

TRANSCRIPT OF GEORGE C. EDWARDS, JR.

11-18-88

Downs: This is Friday, November 18th, at the home of Judge George Edwards in Cincinnati, Ohio. What is your name?

Edwards: I'm going to be talking without touching that machine?

Downs: That's right, it's on conference.

Edwards: Well, my name is George Clifton Edwards, Jr.

Downs: And where were you this afternoon?

Edwards: I was at the United States Court House.

Downs: Now, as I told you, George, this will be recorded and then it will be transcribed. Then you will get a chance to look at it and edit it. You can take anything out you want. You can seal anything you want. The only caution I'd make is that this is not a finished document like a court opinion where every word needs to be right. Even if you get a name or date a little bit off, let the scholars worry. This will be used and we'll get a letter if you agree that Phil Mason at Wayne State University, who is an archivist you know, will have possession and it will be available for scholars. So I think

1 with this we'll start a little bit on your background, do you  
2 want to tell us where you were born, a little bit about your  
3 father and then we'll go into where you went through school.

4 Edwards: Alright, let's get Peggy in here...

5 Downs: Why don't we wait until she gets here. Also  
6 present will be Bette Downs who knew George Edwards since 1930  
7 and Margaret (Peg) Edwards. We can  
8 start now. This is on conference so all your voices will come  
9 through. So, if you want to start. Start in with a little bit  
10 on-where you were born, went to school and so on. Little bit  
11 about your father. I know you have written a book, so we don't  
12 want to repeat that.

13 Edwards: Tom, I was born in Dallas, Texas, August 6, 1914.  
14 We lived at 2603 Shelby Street in north Dallas. I lived there  
15 for the first years of my life with my mother and my father and  
16 my sister, Octavia.

17 Downs: Was she younger or older than you?

18 Edwards: She was either two or three years older than I.

19 Downs: And where did you go to school there?

20 Edwards: I went to Sam Houston school, within walking  
21 distance of our home, then to North Dallas High School and then  
22 to Southern Methodist University and then I got a masters degree  
23 in English at Harvard.

24 Downs: Now, that's a pretty illustrious educational  
25 background and then later you got your law degree when you were  
26 in Detroit. Is that correct?

27 Edwards: Yes, my law degree was a story all in itself

1 because it came in wartime. I got started in taking classes at  
2 the Detroit College of Law before I went in the army. I had  
3 maybe, I don't remember exactly how much, but maybe half of the  
4 courses under my belt. There was a time when I was working at  
5 the Timkin Detroit Axel on war work and working at the Common  
6 Council of the city of Detroit from 9 til noon or later and then  
7 going to Timkin Detroit Axel and working in the shop for 8 hours  
8 and then coming home. All of this to put together some money so  
9 that my wife and one child already arrived and one on the way,  
10 might have something to live on.

11 Downs: Now, let's start on...

12 Edwards (Peg): Before he went into the army.

13 Edwards: Before I went in the army, yes..

14 Downs: This generally of the word liberalism, I think we  
15 know what it means, contrary to the last campaign, people think  
16 if you grew up in Dallas, Texas, generally that would be a  
17 fairly conservative, America first area. Do you want to say  
18 where this liberalism, or these ideas came from. Was it  
19 Harvard, was it your parents, was it the Common Council. Where  
20 did it start?

21 Edwards: Well, my father was a member of the Socialist  
22 Party in the days before World War II, and a very staunch  
23 believer in socialism. That undoubtedly affected my initial  
24 introduction to political affairs.

25 Downs: How about your mother? What was her...

26 Edwards: My mother was a loving, wonderful housewife and  
27 mother. She was devoted to her husband. I think sometimes he

1 was a cross to her because he got into a good many controversies  
2 in the very conservative atmosphere of Dallas, Texas and I don't  
3 think she thoroughly enjoyed those controversies, but she never,  
4 never let him down at any point.

5 Downs: It would be safe to say she was supportive of him,  
6 but not necessarily his ideas.

7 Edwards: Oh, I think she supported his ideas, too.

8 Downs: Supported his ideas, too.

9 Edwards: Oh yes, yes. I just don't think she originated  
10 them.

11 Downs: Just an aside. The first election I remember my  
12 father voted for Hoover and my mother for Norman Thomas. I said  
13 that I have never heard any political arguments since. How  
14 about when you were in college in Texas. Were there any liberal  
15 organizations; Socialist, Democrat, or Debs or anything like  
16 that, that you participated in?

17 Edwards: I don't really think so. At SMU, I was a member  
18 of a fraternity and I lived pretty much the social life of  
19 the...

20 Edwards (Peg): You lived at home.

21 Edwards: I lived at home, but I drove to college or got a  
22 ride there, one way or another, and I enjoyed SMU. I finished,  
23 I think, in three years in order to get the year at Harvard that  
24 Dad had promised if I did.

25 Downs: How about your year at Harvard. Was there much  
26 about what year was that?

27 Edwards: I'd say it was '34, wasn't it?

1           Downs: That would have been in the Depression Period. Was  
2 there much social ferment, you discussed then in Harvard?

3           Edwards: Well, the big thing in that period for young  
4 people was the anti-war movement. There were already stirrings  
5 of the beginnings that led to World War II in Europe and I was  
6 part of a liberal club, I think the Harvard Liberal Club had a  
7 long history. I think that basically we were anti-war at that  
8 period and at one point I made a speech on the steps of the  
9 Widner Memorial Library, which undoubtedly had to do with the  
10 opposition to war. I've never really felt bad about the fact  
11 that I was something approaching a... Well, I never was really  
12 a pacifist, but I was certainly an anti-war person as a young  
13 man at Harvard. I took that position in public on the steps  
14 of Widner Memorial Library.

15           Downs: Now, you later were in the army, is that correct?

16           Edwards: Yes, that's quite a bit later.

17           Downs: How long did you serve in, I think during the  
18 Philippines were you?

19           Edwards: Let's see. This was...this came after I had met  
20 Peg and we were married and...two years.

21           Downs: Peg speak up please.

22           Edwards (Peg): You left in January and I believe you came  
23 back in January and it was two years. And the election of the  
24 Council presidency had been in the interim.

25           Downs: While you were in the army. Now, I'll get to that.

26           Edwards: I was a little longer than that, Peg, I think.

27           Downs: I doesn't make a lot of difference...

1 Edwards: I think it was about three years.

2 Downs: What I want to know is that you shifted, not from  
3 a pacifist, but from an anti-war to being, if you want to say,  
4 anti-Hitler or pro-. What, you know...did that transition come  
5 about? Fast or ...

6 Edwards: Yes, sure. Battle of the Bulge. The Germans...  
7 All of the anti-war sentiment was based, basically upon the  
8 idea that the French had the Maginot Line and that the Germans  
9 could not crack it. It had been built to settle the German  
10 aggressions. When the Maginot Line was turned and destroyed,  
11 all the anti-war sentiment...

12 Edwards (Peg): You and I were anti-war long before the war  
13 was declared in 1939.

14 Edwards: Yes.

15 Edwards (Peg): You are now talking about when the Maginot  
16 Line...

17 Edwards: This is when I turned toward being...

18 Edwards (Peg): We were pro-intervention.

19 Edwards: We were pro-intervention by that time. That's  
20 the change that I'm talking about.

21 Downs: You were pro-intervention. The Hitler...the  
22 anti-war...well, the anti-war period was there in the '30's.

23 Edwards (Peg): Early '30's.

24 Downs: Early '30's. And then, I don't want to put words  
25 in your mouth, but then as...I think...well I don't. Bette and I  
26 went through that same period of being anti-war and then the  
27 rise of Hitler there was a factor in shifting. I don't want to

1 put words in your mouth.

2 Edwards: Well, the rise of Hitler was a factor. There is  
3 no doubt about that, but it was the destruction of the Maginot  
4 Line that just said to me, not only have you been wrong in  
5 relation to this past posture, but you've got to be willing to  
6 do something about it.

7 Downs: Now, let's go back to after you finished Harvard,  
8 what did you do then?

9 Edwards: I worked for the student League for Industrial  
10 Democracy.

11 Downs: And where was it you did that?

12 Edwards: It was based in New York city and it was headed  
13 by Norman Thomas and Mary Fox.

14 Downs: Did you know Norman Thomas well?

15 Edwards: I knew him reasonably well, yes.

16 Downs: What were your activities then in New York with  
17 the...

18 Edwards: I did a lot of lecturing for the student League  
19 for Industrial Democracy. All around the country and colleges.

20 Downs: All around the country, what colleges. Can you  
21 name a few of them?

22 Edwards: "Oh, Amherst, dear Amherst for the name known to  
23 fame and day of yore..." I was there. I'm not sure, I think I  
24 was at Connecticut College, not when you were there.

