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Don Wasserman Oral History

Interviewed by Stefanie Caloia

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P1: It's rolling.

STEFANIE CALOIA: Okay, I'm Stefanie Caloia. I'm here with Donald Wasserman. We are at AFSCME headquarters in Washington, DC, and it is April 18, 2017. Mr. Wasserman, thank you for making the time to be here and talking to me.

DONALD WASSERMAN: It should be my pleasure.

SC: (laughs) Can you tell me where you were born and where you grew up?

DW: I was born and grew up in Philadelphia. I'm -- have always been a city kid, as it were, a product of urban cities. And the only places that I have ever lived for any length of time were Philadelphia and Washington.

SC: What did your parents do for a living?

DW: My mother was a [00:01:00] homemaker. My father, the last several years of his life, worked for a large furniture store, and he was a buyer in the furniture store.

SC: Did either your parents or anyone else while you were growing up -- was there any talk about labor unions that you remember?

DW: Not on my father's side of the family. On my mother's side of the family, like many other immigrants to this country in the late nineteenth century and very early twentieth

century, many of them were socialists, and, consequently,
[00:02:00] in one way or another, tied with the labor
movement. I knew very little about this when I was young,
when I was very young. Was only over the years that I
began to understand it. I think my grandfather was -- my
grandfather on my mother's side, who I never knew -- he
died long before I was born -- I think was an associate of
Gompers. I'm sure there're many people at that time that
make that (laughs) association, but -- and I had, in fact,
cousins, cousins of my mother who were even further left
than that, and I remember once, as a teenager, a late
teenager, as a matter of fact, I had a, I guess, a
[00:03:00] second cousin who ran for Congress on Henry
Wallace's third-party ticket. Needless to say, he lost,
but he did run for office, and there were a few brothers
there who were much further left-leaning than other people
in the family. But it was not -- for my immediate family,
at any rate -- it was not normal dinner table conversation.

SC: Can you describe your childhood kind of in general? What
was it like when you were growing up?

DW: Well, I guess I never really delved back into [00:04:00]
it. I guess I always just thought I was one of the kids,
an average kid. For the first 10 or 11 years of my life,
we lived in an area that was kind of a polyglot

neighborhood. It was largely, I guess, first-generation, second-generation Americans, mostly Irish, Jewish, and Italian. I remember when I was in about fourth or fifth grade, they changed the boundary of our elementary school, and, as a result, the elementary school at that time, which was just now -- talking probably late '30s, 1940 at the latest -- then became somewhat integrated because [00:05:00] there were Black neighborhoods that were adjoining the neighborhood that I lived in. And then, a couple years later, I think by the time -- just before I got to junior high, we moved. We had relatives living with us, which was not at all unusual during (laughs) the '30s. I might say there was an uncle, brother of my mother, who lived with us, and he got married, and they lived with us as a couple for a couple of years until he got steady employment and -- he was a plumber. And then, they moved and got their own place. Then, I had an aunt, my mother's sister. [00:06:00] Her husband lived with us for a few years. And we moved to another section of the city, and so, I changed schools, and I guess that was my -- probably on my last year of elementary school. And I think that it's fair to say that the first neighborhood we lived in was much more diverse neighborhood than the neighborhood we subsequently moved to, which was more of a middle-class,

certainly all-white (pause) neighborhood. And predominantly -- well, predominantly [00:07:00] Christian. So, that's the kind of things that I recall when I think about at least the first, say, 12 years of my life.

SC: And what do you think about after that, like, before college?

DW: I went to high school, was a lousy student, spent more time with a few close friends, skipping school, than going to school in the early days of high school. Didn't like it. As a matter of fact, one (laughs) of the outstanding memories that I have is that, when my class was graduating [00:08:00] in June of 1948, I was still in eleventh grade, and, following that year, I went to summer school (laughs) all summer so that I could graduate and make up, you know, what was virtually an academic year. And by that time, the war was over, and I joined the Air Force Reserve, and -- Naval Air Force Reserve, and luckily, very, very, very, luckily, got admitted to college because what the state of Pennsylvania did at that time [00:09:00] was open up satellite campuses where veterans who couldn't get into college but wanted to go to school and had the advantage of the GI Bill at that time, which was a very good enabler for them to go to college. I got into one of these satellite schools. And then, by the time I finished my freshman

year, I was able to move over to a four-year school at Temple University in Philadelphia, and I spent three years there and graduated Temple. And, just as I graduated, our reserve unit was called up. It was during -- by then, it was the Korean [00:10:00] War. It was 1952. In fact, I went to summer school (laughs) -- I went to summer school to be able to finish college in the September to December semester because I knew we would get called up, and I wanted to finish school before we got called up. And, originally, we were called up in April, so it looked like I made a smart move by going to summer school because, then, I had my degree, but they postponed our call-up for two months, so we didn't go into the Navy until June and spent two years in the Navy, aboard ships and -- aboard a ship, [00:11:00] and got out. And then, I had a GI Bill to go to school, and I -- well, when I was in the Navy, it was -- I had a very productive two years because there's not a hell of a lot to do aboard ship when you're at sea, and it provided me a lot of time to read. And I think it was during those two years that I developed a social consciousness and tried to figure out, and did figure out, what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. And, of course, I was in my early twenties then. And [00:12:00] then, I think during that period of time, I began, also,

much more, to question my parents about my grandparents. I did know my father's father very, very slightly. He died when I was probably -- I'm going to guess five years old. And my grandmother -- towards my father's mother, towards the end of her life, had -- the term wasn't used in those days. Now, we would say dementia or -- probably dementia rather than Alzheimer's. But I began to question my parents more about [00:13:00] their background, as it were, and especially some of my distant cousins who were politically active at the time that I mentioned a few minutes ago. And so, there was a particular individual teaching at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School that I wanted to study with at that point, who was a very well-known arbitrator, and he taught courses in labor relations, industrial relations, collective bargaining, union history, etc. And so, I was able to get into Penn, which surprised me 'cause I guess, even in those days, Wharton School had a reputation of being a first [00:14:00] class business school, and I wasn't (laughs) interested in the business end of it, but, at any rate, I spent a year there in class and classwork, another year -- took me almost a year to do my thesis to graduate, to get a master's degree. And in the meantime, the guy who was very well known was able to recommend me to a Philadelphia

consultant in the area of labor relations for a temporary job, which I did, and it gave me some experience. And [00:15:00] this guy had been -- the guy I worked for on this temporary job -- had been working in Washington during part of the New Deal administration of Roosevelt, and then Truman during the Second World War, and he was able to make some appointments with me because I wanted to go to Washington because that's where most union headquarters were. The national union headquarters were in Washington for most unions except a few, like Auto, which was Detroit, and Steel, which was Pittsburgh, but they all had offices in Washington as well. But I took a job, which I thought would be temporary, and was, with the labor department 'cause that's the only thing I could get as a result of some of these interviews. [00:16:00] And I think that, during that period of time, my interest in working for a union intensified. It took me about a year and a half, and I got a job with the Communication Workers of America. I represented the employees -- at that time, Ma Bell, AT&T, and some other independent telephone companies. And that got me into the labor movement, and, I guess, while I was at the government, a year and a half I spent at labor department, I didn't become active in their union, although, at that point in time, in the middle '50s, unions

in government had virtually no rights at all. At the very most, [00:17:00] they might be able to represent employees who felt abused in one way or another, discriminated against, or otherwise picked on, but beyond that, the unions had no official standing and certainly weren't recognized as representative of the employees. And I thought I did about as much as I could do in the -- at CWA, at the time, and I was there for, I guess, about -- close to four years. And an opportunity came along at the machinist union, International Association of Machinists, [00:18:00] and I moved over to the Machinists in the early '60s, about '61, and I was there for more than six years, when the public sector began to boil, and you had the attempts at organizing public employees, and you had a few cities, large cities that passed ordinances, which gave the right, at least to the union, to exist and to be recognized as a representative of employees. And I guess it was a director of the research department at the AFL-CIO at that time that [00:19:00] recommended me to AFSCME. Jerry Wurf was president at the time, and he had -- by that time, he had been president for roughly two years, I guess, and had developed (laughs) a reputation of being a terrible employer because the union had the reputation of being a revolving door for staff employees. But, at any rate, I

thought it would be a great challenge to come to work for a union that was really attempting to revolutionize the labor movement by organizing public employees. The AFL-CIO was not interested in organizing public employees. [00:20:00] They had the firefighters, but beyond that, there were very little, and they didn't show much interest. So, I moved to over to AFSCME in '67, and I had a wonderful career here that lasted almost 30 years. And, with time, I thought it was time to leave, and I knew a lot of -- at that time, I knew several union presidents, most of them involved somewhat in the public sector, and was able [00:21:00] to get their support, but mostly the support of Jerry McEntee, who, upon Wurf's death, became president of AFSCME in December of 1981. And Jerry was extremely good to me in that respect. He had a very close relationship with President -- by then, President Clinton. And I also knew John Sweeney at that time, president of the Service Employees, SEIU, and John was a friend of mine. And between those two, especially -- and then, making the rounds of the federal unions who -- I knew the president of the AFGE, at that time, John Sturdivant. And so, I had very solid union support [00:22:00] in getting appointed to the Federal Labor Relations Authority. The Federal Labor Relations Authority is akin to the National Labor Relations

Board, but their jurisdiction is only the federal government so that they administer the law, which was passed and became effective in 1979 as part of the Civil Service Reform Act when Carter was president, which gave federal employees, by statute, the right to represent federal employees on a much more limited basis than we enjoy in state and local government, and we'll spend more time, I'm sure, talking about state and local [00:23:00] government as we progress during our little conversation. But, at any rate, I became a member of the three -- it was a three-person authority patterned after the National Labor Relations Board with an independent general counsel, also presidentially appointed. And I was nominated by Clinton, and it took a while. After the nomination, I guess, it took about (laughs) damn near close to a year to get confirmed by the Senate. And then, while there, a person who was heading up the chair of FLRA left, declined another appointment, another term, and left, and I became chair of [00:24:00] the Federal Labor Relations Authority and remained chair until after the 2000 election, when Bush won, and my term was up, and I left a few months thereafter. And (pause) I think, subsequently to that, just in terms, again, of chronology, now, we're talking about 2001. So, I decided that I had been cleansed, if you

will, of my -- I guess it was almost 40 years in the labor movement, just [00:25:00] about 40 years in the labor movement, by being neutral Federal Labor Relations Authority for some -- about six years. So, I decided to become an arbitrator, a mediator, and a consultant. I thought I would probably do better as a consultant than as an arbitrator or mediator, and, (laughs) as it turned out, I got one job as a consultant. The then governor --

