secretaries." The thrust there, however, was the inadequacy of the state and local party organizations in Massachusetts. We felt we had to build our own organization, [and] avoid as much conflict as we could with established organizations that might not appreciate our activities.

It worked out well, and when we were going to Los Angeles we had designated a person to handle each state delegation, in smaller states probably a couple of state delegations. Fellows like Abe Ribicoff and John Bailey and people like that received these assignments to stay in the hotel or headquarters of the delegation to which they were assigned. We had a monitored twenty-four-hour telephone system in Los Angeles to keep

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 22

abreast of the ebb and flow of delegate positions individually. Each morning, these coordinators would meet at our headquarters offices in the Biltmore Hotel. We would go over every delegation in detail and determine what should be undertaken during the day to correct a situation or improve a situation. The result of that effort combined with the telephone procedures we initiated on the floor of the convention was that we were able to determine, within two and a half votes, the roll call that would nominate Kennedy. It was well thought out, well planned organization.

Now, heading into a national campaign, we proceeded to have regional meetings immediately. We traveled the country. We brought Bill Green with us, because he epitomized organization. And we had Whizzer [Byron] White on the citizens' group. We had a woman from the women's division, and all that sort of thing. There were eight or nine representative people in the group, and we traveled the country.

The use of state coordinators was a procedure we had followed in general in all our campaign activities. There was a realization that if we were to spend an inordinate amount of time to determine who should be the designated chairman of the campaign in state X, we would not only spend an inordinate amount of time, we'd get into a number of conflicts. So we made an effort at the top--a governor or a senator or perhaps a state chairman--to clear our selection. But our selection would be a person from outside that state who would literally move to the state, baggage and all, and stay through the campaign. He was the coordinator. They were all fellows who could handle themselves and had experience. No one in the state would be saying, "If we succeed, he's going to be in the key role in my state." There was none of that. They respected him and knew that he had authority, that he could communicate directly with the national campaign and he could get things done. You had to be sure he could, otherwise you destroy his credibility.

A good example would be Eddie Boland in Ohio, a congressman. He's a volunteer; he's known to be intimately associated with the candidate and the campaign. He proceeds to deal with labor, various interest groups, the party people and to coordinate and ultimately maximize the activities there. We found that it worked out very well. It was very helpful in implementing our program.

- G: Was there a model for this that had been utilized somewhere else that you copied, or was this something that you just evolved?
- O: It evolved. It all started way, way back, with the first O'Brien manual, which was several mimeographed sheets stapled together. In Massachusetts the idea of Kennedy secretaries and Kennedy coordinators, while avoiding conflicts with party structures, went to the utilization of manpower. There was a different motivation at that time for three hundred and some-odd Kennedy secretaries in Massachusetts and an organization of over fifty thousand people. That organization was put in place because the candidate was unique. He could appeal to people who were not Democratic activists. More than that, however, of all of these people who were volunteering to help Jack Kennedy there wasn't one, probably, in fifty who had ever been active in politics. What do you do with these people?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 23

Can you detail exactly what each one of these people could do? That got us to every phase of possible activity you could develop.

There were people who could man a local headquarters; they had the time to do it. There were housewives who had kids at home, and they couldn't go out in the evening, but they did have a telephone, so you set up a telephone procedure. You gave them the lists with say a hundred or two hundred telephone calls. And then if they did get into a conflict with the person they were talking to they had a referral number where the person could discuss the issue. Now, that utilized those people.

And then you had younger people who could take on groups of kids in their early teens. So rather than mail a tabloid, you distributed it door to door, over a million of them, with the kids distributing them all across Massachusetts. You could have mailed the million or two million copies to every home. But this utilized all these young people who wanted to be helpful.

Then you finally got to the person who wanted to be helpful and had no time. We concluded a person probably would send out up to fifty Christmas cards. So there were up to fifty people that person knew well enough to communicate with at least once a year. So we had "Dear Friend" cards drafted. But we never would give more than fifty to anyone, because we wanted to be sure they were utilized. No one could mail them. They had to forward them back to the headquarters in the local community. Why? Because then you knew they were completed. Then we'd do the mass mailing. That was a task that you could assign.

Well, the result was there were fifty thousand people across Massachusetts engaged in meaningful activity, ranging from putting in all kinds of hours or manning the telephones in their homes, or sending out cards, or dropping a tabloid at a person's home. All of this had to be detailed. You could make the calls only within certain hours; you always rang the doorbell with the tabloid, you never just dropped it at the door. You handed it to the person answering the door. Or if not, you could slide it under the door.