25 Edwards (Peg): You went out to Lansing, you said. Because  
26 you were nearly burned up in a house.

27 Edwards: Yes, I was ...I was at Michigan State

1 University...I probably was at 75 or 100 colleges. Hither,  
2 tither and yon.

3 Downs: You remember at that period, what was the role of  
4 the Communist Party? Do you recollect that?

5 Edwards: Well, the communists, as you know,  
6 <sup>at the</sup> first were pacifists and then they were  
7 interventionists when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union and that  
8 continued for...let's see...let's cut it for a minute.

9 Downs: We had, had a telephone call interruption. We were  
10 talking about the SLID, you worked there for a while and then  
11 from there did you go to Detroit?

12 Edwards: I worked for the Student League for Industrial  
13 Democracy for someplace between two and three years, I'd say.

14 Downs: Then I want to know how you got into Detroit and  
15 the UAW. How did you make that transition?

16  
17 Edwards: ... adventures with the SLID?

18 Downs: Yeah, let's hear about some of those.

19 Edwards: Let's see...

20 Edwards (Peg): Didn't you start the student union, you an  
21 and Joe Lash? And didn't Norman oppose it because it was going  
22 to have communists in it? That was at the same time.

23 Edwards: ...and it was a big mistake.

24 Edwards (Peg): American student...

25 Edwards: ...Joe Lash and Jimmy Wexler were red  
26 hot for it and I was somewhere between lukewarm and opposed and  
27 as the thing went ahead I got less and less enthusiastic and



1 wanted to get out and I started looking toward the union  
2 movement as a feasible place to work for the things I believed  
3 in.

4 Downs: Well, now is the American Student Union, that was a  
5 united front against war and fascism or am I, I'm trying to  
6 remember that period.

7 Edwards: That was another outfit that had that particular  
8 slogan but it followed the same general line.

9 Downs: And Norman Thomas was concerned that communists  
10 would get into it and control it. Is that correct?

11 Edwards: He was concerned about that and he was rightly  
12 concerned about it.

13 Downs: And history you are saying, again, I don't want to  
14 put words in your mouth, you're saying his concerns turned out  
15 to...were they valid or invalid, his concerns?

16 Edwards: I think his concerns turned out to be valid. My  
17 father, at some point, when I was in school said to me, "Son, if  
18 you ever have to sup with the communists, take a long spoon."  
19 I never forgot that and I never trusted them, and as time went  
20 on I became a very strong anti-communist because they didn't  
21 play by any rules of honesty or decency.

22 Downs: So, while your father was a very strong socialist,  
23 and that must have taken real courage in Texas in those days, he  
24 was also anti-communist. Is that what you are saying? So then  
25 when you became, shall I say, disillusioned or move from the  
26 American Student Union then you moved into the labor movement?

27 Edwards: Yes, I remember that I rode into Detroit one

1 cold, winter day on a truck on which I had hitchhiked. You  
2 know, most of my travel for the SLID was by hitchhiking. I  
3 think the most I ever made from the SLID was \$15 a week. And  
4 that was some weeks. I rode into, I think Chicago, on a spinach  
5 truck, a very cold night. SLID had a branch office in Chicago at  
6 that time and that's that last function that I recall performing  
7 for the SLID. Now, you ask me how I got into the labor movement.

8 Edwards (Peg): You were going to write the great American  
9 novel.

10 Edwards: I wanted to get into the labor movement because I  
11 was going to write the great American novel about it. I had  
12 taken a course in Harvard in writing with a very bright  
13 professor and I was gung ho for writing.

14 Downs: Peg just said, "Did you know Frank Wynn then?"

15 Edwards: When J. first went to Detroit I stayed with him and  
16 these were the formative days of the UAW and Frank had been  
17 taken on as editor on the UAW paper. We roomed together, in one  
18 room, for a period. Headquarters for the UAW were in the old  
19 Hoffman building (now destroyed) on Woodward Avenue in Detroit.  
20 Homer Martin was president of the UAW and I had met Walter and  
21 Victor Reuther in the work in the SLID. They had, had some  
22 contact with Wayne University in a chapter there. At some  
23 point around this period I met my bride to be. At the time that  
24 I met her I was on the payroll of the UAW's WPA department,  
25 Welfare and WTA department. In fact I was director of it and I  
26 was getting paid \$25 a week.

27 Downs: Was that when Homer Martin was...

1 Edwards (Peg): August, 1938.  
2 Edwards: August, 1938.  
3 Downs: Was Homer Martin president then?  
4 Edwards (Peg): No.  
5 Edwards: Yeah.  
6 Edwards (Peg): We went to the convention in Cleveland and  
7 R.J. Thomas was elected.  
8 Edwards: That was the next...that was after the split...  
9 Edwards (Peg): It was before we were married.  
10 Edwards: ...it was before we were married. Yes, that's  
11 true.  
12 Edwards (Peg): We were married April 10, 1939.  
13 Downs: So Frank Wynn was working for Homer...when Frank  
14 Wynn was putting out the UAW paper, was he working...  
15 Edwards (Peg): I don't think so. He was working at  
16 Kelsey-Hayes.  
17 Edwards: Oh, no. Frank never worked with Kelsey-Hayes.  
18 Edwards (Peg): He wasn't editing what we think of as the  
19 UAW paper.  
20 Downs: He was doing publicity work.  
21 Downs (Bette): Well, let me in here. In 1938, in the  
22 summer, I was at the LID summer school in New York and Frank  
23 Wynn was there working with Norman Thomas who had been ejected  
24 from, what's the name of the town in New Jersey, Jersey City.  
25 Edwards: Jersey City. Yeah.  
26 Downs (Bette): And so that was Frank's job that summer.  
27 Downs: Working with the SLID and Norman Thomas.

1     Downs (Bette): Norman Thomas because the plan was to go back to  
2     Jersey City and have a huge rally which they did. And I don't  
3     know what Frank did after that.

4             Edwards: Frank Hague was the mayor of Jersey City who was  
5     squashing all of the labor rallys.

6             Downs: Then you were back in Detroit rooming with Frank  
7     Wynn and you were both then active in the UAW. Is that correct?  
8     I know it is hard to remember these exact...

9             Edwards: I can't put the dates together...

10            Downs: No, I'm not asking you to. We'll let someone else  
11     worry about the dates.

12            Edwards: Along this time that I went to Detroit and I went  
13     there to get a job. Not a job in the  
14     labor movement, to get a job in the shops and I remember<sup>that</sup> as one  
15     of the most vivid experiences in my life. This was now winter  
16     time, running the hiring line at the Ford Motor Company several  
17     days. If you wanted to get a job at Ford, you formed up in rows

18                     ...look at them from the air they'd look like a great  
19     big snake. Literally thousands upon thousands of men were in  
20     that line waiting to get to the hiring gate. There they asked  
21     you one question, "What can you do." If you named the job that  
22     they had for hire that day, they'd move you into another place  
23     and they would go into your credentials a little more  
24     thoroughly. If you didn't give the right answer for a job that  
25     was being hired for that day, they just said, "Go on by."

26            Downs: What if you could do two or three jobs, could  
27     you...

1 Edwards: They would give you a chance to say but one job.

2 Couldn't say but one job.

3 Downs: And you were in that line.

4 Edwards: And it was a bitter, bitter cold process.  
5 Just...you had to get out there at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning  
6 to get in line at all.

7 [end side one]

8

9

10 -

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

1 [side 2]

2 Edwards: I remember particularly hitchhiking into Lansing,  
3 Michigan one terribly cold night and I had a LID contact that I  
4 was supposed to call. I went to Hotel, about five stories  
5 high on the bank of the river that runs through Lansing.

6 Downs: Wentworth...

7 Edwards: Huh?

8 Downs: Wentworth Hotel?

9 Edwards: Maybe, maybe. I don't remember the name. There  
10 I called my contact and nobody answered. And I called again a  
11 little later and nobody answered. Then I went out and I think I  
12 got something to eat and I came back to the same place and the  
13 same pay telephone and I called again and, by golly, the person  
14 who was my contact answered and they said, "Why yes, we'll come  
15 and get you and we'll put you up for the night." Well, that was  
16 awfully good news because I didn't even have the money to...and  
17 it was cold. I couldn't have even paid for that hotel. Well,  
18 one of the reasons this sticks in my mind is because that hotel  
19 burned down that night. I think a half a dozen people were  
20 killed jumping out of the upper floors. That would register  
21 with you, wouldn't it?

22 Downs: That would register. That was before that...I  
23 think I gave you the name of the wrong one, but I do remember  
24 hearing about a hotel fire in Lansing.

25 Edwards: Well, let me see where we go from there. We got  
26 me to Michigan.

27 Downs: Let's get... Peg, would you read those dates in

1 just so we can refresh our memory and Bette is helping, too.

2 These are approximate by year.

3 Edwards (Peg): When George and I first started going  
4 together, George was working out of the Hoffman building. I  
5 don't remember who was president of the UAW.

6 Edwards: Well, I was a little bit confused at that point.  
7 Homer Martin was president. Homer Martin had been president for  
8 quite a while.

9 Edwards (Peg): In 1934 George went to Harvard. '34-'36 he  
10 worked for the LID and they formed the ASU, American Student  
11 Union.