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DW: -- of the state of Maryland had issued an executive order giving the right to collective bargaining to state employees who worked directly for the governor. And I was hired as a consultant, and then recommended a second person who the state hired to work with me to write the regulations under which the executive order would be administered. (laughs) And that's the only consultant job I ever got, but I, surprisingly enough, got job appointment to arbitrate cases, even some of which were in the public sector or, [00:01:00] more importantly, the federal government, and given some of the decisions that I wrote

while a member of the FLRA, the authority, and, more importantly, some of the dissents I wrote had me convinced that I would never get appointed as arbitrator in federal cases. But I did, and I think I was able to do a decent job as a neutral in writing those decisions. (pause) And I did that from 2001 to 2009, and I was semi-retired. I retired from AFSCME [00:02:00] in January of '96 to get the appointment from Clinton when I was -- when the Senate finally confirmed me. And then, in 2009, I was appointed by then Mayor Fenty to serve as a member of -- the local government had also enacted in 1979, when they got home rule, when the District of Columbia got home rule, they enacted a collective bargaining law and had their own independent Public Employee Relations Board, and that's -- I think that's [00:03:00] a five-member board. It's part-time. You get paid for the days that you work. And so, I was appointed and confirmed by the city council to be a member of PERB. I thought I should have been appointed as a (laughs) neutral, but I was appointed as the labor designee. It was a tripartite board: one management, one labor, and three neutrals, and one of the neutrals would be chair. And I was appointed in '09, and then, I think it was five-year term. And then, by then, Mayor Gray (pause) -- the then mayor reappointed me to a second term

[00:04:00] that expired in '14, and I didn't want a -- I made it known I did not want a third term on PERB. And, in the meantime, in October of '09, Obama appointed me to the Federal Service Impasses Panel. It's FSIP, which is an appendage to the Federal Labor Relations Authority. That appointment did not require Senate confirmation, and it's a seven-person panel, and we settle negotiating disputes or collective bargaining disputes between federal agencies and the unions representing federal employees. That's a limited jurisdiction [00:05:00] that we have in settling collective bargaining disputes, and that's also part-time employment. He appointed us in '09. I was, again, reappointed in '14 for another five-year term. Although it's a definite term of five years, you still serve at the pleasure of the president, so I'm expecting, at any time, that the seven of us will be fired, and a new panel will be appointed. But so far, we haven't been fired, and that job is very -- I find that job very appealing, that appointment very appealing because you still deal with the parties. We deal with the unions, and we deal with the agency management, [00:06:00] and we want to settle disputes. We try to settle disputes, so it's right up my alley. And my term doesn't expire until January of 2019, but we'll be long gone before that. And then, I'll probably fully

(laughs) retire, or maybe still keep my fingers in, doing a little arbitration, and mediation, and maintaining an office in town if my health holds up. My plans were that, when Hillary Clinton won the presidency, won (laughs) in 2016 election, I had already been appointed to a term that expires in 2019, [00:07:00] and that would be my last hurrah. In January of 2019, I would -- my term would be up. I would retire. I would stop doing arbitration and mediation, and I would come to rest (laughs) as it were. But I enjoy what I'm doing very much, and I like the structure that it gives my life as well. And I still enjoy the work, so I still continue. So, that's the -- one aspect of the chronology that I didn't address is that, back in late 1962, [00:08:00] I met my wife, who grew up in Baltimore, and she was an English major in school, and (pause) she worked for the Washington -- came to Washington. She had worked for the *Baltimore Sun*, and then decided that she wanted to come to Washington, and I think she came to Washington -- she was here less than a year, certainly, when -- about a year when we met at a party. And we were in love, and we got married in mid-'63.

[00:09:00] And we have two adult sons now. The oldest son went to school in Arizona because he was a sun worshipper, and he could get admitted (laughs) to the University of

Arizona. That's how choices are made. My youngest son liked to play hockey, and he was an ice skater, and he had developed, evolved into a pretty good skier. And so, he wound up at Colorado State (laughs) University. Cutting through some years, my older son spent about two or three years back east after he finished school, and then decided he wasn't going to put up with any more eastern [00:10:00] winters and decided to move back to Arizona. And for the next almost 20 years, he lived out west majority of the time, in Arizona and the Phoenix area. And then, about seven years in Los Angeles. Decided he wanted to be a screenwriter, but he always had a good day job, so he was able to survive in LA. And he came back east a couple of years ago. He reconnected with an old high school sweetheart, and they hadn't seen each other probably in at least 15 years or more, more than that. And [00:11:00] once they did reconnect, they took about three months to decide whether she would go out to LA or he would come back here, and they decided that he would come back here. And so, he's been back, which has been a godsend for us. That is, my wife and I. And my younger son, the same thing. He came back here, worked a few years, got into politics. When he was a student at Colorado State, because he lived in Colorado, he became an environmentalist. That got him

into environmental politics, and that led to politics in general. And so, he was back here, worked in politics for a couple years back here. And then, when [00:12:00] Pat Schroeder was retiring from Congress, a woman by the name of Diana DeGette was replacing her, and she was a solid Democrat, and he went to work for her as her fundraiser and worked for her for a few years. Moved back to California - - Denver. He met a woman eventually in Denver, got married, and has two children, so we have two grandchildren. And they still live in Denver area, and he has spent his adult life working in fundraising and mostly having to do first with politics and then the art world, Denver Museum, and then the University of Colorado, [00:13:00] and now, on his own, and essentially dealing with educational institutes and other nonprofits. And so, I -- oh. (laughs) My wife eventually -- she stayed home for a number of years when our kids were very young, and our youngest son, I guess, was about, probably, four or five when she went back to work, and she wound up being the [00:14:00] executive director of a nonprofit in the public sector called Public Risk Management Association, advising local governments how to handle their risks. And then, when it was time to leave that job, she decided she wanted to go to law school, and she did. (laughs) I think she was

about 60 when she graduated law school. And then, eventually wound up teaching at the law school she went to, here in town, and, at that time [00:15:00} -- it's a clinic law school, and students'll do clinic work, and she taught in the AIDS clinic. AIDS was at its height at the time, and so, that was pretty gruesome work, dealing with AIDS patients and how AIDS patients who were very typically single parents -- one parent or the other frequently in prison -- and how their lifespan had grown very short, and how -- what kind of arrangements they could make for their children when they were no longer capable [00:16:00] of keeping -- of taking care of the child or when they died. So, she did that for a number of years, and then retired, and then did some voluntary work, legal assistance for the elderly, things like that. So, I think that brings us up to date, (laughs) chronologically, and maybe it got more than you asked for. (laughter)

SC: No, it's all good. So, there are a couple things I wanted to go back to that you mentioned before we get too far into AFSCME. So, you said when you were in the Navy, you did a lot of reading and that kind of developed some of your beliefs and [00:17:00] your motivations in the labor industry. Do you remember any particular books that had a big impact on you?

DW: Well, books had impact in various ways, but one of the authors that I read a lot of -- this may sound strange -- George Bernard Shaw, who was kind of what I would call a soft socialist, Beatrice, Sidney Webb socialist. And, gee, I think, at that time, I read a lot of Aldous Huxley, and Steinbeck. (pause) Oh, I did a lot of magazine reading. [00:18:00] I subscribed to a couple of progressive journals at the time. *The Nation*, I remember, very distinctly had an influence. I think *The Progressive* was another one. It was out of Wisconsin, I think. (pause) Those are the names that come back and ring a bell now. Orwell. (laughs) Orwell has much more significance today than it did then, but it gave me a better sense of democracy, as it were, [00:19:00] and what democracy means, and what authoritarianism means, and... (pause) And I did not mean to convey the thought that I really enjoyed being in the Navy. It was (laughs) only that I was able to make good use of the time that I was there. (laughs)

SC: Good to see the positive.

DW: Say that again?

SC: Said it's good to see the -- or think of it in positive terms.

DW: Yeah. Dos Passos was another guy that comes to mind that I read. John Dos Passos. (pause) [00:20:00] Oh, I think,

also, (pause) I'm gonna -- I think -- is it Edith Hamilton who wrote a lot about mythology? I think I've got the name straight, but I'm not sure.

SC: I'm not sure. Like, Greek mythology?

DW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. All put together, that had an impact on my religious evolution. [00:21:00] I had a normal childhood. I suspect not being -- I think my parents went to synagogue on High Holiday, you know, that was about it, and I went to Hebrew school as a very young kid in order to learn enough to be bar mitzvahed. So, I would say that was probably average or typical. But as I grew up later, the older I got, the more distant I got, both from [00:22:00] religion, went through a period where I was very anti-religious. I felt [like?] religion is a fraud and eventually joined the American Humanist Association and consider myself a nonbeliever completely. (pause) And I think, over the years, my wife probably had a closer identity than I did. When we were married by - it was a very small wedding, but we were married by a rabbi, [00:23:00] although, I guess, if left to my own devices, it would have been a civil ceremony, probably. But I was, I guess, still in the time of pleasing parents and (laughs) family and that stuff, my wife. But she has also grown away from the practice of religion and is much less connected than she was in her

twenties and thirties. And our older son has never been connected, really. He [00:24:00] was not bar mitzvahed by his own choice. He didn't want to participate in any way. Younger son, the opposite. He was. He wanted to participate, and he still does. Both my sons married women who were Catholic but fallen away, shall I say. Not practicing. So, the only one (laughs) who has any identity at all is my younger son, and I know he had [00:25:00] a Passover dinner at his house. He was officiating. So, at least to some extent, he's still (pause) goes through some of the symbolism, if nothing else. (pause)

SC: Do you remember the name of the professor at Wharton that you had talked about?