Well, all of that utilized to the fullest our fifty thousand volunteers, and Kennedy was elected to the United States Senate, defeating a very popular incumbent senator, while the incumbent Democratic governor lost and Eisenhower swept the state by a quarter of a million votes. That was organization.

We tried to carry it on in the primaries the same way, and we did, through the primary states. And then we utilized this kind of detailed organization in the election campaign. You know, it's not easy with Abe Ribicoff to say, "Abe, we want you to do sort of a journeyman's nuts-and-bolts task." But you had enough people, fortunately, of that stature, the Eddie Bolands and the rest of them, willing to do that sort of thing. So it was the utilization of volunteers in the instance of Kennedy where the unique aspects of the candidate would bring volunteers that otherwise might not be engaged in politics. And that was the purpose of all of this: look to your potential and your strength.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 24

Then we got to that other phase, which was inherent in all of this: no controversy. This stranger comes into the state, respected because of who he is, his close proximity to the national organization, his close relationship with the candidate. Now you're in business.

We had the telephone procedure, the boiler room, as we called it, in the headquarters, which was manned twenty-four hours a day by a group of girls. All the problems, everything funneled in, and we at the national headquarters would take the corrective measures, whatever measures were available, to respond to all requests from our people out in the country. And then they furnished, in turn, daily reports of progress.

It's difficult, more intricate. But what happened to the O'Brien manual? I don't know how many different printings we had over the years, but it became a glossy, with pictures. It became a manual that was utilized in over thirty countries to my own knowledge. People from all over the world would come to visit us and want to talk about it. And what was it? It was a basic primer for utilizing volunteers.

It involved the utilization of media, the potential for free media. It became more sophisticated, and finally, at the last election, we printed two or three hundred thousand copies. Then we sold them at fifty cents a copy to cover the cost, or seventy-five cents, whatever it was. In fact, it used to be an embarrassment to me to have somebody from Sweden or Great Britain or the leaders of a political party come in, and the State Department say, "This person wants to be sure to meet you." It was an embarrassment, because they wanted me to talk about this basic manual. They thought there was some secret somehow that could be explored.

Now in 1964 the motivation for this in-depth effort really wasn't there. You would have enjoyed doing it one more time. But all of us who had been engaged in activity of this nature were otherwise engaged. So the dependency would have to be on the party structure. Cliff Carter was at the Democratic National Committee.

G: Cliff Carter?

O: Yes, Cliff Carter, and Dick Maguire was over there. And they were doing their job. There was an ongoing campaign, and we had done such things as arrange for media, the Tony Schwartz spots; we've mentioned the rest. But the President's concern was he didn't have a feel for it. He didn't really feel there was an ongoing campaign, rightly or wrongly. He latched onto me, and I supposed figured, "What is he doing sitting around here? He's had experience in the field. He ought to be out there." I didn't go to the President and suggest it. I recall the President just putting it right on me.

G: Before you get into this one, let me just ask you one follow-up on Eddie Boland in the Ohio coordinating job. When you had an outside person in, did you sacrifice anything in terms of knowledge of the state?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 25

O: A little.

G: And how did you compensate for that?

O: They were quick at it, knowledgeable. Eddie Boland, for example, had been elected to office any number of times, didn't know the cast of characters, but quickly would find a common ground. That was a problem that was minimal compared to the plus factor of such an assignment. We prepared a briefing for them, the cast of characters and knowledge we may have of all the people. We had sent out a basic notification of assignments with a resume of the fellow that was assigned, so they, in turn, would know about him. His first order of business was to make his courtesy calls to the appropriate people and put a group together. And while there was a learning process, it worked out well. Certainly, whatever disadvantage there was was more than compensated for by the tremendous advantage of the non-conflict aspect of it operationally--nobody considered that fellow to be a future threat to them or him or her.

G: Did you lose a degree of power by having someone from outside the state, local power?

O: No, not at all, because it was accepted. The assignment represented an understanding of the fellow's stature in terms of the national structure, his stature in terms of the candidate. I don't recall any problems of getting full cooperation. There was only a certain number of people who could undertake a task of that nature. A Boland would be a good example of top quality. If you had fifty Eddie Bolands then you could, with great comfort, inaugurate a procedure of this nature and be assured that it would be properly implemented. Some of the fellows were not of the stature of Eddie Boland, but Eddie Boland wound up in a major state. No candidate is going to inherit a well-structured, grassroots national organization to carry on the details of the campaign, particularly in the nuts-and-bolts aspects of it. It's not there, and there has to be some degree of implementation. Of course, as I said early on, it should be there if the proper support were given to the Democratic National Committee, which is the national entity for this to flow from.