12 Downs: Which overlapped.

13 Edwards (Peg): Overlapped. In '37 or late '36 he went to  
14 Detroit and he got a job at Kelsey-Hayes.

15 Edwards: That's right. Got a job at Kelsey-Hayes.

16 Downs: When did you meet, Peg?

17 Edwards (Peg): We met in August of '38.

18 Downs: When did you get married?

19 Edwards (Peg): '39. April.

20 Downs: So we've got you, George, working...

21 Edwards (Peg): Fifty years this April.

22 Downs: ...you're working at Kelsey-Hayes. Was  
23 Kelsey-Hayes organized at that time?

24 Edwards: No, but I helped organize it.

25 Downs: Do you want to tell us a little bit about that,  
26 what you did.

27 Edwards: Well, let's see, Kelsey was not the first

1 automobile plant in Michigan to organize, but it was was about  
2 the second. Kelsey-Hayes had two plants really, three, it had  
3 the main plant on McGraw Avenue and a foundry across the  
4 street, and then it had another plant five or six blocks away.  
5 I was in the McGraw Avenue plant, I was in department 49 and I  
6 was working on a brake line. I was just hired right off the  
7 street. They put me to work on the brake line the same day, I  
8 think, that I was hired and my job was taking a brake plate,  
9 that's the plate to which the brake shoes would subsequently be  
10 fixed by screws or rivets and I took the brake plates off of  
11 a...that's not right. Another man took the brake plates off the  
12 conveyer line and put them on a bench, a metal bench in front of  
13 me and I took a strong wire spring which had metal plugs  
14 on each end and performed the function of putting a plug in  
15 the holes of the brake plate which were going to be used for screw  
16 holes when the machining was done. This was to keep the paint,  
17 which was applied then by dipping a lot of brake plates at one  
18 time, out of these holes so the holes could be machined  
19 properly. The guy who put the brake plates on the line worked  
20 like an ... I never got a friendly word out of him the whole  
21 time I was there until after the plant became unionized. He  
22 would slam the brake plate down and if I was delayed in making  
23 this to me, rather difficult operation of putting the plug in  
24 one side, twisting and putting the plug on the underside, he  
25 would just drop the plates on my hand. Wasn't fun. I had quite  
26 a bit of controversy with him about what was happening to my  
27 hands in this process. That, I'm trying to remember now...Vic



1 Reuther had gotten a job on the day shift...on the night shift  
2 at Kelsey. Not in the same department as I. I had met Walter  
3 Reuther in LID days at Wayne University and Walter, by then, was  
4 president of the westside local of the UAW.

5 Downs: I want to interrupt for a minute. Do you remember  
6 what the pay was when you worked at Kelsey-Hayes?

7 Edwards: Beg pardon?

8 Downs: What was the pay when you worked at Kelsey-Hayes?

9 Edwards: 37½ cents an hour.

10 - Downs: How many hours did you work? How many days a week,  
11 was it a 40 hour week?

12 Edwards: It wasn't a 40 hour week. It was a 48 hour week,  
13 I think. I think so, I'm not positive of that.

14 Downs: No overtime?

15 Edwards: No, no overtime.

16 Edwards (Peg): Weren't you called by numbers?

17 Edwards: That was one of the biggest things. The foreman  
18 never addressed me except by my number, my shop number.

19 Downs: Was that true for all the workers.

20 Edwards: That went for all the workers.

21 Edwards (Peg): It wasn't that this man was so cruel  
22 because he was so worried because he was near 40.

23 Edwards: Well, a whole lot of things are called back by  
24 these memories. There was a man named Denzig who ran the  
25 employment aspect of Kelsey-Hayes and the man who owned the shop  
26 was named Kennedy. The shop was a big supplier to Ford. The  
27 work that I was doing was going on to Ford cars subsequently.

1 One of these employees, and I think maybe I'm not sure of this,  
2 an older man at lunch break on a sunny day, we were sitting  
3 outside, said to me, "I bet you are too scared to join a union."  
4 And I said that I'm not too scared to join a union, are you a  
5 union man? He said, "Yes, I'm a union man and I have a card  
6 here and if you give me a dollar, why you can fill it out and  
7 you can become a member of the westside local." I filled it out  
8 and I became a member of the westside local and I still have the  
9 card. It's framed on the wall in here.

10 Edwards (Peg): What were you going to say about Denzig?

11 Edwards: Well, Denzig was...I always had a lot of respect  
12 for Kennedy. Kennedy was a man of his word. When we got to  
13 talk to him we could generally work things out. Denzig was a  
14 typical employment manager type who was engaged in trying to get  
15 everything out of employees that he could get out of them  
16 without giving anything back. It seems to me that things came  
17 to a crisis on one of the days around Christmas time when Ford  
18 Motor Company undertook to take trucks and employees into the  
19 McGraw Avenue plant to take the dies out so that they could  
20 move them to Ford and they could do the work there. That, of  
21 course, was very threatening to the strikers and the strikers  
22 organized on that point.

23 Downs: You mention strikers. When did the strike start?  
24 Or were they taking the dies out after the strike started?

25 Edwards: They were taking the dies out after the  
26 strike started, yes. The actual...the first strike I think was  
27 called by Vic Reuther on the afternoon shift, but it only lasted

1 for maybe an hour or so and then the next day, after that brief  
2 shutdown in department 49...we shut department 49 down<sup>on the dayshift</sup>. That's  
3 <sup>really</sup> when the strike started and it was several days after that the  
4 Ford Motor Company undertook to take the dies out. Workers from  
5 all over the city showed up at the gates and they did not take  
6 the dies out.

7 Downs: Was Kelsey-Hayes organized at that time.

8 Edwards: Well...

9 Downs: Or was it just a process

10 Edwards: It was in the process of being organized.

11 Downs: You had the strike...

12 Edwards: Midland Steele, I think was the first plant in  
13 Detroit to organize and it had been organized for maybe a month  
14 by then. So I think that Kelsey was probably the second plant  
15 to organize.

16 Downs: Then the workers from other plants came to help to  
17 keep the dies from being taken out.

18 Edwards: Yeah, no question<sup>about</sup> that, that happened.

19 Downs: Now, you said that you met Walter Reuther. Was  
20 that...what period...what was that occasion?

21 Edwards: Well, I had met Walter at Wayne University while  
22 I was working for the LID.

23 Downs: Was he a student at Wayne at that time?

24 Edwards: He and Victor were both students at Wayne at some  
25 point or another in exactly when and how...

26 Downs: That was an SLID meeting at Wayne where you met  
27 him.

1 Edwards: Yes, I am sure there was a SLID meeting at Wayne.  
2 Downs: Now, from Kelsey-Hayes then the strike ended up  
3 at...the UAW won that striked?  
4 Edwards: Kelsey-Hayes?  
5 Downs: Yes.  
6 Edwards: Oh, no question about it. The...  
7 Edwards (Peg): George jumped over the fence though and  
8 went off to Chicago to a meeting of the ASU and resigned as  
9 president of the ASU, ran back, jumped over the fence and got  
10 back in the strike.  
11 Downs: You had been president of the ASU?  
12 Edwards (Peg): Yes.  
13 Downs: Nationally?  
14 Edwards (Peg): Yes.  
15 Downs: And you went and resigned and then came back.  
16 Edwards: Yeah.  
17 Downs: Peg, you add more color to it than George does.  
18 Edwards (Peg): Well...there is so much, you know.  
19 Downs: I know it...it's not...what...what to say, it's  
20 what to leave out. There is so much there. Why did you say you  
21 resigned when you went there as president because that must have  
22 been pretty dramatic.  
23 Edwards: I guess I told them that I was going to be  
24 working in the labor movement. But, truth to tell, the  
25 communist influence in the ASU bothered me to no end. There was  
26 a gal named Celeste Stract, organizing ASU'ers and I didn't  
27 see...couldn't see her for dirt.

1 Edwards (Peg): What about Joe and Jimmy?

2 Edwards: Well, they weren't at the meeting. They stayed  
3 in New York and they didn't get out in the countryside. Jimmy  
4 wrote the paper and Joe masterminded, but he didn't get around  
5 the country.

6 Downs: Did Joe Lash break from the ASU at that time? Do  
7 you remember?

8 Edwards: No.

9 Downs: And Wechler didn't either.

10 Edwards: Both of them stayed with the ASU for quite a while.  
11 I don't know just how long.

12 Downs: Yeah. Then you went back to Kelsey-Hayes.

13 Edwards: I went back to Kelsey-Hayes, just climbed over  
14 the fence and picked up the strike. Then we...

15 Downs: Kelsey-Hayes was part of the westside local.

16 Edwards: Kelsey-Hayes became part of the westside local  
17 after...there was...I can't remember exactly how this came  
18 about, but at one point Mike Manning and I were outside the  
19 company office and Paul Denzig who was the labor relations guy  
20 for Kelsey-Hayes called me away from Mike and said, "I want to  
21 talk to you alone." I said, "I can't talk to you alone." He  
22 said, "Mr. Kennedy wants to make you an offer. He'll pay you,"  
23 and I think it was \$16,000 a year, which was quite a fortune at  
24 that period, and I somewhat indignantly told him, "Thanks, but  
25 no thanks."