DW: His name is -- well, he's long gone.

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DW: His name was George Taylor, and, as a matter of fact, when New York State passed a collective bargaining law for public employees -- at that time, Rockefeller was governor. Nelson Rockefeller was governor. And they appointed a five-person -- well known academic scholars in the field of

labor relations from various schools, and Taylor was the head of the committee, and -- 'cause he was the dean of arbitrators. And no politician wanted to have their name on the bill, so the law was called the Taylor Act.

(laughs) And [00:01:00] there was somebody from Princeton, somebody from Penn -- Taylor -- somebody from Yale, somebody from Wisconsin, and I forget where the fifth person came from. They recommended a law. The legislature passed it with some of their own input, and that became the prototype for state collective bargaining laws later. When I was at AFSCME, that became one of my prime interests, collective bargaining legislation, getting states to pass laws, and I would testify a lot before state legislative committees and legislators. [00:02:00] And I have to add quickly -- I'm not a lawyer, so it seems to be almost counterintuitive, but I developed a knack for this stuff, and it became one of my occupational responsibilities, as it were, at my almost, I guess -- I was at AFSCME almost 30 years. When I retired, I was 28-plus. [00:03:00] And Taylor had a large following. There were several people that emigrated to Washington from the Philadelphia area who became well known arbitrators in this city, and -- I mean, in the metro area, you know, the greater metro area -- and were devotees of Taylor. And I went the other way. I

became an advocate rather than an (laughs) arbitrator or mediator. I became an advocate, and -- (laughs) until my sixties, when I became a neutral, as it were. (pause)

[00:04:00] But, in later years, I got to know some of these folks who had been at Penn, in some cases, a couple of years prior to me. One, I became friendly with while I was still in Philadelphia, and I became friendly with his -- his wife was also an arbitrator. (pause) But, you know, I guess, in part, at least, it's hard for someone [00:05:00] today to conceive (pause) of someone like me, say, in my twenties, who believed that the labor movement was a vehicle by which (pause) this country would fulfill all of its promises to all of its people and that the reform that was necessary [00:06:00] in this country could be achieved with the labor movement playing a role at the point of change. And, in fact, I came along at the time -- I came along to AFSCME. This is after 10 years in the labor movement. I came along to AFSCME at the time of the major growth beginning in the public sector, and what enabled it, in large measure, was an [00:07:00] alignment and a solidarity, if you will, between the Civil Rights Movement and the labor move-- the progressive wing of the labor movement. Labor movement always had a kinda bipolar existence. The trades, the building trades, were always

the conservative, and while we were organizing minorities and calling for more minority rights, the craft unions were trying to keep Blacks and Hispanics out of their (laughs) apprenticeship programs, so you had that kind of contradiction, but there was no question about what the direction was. And now, you have construction unions favoring [00:08:00] rights of (laughs) immigrants so that - - they are still very conservatively -- socially -- and, sometimes, economically, they at least are understanding history to some extent. I mean, because some people would say the labor movement is irrelevant in 2015 or whatever year you want to look at. (pause) But I looked at it as a cause, a "cause" in quotes. And I don't think I've ever really lost that [00:09:00] kind of consciousness, direction. One might call it naive, but so (laughs) be it. (pause) And, if you look at the history of social legislation in the United States, whether it be part of the New Deal legislation that was enacted or maybe even separate, the gains were spearheaded by the labor movement. Whether it was the Fair Labor Standards Act, you know, with its [00:10:00] overtime provisions and the eight-hour day, the Social Security Act because there were very few pensions back in the '30s. You could probably name the

number of companies that had pension plans. That's long before IRAs, long before Ks. I can't --

SC: 401(k)s.

DW: Yeah, 401(k)s. And long before a lot of workers and Steelworkers were able to break through with pension and health insurance, the unemployment insurance, the workers' compensation insurance, all pushed hard by the labor movement. [00:11:00] And what was Gompers's one? Aside from "what does labor want?" "More," you know, was one of the answers, but Gompers also said, "A rug on the floor, and a picture on the wall." So, he was talking about the kind of evolution of culture as well, people appreciating -- have enough time to appreciate cultural surroundings and how they lived. And that was always one of the differences historically and allegedly between the AFL and the CIO, that the AFL was interested [00:12:00] in, you know, money on the barrelhead, and that was it. The CIO was always much more socially oriented. And I think there were great exceptions to that, but, as a generalization, I think it was -- George Meany saying to Philip -- A. Philip Randolph, at one point -- "Who put you in charge of what Negroes want?" That's a paraphrase. It's not a direct quote. When Randolph wanted some change in resolutions the AFL was adopting. AFSCME, for example -- I don't know how

much Bill [Lucy] talked about it, but [00:13:00] AFSCME was the point, if you will, during the late '60s, early -- well, I'd say early '70s -- of creating the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, of which Bill became the first president as a counterbalance to what we believed was the lack of progress that the A. Philip Randolph Institute within the AFL, and then the AFL-CIO, was making with respect to race and pushing civil rights. The AFL portion of the AFL-CIO, for example, did not participate in the March on Washington or the Poor People's [00:14:00] March. AFSCME was a major participant, and UAW was a major participant. The Steelworkers were major participants. When King was assassinated in '68, it was AFSCME's -- and I'm sure Bill went into this in great detail, but Local 1733 was on strike. That's why King was in Memphis. And you had labor leaders from the CIO part of the AFL-CIO who marched with us in Memphis. So, still, you had that split within the AFL -- the merger took place in the end of 1955, and here it was, eight years later. They still had the two wings of [00:15:00] the labor movement. In the meantime, what was happening was the NEA, which had always been the school administrators' organization, not the teachers' organization, was becoming more, and more, and more, and more labor -- more a labor organization during that same

period of time in the '60s. They were still heavy rivals of the AFT, but they were acting more, and more, and more like a labor union and getting laws passed for teachers in various [00:16:00] states, and the big difference was that AFT was much more central. It had a kind of a CIO administrative -- or constitution, in which the National Union was very strong, whereas, in the NEA, it was always the state -- and still is -- the state organizations that dominate. You must win over the major state organizations to do things in the NEA. (pause)

SC: So, when you came to AFSCME, you were [00:17:00] hired in as director of research?

DW: Yes. Mm-hmm. That's correct.

SC: So, can you talk about not only your role as director, but the role of the department within AFSCME and how that changed over the years?

DW: Yeah. The role was (pause) to support -- I mean, AFSCME would never become the kind of national organization that the Auto Workers or the Steelworkers were, for example. It would never have national bargaining because our bargaining would always be limited to the jurisdiction, whether it was a state [00:18:00] or a city. And so, we saw our function as giving -- supplying information that the local unions and the councils could use when they were negotiating with

their employers. Their employer, in some cases, were the city of Detroit. In other cases, it was the state of Michigan. In other cases, it might be a department within the state of Michigan. It could be a county. It could be Wayne County. And that would be the parameters of the bargaining, [00:19:00] and, as long as government remained structured that way, that's what bargaining would follow. So, (pause) while we didn't -- can't say didn't completely, but the overwhelming amount of our time was spent in providing comparative information to our affiliates to assist in their negotiations. Typically, at the outset, it was wage and salary information. It [00:20:00] grew from that. We had to compare health insurance and pensions as these things became negotiable rather than simply legislative. (pause) There was a period of time, for example, when pensions were the overriding concern because they were being paid for, in many states, on a pay-as-you-go basis. There was no state (laughs) law that had to put away a certain amount of money for pensions, and the demand for better pensions as a result of what was going on in the private sector at that time, [00:21:00] where pensions were being introduced in manufacturing for the first time -- so, we were insisting upon legislation which demanded that the states have funds that -- and we were also demanding, at

that time, that they come under ERISA, which we were never able to achieve, so that the unfunded liabilities would not be of such a great amount that they would prevent workers from getting wage increases 'cause all the money going into pensions. So, it was quite a change as, slowly, reform came to [00:22:00] state pension plans, and they began to put away more funds, not because they wanted to, but because they had to. And the concern switched from pensions to health insurance because we began to see these escalating health costs go up so much, and it was a question of how you pay for health insurance. And so, we had to use comparative information, suggest to people what kind of changes can be made, what kind of improvements can be made without the price being -- you know, just going through the roof, so to speak. And, gradually, we developed some expertise [00:23:00] in these two areas, in health insurance and in retirements systems, and we had -- we hired one or two people who would specialize in those areas so that, when our affiliates went into bargain, they would be as well in-- or almost as well informed as the employer. We would then send these folks out. They began to participate in negotiations, at least for those aspects in which they had -- they weren't necessarily actuaries themselves, but they had actuarial skills, so they could

deal with the people who came in from the employer, the consultants at the employer. And then, gradually, worked into [00:24:00] participating more and more into the actual negotiations. And the niches that I cut out, some of which happened accidentally -- the (laughs) demand preceded the supply, as it were. I remember, early on -- well, we formed an organization called CAPE, C-A-P-E, and I guess somebody has raised CAPE in their discussions with you. [00:25:00] It was us, the Fire Fighters, the NEA, and one of the federal unions. Oh, NTEU. National Treasury Employees Union. So, the four unions formed the coalition to advance the cause of public employees. (pause) And that was in the late '60s, early '70s, and one of the things --

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DW: -- that CAPE did was push for a federal law covering all public employees nationwide. Local government, state government, federal government. (pause) I was not a direct participant in that, but I did write some background stuff, as I recall. And when Wurf went up to testify, I would go up and test-- you know, I would sit with him when he

testified before the congressional committee on a -- I think we called it Public Employee Relations Act, something. PERA. So, [00:01:00] that got me interested in the legislative piece of collective bargaining because, at the same time, we were trying to get a federal law. We were still acting on a state level basis to try to get state laws passed. New York had already passed the Taylor Act in '68 -- no, they passed it in '66. It went into effect in '67, I guess. And so, I got into that kind of almost accidentally, but -- and I think one of the things, at that time, was we had a house attorney. One person. The general counsel was outside general counsel.