Tape 2 of 3, Side 2

O: We reviewed the summary that was submitted to the President by me, covering the first week or ten days of travel and that first summary covered nineteen states. The second summary was submitted to the President just about a week or so later, and at that time it was a report of organizational meetings in sixteen additional states and the District of Columbia. And this brought us up to thirty-six states plus the District of Columbia in about a two-week or two-and-a-half-week period. Now, I'm not suggesting this was in-depth coverage, but it certainly was an effort to get out there and get a feel of things. That left us at that point, which was October 11, with fourteen states yet to be covered. And this second summary follows pretty closely the elements of the first summary. We go

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 26

into aspects of local contests and I do say that we have a good chance of picking up two House seats, and possibilities of picking up seven more, and we may lose one, with four additional Democratic seats in contest. So I think the combination of the two summaries would indicate that there was a limited area of potential change, that we would have difficulty retaining some districts, and we had an opportunity to pick up seats in a somewhat larger grouping of districts.

And we also, of course, as we did in the first summary, got into evaluations of the governorship and Senate contests, where Senate contests existed. I do note, though, after doing that evaluation, I made reference to the problem that I had cited in the earlier summary, and that was the materials, the availability of materials in the field. And I note that I state, "The materials situation improved considerably this week"--now this was only a week later--"in some states, because they produced their own." That happened to be the case; as we moved along, we found some local organizations simply did their own work. In others, they had received orders from the national committee which showed that the national committee was responding rapidly to this request to move out of the warehouse. I also mention that COPE's fifty million pieces that I referred to in an earlier summary also began arriving this week. So there was a great deal of movement in a very short period of time in the distribution of materials. This took much of the pressure off, and we found that these meetings in the second phase did not focus on lack of materials to the extent that the early meetings had.

But I do note here, and I should mention what states we're talking about, because this comes into this summary and it didn't in the early ones. In addition to the District of Columbia, this summary covered California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Hawaii, Nevada, Arizona, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and, as I said, the District of Columbia. In the summary report to the President, I mention that "it is becoming more and more apparent to me that we need to make a special effort to get out the vote in the Negro precincts. There is no question about the sentiment of Negro voters"--and they were referred to as Negro voters in 1964, not black voters; and we state the obvious--"is virtually 100 per cent support. But there is serious doubt in my mind," and I also mention in the minds of some of their leaders, "about how many of them are going to actually get to the polls. A special program aimed at this is being developed by the DNC in cooperation with labor." So this was a little belated, too, but at least attention was being directed to it.

And then in this summary we get into the senior citizens for Johnson committees throughout the country. These had been established over a period of time; they were related to the effort, of course, of the President in the area of Medicare. And we mention that we are creating all kinds of special committees: scientists, engineers, arts and so forth, which we were, and they were doing that through the DNC. But senior citizens don't seem to be subject to the same kind of activity, so we did and would continue to alert all state campaign coordinators to form state-level senior citizens for Johnson committees this week. And "this week" was the week of October 11, late as it was. And they had to work with the party organization to [start a] get-out-the-vote drive.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 27

Then I point out the great variation in registration programs in these states that are referred to. I mention specifically that California has a good registration drive, and their efforts could serve as a model for other states. And then we get into some statistics. Again, which is a repeat of the first summary, I give great credit to COPE in this get-out-the-vote effort that has been put together. And I register admiration for the cooperation between the labor people and the regular party people, both at the state and national level. That was high that year, there weren't any conflicts and everybody was working in concert. As I said, in the past there had been real friction between labor and some party organizations, but that's not the case in 1964.

And then it's interesting. I then say, "Except for Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia, where civil rights is the big issue, the major issues of concern to voters in these states are the bomb, fear of Goldwater, responsibility in government, social security and Medicare." And there again, it's a repeat basically of the prevailing issues we saw in the early summary.

Then reporting to the President again on hate literature, I point out that "We found it confined to Southern California, Arizona, Maryland, New Hampshire and Rhode Island." And it's interesting, covering the number of states that we did that week, that we now [have] somewhat isolated this in terms of specific areas where there seems to be an impact, indicating a real effort on the part of the hate literature distributors. Then we picked up evidence during those meetings that Haley's book had been translated into Spanish and also had been put on a long-playing phonograph record. So they were working hard.

Then we get to our problems, and the biggest problems are the obvious ones: apathy, overconfidence, lack of concern. We're hammering away at that, and it, I think, reflected the poll results that were current, the overwhelming victory that was brewing.

G: How did you deal with apathy, though, overconfidence? Everyone assumed that Lyndon Johnson was going to win that election by a wide margin.