26 Downs: What was the \$16,000 a year to be for?

27 Edwards: I guess to be in employment relations.

1           Downs: The work, it wasn't to be a spy in the union, but  
2 just to work in the employment relations for the company.

3           Edwards: No, maybe I'm just assuming that. I know that he  
4 mentioned the figure...

5           Downs: The \$16,000. That was pretty big money at that  
6 time.

7           Edwards: That was very big money.

8           Edwards (Peg): You made 37¢ an hour.

9           Edwards: That's the thing that I was trying to get at,  
10 at...I can't remember whether it was before or after this.  
11 Maybe it was after this...maybe it was before this. But,  
12 in...we had some discussion with top management in Kelsey-Hayes  
13 and they offered to post a notice which said that the plant will  
14 open at 7:00 or whatever the starting time was on such and such  
15 a date. This was after Christmas, as I recall it, and the base  
16 rate will be 75¢.

17           Downs: That was more than double.

18           Edwards: More than double...more than double. And  
19 that...and that was posted and at Kelsey-Hayes, Kennedy did not  
20 want a contract with the union because Ford didn't want any  
21 contracts and we understood that and we went along with  
22 developing a bargaining relationship which was one of the best  
23 in the union for years. But we never had anything on paper and  
24 in writing.

25           Downs: Now, did men and women get the same pay then?

26           Edwards: No, and I don't remember...they got raises  
27 proportionate to...

1 Downs: Were there many blacks or was it all white?

2 Edwards: There weren't any blacks in our unit. There were  
3 blacks in the foundry across the street.

4 Downs: Were women doing the same work as men, or different  
5 jobs.

6 Edwards: Women were doing...there were women working in  
7 department 49 and they were doing jobs that were similiar but it  
8 tended to be fast jobs.

9 Downs: Let's just wind up in a couple of minutes. You'd  
10 mentioned this fellow that would put the brakeplates on your hand  
11 before the union. Then you said something about after you were  
12 organized you worked beside him. Was there any difference.

13 Edwards: Oh, Yes. He was the friendliest fellow in the  
14 world. It had just taken years of... You see, Kelsey also  
15 recognized seniority from that point foreward and...

16 Downs: From that point you mean after the strike.

17 Edwards: After the strike.

18 Downs: Even though it was not in a written contract.

19 Edwards: Even though it wasn't in any written form. But  
20 they had seniority by...we had departmental seniority, really.

21 Downs: We have done pretty near an hour, now. We had  
22 planned a half an hour. Shall we quit for a while and then.  
23 This is Tom again. It is now about 8:30, Friday night and this  
24 is the second side of the tape. This will be the end of it and  
25 then we'll start tomorrow on the difference where George worked  
26 for as a union person and before the person was in the union.  
27 That's the end of the second side of the first tape.

1 tape 2, side 1

2 Downs: Testing X,Y,Z. This is November 19th, tape 2, side  
3 1. It's now about 10:00 Saturday morning, November 19, 1988.  
4 George you remember we wound up last night we talked about  
5 before the union when you worked on the line. Something about  
6 the brake shoe and the fellow that was before you, got the part  
7 and take it and practically slam it on your hand if you got  
8 behind and was very non-communicative. Then you talked about  
9 the change after the union. Do you want to go into that a  
10 little bit more?

11 Edwards: Well, the whole atmosphere of the plant changed  
12 to no small degree I presume that it didn't change through the  
13 desires of the management, but it certainly was more pleasant  
14 from the point-of-view of the people that were working there.

15 Downs: What was the age of the man that worked next to  
16 you, about?

17 Edwards: He was very old. He was 40.

18 Downs: That was very old for the plant. How old were you  
19 about? In your 20's?

20 Edwards (Peg): 22 or 23.

21 Edwards: Something like that.

22 Downs: Then you said, I think often the best comes up in a  
23 discussion of a seniority system, even though it  
24 wasn't in writing. What effect would that have had on this man?

25 Edwards: Well, it saved his job, but it also ultimately it  
26 meant that I didn't get called back because Vic and I were very,  
27 very junior people on the roster.



1           Downs:  Would you tell us some more changes that you saw  
2 after the union, the relation with this man.  I just want a  
3 little more.  What actually happened.

4           Edwards:  I don't know that I can remember specifics, Tom.  
5 But, it <sup>u</sup>was totally more relaxed situation and he, in place of  
6 being worried about his job every day that he went to the shop  
7 for fear he might get laid-off permanently was confident of a  
8 job and probably was a better worker for it.

9           Downs:  Did he put brake plate on your hand from then on?  
10  
11

12           Edwards:  Not thereafter.

13           Downs:  Did you call each other by your real names, did  
14 you recall?

15           Edwards:  Yes, yes.

16           Downs:  Then you talked, I think a little after the tape  
17 was off kind of reminiscing about, did the people flock to the  
18 union, or did you have to recruit people.  How did they come  
19 into westside local?

20           Edwards:  They came into the westside local in droves.  
21 There were...there was a time that I distinctly remember that at  
22 the office at 35th and Michigan we had waste baskets full of  
23 application cards for the union and dollar bills clipped to  
24 them.  Bob Kanter, and I stood guard over this union treasure  
25 trove for some nights before we could get them processed into  
26 some sort of records .

27           Downs:  They would just come off the street, walk in and

1 want to sign up.

2 Edwards: They brought them in, stewards in the shop.  
3 Collected them and brought them in and turned them in at the  
4 35th and Michigan office.

5 Downs: You said that when you were working before the union  
6 somebody asked you if you wanted to join and you paid a dollar  
7 and joined. How did you know that wasn't a spy from the company  
8 that wanted to get you fired?

9 Edwards: Well, I didn't know. I just didn't think so. He  
10 sort of challenged me, he said, "I bet you wouldn't be willing  
11 to join the union." And I did.

12 Downs: Well, I have here the official receipt, local union  
13 174, number 1162, General Office 804 Hoffman Building,  
14 International Union, United Automobile Workers of America.  
15 Received of handwritten, George Edwards \$2.00 dated December 7,  
16 1936. Signed by Walter P. Reuther, Financial Secretary. Dues  
17 International Office 137½. Someday I would like to get a  
18 photostat of that to put with these. And that is the original.

19 Edwards: That is the original.

20 Downs: Well good. There aren't many of those around. And  
21 Walter Reuther was the financial secretary. Alright so then...

22 Edwards: He was doubling in brass.

23 Downs: Do you want to tell us some more about those early  
24 days at westside local and Kelsey-Hayes, and so on.

25 Edwards: Well, we were engaged very quickly in organizing  
26 in other plants. There was a great big plant called Turnsted  
27 where there were a lot of women workers, as I recall, and we

1 organized it and then Cadillac, as I recall, it was next on  
2 the <sup>list</sup> in terms of dates. And the Cadillac management elected to  
3 keep the plant open and there were...Cadillac was always sort  
4 of...it was always...it had a little more prestige, both among  
5 the workers and on the supervision and they got quite a few  
6 people going through the picket lines and there was some  
7 pushing and shoving at the Cadillac picket lines on a cold  
8 winter days.

9 Downs: Now, when you said you would organize, just  
10 specifically, what would you do? Like to organize Turnsted?

11 Edwards: Well, we had a soundtrack and make speeches and  
12 said that the union would be good for you so join.

13 Downs: Now, were you doing this as a volunteer or were  
14 you paid at that time?

15 Edwards: I can't remember when I first was put on the  
16 payroll, but I do remember, I think, that I was paid \$15 a week.  
17 I don't...I think I stayed on that until sometime later on when  
18 I began to develop an affiliation with Margaret Medill McConnel  
19 and at that point I went in and saw George Adess, who was the  
20 financial secretary, and the man who could get my pay raised.  
21 At that point I think it went up. I know it went up twice,  
22 maybe it went up more than that. Maybe it got up as high as \$50  
23 a week at some point.

24 Downs: Now for a while there, though, you were working at  
25 Kelsey-Hayes ... and <sup>on the</sup> Soundtrack and Turnsted, that would be on  
26 your off time?

27 Edwards: Well, I didn't go back into Kelsey-Hayes after

1 the strike occurred because my seniority was not such as to  
2 warrant my being called back in.

3 Downs: Peg Edwards has found from a scrapbook, a card.  
4 Would you please read that.

5 Edwards (Peg): This is a card from the International Union  
6 of the United Automobile Workers of America, affiliated with the  
7 Committee for Industrial Organization. Office of the  
8 International President. To Whom It May Concern: This is to  
9 certify that George Edwards is hereby duly authorized and  
10 legally commissioned to act as International Representative and  
11 this day is the 26th day of October, 1937. Signed by Homer  
12 Martin, President.

13 Downs: That is a bit of history. Did you know Homer  
14 Martin very well?

15 Edwards: Yes, I knew him reasonably well.

16 Downs: Do you want to make any comments. There has been a  
17 lot written on Homer Martin, I don't know... (unclear because of  
18 coughing).