[00:02:00] (pause) So, I was able -- well, I became interested, first, and then was able to become much more involved in attempting to get the state legislation enacted, and that was -- by then, it was in its '70s and going into the '80s. And so, what I did was I began, but I drafted a set of principles. This was for state legislation. What element should a collective bargaining law have? [00:03:00] And I came up with 16 points or principles that could be described -- each one could be described in, like, a sentence. And then, as time went on, by (pause) the late '70s, early '80s, (pause) I became much [00:04:00] more (laughs) knowledgeable. And so, I would be

the union lead person in going around when our affiliates were trying to get a collective bargaining law passed -- in going around and sitting with them, with the leadership, and using these 16 points to actually begin to draft language, and I remember, in one case, we had a committee, and I brought in people from states -- our leadership in states with bargaining laws to a state without a bargaining law to show our leadership in those states what [00:05:00] -- how a union operated with a collective bargaining law, what we needed in a collective bargaining law, what kind of compromises we could make, knowing that whatever we drafted would be changed to fit into the state's systems of how laws are -- you know, that we didn't have that language. That had to be done. But to get those ideas into the state's own language. And the thing is, and I would also -- I understood the limits of my own capacity, not being an attorney, [00:06:00] that when I came into specific problem areas, that I might be confronted with -- I would have to go to our lawyers and get advice as to how to get around this, how to handle this, something like that. Then, we basically changed the aim from research department to research and collective bargaining because, I mean, [I have?] people beside myself who could go around, and sit with our people, and work with them at the bargaining table

in terms of negotiating contracts. [00:07:00] And then, another (laughs) -- and both McEntee -- well, let me begin saying Wurf and McEntee were much different kinds of leaders. Wurf was much more hands-on and micromanage, want to know every detail of what was going on, and especially if he smelled a problem or if he felt he wasn't being informed (laughs) enough. McEntee was the opposite. As long as things were running [00:08:00] smoothly, he did not want -- he didn't interfere, and he -- he would interfere if there were jurisdictional disputes within the staff. Whose responsibility was it? Whose responsibility was this? Then, he would interfere, I mean, and try to settle it. But he had confidence, generally speaking, in the people who got the assignments, and you had an opportunity to spread your wings, as it were. And [00:09:00] I think I had (pause) a sense, not always right on the nose, but a sense of how far to go and how far -- where to stop in terms of working with our people in the field and what to get involved in and what not to get involved in. For example, I always had a very good relationship with our legislative department and understood what was in their jurisdiction and what was in my jurisdiction. [00:10:00] And (pause) I always had a good relationship with our general counsel's office, whether the council was outside

or inside 'cause it -- from time to time, it would change. So, that was not true of all departments, but it was two major areas, and I guess the legislative department always had enough issues that it had to deal with that it didn't get into the (pause) collective bargaining area.

[00:11:00] And the department kept growing as a result, and it's continued to grow, I must say, after I retired. I think, when I retired -- I think there were about three dozen people in the department, or at least between, say, 30 and 35, and I think that, as a result of mergers between departments, etc., etc., I don't know what the number is now, but it's well beyond that. And (pause) I am sure,

[00:12:00] during those years, I had a reputation of being a tough taskmaster. I'm sure of that. (pause) I demanded a lot from the people who worked in the department, and I would try to sense -- I made some very good hires, but I also made some mistakes. I would try to get a sense from people when I interviewed them for the job, and for most hires -- (pause) [00:13:00] for most hires, I could make the decision. The only time I would take them upstairs, as it were, to see Wurf or McEntee would be if it was a management job within the department. But other than that, I'd pretty well make the decision, and I would try to get a sense whether -- how they viewed the union. I mean, not

necessarily our union, but how they viewed unions, what they expected from the job, and try to figure in advance, sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly, whether they were really looking for a nine to five [00:14:00] job or whether they were looking for something to expand their own horizons and have certain amount of ambition, as it were, to do that. And (pause) I was never concerned about hiring someone who would be great, (laughs) who would outshine me. I didn't have an anxiety or fear of my (laughs) job.

[00:15:00] I will say that. And you may or may not know that I hired Lee [Saunders]. I hired his chief of staff -- his just-retired chief of staff, Steve Fantauzzo. I didn't hire Paul Booth. Paul was working in Chicago, but at one point, before he died, I became Wurf's executive assistant and had cut a deal with a guy who was running our Illinois operation that I could bring Paul Booth in as my assistant, but Wurf died. It never happened. But Heather [Booth] had gotten some job that she would be spending a lot of time in Washington, and I thought Paul was one of the [00:16:00] younger guys who would be a success here and would be of great assistance to me because I was spending more and more time out of the office than I was spending in the office. And that just increased after Wurf died. I mean, with McEntee, I -- what happened was, as we got state laws

enacted and we won the elections to represent these state employees, I would be assigned the task of going out and negotiating the first contract, and that happened a number of states. And that was a great investment of time, you know, virtually commuting back and forth to Washington.

[00:17:00] And then, there were a few states that I would go out to every two years, in which they had -- the contracts were aligned with the state budget process, so that was another thing we had to develop, was people who could analyze state budgets along with the health insurance and the pension stuff. And (pause) so, every two years, Iowa is an example. Every two years, they had a contract. I would go out towards the end, and we'd go into a fact-finding procedure or an arbitration procedure, [00:18:00] and I would be the advocate for the union. So, in other words, the department supplied the information, and I would use the information at the bargaining table and make the case for why these employees should get x dollars wage increase or the health insurance plan increased or whatever. And Hawaii was the same thing. Every two years, I'd go out to Hawaii. When we took over an association and had to negotiate a new contract in Alaska, I spent a year and a half up there, negotiating a new contract, going back and forth to Alaska. And I was [00:19:00] very frequently

the union's chief advocate in either the impasse procedures, whether it fact-finding or arbitration, or in negotiating the agreement. And so, I was doing a lot of -- especially, I say, after Wurf, when McEntee became president. And so, I had a job in effect that was very fulfilling and one that I liked very much. And when McEntee was elected when Wurf died, by that time, I [00:20:00] had been with the union about 15 years, and, in 15 years, you develop some baggage with some people. (laughs) That's a normal occurrence in any kind of an organization. And so, there were some people who were very close to Jerry who did not have very fond feelings toward me --

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DW: -- in some cases, reciprocated. But Jerry made it clear to me that he wanted me to stay, that he did not want me to leave. And I remember having a brief conversation with him the day that the -- the day of the election, right before the election 'cause, at that time, our constitution provided that the board elect the president if the

president was incapacitated or died. Now, we have, under most conditions, a special convention, but at that time -- so, it was McEntee versus Lucy. And so, I did. I did, and I prospered [00:01:00] under Jerry, under McEntee. I use the last names 'cause they both had the first -- same (laughs) first name. Down the road, you may hire, may interview Jim Schmitz. I don't know if that name is on your list or not, but he was director of field services for a while. But he started in the research department. I hired Jim as well. And I hired Jim Savarese, who was -- became, at one time, Wurf's [00:02:00] executive assistant, and Jim was very close to -- became very close to McEntee. And he was Wurf's next to last executive assistant. I was Wurf's last executive assistant, and that lasted for several months till Wurf died. I always figured that I -- Wurf made me his executive assistant around September of -- yeah, was around September [00:03:00] '81, and our next convention would be in '82, and I always figured that I would last as Wurf's executive assistant until the convention of the summer of '82 was over. I would get him through the convention of '82, and then that would be the end of my (laughs) term as executive assistant, but that I would stay with the union, but I would go back to research and bargaining again. (pause) [00:04:00] So, I don't know

what other memory jogging you want me to do, if any.

(laughs)

SC: Well, it's almost one o'clock. Do you want to break for lunch?

DW: Well, let me ask it this way. Yes and no. Yes, if you see us going for a while longer, but --

SC: Yeah, if you have time, I think. I have quite a few more questions.

DW: Oh, okay. Well, then, yeah, this might -- well, let's see. What's your next question? Let's see whether that's a brief or long --

SC: I think it's a long one. Let's see.

DW: And when do you take lunch?

P1: I don't ever take lunch. (laughter) [00:05:00] I've coordinated the next shift.

SC: So, my next question was gonna be about why you and AFSCME pursued legislation as an approach to collective bargaining and what -- the strategic reasoning behind that, what, maybe, internal conversations might have taken place.

DW: Sure.

SC: I think that's a longer question.

DW: Yeah. I'll hold it. I'll hold off on that. Yeah, okay. So, it's one o'clock, you say?

SC: Uh-huh.

DW: How long do you want to break?

SC: And hour. Would that be okay?

DW: It's okay with me.

SC: I have to catch a plane, so I have to leave at 4:00.

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P2: All right, we are recording. Whenever you're ready.

SC: So, before our break, we had talked about --

DW: A lot of stuff.

SC: (laughs) A lot of stuff, yeah. Particularly, we had talked some about collective bargaining and collective bargaining legislation. So, can you talk about why AFSCME decided to pursue legislation as a strategy? What was the reasoning behind that?