O: Your fate, in terms of total voter turnout, is to a great extent in the hands of organizations and candidates at the local level where there are contests. The difficulty in a national campaign is that you have a third of the Senate involved. You have, obviously, 435 House members but only less than a hundred of those House seats are really in contest. So there's another very weak spot in terms of having a credible turnout in a national election. Now you add to that the opinion that was overwhelming that Johnson was going to be easily elected. You add all that together, and it's a problem. So really, you're not in a position in a presidential campaign to put in a very effective, localized, get-out-the-vote effort. You're hopeful that there's enough state-level, county- and congressional district-level contests to arouse enough voter interest to ensure a reasonable turnout, and that's dependent oftentimes on the organizations, the get-out-the-vote organizations of the local candidates.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 28

I also make reference to the priority list for financial assistance that I had developed, and mention the figure two hundred thousand dollars again, which indicates to me that perhaps we hadn't gotten to that distribution, because it's a gentle reminder that that is something which has been put into place in terms of targets and we ought to implement quickly.

Then I conclude in that summary another reference to our general situation. I call it "satisfactory on the whole. Goldwater's people are busy, and I'm convinced he will get out every possible Goldwater vote." That was the case; that was understood, and that wasn't any great finding on my part. I didn't have to travel to recognize that. But I do add, "For every sign of Goldwater activity we get several reports of Republicans switching to vote for you," LBJ. And then I repeat what I had said before: "I don't believe that these 'Johnson Republicans' are likely to become Democratic converts. My feeling is that most of them will vote for you but then swing right back to the big R for state contests. Where other candidates will derive greatest advantage from your personal strength is in states where they can pull one lever or mark one box for the entire ticket," stating the obvious.

So those two summaries really indicate the degree of activity we hastily engaged ourselves in, in a very limited period of time, and it's not in any way a suggestion that we plunged into a detailed national organizational drive, covering thirty-four states in two weeks, that was remotely as effective as it could have been if all this was engaged in at an earlier time.

G: I assume that LBJ's travel schedule was already fairly well set by this time, so you--

O: Yes, it was.

G: --didn't have a lot of play there.

O: No, you didn't. We might have made an adjustment; I don't recall it. I think we were locked into that, and that gets me to a separate memo which refers specifically to New York. I proceeded to spend three days in New York, where I conferred with all of the party leaders throughout the state. There was a series of informal group meetings and individual contacts, and there was no question about LBJ carrying New York. But I point out it's due to his personal popularity and strength and certainly not due to any New York organizational effort.

Then I refer to Bob Kennedy's race. This is on October 17, and I did say at that point, "He hit bottom last weekend and now is picking up momentum." And I state, "There is no question that your visit"--LBJ's visit--"did a great deal to help Bobby's situation." Then I cite the New York problems, and some of them are not unique to New York. The usual problem was financial. The state committee really was not effective. "It's broke and in debt. Here we are, on the verge of the 1964 national election. There were some complaints registered with me that most of the money raised in the state,

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 29

particularly by the citizens' committee, is being sent out of the state." Now that of course gets you back to our discussion of large contributors that I referred to sometimes as fat cats, and of course, many of those large contributors are here in New York. So those complaints might be registered, but the reality of the situation is that New York is a tremendous source of campaign funding, as California is, and it certainly could not be envisioned by anyone but somebody extremely naive that the monies derived from that fund raising in New York would be retained in the state of New York.

G: Was this a source of friction between the Johnson campaign and the Robert Kennedy campaign?

O: No, I don't recall it as friction. It was friction between the old stalwarts of New York, who knew most of these people and could envision the money raised in New York not being retained in New York. You might listen and be sympathetic to them, but it didn't make any impact.

I do say, "The citizens' group apparently is concentrating exclusively on fund raising, is not engaged in the additional functions citizen's groups in other states have undertaken." And that means that this citizens' group was really a fund-raising group, and was not engaged in the nuts and bolts; the registration effort was spotty. Similarly, the get-out-the-vote drive--I go into a lot of specifics about various assembly districts, congressional districts and the rest. Then I do point out, "The Kennedy campaign group is bearing the brunt of general organizational activities." That's pretty normal; it's a statewide campaign. And it's obvious that they're bearing the brunt of it, because his campaign was much tighter than LBJ's campaign in New York. But that, after all, works to everyone's benefit, and the Bobby Kennedy people were engaged in a massive effort.

G: Was it comparable to the Senate race in Massachusetts?

O: It was following the same basic pattern, and I was never close enough to it to observe how effective it was or compare it in that regard. Bobby had discussed his campaign at length with me on a number of occasions. I think he would have liked to have had me come and spend some time in New York in the campaign, but he had some awfully good people, and some of them came in from outside New York, some old friends and political associates.