19 Edwards: Homer Martin was... Let me see, how can I  
20 describe Homer Martin... Homer Martin had organized, I think,  
21 the Kansas City local and at a convention which preceeded my, I  
22 think preceeded my becoming a member of the union, he had been  
23 elected president. He was...he was not a strong person. He  
24 didn't have a consistant policy about anything, as I recall him.  
25 There were...was...there were....there was developing a three  
26 way split in the union. A split which was led by a man who was  
27 a pretty well-known as a communist named John Anderson and there

1 was a unit that was led by Martin and then there was a unit that  
2 was led by Walter Reuther. I supported Walter, of course.  
3 I don't know about "of course", but I did. Because I thought he  
4 made more sense than anybody else consistently.

5 Downs: What was John Anderson's base? He was president of  
6 a local or...

7 Edwards: He was president of a tool and die, there were  
8 two tool and die locals and he was president of one of them.

9 Downs: One 55 and one 57.

10 - Edwards: I think they were 155 and 157.

11 Downs: Blain Marris was later the president of one.  
12 Is that correct?

13 Edwards: Blain Marris was in the union, but I don't  
14 remember whether he was...

15 Downs: Now, Anderson was the president of that. What was  
16 Walter Reuther's base at that time?

17 Edwards: Walter had been at Ford and he was...I think his  
18 membership was credited as Ford local. At that time there was  
19 practically no such thing as a Ford local. Did I ever talk to  
20 you about running the employment line at Ford?

21 Downs: Yes, you talked about the (inaudible) But what you  
22 never did tell me. Did you get up to the place to be hired?

23 Edwards: Yes, I got up to the place to be hired.

24 Downs: What did you say?

25 Edwards: And they said, "What can you do?" and I said that  
26 I could operate a punch press and they said, "We don't need you."

27 Downs: You just picked the wrong job.

1 Edwards: Yeah, I picked the wrong job.

2 Downs: If you had known if they wanted something else like  
3 a millwright, is that a millwright?

4 Edwards: Well, I would have had a hell of time asserting  
5 that I could be a millwright.

6 Downs: Where a punch press was...

7 Edwards: A punch press I thought I could run.

8 Downs: (inaudible) could keep your fingers crossed. So  
9 then...and then they rejected you, you just went away, or were  
10 there security people to see you got away?

11 Edwards: No.

12 Downs: You just went off. Then Walter was at the Ford  
13 local and then from there, how did he get into the westside  
14 local?

15 Edwards: Well, for a time the westside local claimed  
16 hegemony over the Ford unit.

17 Downs: Oh, I see. The westside local had hegemony over  
18 (inaudible)

19 Edwards: Everything on the west side and the (inaudible)

20 Downs: The west side of Detroit.

21 Edwards: Yeah.

22 Downs: Which is a pretty big area.

23 Edwards: That's a damn big area. It could encompass the  
24 whole Rouge plant.

25 Downs: Rouge plant, Cadillac, Turnsted , Kelsey-Hayes, you  
26 name it (inaudible). That was 174?

27 Edwards: Walter never was backward in ambition.

1           Downs: Now, you had met Walter at Wayne, when you were  
2 working for the SLID, was that...

3           Edwards: Right.

4           Downs: We went over that. Then when did you next see him

5           Edwards: Well, he was certainly around the Kelsey-Hayes  
6 strike and I presume I was in contact with him. Vic was in  
7 Kelsey-Hayes, although on a different shift. But we...I'm sure  
8 I was around that 35th and Michigan office quite a bit.

9           Downs: Then when you were working at \$15 a week, that was  
10 signed by the International Representative, Homer Martin and  
11 George Addes was the Secretary of the Treasury, is that correct?  
12 Addes and Reuther were the two leaders of the two big factions.  
13 I think that's pretty well...

14          Edwards: Martin, Addes and Reuther, each ultimately was  
15 the head of a faction in the union.

16          Downs: Then you sided with Walter. Did you work directly  
17 for... Who did you work for directly when you were  
18 International Rep.? On organizing these plants, was it...did  
19 you do it on your own, or were you...?

20          Edwards: I don't think that there was rather...a very well  
21 defined line of authority, but I agree that I  
22 worked for the union and that Walter was the closest person to  
23 somebody I recognized as a leader.

24          Downs: Gus Scholle, when did you get to know him?

25          Edwards: Not for some time there after...

26          Downs: I remember Gus told me there would be...he was  
27 working for the CIO, Alan Haywood at that time and there would

1 be a phone call or so many people were sitting down, they wanted  
2 and I think he said that there was a hundred or under a thousand  
3 they just weren't able to bother. I mean it's. Am I?

4 Edwards: It was a thing<sup>that</sup>/mushroomed and people would call  
5 up and say we are on strike. Come organize us. That's what  
6 happened in Yale town situation. Which was where I was involved  
7 in organizing. I was sent, I guess by Walter to respond to one  
8 of those calls "We are on strike" and we distributed  
9 application cards and signed up members and organized the  
10 strike. It went on for sometime.

11 Downs: Was that a sit down strike?

12 Edwards: Yes.

13 Downs: And they stayed in the plant and the police tried  
14 to get them out.

15 Edwards: Yes . They...some...let's see, the big... There  
16 were by then, some big (inaudible) plants on strike. The Flint  
17 plants were organized. They were big General Motors plants.  
18 Particularly plant four. Murphy was Governor of Michigan at the  
19 time and there was...General Motors had organized a force of  
20 supervision with a view toward ousting the strikers from plant  
21 four in Flint. This got to be a very tense situation and Murphy  
22 sent in the National Guard and they took up positions around  
23 plant four, as I recall. Then <sup>Murphy</sup> convened negotiations between  
24 General Motors and the union and some sort of agreement was  
25 arrived at whereby it was agreed that the workers would leave  
26 the plant and production would be resumed and negotiations would  
27 open on contractual matters. Lewis had sent a couple of



1 ...sent a couple of people to Flint, as I  
2 recall the matter. One of them was...I think one of them was  
3 Brophy and I'm trying to remember the other one... Geomer  
4 Adolf Geomer. Geomer was a former mine worker. Geomer was  
5 pretty timid for a former mine worker, as I recall him. We  
6 decided that there should be, and I expect that Walter was a  
7 major figure in the decision, but I was involved in it also.  
8 That there should be a demonstration in Cadillac Square to show  
9 the strength that the union had. This was treated in the press  
10 as being a threat of a mass riot and in fact thousands upon  
11 thousands of people gathered in Cadillac Square and there was  
12 no problem at all, and of course the meeting was a series of  
13 speeches. I don't remember who all talked, but I suppose that  
14 everybody that was in some leadership position did. I certainly  
15 talked at one of those Cadillac Square meetings. I don't  
16 remember if it was the one that I'm talking about now, or  
17 another one.

18 Downs: Now, when you were the organizer for the UAW, did  
19 you have, what we would now call, staff meetings, or were you  
20 just moving so fast that...the kind of organization taking place  
21 within the people working for the union.

22 Edwards: I would say that it was about as...it might have  
23 seemed to the opposition that it was well organized, but we knew  
24 it wasn't.

25 Downs: When you were organizing there you  
26 were assigned to the west side ~~(Inaudible)~~ everything west of  
27 Woodward is that it.

1 Edwards: Right.

2 Downs: That is a pretty big area. Now, were you an  
3 officer, or did you get elected to any position at the westside  
4 local or were you simply a staff person?

5 Edwards: I was a staff person.

6 Downs: Is that right. Then did you ever...

7 [end side 3]

8 Edwards (Peg): We were married in April of 1939. I  
9 remember... and George was a staff organizer for the UAW,  
10 assigned to the WPA and Welfare Department. He worked for WPA  
11 workers and Welfare and that's how he came to the attention to  
12 the Mayor. But, I can remember a meeting at our house with  
13 Walter and I believe George Young and Mike Manning. George  
14 wanted very much to be president of westside local. I think  
15 that is the job he wanted most in life that he didn't get.  
16 Walter ended the meeting by saying, "Mike, you will become  
17 president of the westside local. George Edwards, you will be an  
18 organizer for the WPA, and Welfare Department" and George Young he  
19 gave another position. I don't happen to remember what. That  
20 was a very emotional meeting for both of us.

21 Downs: Now, Peg, what was Walter's position?

22 Edwards (Peg): Walter was president of westside local, but  
23 he was moving on into the...he was moving out of the westside  
24 local and into the national...into the UAW international.

25 Downs: To be on the executive board or president?

26 Edwards (Peg): I think so. I think he just got elected  
27 on the executive board.

Edwards: He was already on the executive board.