DW: In the public sector, you can exist and, as a matter of fact, thrive as a union and [00:01:00] do well by your members in a large urban area, at least in the northeast, the middle Atlantic states, the Midwest, and the coast, the West Coast, without benefit of law. In other words, exist on what I call a de facto basis because enough pressure can be brought on local governments, be it city, county,

school, district, [00:02:00] so that the union can be recognized, be recognized as an exclusive representative, and without the fear -- this was certainly true in the '60s and '70s and going to the '80s -- without fear that, if the other party came to power, the party other than the one that recognized you and recognized your right to exist, would not (pause) take away what the friendly party that recognized [00:03:00] you gave to you that is the representation rights, and that you can continue to thrive. You'd rather do it by virtue of law, but you could continue to exist in large metropolitan, urban areas. (pause) One of the problems would be what we call the scope of negotiations, the scope of bargaining. The employer while -- recognize you and willing to bargain with you, even over wages as well as working conditions, may withhold some subjects as being not negotiable. For example, would refuse to negotiate over pensions [00:04:00] or refuse to negotiate over health insurance. Might even negotiate over how much of the premiums they would pay or contribute, but not necessarily particular benefits that you would be entitled to or vice versa. They may be willing to negotiate over the benefits up to a certain amount, but over that amount, no negotiations. Unilateral determination by the employer. And, very frequently, you

were also willing -- were able to secure an executive order by the mayor, as in the case of New York City under Mayor Wagner, [00:05:00] which gave you the rights. Now, that also happened on a state basis. We, on occasion, would endorse someone running for office, for governor of a state, if we had a commitment from that individual that, in the absence of a law, he would issue or she would issue an executive order giving us specific rights to represent people and what those rights would be. Too often, under an executive order, the rights may be limited to matters of representation, matters of being recognized for grievances, representing workers who -- discriminated against, who had problems, but [00:06:00] not for economic bargaining. And, furthermore, on the state basis, the guarantee of continuing to operate in the absence of a statute was less secure, less definite. For example, back in the '70s, in Illinois, AFSCME supported (pause) soon-to-be elected Governor Walker. Governor Walker committed to issuing an executive order giving bargaining rights to state employees, including the right to negotiate wages, and he lived up to those commitments, [00:07:00] and AFSCME thrived under the executive order, but Walker lost the next election to Jim Thompson. Fortunately, Thompson did not cancel the executive order, which was his right to do. I

mean, he had the power to do it. But he decided he would try to live with the union, and he did, and we continued to negotiate with Thompson under the executive order, but we also realized how tenuous that could be, and we lobbied loudly, strongly, and eventually did get a statute enacted in Illinois. [00:08:00] On the state basis, for example, the fact that you have legislation rather than an executive order gives you the rights prescribed by that legislation, and an order -- another governor cannot come in and take away those rights. He would have to do it legislatively. So, during the period actually leading up to their most recent period beginning in 2010, long after I was gone, if you had legislation, that was embedded, and chances are it would not be changed unless it was even further improved. For example, some of the early legislation [00:09:00] did not give the unions the right to negotiate for pensions. On the subject of pensions, retirement. We were able to expand that in some cases, in some states. But it was only with the adoption of a collective bargaining law specifically setting forth the unions' rights that we could consider it as going on forever, as it were, as long as we continued to have the support of the workers who we represent. That all took a dramatic change in 2010. We saw Ohio basically [00:10:00] retract its collective

bargaining law, but people in Ohio were able to take that up again by referendum, and basically all of the rights, then, were retained as a result of the referendum, which upset the legislative action of which -- drawing the statute, but you see what happens in Wisconsin, for example. It's just happened in Iowa. The law was substantially weakened. In Indiana, we were still operating under an executive order because we never were able to get the full support of the legislature to adopt a collective bargaining law. When Evan Bayh was elected as governor of Indiana, he, too, had promised an executive [00:11:00] order giving unions the right to represent workers on an exclusive basis and also, as a result of discussions and negotiations, to set up bargaining units, which made sense to the state as well as the union. And we thrived, to some extent, under that executive order for a number of years, until Daniels was elected, and his first action was to withdraw the executive order that Bayh adopted. So, under an executive order, you never had the same security of continuation that you would have under a statute. Now, again, I [00:12:00] say that changed dramatically, beginning seven or eight -- you know, six, seven years ago as a result of the 2010 elections. So, yes, ideally, you needed legislation to give you rights

that would permit you to represent employees on what we would call relatively full-scope collective bargaining -- wages, hours, terms of conditions of employment -- just as private sector workers had been given that right by legislation under the National Labor Relations Act, which was -- what? In '35 [00:13:00] or '36. Now, if you couldn't get a law like we could not get in Indiana, for example, because we could -- the legislature was never ripe for a statute, we would then shoot for the next best degree of recognition, and that would come from an executive order. Our thought was always, once having an executive order, to try to turn that executive order into legislation, and we did that successfully in Illinois. We did that successfully over time in Maryland. In [00:14:00] Indiana, the executive order ended when Walker was no longer governor and Daniels came in and ripped the executive order. It worked in Illinois. We were able to move that executive order into legislation, and that legislation is still on the books in Illinois, threatened at time, but we have a very conservative governor in Illinois today. But still, we have been able to keep the legislation, the collective bargaining law in place. So, that's the highest degree, in my view, of security, and that's the [00:15:00] preferred -- and that's how private -

- we didn't invent (laughs) -- I would like to take credit for inventing the system, but that's how private sector unions were able to thrive and organize in the thirties, and forties, and fifties, because they had -- once a law is adopted, it becomes the public policy of that jurisdiction, so the public policy of the United States, although one would never know it by virtue of experience of the last several decades, is that collective bargaining is good for the economy. It's good for the people, and it is the public policy of the United States. [00:16:00] Although, I must say that the actions of specific administrations, the actions of Congress, the actions of the courts have somewhat diminished that public policy. And so, if I look at a state like Pennsylvania, for example, or a state like Michigan, which, I must say, dramatically changed its policy by additional legislation, basically outlawing agency shop, which is a certain amount of union security in the agency shop, when -- what's his name? Snyder? What's his name? [00:17:00] Snyder? The governor. Yeah. Was elected. And that was hurtful and harmful to private sector employees as well. And so, it's a question of what, politically, you are able to achieve, but keeping your eye on the eventual goal of having it embedded in state statute, and state statute can cover not only state

employees, but depending upon how the law is written, it can also cover and include employees of local governments within that [00:18:00] state. So, you could have one state law which covers all public employees in the state, and that's the most desirable. (pause) I don't wanna get into the weeds too much, but I would have to add, also, that, when a law is designed, it has to give guidance as to what the collective bargaining units of representation will be so that the collective bargaining can act efficiently. And, for state service, basically, the state wants a certain amount of uniformity so that, if you're a blue-collar worker working on the highways of the state, for [00:19:00] example, it doesn't matter if the state does -- if they are state employees -- doesn't matter in what part of the state they work. They're all in the same bargaining unit. You have a horizontal unit, which covers all blue-collar workers employed by the state of x, which is called a -- technically, we call those horizontal units, so that doesn't matter whether you're working -- what department, what agency of the state, or if you're an administrative employee (pause) in the budget department or the accounting department. Doesn't matter what agency you're working for. [00:20:00] You are covered by the same bargaining unit, and that enables the state to maintain a certain amount of

uniformity throughout its wage structure because you're still operating -- while you have collective bargaining, you are still operating under the civil service structure of the state for organizational purposes, and there has to be a certain amount of rationale to that in order for the state to function well. So, yes, you fight like hell to try to get a law. One state's an interesting example. I could have pointed it out earlier, that, needless to say, [00:21:00] the South resists unionization of public employees as much as it resist unionization of private sector employees. We see what happens when the UAW tries to organize Volkswagen employees in Tennessee. The same thing happens with public employees. (pause) They typically resist very strongly. Florida rewrote its constitution in the '60s. The Supreme Court in Florida interpreted the new constitution to provide collective bargaining [00:22:00] rights for public employees in Florida. Florida legislature stalled for years in doing anything about that and passing a law, which would embody the constitutional right of state employees in Florida to organize and be represented. The Supreme Court, at some point -- I guess there's no other way to say it. They got so fed up with the legislature's refusal to encase these constitutional rights in a statute that it threatened the

legislature that, unless they [00:23:00] provided a mechanism to enforce these rights and standards by which workers could be represented, that they would, in effect -- the Supreme Court, that is, would, in effect, write the rules of (laughs) engagement. And so, the legislature, as a result, did pass a collective bargaining law for state employees. It's not a model law by any stretch of the imagination, but it is a law giving public employees in Florida the right to organize. If it was not for the Supreme Court, the constitutional interpretation by the Supreme Court, we'd have never had a law in Florida. The best we would've done in Florida [00:24:00] would have had ordinances in metropolitan counties like Dade County, for example, to provide for rights for Dade County employees or the city of Miami, but it would have never covered rural areas or semi-rural areas, would never have gotten that far. So, let me put it this way. It became, I think, a strategy of necessity, born of necessity because one of the differences between public and private employment is that a private employer will say, "I can do anything except [00:25:00] that which law prohibits me from doing," and that goes far beyond labor relations. I'm talking about any activity of their business. "I can do anything unless it's prohibited by law." (pause) The head of a government

agency will say, "I am authorized to do certain things by statute. I cannot do anything unless I am (laughs) authorized by law to do this."

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DW: It seems to me it's an exact flip of the coin. I can do anything except that which law prohibits me from doing. I can do only those things which law says I can specifically do. That's one of the fights that always exists between the executive and the legislature on a national level. The same guys who were encouraging Trump to write executive orders are the same guys who criticized Obama for writing executive orders on the same subject.

SC: Was there ever any debate within AFSCME about whether you should pursue legislation?

DW: Yeah. We've had debates in a number of -- internal debates, that is, [00:01:00] in a number of states. I didn't mention the state, I think, when I was talking earlier, but the state of Washington is a traditional civil service state. It was never considered, like, a patronage state like Illinois was a patronage state. Pennsylvania

was a patronage state. What turned Pennsylvania away from being a patronage state was the collective bargaining law. When we got bargaining rights in Pennsylvania for all these blue-collar workers who were appointed by pols and then fired when the next party came into power, we wrote seniority provisions in the contracts, and we said workers could be discharged for [00:02:00] cause only, for just cause only. So, the next governor can't fire you unless you messed up your job so badly that you deserve to be fired. So, in a sense, we, through collective bargaining, would reinforce what I would call good government or career service in government, and I used the road jobs as an example, but it's -- any jobs in any department would change by virtue of political affiliation. That ended with the collective bargaining law because there was only one reason that workers or employees could be terminated, and that was for cause, and political activity or registered as a Democrat or Republican was not [00:03:00] cause to be discharged. Well, that was not the case in -- Washington was always a civil service state. They believe in the civil service system. We had collective bargaining arrangements by virtue of ordinance or simply -- ordinance would be the de jure recognition rights of employees, like Seattle or King County, things of that -- big urban areas.