G: Who did run his campaign, primarily?

O: I don't recall who was at the head of the campaign.

G: Who would have been near the top; who were his key people?

O: There was Jack English--even names elude me at the moment--Jack English would be very key in this campaign. Joe Crangel in Upstate New York, who was county chairman of the best-organized county in the state, would be key in the campaign. And he had a number

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 30

of personal friends and family friends who were involved.

I point out that the regular organization, whatever it was, really was the mainstay of our campaign, because that's really organizationally all that we had going. Bobby had mounted his effort, and then you always have the conflict between the regular Democrats and the reformers. That's typical of New York. I mention that here, incidentally. "The reform movement is at odds with the regulars," although, obviously, both factions were supporting LBJ, so I wasn't unduly concerned. "We get some reports of individuals who make some shortsighted decisions not calculated to enhance the overall good of the Johnson-Humphrey-Kennedy ticket." I don't know who I'm referring to specifically there, but apparently something was disturbing me. But I point out, "They are relatively rare and do not appear to be hampering the overall effort. But the inherent friction between regulars and reformers remains, and we aren't going to end it. So we may as well adjust to it."

Then I cite the *New York Daily News* poll of this date, and that gave Kennedy a psychological shot in the arm, but it showed LBJ running three to one ahead of Goldwater, and Bobby ahead of [Kenneth] Keating by about four to three. Coming on top of the reports of the Senate race as a tossup or even that Keating was ahead, this propped up many of the campaign people.

I make some reference to the [Walter] Jenkins matter, which I guess in the time frame was probably a subject of some discussion at that point.

G: It just happened, I think.

O: I was trying to recall. That's right, it had just happened. I was wondering why I make a reference to it here. Oh, yes, I do say, "It's too soon to make an evaluation of the effect of the Jenkins matter on the New York race. My personal opinion is that it will not seriously hurt you here where you have a tremendous lead, but may cause some slight falloff in normally Republican areas, where Republicans have been looking for an excuse to vote for Goldwater."

And then I mention, "The materials in New York, most of it had been produced in New York, and it's in reasonably good shape for that reason. Much of it is of excellent quality." I mention that several Johnson-Humphrey-Kennedy hyphenated, affiliated headquarters--they were joint headquarters--had been opened in Manhattan. "There's a large working headquarters. This headquarters is under the direction of Ed Cavanaugh, and I was impressed with what I saw there. I was advised that this was self-supporting." And then: "There's a volunteers' headquarters, and that is where the Kennedy operation is being conducted from. There's a walk-in headquarters at the Paramount Theater exclusively for the national ticket." So I detailed the New York situation.

And then I state the obvious, that get-out-the-vote is the problem, and that's particularly true in the Negro and Puerto Rican areas. Meetings were currently in place to

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 31

work on this and the financing of the get-out-the-vote drive, which would be a joint effort. And then the summary: "You'll carry New York big. Bob is in a tough fight but now has the edge. If he holds the city at 60 per cent, which is indicated by the poll, he can't miss. The [Hugh] Carey seat will be held, and there are a couple of fair shots," which apparently I had spelled out to him in my congressional report. And then I point out that following this three days in New York I am going to the South.

G: Let me ask you about LBJ coming up here and campaigning with Robert Kennedy. Do you recall how that was arranged?

O: I do know this, that LBJ was not only willing to come up, but he was anxious to. I think he felt that this was where he could establish a record of being directly helpful to Bobby. It was well done, carried out extremely well, enthusiastically accepted, and I think it did do a great deal in terms of helping Bobby.

G: Did it help him?

O: Yes, because LBJ was riding a crest at that point. And secondly, it was, in my judgment, at least a contributing factor of some significance in trying to alleviate this problem which, having been on the periphery of and directly involved with it on some occasions, was something that I didn't particularly enjoy either--the existence of that situation.

G: Did Robert Kennedy ask him to come in the first place, or how did--?

O: I don't remember how it started. I think if you're setting up what obviously would be a somewhat limited travel schedule, but you wanted and the President certainly wanted to have at least the appearance of an active campaign on the part of the candidate that New York would have been a must as a stop. The Bobby Kennedy situation, of course, underscored that. So I don't know whether Bobby requested [it]; maybe he did, and if he did, probably through me. But it wouldn't be anything that was of great significance in terms of let's think about it or let's weigh it. It was a pretty obvious step to take.

G: Were there issues to resolve on the type of campaign that would be done, or the circumstances of Johnson's--?

O: In New York?

G: Yes.