1           Downs: And then at that time he was in a position to name  
2 his successor, is that it?

3           Edwards (Peg): Isn't that right, George.

4           Edwards: Well...

5           Edwards (Peg): He did name his successor.

6           Edwards: Oh, he did!

7           Edwards (Peg): And his successor lived with us you know.

8           Downs: Mike Manning.

9           Edwards: Mike Manning. He boarded with us.

10          - Downs: Remember this is an aside. Jack Mc Elhone , I know  
11 both of you knew him very well, but Jack somehow or other didn't  
12 think too much of Mike Manning and he would write speeches for  
13 him and then shuffle the papers so that there seemed to be a  
14 continuity and wasn't. I mean Jack had that kind of sense of  
15 humor if you remember.

16          Edwards (Peg): Well, Mike was not the worlds brightest.  
17 He was one of the worlds nicest.

18          Edwards: He was a very decent man

19          Edwards (Peg): A very decent human being. It appeared to  
20 me that Walter was jealous of George and did not want him to go  
21 up in the UAW. By this time George was already in law school  
22 and already made the decision that he was going to move out of  
23 the UAW, but he wouldn't have if he could have had the westside  
24 local.

25          Downs: So there was not a caucus that made the decision,  
26 there wasn't a, like later on you'd have a caucus...

27          Edwards (Peg): Certainly didn't appear to me, I mean, he

1 was in our living room saying who would do what.

2 Downs: And then Walter did go on and get elected to the  
3 executive board, Mike Manning was...

4 Edwards (Peg): He probably was on the executive board in  
5 '39

6 Downs: And then Mike was president of the westside local.

7 Edwards (Peg): For a long time.

8 Downs: George, you were head of what. The WPA and  
9 Welfare.

10 Edwards: Yeah.

11 Downs: And that was...Ethel Polk was your secretary at  
12 that?

13 Edwards: She was the only employee of that department.

14 Downs: Did you work out of Hoffman Building?

15 Edwards: Yeah, out of the Hoffman Building.

16 Downs: Where was the UAW headquarters at that time.

17 Edwards (Peg): Hoffman Building.

18 Edwards: I think it was the Hoffman Building

19 Downs: And the westside local headquarters, where was  
20 that?

21 Edwards (Peg): On Mayberry.

22 Edwards: Now, when did we get to Mayberry?

23 Edwards (Peg): Well, I don't know, but I always went to  
24 meetings on Mayberry. I never went to the other building.

25 Downs: And then there was that.

26 Edwards: We bought a building at Mayberry/Grand, which had  
27 been a former lodge.

1           Downs: Was that the one that had the mural that was never  
2 completed of the good guys and the bad guys. It had John  
3 (inaudible) on one side and Henry Ford on the other and then  
4 switched...am I...was that, that building.

5           Edwards (Peg): I don't know, I don't remember.

6           Edwards: I don't remember that either.

7           Downs: Yeah. Did Walter give any reason why he wanted  
8 Mike to be president?

9           Edwards (Peg): He didn't have to.

10          Downs: He didn't have to, yeah. So then you went, you  
11 were in law school and you also were head of the WPA and  
12 Welfare.

13          Edwards (Peg): And he was making an impression on the  
14 Mayor, who was Edward Jeffries.

15          Downs: How did you happen to know the mayor?

16          Edwards: Well, let's see, I appeared before the council  
17 dealing with welfare problems for the WPA and welfare department  
18 and Ed Jeffries, who was then mayor, became very friendly toward  
19 me and principally because he and I argued with considerable  
20 vehemence about what the city should be doing in relation to  
21 these things. He called me down, he sent word to me somehow, I  
22 don't remember how, but he sent word to me that he wanted to see  
23 me. There was a welfare commission, I think, at that time.  
24 When I received word that he wanted to see me, I thought he was  
25 going to put me on this welfare commission, which would have  
26 been an unpaid job. In place of that, he offered me a choice of  
27 several full-time jobs. Secretary of the Lighting Commission  
was one and Secretary of the Housing Commission was another, and

1 he may have offered...there may have been still a third  
2 alternative. Well, I didn't want to be Secretary of the  
3 Lighting Commission, but the Housing Commission was very  
4 interesting because there was...nationwide there was a big  
5 housing, public housing program in the works. And I opted for  
6 Secretary of the Housing Commission. I worked for several  
7 years in that slot.

8 Downs: That was a full-time position.

9 Edwards: That was a full-time position.

10 - Downs: You worked directly in line with the Mayor on that.

11

12 Edwards: You see the Mayor designated members of the  
13 Commission and the Commission was the authoritative body in  
14 relation to running the...running the housing program. And as  
15 Director's Secretary of that program, I was the executive.

16 <sup>no</sup> Downs: Now, you were still...at that time you still had  
17 your membership in the westside local, is that correct.

18 Edwards: Yeah.

19 Downs: And were you an organizer for the UAW?

20 Edwards: Yes, I...well, I just don't honestly recall. I  
21 had several small plants that looked to me and Kelsey-Hayes for  
22 that matter, it looked to me to handle negotiations and I do not  
23 recall specifically when those duties tapered off and I became  
24 exclusively concerned with the housing commission.

25 Downs: Then as far as head of the UAW, Welfare and WPA  
26 Department. Is that what it is called?

27 Edwards: Yeah.

1           Downs:    Then you, I assume you didn't continue that.  
2 Then who replaced you on that? Do you remember, or was there a  
3 replacement?

4           Edwards: No I don't. Yes! It was Charles Edgecomb.

5           Downs:    Then did you talk with Walter or the UAW about  
6 making that shift, or was it just one you had made up on your  
7 own?

8           Edwards: I don't think that I talked to Walter about  
9 making the shift.

10          Downs:    Then how long did you stay as Secretary of the  
11 Housing Commission?

12          Edwards (Peg): Until he was first elected (inaudible)...on  
13 the council.

14          Downs:    Then from there, that's what I want to get into.  
15 Then at what time did you run for the Council?

16          Edwards: Well, the Mayor had a big hand in that. He, in  
17 effect, suggested to me. Not in effect. He suggested to me  
18 that I run for council. Then that was kind of a shocking  
19 thought. Thought it over and thought well with Jeffries backing  
20 me, which he promised to do, I thought I had a shot at it and we  
21 were married by then.

22          Edwards (Peg): Oh, yes. And the UAW endorsed the three  
23 Aces of Labor. Charles Diggs, Stanley Novak and George Edwards.  
24 That was the labor ticket. However, apparently the powers that  
25 be assumed that there would be a labor person on the Council.  
26 Jeffries may have been able to convince them, I don't know who,  
27 but the Civic Searchlight endorsed George. As did the papers.

1 They did not endorse all of the three Aces of Labor.  
2 Edwards: They didn't endorse the other two aces.  
3 Edwards (Peg): And George ran 17th in the primaries.  
4 Downs: How many were to be nominated. (18)  
5 Edwards: Well, there were three to be...oh, how many to be  
6 elected.  
7 Downs: How many elected, was that nine?  
8 Edwards (Peg): Nine elected!  
9 Edwards: Nine to be elected. And I ran 17th in the  
10 primary.  
11 Downs: You had to be the first 18 to be nominated.  
12 Edwards (Peg): Yes. I could have been a hundred running.  
13 There were a lot.  
14 Edwards: A lot of people running.  
15 Downs: Then did you get elected that time?  
16 Edwards: We looked at...that was very discouraging to me.  
17 Downs: 17th.  
18 Edwards: To run 17th.  
19 Downs: 17th out of 18 to be nominated.  
20 Edwards: To be nominated, yeah. And my first reaction, I  
21 know, was that one of intense discouragement and that is the end  
22 of that aspect of life. Then we, I guess, Peggy, I and others  
23 looked at...  
24 Edwards (Peg): Probably the Mayor. He was very much into  
25 your campaign.  
26 Edwards: ...looked at the people who were above me in the  
27 list and we saw that there was just one right after another of



1 people whom we felt absolutely, positively were not going to be  
2 elected because they had gotten there with a specific kind of  
3 group vote potential with the groups being very much less  
4 numerous in membership than the group that I could depend on for  
5 some substantial help. We decided to go for broke and run for  
6 it. And we did. And I was elected 7th.

7 Edwards (Peg): 7th or something like that. Close to 7,  
8 but not bottom.

9 Edwards: Not bottom.

10 - Downs: Then at that time in the general election, what all  
11 groups did you have support from?

12 Edwards: Well, for that race I had a wide community  
13 support. The newspapers, I think, had me on their slates. At  
14 least one of them did and maybe all of them did. I don't  
15 remember.

16 Downs: And the Mayor was still supporting you.

17 Edwards: The Mayor was definitely for me and made speeches  
18 for me and the UAW was for me and nobody was really fighting me.

19 Downs: How about Frank Martel and the AF of L.

20 Edwards: Ah. Martel was against me.

21 Downs: The concern of what, the CIO or just...

22 Edwards: Yes, they were not very happy about the  
23 ~~CIO-stuff.~~ *Handwritten scribble*

24 Downs: How about you and Frank <sup>Martel</sup> personally. How did you  
25 get along. Did you know him very well?

26 Edwards: We never got along particularly well. I think  
27 that relationship did not exist.

1           Downs:    So when you had labor support that was the UAW,  
2 the CIO, how about the building trades or do you remember how  
3 they (inaudible).