And we had arrangements worked out with the state that workers' representatives, the unions, were recognized, but they were recognized for [00:04:00] a limited amount of negotiations, what we call rights bargaining. Rights bargaining means represent workers through the grievance procedure through establishing means, how people get promoted, how they get laid off, things of that nature, but not for economic bargaining. But, on the other hand, the union always had a voice in state commissions, which dealt with unemployment compensation, with wage increases, and they always had a lobbying voice when it came to determining wage increases. They had a voice in [00:05:00] determining wage structures, not bargaining, but through lobbying and influence. For many years, leadership was -- Council 28 -- for many years, the leadership of the council was perfectly satisfied with the way they were doing business, and they were not looking for a collective bargaining law. (pause) But, over a period of years, they were finding that their influence was waning somewhat, depending upon the makeup of the legislature, and also depending upon who the governor was, and they began to believe [00:06:00] that they weren't always getting the fair treatment that they had gotten in the past. So, they started talking about whether it would be worthwhile to

look at a collective bargaining law. So, somehow -- I don't know. I can't really remember whether they went to McEntee and said they wanted me to come out and talk about all of this to them or whether they just came to me. I mean, they could have done it either way. I mean, McEntee would have been more than happy to [00:07:00] have me go out there and sit with them. (pause) So, after some initial discussion, we decided the best way to handle this was to set up a rank-and-file committee, a small committee, of active members covering the political basis within the council, and let's do (pause) some discussion. Let's set up a formal structure by which we take the first steps in determining whether having a collective bargaining statute in the state of Washington for state employees -- now, we're not talking about local government [00:08:00] employees. We're talking about state employees only. (pause) And, as a result, in my conversations with the president of the council and the executive director of the council, the powers in the council were split. You had a full-time executive director and a part-time president, who was like the chairman of the board, as it were. And so, we made a decision that they would set up this working group of a half a dozen people or thereabouts, and we would engage in long-range discussions. And, in turn, I took a

look at who would be helpful. And so, I asked the [00:09:00] council directors in Minnesota, strong civil service state, Wisconsin, the epitome of a civil service state, the prototype, going back to Governor -- the progressive Republican governor whose name I unfortunately can't think of. You would know it if I could think of it. (laughs) It's Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois because Illinois was a patronage state that had gone a long way to civil service in making the transition to collective bargaining, first through the governor's executive order, second state law. And there were [00:10:00] one or two other states that I selected on the basis that they would be people who could communicate with the folks from Washington who were very independent and that the last thing I would do is choose somebody from New York or New Jersey (laughs) because they would be talking across one another rather than to one another. Their experiences were so, you know, so different. So, we set up this committee, and the committee was in operation. I was going out to Washington State once a month, spending three or four days with them. And we were having [00:11:00] very intense conversations and exchanges of information about how things worked here, and, in the meantime, I was also sitting down with the executive director and president of the council,

and we were beginning to draft a collective bargaining statute that would fit the needs of Washington as best interpreted by these guys, who were, you know, really the (pause) -- the president of the council was a blue collar worker who was extremely popular with the membership in the state. I mean, Georgie [George Masten?] was elected term, after term, after [00:12:00] term, and he had the respect, universal respect of the activists in the organization. And the executive director was an extremely bright young guy who understood stuff immediately. I mean, you didn't have to -- he was very, very -- as a matter of fact, he later wound up to be the executive assistant of the governor (laughs) of the state of Washington. So, that took a long time. It took real discussion. It took persuasion. It took conviction. [00:13:00] And (pause) the final straw was we did everything but put it up to a vote, and then, at their convention, the Washington State Convention, they asked me to invite a speaker. It was a woman that they wanted, who was the executive director of one of our councils, to come out and speak to their convention about working under a collective bargaining law. And she did speak. She came out. She did speak, and, at the end of the convention, the delegates took a vote, and they voted in favor of seeking a collective bargaining

statute for the state of Washington. And that was really democracy in action. [00:14:00] It was the only experience like that that I ever participated in or witnessed. Usually, it came without much debate, without much -- sure, we need a bargaining law. The bastards won't pay any attention to us without a law. We can bat our heads against the wall. We need a law. It was just automatic reaction from the activists within the union, within the state. So, that was a very, for me, an educational experience, a gratifying experience, and I would then go out and testify the state legislature Senate and House about what, exactly, we were proposing, why we were proposing it, and [00:15:00] be quite frank with them about what they needed, as a state legislature, to protect their interests in the process and what pitfalls there were. Needless to say, I would accentuate the positive, but there were certain things that -- if we were going to get a law, the important thing was to make the law work.

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DW: Fight to keep the faculty out, of course, keep them from being covered by the law. And (laughs) it's -- the dean is the dean is the dean is the dean. So, that's where I remember California being the prime example where campus after campus would put up fights in terms of organizing employees. But, other than that, typically, you don't run into anti-union campaigns other than (laughs) university campuses. (pause)

SC: Was there ever any conflict within AFSCME headquarters about [00:01:00] legislation, or...?

DW: (pause) On the macro question, no. We'd sometimes get into arguments about the establishment of bargaining units, but not frequently. We did get into that early on in our -- back in the '60s (pause) because, back in the '60s, our evolution of thinking changed a little bit too. Back in the [00:02:00] '60s, we would take the position -- this is an exaggeration, but it's an exaggeration that makes the point. Every law uses the term appropriate bargaining unit, and our position would be an appropriate bargaining unit is any -- is the largest unit that a union can win, so if it was statewide, that, we would consider an appropriate unit. Most frequently, it would be a fragmented unit. It would be part of an agency. It would be where we had a following, and we would not run into too much opposition by

another union. So, [00:03:00] it would be a pragmatic decision. What's the biggest unit? What's the biggest unit we could win? And we petitioned for that unit. The lessons of New York had a great impact 'cause, in New York, it was like one unit that -- basically, because the association was so strong. And, finally, as a result of our striking in the hospitals before the election, they made accommodation. They changed it, and they came down with five separate units in state service, and this is the progenitor of the horizontal unit determination. We would liked to have had vertical units. [00:04:00] The association had the inside track because, in one major factor, you had to belong to the Civil Service Association because you would buy your life insurance through them. The state had no life insurance program, no health insurance program. And so, the insurance was purchased through the association, and the association beat us in four out of the five elections. They later affiliated with us two or three years after that, but that's the Civil Service Employees Association. It's the Local 1000 of AFSCME. But we realized that we were then the strongest union willing to spend all of our money and borrow money if [00:05:00] that -- to run a statewide campaign. And so, that was another, at that point, pragmatic decision that

was made. We would accept statewide units, the horizontal units, and it would benefit us because other unions could not afford to run statewide campaigns. They could afford to run a campaign in the transportation department, or in the prisons, or in the blue-collar unit, but they couldn't afford a statewide, and we could. And, basically, that's how we won Pennsylvania in the early '70s, because we took -- we basically (pause) -- Pennsylvania has state liquor [00:06:00] stores, and we made a deal with food and commercial workers that they could represent -- we would not seek representation rights in the state liquor stores if they kept out of everything else and limited their efforts in the state to the state liquor stores, and that held. And the other deal we made was with SEIU, is we would let them -- they had big representation among the social workers. That was what Andy Stern was out of the social workers. And we would not seek representation of social workers if they committed to seeking representation only for that unit, social workers. [00:07:00] And, basically, we beat the Laborers, and the Teamsters, and the Building Trades, and every other unit that was determined. And then, as our thinking was refined and as we grew to understand more and more about what the state needed as well, as I talked about a few minutes ago, it became a not

only pragmatic decision, but it became a decision of necessity and philosophy because we thought that it made the most sense, and it helped us the most, so it was both pragmatic and (pause) [00:08:00] it made sense to the state. I mean, the state could understand much easier where we were coming from, you know, and that we, in effect, demonstrated that we understood -- we may not always agree, but we understood their need for what made sense in establishing bargaining units. And that became one of my responsibilities, was to talk to state legislatures about the need for a rational determination of bargaining and suggesting to them -- at least suggesting (inaudible) [00:09:00] that they could establish them in the statute, or they could write the standards in the statute so that it would fit into their structure and fit into our desires as well. I mean, it seems to me that what we provided the state (pause) was an understanding of some of their basic needs, how not to screw themselves in setting this most important issue, which was frequently not initially appreciated. [00:10:00] That is, the establishment of rational bargaining units. And the other thing I did was I had a friend who was the executive director of a state PERB, and that I participated in those negotiations every two years. And this guy would mediate

between us and the state when it came down to the final crunch time. And I would bring him in with me to testify before state legislative committees in terms of being an expert in how you determine [00:11:00] bargaining units and what makes sense from the states. And then, he would go around and talk to the budget director of the state so that this budget director of the state had a sense that we were bringing in a certain amount of, if I can use the term loosely, intellectual capacity to (laughs) understand their structure and how the thing would work in practice. So, in that sense, we had it. I got to say, we had it head and shoulders above other unions in this ability to (pause) [00:12:00] function, and also to try to convince the state, sometimes successfully, sometimes not, that we were not the enemy, you know? (laughs) We were not the enemy. We were advocates, yes, and we would be very strong advocates for the people who we represented, and we wanted an arm's length relationship in those terms. (pause) People got worked up over issues like whether we should have the right to strike or not, and, initially, we were as militant as anybody demanding the right to strike. Then, we said, "Well, if not the right to strike, then we have to have binding arbitration." [00:13:00] Then, we would settle, later, if that was impossible, for fact-finding and fact-

finding with recommendations. In other words, what we could get without throwing away the entire bushel of apples. Again, I keep saying an argument on two levels. One, the pragmatic, what we needed, and also a shared interest, as it were. And I think, in large part, that's [00:14:00] -- at least, in many situations, it gave us an upper hand. I would sit with a group of -- I remember this example from Ohio. (pause) We gave Ohio our ideas on bargaining units, and they were largely based on two bases. One is where we felt very strong, that we would win elections. The other is based on their structure and what made sense. And they actually -- the state kind of, as they drew their law or their proposed law [00:15:00] -- I bought about 90 percent of what we argued made a rational structure of bargaining units. And, after the law was passed, and we're gonna write regulations, and part of the regulations were going to be to determine what the bargaining units would be, and I was sitting in a room with about a half a dozen attorneys from other unions. Building trade unions had had an interest. Teamsters. Ohio, I think, was also -- Steel was involved. CWA was involved, heavy. The Teachers were -- now, CWA, mostly. [00:16:00] Yeah, 'cause they had absorbed an independent organization. And we were doing actual testimony, in a sense, in terms of