O: No. New York was a state that Johnson was going to win overwhelmingly. That's A). B), it's a state where a nationally watched Senate contest was ongoing. An incumbent Republican was faced with another Kennedy. And the media attention was beyond any normal Senate contest. C) Consequently, this contest ensured a pretty decent voter turnout, and the apathy we were concerned about to some degree was reduced. And it was just that, and it did intrigue the New York voters. It isn't every day you have a

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 32

contest of that nature. I wouldn't suggest that it was Kennedy-Lodge, but it had some of the elements of it: Keating had been a Republican moderate. There wasn't any quarrel about Keating that I recall. He was a pleasant fellow; he wasn't Lodge, but his voting record would be somewhat similar. You had to conclude at the time of Lodge-Kennedy, if there hadn't been a Kennedy around, Lodge would have remained in the Senate for the rest of his life, if he cared to. And Keating, similarly, probably would have stayed in the Senate. You couldn't state that as firmly as you could in the Lodge instance.

So adding it all up, spending three days in New York was part of an effort to react responsibly to Johnson's request. With the traditional weakness of the state party, the total breakdown of party organization in the city of New York, the reform-regular quarrel all the way back to Carmen DeSapio, New York was a disaster area organizationally.

G: Did Johnson's campaigning here for Robert Kennedy improve the relationship between the two men?

O: I'd like to think it did.

G: Did you think so at the time?

O: I'd have to reflect on what occurred later on in responding to that. Clearly Bobby Kennedy had to be thankful that he had received support from LBJ.

G: Do you think he was?

O: Yes. Because he was in a tough contest, and if the fellow who heads the ticket is going to get 60 per cent of the vote in New York, his presence arm-in-arm with you around New York has to be a plus.

G: I wonder, though, to what extent it was a question of Johnson's popularity here or the relative unpopularity of their opponents. Keating seems to have been enormously more popular in New York than Goldwater was.

O: Yes. It was generally known that Bobby and LBJ had had problems in their relationship, and I think just the two of them arm-in-arm under these circumstances had to have a plus factor. But the Kennedy-Keating contest was not unique in that sense. After all, you had close contests being waged around the country, and we all know that a president, a popular president, cannot transfer that popularity to others. I remember an election for governor in New Jersey in 1961. Dick Hughes was the Democratic candidate and wanted Kennedy to visit New Jersey. We talked about it, not that we didn't like Dick Hughes and hoped he would win, but it was conceivable that this first political activity of the new President could result in a negative, in the sense that he campaigned for Hughes in New Jersey and Hughes lost. Even worse, was it possible that the people of New Jersey might react negatively and say, "Who does he think he is to come into New Jersey to suggest to us who should be our governor?"

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 33

What you finally came down to was that "the candidate wants you, he's our guy, he's a great fellow, and if he wants you to come, that's his judgment." So you go. I can remember managing a congressional campaign. Walter Reuther and others who were nationally prominent volunteered to come into the district to campaign on behalf of the candidate, who was Foster Furcolo. We refrained from having any of them in, because we concluded it could be a negative and that people would resent it. It comes to judgment.

G: Any insights on the Walter Jenkins problem?

O: No. I never knew the details of it. I remember the flurry, the *Washington Post* initial stories, the President's efforts to contain this. I believe that the two fellows that he looked to for advice and assistance were [Abe] Fortas and [Clark] Clifford.

G: What do you think the effect of the Jenkins incident was on the campaign?

O: Minimal to non-existent.

G: Did Jenkins' departure change things in the White House? Was access to Johnson different, or was the operation of the President's office different?

O: No.

G: Jenkins had been around for a long time, and had been awfully close to Johnson.

O: I don't recall any change. This was the situation after Dallas: Johnson not desiring or seeking change and putting another layer of staff in with the Kennedy staff. There was an observable tendency on LBJ's part to reach out to the Kennedy staff to maintain the comfort factor to the fullest degree possible. And we'll probably get into some of those things when we get to the aftermath of the November 1964 election.

It was over the long haul an impossible situation. It did not affect me at all, and my relationship with Johnson was a totally open, complete availability, twenty-four-hour-a-day relationship. Walter Jenkins, [Jack] Valenti and the others took the same approach to me, doing everything possible to be of assistance. And that was enhanced by Johnson's attitude toward me.

My staff and I had a major portion of that second floor, but there were Johnson people on the second floor as well as the first floor, and they extended themselves in every conceivable way to be cooperative.