4           Edwards:  I think I had one building trades local.

5           Edwards (Peg):  We had great black support.

6           Edwards:  A lot of black support.

7           Edwards (Peg):  Great Jewish support.

8           Edwards:  Yeah, that's true.  Now, how did I get the black  
9 support.

10          - Edwards (Peg):  I just saw in a book...  Well, you got it  
11 because in the Housing Commission you had Sojourner Truth...

12          Edwards:  Oh yeah.  I had fought to keep...there had been a  
13 terrific hassle in the Housing Commission...

14          Downs:  Did you know Bette wrote her masters degree on  
15 Sojourner Truth?

16          Edwards:  Who?

17          Downs:  Bette.

18          Edwards:  Oh, I didn't know that.

19          Downs:  Yeah, she just gave it to someone the other day.  
20 Jim, Jim got one and somebody else doing some research.  When  
21 she comes in we'll ask her about that.  So the Sojourner  
22 Truth...

23          Edwards:  That was a big issue.

24          Downs:  ...gave you support in the black community.  Now,  
25 did it hurt you in the Polish community?

26          Edwards:  Yeah sure.

27          Edwards (Peg):  No.  I don't think it did.

1 Edwards: Yeah, it did.

2 Edwards (Peg): Well, the labor movement supported you. At  
3 that time...

4 Edwards: And the Poles were in the labor movement.

5 Edwards (Peg): Labor movement. Strong in the labor  
6 movement.

7 Downs: Then since the three Aces of Labor, Novak and Diggs  
8 didn't make the primary, you were the only one from the original  
9 labor slate that got through this, so you had the labor, the  
10 black, the Jewish, the Mayor, at least one of the newspapers,  
11 and so on. Had gone on. So that got you on. And you were  
12 still in law school?

13 Edwards: Uh, I was taking...I took classes in law school,  
14 I think longer than anybody known to man, woman or child. It  
15 seems to me that the first law school class I took, I took at  
16 Wayne University, and I don't remember what it was, then I got  
17 to where I was taking law school classes at 8 o'clock in the  
18 morning. At 8 o'clock in the evening at Detroit College of Law.  
19 I would...I was in the council and I would take 8 o'clock class  
20 and practically run from the class to the  
21 council. I remember that I followed the practice in my law  
22 school days of...oh, let me talk to you about getting in to law  
23 school. I went to apply at DCL, for entry into Detroit College  
24 law school. There was a dean, an elderly man named Kruschbalm, I  
25 believe, and he said to me, "Now, this is a little bothersome.  
26 As I understand it, you are an organizer for the United  
27 Automobile Workers, are you not." I said yes and he said,  
"How is that going to be consistent with the impartiality that

1 you should bring to the practice of law." Well, I said, "Dean,  
2 I negotiate with a half a dozen people who are in your law  
3 school and who work for the personnel offices of automobile  
4 corporations, and Dean, I can be fully unprejudiced as those  
5 fellows are." "Well," he said, "you know, I never thought of it  
6 that way." I never thought of it that way. "Well, alright."  
7 and he signed my cards.

8 Downs: And he had apparently never thought of it that way.

9 Edwards: He had never thought of it that way.

10 - Edwards: Then I got into the business of trying to...after  
11 getting into the law school, I had to do the work. By then we  
12 had one child already?

13 Edwards (Peg): Well, not at the very beginning of our  
14 marriage, but after a year.

15 Edwards: I appreciate that <sup>not</sup> from the very beginning.

16 Edwards (Peg): After a year we had a child and you were  
17 still in law school.

18 Edwards: I was still in law school.

19 Edwards (Peg): You were in law school, you were...

20 Downs: Now, as a council<sup>man</sup> was it a full-time job?

21 Edwards (Peg): No. Never has been.

22 Edwards: Never was a full-time job.

23 Downs: So then you were in law school, council...

24 Edwards (Peg): He was a civilian defense director for  
25 Detroit, he was working a shift in the factory.

26 Downs: In which factory?

27 Edwards: Timkin Detroit Axel. But that was a little

1 bit later.

2 Downs: But, the Housing Commission was a full-time job?

3 Edwards: The Housing Commission was a full-time job.

4 Edwards (Peg): More than a full-time job.

5 Edwards: Yes, it was more than a full-time job.

6 Edwards (Peg): George made \$7,000 a year and he had to  
7 take a cut to go on the council.

8 Downs: Bette, you wrote your masters on the Soujourner  
9 Truth. Is that correct?

10 - Downs (Bette): Well, it was on the housing policies of the  
11 Detroit Housing Commission, which included the...

12 Downs: The Soujourner Truth. We discussed that while you  
13 were in the other room.

14 Edwards: What did you have to say about me?

15 Downs (Bette): Very good things. I'll send you a copy of  
16 it if you would like?

17 Edwards: I would love to see it.

18

19 Downs (Bette): Jim asked for a copy of it so we sent it to  
20 him.

21 (Inaudible)

22 Downs: No, we'll xerox one at the office.

23 Edwards: I'm thinking that there is more to that.

24 Downs: Let's just take a minute. Where we are George  
25 (inaudible) I think at Turnsted.

26 Edwards: Never Turnsted.

27 Downs: Oh, never Turnsted. You were working at

1 Timkin...you're working...you're really doing three things.  
2 You're working at Timkin, you're on the council, really four,  
3 civilian defense, and going to law school.

4 Edwards: Yeah.

5 Downs: Then I suppose at that time were you active in the  
6 UAW, or were you primary dealing in the council and law school.

7 Edwards: I was busy.

8 Downs: You were busy.

9 Edwards: I was not active in the UAW. I don't mean that I  
10 was-totally uninterested in them, but I just...

11 Downs: Now, was there a liaison between the, say the CIO  
12 council or the UAW and the City Council. The way, oh I'd  
13 suppose now you'd call it lobbying, the way I worked for Gus  
14 Scholle and Gus would had a liaison with the legislatures in  
15 Lansing. Was there that kind of thing at the City Council  
16 level? Was it each person kind of going off on his/her own?

17 Edwards: I'm going to pick it up where I am in the  
18 council. The United States has joined the conflict in Europe,  
19 in WW II, and I know that I'm likely to be called and I start  
20 in to try to leave some money for my bride and I can't remember  
21 whether you had...at least one child and maybe another one on  
22 the way.

23 Edwards (Peg): And he would not have had to go.

24 Downs: Could have been exempt because of being on the  
25 council.

26 Edwards (Peg): And children.

27 Downs: And children.

1 Edwards (Peg): Our friends didn't go.

2 Edwards: Well, that's not my memory of the matter. I  
3 might have been able to. I could have asked for an exemption on  
4 the basis of the civil defense.

5 Downs: We are now up to the point where you are about to  
6 enter WW II, so why don't you start with that. Now on the  
7 council and head of civilian defense and working in the plant  
8 and going to law school and married.

9 Edwards: Yeah. I was reasonably busy. I remember coming  
10 home one night from the shop. I got home about...in that period  
11 I got home about 10 or 11:00, didn't I?

12 Edwards (Peg): 11:00.

13 Edwards: 11:00. And the house was full. Peggy was having  
14 a meeting. I don't, now, remember what the meeting was about.  
15 but...

16 Edwards (Peg): (Inaudible) Margaret Mead was there.

17 Edwards: Margaret Mead was there.

18 Edwards (Peg): You heard her say that she could tell a  
19 fascist by his face.

20 Downs: Oh, come on now.

21 Edwards (Peg): Yes, she did.

22 Edwards: She did.

23 Edwards (Peg): George walked right up the stairs, young  
24 George (Andy), had been coming down the stairs about once every  
25 15 minutes. I had been writing these Merrill Palmer reports  
26 saying that he slept from 7-7. About every 15 minutes he would  
27 come down the stairs and he would drink out of their beer

1 glasses and he would in general...

2 Downs: How old was he?

3 Edwards (Peg): Oh, three, two and a half.

4 Edwards: Two and a half.

5 Downs: Margaret Mead said she could tell a fascist by the  
6 look in his face. The famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead?

7 Edwards: That's absolutely the fact.

8 Edwards (Peg): And so George went up and grabbed Andy and  
9 put him in bed with him and the two of them went to sleep.

10 Downs: I would call that good judgement.

11 Edwards: I did think that was one of the...

12 Downs: Did anyone challenge Margaret Mead on that  
13 statement?

14 Edwards (Peg): Oh no.

15 Downs: Because she was Margaret Mead.

16 Edwards: Yes

17 Downs: That is not what I was taught is the scientific  
18 method in anthropology 101. Now I've digressed. No, this isn't  
19 a digression. These are the little tidbits...

20 Edwards (Peg): That no one else knew. Sally Brown was  
21 in the room that night.

22 Downs: (Inaudible) Sally Brown was there?

23 Downs (Bette): She was a friend of Margaret Mead.

24 Downs: She doesn't remember that statement?

25 Edwards (Peg): I don't know whether she remembers that  
26 statement.

27 Downs: I'll ask her.

Downs (Bette): Margaret Mead in her last (inaudible) in



1 New York.

2 Edwards: That happens. That was a (inaudible) episode.  
3 This period Hester and Shelly Westerman were among our best  
4 friends.