what the bargaining unit structure should be. These guys were all from private sector unions trying to get into the public sector, and I could tell that their arguments were arguments you would make in the private sector for (laughs) determining units. It was far removed from what made sense in state government. They just had no [00:17:00] feel, no background, no understanding of the state organizational structure, and because they knew that they had a half a dozen people here who were interested in being represented by the Steelworkers, and that's what they wanted to protect, or something like that. (pause) If nothing else ever convinced me, that convinced me there was a substantial difference between the public sector (laughs) and the private sector because you had to take into consideration the employers. And, sometimes, the employer had to be [00:18:00] convinced. They didn't quite understand it from the beginning about what -- and so, I did something else on one or two occasions. I brought in, as a consultant to the employer -- we paid for (laughs), but -- for him to sit down with the employer, this guy who had been the first director of the New York State PERB and helped as a PERB -- design the PERB bargaining units. I can't think of his name. And I brought him into a few locations. I wasn't even in the room. He sat down with

the employer and tried to lecture to the employer what the employer needed in state employment to protect their interests. Now, [00:19:00] it so happens, of course, not accidentally, but this guy's identification of what the employer needed was also the way -- if I was in the room, (laughs) the way I would present the issue as well, so -- but here, he was an independent. I was an advocate. (pause) So, we went to a lot of lengths, and I always considered that one of the most critical areas in designing a collective bargaining law. How do you determine bargaining units and what an appropriate bargaining unit is? It's not sexy, but it's bread and butter for both of us. I mean, you know, for the employer and [00:20:00] us.

SC: You ready to take a break?

DW: Yeah, I think I'd like to stretch, and maybe I'll hit the men's room.

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P2: And we are recording.

SC: Okay. I wanted to change gears a little bit 'cause I'm unsure of whether you were involved with the Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike at all.

DW: Not directly. I was working at AFSCME during that period of time, and (pause) (laughs) I remember, once, attempting -- well, what happened was -- I'm not sure, in any case, that I would have been involved, but I tried to get involved. What happened [00:01:00] was, right -- a matter of a day or two before the assassination, I had some eye surgery. I somehow injured my eye. I have no idea what happened. And I had some minor surgery done to the eye at the ophthalmologist's office, as a matter of fact. And they dressed it up, and, the next day -- they wanted to see me in two or three days, and the next day or two days after that is when King was assassinated, and I [00:02:00] remember I had an appointment with the doctor in town to reexamine the eye and change the dressing. You know, I had big pad on the eye. But there was no way to get in town. Town was closed down. We were living on Capitol Hill at the time, and so, somehow, made contact with the doctor, and one of the doctors in the firm also had an office in suburban Virginia. And so, this is, like, the day after the assassination. A friend of mine who lived in our neighborhood drove me over the 14th Street bridge [00:03:00]

to make the eye appointment. This guy was a doctor himself. And so, I got examined, and he changed -- but there was no way that I could travel without risk.

(laughs) And so, I gave up the ghost, and stayed in town. And stayed in town. And I was always a bit chagrined that I could never -- not that I would have -- I mean, it was not a dispute that was based on information (laughs) either. Yeah, we supplied some information, but [00:04:00] that's not what the strike was all about, of course, as you know. So, I did come, over the years, to work with that local on more than one occasion. In fact, Bill and I did a negotiations down there one time with the hospital. Not the Sanitation Workers. But the local had expanded, you know, over the years. They came to represent much more than the sanitation workers. And I became friends with some of the guys who worked down there as part of the staff that were in Memphis. But that was one that I missed, and, for the most part [00:05:00] -- but I subsequently developed a relationship with the leadership of that local, of 1733, and went down there on a few occasions, but that was, you know, years after the strike and the assassination.

SC: How did they do in those years after?

DW: Pardon?

SC: How did the local fare in the years after?

DW: They had a very vibrant local for many years. Then, they ran into some problems with some of the leadership, in some [00:06:00] cases, losing touch with the members. In some cases, there was some (pause) financial issues. But I think, at this point in time, the local is in reasonably good shape, as I (pause) -- I think Lee [Saunders] goes down every year, and I went down several times on the anniversary, especially -- you know, like, five-year, (pause) and I participated in marches subsequently, when we [00:07:00] -- the local would march every year in honor of King. And, interestingly enough -- I don't know if Bill [Lucy] got into this, and I won't say much more, but when Junior ran for Congress in the Democratic Primary against John Lewis, the local supported John Lewis. AFSCME supported John Lewis, who was, himself, the hero of not the '68 strike, but all of the Freedom Rides, and, despite the ties to King, the local were big John Lewis supporters from the very beginning of [00:08:00] -- and Bill was very instrumental in that too. And, of course, having worked that strike from beginning to end, I mean, Bill always had a very close relationship with the local and its leadership.

SC: (pause) I am having trouble deciding --

DW: What question to ask next?

SC: Yeah, (laughs) 'cause there's quite a few, and they could all be very long.

DW: One that I don't ramble on too much.

SC: (laughs) Well, how 'bout we talk about -- and you have talked a little bit about working with parties who might otherwise be an opposition to the union, you know, change in power in the state [00:09:00] governments and whatnot. If you could maybe talk about how that compares to current situations, and also, maybe, about kind of the backlash to public sector collective bargaining that's going on now.

DW: (pause) I think, again, as a generalization, the political situation was not as vitriolic as it is today. That, I think, goes without saying. One major difference is that [00:10:00] -- I can say this, I think, almost without exception, but there are some exceptions -- organizing in the South for public employees, as well as private sector employees, was always very difficult because, even at a time when Blacks were being elected mayors of major cities, as happened in the '70s in Atlanta with Maynard Jackson -- Maynard Jackson used to be a lawyer with the NLRB. You know, he would consider himself [00:11:00] a liberal Democrat, but when we tried to organize and try to bargain -- we had a local going in Atlanta -- he was as miserable

as anybody. He was upholding the traditions of the
(laughs) South. Keep it nonunion as long as he was --
well, we had a union, but the question was recognition of
the union and dealing with the union. I remember when the
slogan of that strike was -- was the Sanitation Workers,
again, in Atlanta, and the slogan of that strike was
"Maynard's word is garbage." In other words, you can't
trust the guy. (pause) [00:12:00] There were inroads that
were made in certain areas of the South, and for very odd
reasons. I mentioned what our Florida experience -- even
after the law, the union was never very successful in
Florida for a whole variety of reasons. Louisiana was an
interesting example. (pause) We've always had a
relationship with the state whereby, in certain state
departments, depending upon who the governor was, the union
was permitted to exist. Not [00:13:00] thrive, but exist.
And then, it would go into -- under different governors, go
into different hibernation stages to come out again
depending upon who the governor was. It was all political
arrangements so that the best the union could do was exist.
There were periods, places -- couple of places in Texas
where I don't even pretend to understand the history of why
the union was able to exist in those days. Now, they have
a reasonable relationship with the city of Houston,

[00:14:00] but elsewhere in the state, it's awful. Well, Houston and Fort Worth, they had a -- were able to exist as well, (pause) but they were isolated instances where, you know, usually, in a metropolitan area, Louisiana being the exception -- it wasn't necessarily really urban area 'cause it was state employees -- there were reasonable relationships which benefited -- for whatever reasons, benefited both the union and the governor. Illinois is an example where [00:15:00] Jim Thompson did not cancel the executive order, and, later, the executive order was turned into a statute, and, as a matter of fact, Thompson agreed to an impasse procedure with the state when we couldn't reach agreement on a wage increase. The negotiated contract called upon an increase in conjunction with the state's budget results at the end of the year and how that was interpreted, and, although we disputed how it should be interpreted -- you know, the union wanted this. The state wanted [00:16:00] much smaller increase. The governor did agree to an impasse procedure, which -- a mediator was called in, and the mediator's recommend-- both sides would agree in advance that they would abide by the mediator's recommendation. So, he operated under reasonably good faith with the executive order. Sometimes, laws were passed -- Pennsylvania law was passed while a Republican

governor was in power, and he did not fight the enactment of the law. He didn't champion it, but he didn't fight it. And [00:17:00] so, you have a lot of -- I mean, not a lot, but you have several of those examples. But mostly, I mean, mostly the laws were a product of a democratic governor and a democratic state legislature. There's no question about that. But, as I say, I point to these exceptions, where -- New York was an exception.

Rockefeller was governor. I can't think of them all at the moment, but there were other exceptions, so there was a live and let live administration -- Republican administration, that is -- in some -- Iowa was another example. [00:18:00] Branstad, now, who's the ultimate conservative, was always a conservative, but when we had a law in Iowa, he went by the law. He didn't try to gut the law, and we had arbitration of disputes, settling wage disputes on contract negotiations in Iowa, and Branstad lived by it. You know, he went with the times. As the times became much more conservative, he became much more conservative. (pause) But, as you could appreciate, [00:19:00] certainly, the ability of the union to organize and thrive was much more likely under a Democratic administration, a Democratic legislature. But there were notable Republican exceptions to that. I mean, I could

have never, never, never in my wildest imagination expected what happened in 2011 and '12 in Wisconsin to -- would have happened under a Republican governor in Wisconsin. I mean, I remember working a strike in Wisconsin under a Democratic (laughs) governor, going out to Council 24 [00:20:00] and working with them during their strike back in the '70s.

(pause) How could Michigan ever pass a right to work law? I mean, that would have been inconceivable in the '70s. I remember Michigan with a liberal Republican governor named Romney. George Romney, formerly head of American Motor Company. He was pro-union. He (laughs) wasn't anti-union. (pause) [00:21:00] So, the times determine a lot, and the pendulum has certainly swung far, far, far to the right, and that's not -- did not originate with our current president, who I don't think will serve out his first term, but we'll see.