Tape 3 of 3, Side 1

O: I think I'd like to touch on this separate memorandum to the President of October 23 which was headed "Get Out the Vote Nationally," and highlight three or four comments.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 34

I point out that the national committee's effort is in four categories, with Matt Reese responsible for general get-out-the-vote coordination; Louis Martin, our minority representative, the women's division's activities and the special groups, such as new citizens and veterans. I repeat my observations regarding COPE and point out that Roy Reuther headed this COPE registration program, leading to the get-out-the-vote program, and that COPE expended a million dollars-plus in the registration activities, which was a real contribution to that effort. And I emphasize the harmony and the coordination between labor and the party apparatus.

This was affirmed by Roy Reuther, and he cited the three reasons why he thought this spirit of cooperation existed: LBJ's pro-labor positions on major legislation, the fear of Goldwater which was permeating the atmosphere, and, third, a purposeful effort by COPE to achieve this harmony. I again mention that COPE distributed fifty million pieces of literature and had an excellent fifteen-point pamphlet on getting-out-the-vote which had been widely distributed, using the same machinery that it used in its successful registration program. Our reports indicated that volunteers in this get-out-the-vote effort were at a high level, more than perhaps ever before.

I did however point out, and Roy Reuther was in accord, that the soft spots were primarily in some large cities where ward leadership had remained constant while the people in the wards have moved on and the ward makeup had changed. I do say there are some of the old complaints, some degree of reluctance in some of the old, established party people, but this is a recurring complaint. And although there is obviously plenty of room for improvement, I advised the President that it was a better situation, in my judgment, than had existed in 1960.

And then, in addition to the million-plus in registration, I projected COPE's investment in get-out-the-vote as approaching five hundred thousand dollars, including fifty thousand which had been pumped in through the campaign in certain critical areas that very week. Then I point out that Matt Reese of the national committee's operation is zeroed in on approximately sixty counties and cities in fourteen target states, because the reality was that you had to target. You couldn't handle a total national get-out-the-vote drive.

It's interesting that Reese is operating with a budget of seventy-three thousand dollars and a limited staff, two full-time people in the field. And he's doing a commendable and conscientious job and has produced a solid manual on get-out-the-vote. You weren't really operating with much.

What was always held in great confidence in every campaign I was ever in was the Negro vote--and I keep saying Negro in order to stay with the time frame here. Voter registration get-out-the-vote drive in the South has been described in detail in the previous memo, but overall, Louis Martin has administered a total minorities get-out-the-vote budget of \$223,300. And I said I'm sure this money is being well spent. I break down the

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 35

expenditures in each of the states that were involved in this special drive.

- G: I wonder about the variations from one state to another. Ohio gets thirty-one thousand, California only twenty-five hundred, and Texas ten thousand.
- O: Yes. Well, you have to relate from a national position. It came to that odd number, I'm sure, because Louis Martin, who was a very able fellow, was not a spendthrift. He would relate this to the activity he was aware of, involving state-level promotion of this get-out-the-vote drive in the minority areas, and California would reflect well-organized minority registration, get-out-the-vote activity. Willie Brown and those people had the capacity to carry their own financial weight and this meant Louis Martin sent a token contribution to the effort. There wasn't a need to bolster them financially. You'll find that the variation in some of these major and large states with large black and Hispanic populations reflects judgments of need.
- G: Judgments on supplementing the funds that they would need.
- O: Yes, that's right. And after all, this was a modest budget; it's the national budget, and it in no way reflects the total expenditure in that area. The get-out-the-vote drive in the minority areas is the most difficult. The registration drives are always the most difficult. It was always a problem and it wasn't something we could try to coordinate and direct. Louis Martin was the key to efforts of this nature.
- G: Tell me a little bit more about Martin and his role in this.
- O: Louis Martin, my recollection, when he was in the picture in 1960, of course. Louis Martin, a newspaper editor in Chicago, was a street-wise politico in the Chicago mold, extremely knowledgeable, and he moved from his newspaper experience into national politics.

Louis was one of a kind, and we were fortunate to have him. It was very, very difficult in a national campaign to get a handle on the minority situation. There were any number of small minority newspapers over the country. There were a number of self-proclaimed leaders--local level, county level, state level--in black and Hispanic politics.

There were people you could depend upon locally to give you advice and counsel, and you could follow their direction. But what was essential was that you have someone who was knowledgeable nationally, who was known to all of these people. You could turn over to him with great confidence all of this activity. He was also a fellow who recognized your financial limitations.

It's a unique area, and it was a troublesome area; it was a difficult area for any of us to cope with. So Louis was an important element in all this.

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 36

- G: Did he have other assignments at the White House or was this something that he--?
- O: Basically, he was in minority relations. I believe he went into the White House in the Carter period. He was on the staff, and he had a feel for all of this, and he was the most knowledgeable fellow in the country. That's why everyone on the national scene knew Louis Martin and to this day has moved to Louis for advice and counsel in areas such as this.
- G: You mentioned the confidentiality of this aspect of the campaign, and in one of Louis Martin's memos he also points that fact out, that it has always been a rather quiet and secret operation. Why the secrecy?
- O: We had allocated approximately two hundred thousand dollars for key contested districts across the country, and we're talking about a little more than two hundred thousand dollars in this minority area. The tendency was to expend substantially more on registration and get-out-the-vote in the minority areas than in general. It was a more difficult task and you were forced to deal with local activists who claimed to be significant and important. That was the reality of it, and that's why it was just as well that we not discuss publicly the amount of money out of the total pot that went into these kinds of activities.
- G: Was there a fear that there might be a backlash or a response to this from white voters?
- O: It was a concern that knowledge of the amounts involved might be disturbing to people who would find that the fund being allocated to them was substantially less than allocated to this area.
- G: Was a consideration the high percentage of black voters who you knew would vote for Lyndon Johnson if they got out with this--?
- O: Oh, sure. If you could get every eligible black voter in America registered and to the polls, you have an assured 90-plus per cent support. It fell somewhat below that in the case of Reagan's re-election. That's a gold mine. You're faced with a lower voter turnout compared to the turnout as a whole. So each step of the way you've lost a potential that is guaranteed if you can only produce it. So your effort had to be maximized in those areas. You knew that any expenditure was going to produce and nine out of ten at least were going to support you. In this case, the assurance of support was so overwhelming that it was worth the effort.
- G: One of the memos indicates that Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference was very active in voter registration of blacks, as well.
- O: Yes.
- G: How did this dovetail in with Louis Martin's operation?

O'Brien -- Interview XI -- 37

O: It did in the sense that Louis Martin had an easy and pleasant relationship there, too. Louis bridged things. He could deal with the Negro establishment; he could deal with the Negro politician, and he could deal with the Negro civil rights activists. He was accepted in all quarters. While Louis leaned toward party organization, his personality and activities over the years placed him in a unique position. He could bridge all of this. He could be dealing with a hard-bitten Negro ward leader who would be as hard-bitten as his white counterpart and deal with them in the language of politics and yet he could deal with a reverend whose involvement and concern were focused on civil rights.

He does point to the particular southern registration, get-out-the-vote effort and how it was being held closely and tried to avoid undue publicity attendant to it, and he had the agreement with the Negro leaders, including Martin Luther King, that they not publicize or brag about their registration efforts. He mentions Frank Reeves, who was very active. I thought of Frank as we were talking. I am sure that anyone reading this memo would understand the need not to publicize. Others might say, "The get-out-the-vote operation has four prongs," and find two of the prongs are the insurance agents operation and the barber and beauticians operation.

There's a tremendous amount of insurance purchased by blacks, which required weekly or monthly visitations for collection. So, therefore, there is an army of the Negro insurance agents who have a tremendous amount of contact with their fellow Negroes across the country, and this was particularly true in the South. I'm not as familiar with the barber and beautician operation, but there again, Negro barbers and beauticians were looked upon as people of accomplishment by their fellow Negroes. They had a constituency. So Louis has pointed to two constituencies that normally you would not have listed among the four major segments of a get-out-the-vote drive and that's realistic. Only a fellow like Louis could implement this.

But you had asked about civil rights connotations because of the expenditures. I was focusing on the internal structure of the get-out-the-vote drive. You have requests from all kinds of sources insisting that they have to have X number of dollars in order to accomplish the get-out-the-vote or registration effort. You would never be able to comply with all those requests. So you pared them down to whatever your resources called for. But you used a different scale when it came to the minority registration and get-out-the-vote. But I'm sure that Louis is accurate when he says that there was a great need to low-key as much as possible the activity in the South.

End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview IX

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of Lawrence F. O'Brien

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Lawrence F. O'Brien of New York, New York, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on September 18, October 29, October 30, December 4, December 5, 1985; February 11, February 12, April 8, April 9, June 25, July 24, July 25, September 10, September 11, November 20, November 21, December 17, December 18, 1986; April 22, April 23, June 18, June 19, July 21, July 22, August 25, August 26, September 23, September 24, November 3, November 4, December 10, December 11, 1987 at New York, New York and Cotuit, Massachusetts and prepared for deposit jointly in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

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Signed by Lawrence F. O'Brien on April 5, 1990.

Accepted by Donald Wilson, Archivist of the United States, April 25, 1990.

Original Deed of Gift on file at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library, 2313 Red River, Austin, TX 78705.

ACCESSION NUMBER 92-20