SC: If you were still at AFSCME, I mean, have you thought about how you might approach these situations?

DW: Well, the honest answer is no. We went through some hard times at different periods of time I was here. There were political swings, and there were [00:22:00] also swings where we're facing recessions, things of that nature, and recessions always seem, to me, to play havoc in urban areas, where we're typically very strong. But we survived

them. We lived through them. We lived through all kinds of severe budget cuts from the feds to the states, budget cuts from the state, from the state and the feds to the cities, but we managed. You know, we managed to survive, but, as I look back and I see what's going on, it seems to me they were [00:23:00] child's play compared to what's happening today. I would've been, (pause) I think, a very, very, very unhappy camper today, trying to represent workers. I mean, you fight, you fight, you fight, you fight, but it's very wearing, and I've -- I mean, I've talked to people in the staff here who are still (laughs) here, very few of them, but [00:24:00] -- and I know how difficult it is, and I don't think that -- I have to be very frank and say I don't think I'd be very successful. I shouldn't say that out loud, but I did. I think it would be very frustrating. Very frustrating. (pause) And I give Lee a lot of credit. A lot of credit. He's the right guy for the times. I mean, the times are terrible, but he's persevering, and very thoughtful, and very energetic, and I think he [00:25:00] does much better than others would do in his place, given the burden and the responsibility of the job. I give him nothing but credit and whatever (laughs) moral support I can give him.

SC: Well, would you talk a little bit more about your relationship with --

DW: Excuse me?

SC: Could you talk more about --

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SC: -- your relationship with Lee Saunders? 'Cause you said you hired him, right?

DW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. I like to think that I was a little bit of a mentor, but I'm not sure that's true. (laughs) He did so much on his own. It's very interesting. You can tell almost immediately when someone is going to be a success at what they're doing. From the moment I hired Lee and Steve -- I hired 'em at the same time, by the way, or within weeks of one another. I hired Steve on a recruiting trip (pause), and I hired three or four people on that trip from the Detroit Airport. (laughs) [00:01:00] And I hired Lee because he threw in a resume to someone else in the union, who forwarded it to me, and I was on a campaign. I don't wanna get into this too much. I was on a campaign to hire minorities and women at the time, and I did hire -- I was

successful in that trip to Detroit. A woman worked for a union. The woman worked for the state of Wisconsin and was an active member of the union in Wisconsin. The guy was a [00:02:00] CETA employee outside of Detroit. Ypsilanti or something. And Lee's resume came in, like, through the transom door, but the fact that he was a public employee, had been a public employee in Ohio was a plus. And then, when I interviewed him, he was Black, and from the very moment that he started, and then Steve started -- they're just great. They were just great. I knew they would both be -- I opened up the union to them. I mean, I thought they would be great representatives [00:03:00] of the union, and they were. And we developed a personal relationship as time went on, and I'm very fond of him. And the same with Steve. I was very fond of Steve. Or I'm very fond of him. And I think they were a perfect match. I mean, they complemented one another very well, I thought. And I thought that Jim Schmitz did a good job as -- he was head of field services for a while. And so, I pride myself on the good hires I made and try to forget [00:04:00] the bad hires (laughs) I made.

SC: Did you have any kind of specific approach or philosophy about mentoring people you hired, or...?

DW: I was a tough critic. I mean, I would review their work and tell 'em where I thought it was good and, you know, where I thought it was -- needed -- but those two were very, very good, and they were good in the field, and -- which was the most important thing. They did very well with the members. And I would (laughs) always -- I think they got tired of hearing it. My [00:05:00] daily lecture was, you know, it's the members. You work for the members. You work for the members. You work for the members. And they understood that. The members are paying your salary. You work for the members. (pause)

SC: Was there anyone in particular who served as a mentor to you? I mean, you talked about McEntee.

DW: Mentoring for me? Yeah. Yeah. I have a photograph that I discovered recently. [00:06:00] A guy who worked in -- who, also, I guess I hired. A guy named William Wilkinson. When we decided we were going to build up a library, which grew beyond my expectations into a information center, which William really built on his own. He retired recently, about a year ago, I guess. (pause) I was making a presentation to a group after I had left PERB. PERB was doing some training sessions for union or management people and neutrals, better understand the law, and I was asked to do a part of a program, what it was like before [00:07:00]

the law, what led up to the law in the city. And so, I had to get William to get me a bunch of information that I had long since forgotten about, which he did, and in that group was a picture of Mayor Washington -- mayor of this city, Mayor Washington, some management guys -- two management guys -- sitting at a bargaining table with Bill Lucy, me, and a guy named P.J. Ciampa. Has Ciampa's name been mentioned to you? Yeah. So, at any rate, the picture was taken in 1971. We had a strike against the city of Washington. Wurf was fearful that Nixon was gonna (laughs) send the troops in because it was an illegal strike.

[00:08:00] But it went okay, and the strike -- the workers went back to work, and then we sat down after they went back to work to negotiate a first contract, and this was at the bargaining table, I think, over what the wage increase would be. So, at any rate, long answer to your question is I consider P.J. Ciampa as a major mentor to me. I think Wurf and P.J. Ciampa. Ciampa, at that time, was -- he had a lot of different titles like I did throughout the years. At that time, he may have been either area director for this -- he was on the payroll of the National Union, [00:09:00] and he was either area director or, at some point, he became field services director, and he could have been either field services director or area director at the

time. But, somehow, I developed a relationship early on with Ciampa, and we would go around. I would go around with him as we tried to settle strikes or negotiate contracts. I remember, once, spending a lot of time with him in Baltimore. We had a strike in Baltimore, and I would be his information guy. You know, at that time, we'd supply information to our affiliates to enable them to do an intelligent job in presenting their [00:10:00] case with the city. And I got involved with New York with Ciampa, and I got involved in other places that -- Washington DC, other places that I can't even recall off hand. And so, I would say that I learned an awful lot from Ciampa. An awful lot. I learned a lot from Wurf. From Wurf, I learned a lot about the discipline of work, (laughs) how to work. Hard work, long hours. That kind of stuff. And, from him, I learned [00:11:00] a little bit about how much I didn't know. You know, I got an appreciation for how much I (laughs) had to learn. And from Ciampa, I got an appreciation of learning it (laughs) firsthand, sitting with him. And how (pause) innovative he could be at the table. You know, how quick he would grasp stuff and turn it to his advantage. He, by the way, was out of -- Wurf hired a lot of guys who lost their positions working for private sector unions, and Ciampa -- the leadership in

Maryland, [00:12:00] Ciampa, a guy named Ernie Crofoot, and a guy named Pete Moralis were all out of the Martin plant in Baltimore. UAW-organized plant. And Ciampa had the unmitigated (laughs) nerve -- I was going to use another word, but I'll -- to run against Walter Reuther's area director or re-- I think they call them regional directors in the UAW. Regional directors. In this area that was also in charge of the -- the Martin plant was a big plant in those days. And Ciampa won the election. Well, that didn't last long. It [00:13:00] lasted one term. Reuther got him (laughs) the next time. Reuther's guy won the election back. And so, Ciampa was bounced, and he got a job -- Wurff hired him. One of the best moves Wurff ever made, I think, in terms of hiring. And Pete. He hired Pete. Pete was very good for a few year-- you know, several years. As a matter of fact, I always thought that Pete was behind the strike I mentioned in Washington DC, the sanitation workers' strike, 'cause he worked with that local. And Crofoot ran the Baltimore, Maryland AFSCME. He was executive director of Council 67 in Maryland.

[00:14:00] And these were, all three, experienced UAW guys, and, you know, they knew what they were doing, so I think UAW trained people well, and Ciampa was an early hero of mine. I mean, I really had great admiration for him and

great respect for his ability, and, yeah, I became close to Ciampa. Very sorry to see him go. (pause) He died the same time that I became Wurf's [00:15:00] executive assistant. Those two things happened very close to one another 'cause I remember driving up to Baltimore with Wurf and Mildred, his wife, to Ciampa's viewing. (pause) Another thing that turned me against the religion. I had long since, but Ciampa, to me, was the epitome of a human being. You know, he was a people person, and he felt for people. And when I went [00:16:00] to his wedding, it was the coldest goddamn thing in the world. I mean, it was nothin' said about Ciampa. It was a Catholic wedding like it could have been for anybody. Not a Catholic wedding. A Catholic funeral. It could have been for anybody off the street. The priest would have said the same goddamn thing. Now, maybe Ciampa (laughs) wasn't very -- I'm sure Ciampa's wife was still -- you know, was religious. Ciampa himself didn't give a shit, but he deserved a sending off. He deserved a tribute. He deserved to be spoken about as a person who lived his life well and -- or, at least, certain aspects of his life, he lived very well, and was very concerned with people, and it was a damn shame that [00:17:00] his funeral was so barren of any of that. (pause) And my wife was very fond of Ciampa. I mean, and

she commented to me about that after the funeral too, about how cold it was. I don't know what other word to use other than cold. (pause)

SC: We have to wrap up, but I wanted to ask you to talk a little bit more about your relationship with Gerald McEntee.

DW: My relationship with McEntee?

SC: Mm-hmm. [00:18:00]

DW: You wanna do that now or later?

SC: Maybe we should do it later.

DW: Hmm?

SC: Should we do it later, do you think?

DW: Well, it's a long, involved relationship.

SC: Okay.

DW: I mean, I could go on for a half an hour, an hour.

(laughs)

SC: Okay. All right. Well, then, we'll wrap up for today, but thank you so much for making the time to be here and share all your experiences.

DW: Okay. And you'll just call me in advance to set up a time to talk by phone.

SC: Sure, yeah.

DW: Yeah. And then, I can -- yeah. Is that the biggest item left, or do you have others?

SC: No, there's more.

DW: Oh, okay. Okay. But that will be next.

SC: Sure.

DW: Yeah. Okay. All right. Yeah. That's fine. What time is
it?

SC: It's four o'clock. [00:19:00]

DW: Oh, my. Well, that's a long day's work for me.

END OF AUDIO FILE