5 Downs: Oh, Hester Westerman that was a social worker.

6 Edwards (Peg): Yes. She worked with George and she worked  
7 with the WPA workers and our other best friends lived in the  
8 same building and were Flo and Frank Wynn.

9 Downs: (Inaudible) was Joe Kawolski. He had Hester  
10 Westerman in on training programs.

11 Edwards: Well, that Hester Westerman was faithful person  
12 her husband was a fine human being, but Hester had a lot of  
13 stuff. Well, we have got to the point...

14 Edwards (Peg): You were leaving for the army.

15 Edwards: ...where the army gets interested in me and I am  
16 offered a chance to ask for a deferment and I did not. Time  
17 went by and I was notified to appear at the induction center in  
18 Chicago. I went to Chicago and from there I went south to...

19 Edwards (Peg): Macon

20 Edwards: ...Macon, Georgia. I can't remember the name of  
21 the camp, but it was an infantry training camp.

22 Edwards (Peg): Wheeler.

23 Edwards: Wheeler. This was just before the the start.  
24 This was just before the Battle of the Bulge. I was in a  
25 training cycle and developed a lot of good friends in my unit  
26 and I became acting corporal or something like that. My  
27 platoon, I became guide for my platoon, which means I set the

1                   We were promised...oh, the officer commanding our  
2 battalion announced that there would be a reward for the platoon  
3 which performed best in drill on a particular day. My platoon  
4 won. The result of that was that...the reward was that all the  
5 rest of the battalions did close order drill and we were allowed  
6 to play football. The net result of that was that I made a  
7 tackle on a fellow who was coming through the line and pulled  
8 this finger back until it touched there and snapped. And I  
9 ended up in the base hospital for three long months. Three long  
10 months.

11               Edwards (Peg): Weeks.

12               Edwards: Weeks?

13               Edwards (Peg): That's a long time to be in a hospital for  
14 a finger. In the meantime Jim was born, he couldn't come  
15 home.

16               Edwards: They wouldn't let me come home. It was weeks  
17 rather than months? Seemed like months.

18               Edwards (Peg): I'm sure it did.

19               Downs: I'm sure it would seem like...

20               Edwards (Peg): (Inaudible) years.

21               Downs: George, we could be in someplace for three weeks  
22 and it would seem like three years.

23               Edwards (Peg): Well, in the meantime they...your group  
24 moved out.

25               Edwards: Our group moved out. All these fellows I had  
26 trained with went right into Europe and right into the Battle of  
27 the Bulge, and they were decimated. And I mean I...I had at

1 least three or four quite close friends in that group and I  
2 tried to write and find them after the war was over and every  
3 one of them had been killed. Every one of them. So, that  
4 hospitalization worked to my considerable advantage as far as  
5 longevity is concerned. I was, let's see, I was cadred for a  
6 time at Wheeler and then I...it was suggested to me by the  
7 officer who was closest who was my, our immediate superior that  
8 I apply for officer candidate school. So I did apply for  
9 officer candidate school and after quite a bit of fussing around  
10 about my past activities they had a board hearing and they  
11 decided that I should go to OCS. I went to OCS in Texas.

12 Edwards (Peg): No, another Georgia camp I think,  
13 Bennington?

14 Edwards: Bennington, Fort Bennington

15 Edwards (Peg): Benning, Benning School for Boys.

16 Edwards: Benning School for Boys. Fort Benning.

17 Edwards (Peg): No, what town was that, Bette?

18 Downs (Bette): It seems to me that's all you ever used.  
19 Maybe that's the town.

20 Edwards: Fort Benning.

21 Edwards (Peg): The other was Macon, Georgia.

22 Edwards: So I completed (inaudible) that was the split lip  
23 episode, wasn't it?

24 Edwards (Peg): That's where you left to take your law  
25 exam.

26 Edwards: I had a applied for leave at a time when I was  
27 doing nothing, literally. The unit was doing nothing and I was

1 doing nothing. To come back to Detroit to see my newborn son.

2 Edwards (Peg): Well, you had a letter from Dick Sullivan.

3 Edwards: Telling me that Dick Sullivan had written me, he  
4 had been in law school.

5 Edwards (Peg): He was the head of Transportation in  
6 Detroit, or something like that, the (inaudible) he was in the  
7 local government.

8 Edwards: Jeffries clan and he had written me at...

9 Edwards (Peg): That they would let people take the exam  
10 (inaudible).

11 Edwards: They had passed a statute in Michigan that said  
12 if you had gotten within three courses of completion of law  
13 school, that under a wartime statute passed by the  
14 legislature, you could take the bar examination if became a  
15 lawyer...or if you passed it you could practice. So, I applied  
16 for that. For leave for that purpose. And the first sergeant  
17 who had laughed at me about coming home to see my firstborn and  
18 had said literally, "A father is essential to the laying of the  
19 keel, but not of the launching of the ship." This time, now it  
20 was quite different in his attitude toward my taking the bar  
21 exam. He said, "Bar exam, why that's important." And he said,  
22 "Well, we'll have to see what we can do about that." He said,  
23 "You know I took a one course in law school, I was thinking  
24 about law school. I'll see what I can do." I then wrote my  
25 father in Dallas and said that I might have a chance to take the  
26 bar exam and please get me a copy of Ballentine's Bar Review and  
27 ship it airmail first class. Well, when it arrived we were just

1 about to go out on bivouac for that cycle and I threw the  
2 Ballentine in my footlocker and life went on and we went out on  
3 bivouac. It had gotten very close to the date and I had given  
4 up any hope, but I had the Ballentine there. We were out on the  
5 second week of bivouac, I think and I was sound asleep with a  
6 black officer candidate named Jesse Egleton and the water truck  
7 driver came around sometime around midnight and woke me up and I  
8 said, "What do you want?" He said, "I don't know. The first  
9 sergeant says to bring you into camp." I said, "What for?" He  
10 said, "I don't know. Roll your pack, you're going into camp."  
11 So I stripped off my shelter half, still raining hard, draped it  
12 over Jesse Egelton and got on the water truck and we went into,  
13 I guess that was Macon. He had figured that thing out so that I  
14 could get the train that left sometime around 1 o'clock in the  
15 morning and would get into Detroit in time to take the bar exam.  
16 I got to Detroit, got off the train saw Peggy, saw George. I  
17 maybe Jim was born then, I guess that Jim had been born by then.  
18 I slept one night at home, drove to Lansing the next day, wrote  
19 the bar exam. I'm not sure I didn't write three days on the bar  
20 exam. I think I did. Drove back to Detroit. Got on the train.  
21 Reported for duty. Just at 6 A.M., just shy of exceeding a  
22 week, which would have meant that I would have had to repeat a  
23 whole cycle, which I hardly wanted to do. I passed the bar  
24 exam. I learned that sometime considerably later. Years went  
25 by and I got very tired of explaining why my curriculum vitae  
26 said that I did not have...omitted any law degree. I finally  
27 decided to take three additional courses and get my law degree.

1 I took, I don't remember exactly how it went, but I took a  
2 course at night and a course in the morning and finally I  
3 got... Oh, wait a minute. I didn't...I couldn't... They  
4 wouldn't let me take the...they wouldn't let me take the bar  
5 exam without attending classes and I couldn't attend classes  
6 because of what I was doing by then. Which I guess was... Oh  
7 I'd been elected president of the City Council.

8 Edwards (Peg): I don't know where you are. I have been  
9 out of the room.

10 - Edwards: Yeah. I am back...

11 Downs: He had been elected president of the City Council  
12 while...

13 Edwards: While I was in the service.

14 Downs: ...in service. And you were then in the  
15 Philippines.

16 Edwards (Peg): And I ran the campaign.

17 Edwards: And Peggy ran the campaign. The best campaign I  
18 ever ran and most successful one. Ran way up at the top.

19 Edwards (Peg): (inaudible) Johnny Penczak.

20 Edwards: Johnny Penczak and Peg ran the campaign.

21 Downs: We didn't get you from the getting back from the  
22 bar exam. How did you go to the Philippines and not to the  
23 Bulge?

24 Edwards: Not to the Bulge?

25 Downs: After the three weeks in the hospital then how did  
26 you get to the...

27 Edwards: The reason I didn't go to the Bulge was because

1 of the broken finger.

2 Downs: Then how did you get to the Philippines?

3 Edwards (Peg): He went to Texas to Camp Maxey.

4 Edwards: Went to Texas to Camp Maxey, went through training  
5 cycles. Became an officer, a second lieutenant.

6 Edwards (Peg): Became that at Bennington, but I don't know  
7 why you went to Maxey. That's just where you were assigned.

8 Edwards: Well, I was assigned to do training.

9 Edwards (Peg): Training of other people.

10 Edwards: Training of other people.

11 Edwards (Peg): And the war ended in Europe.

12 Edwards: And my wife went to Dallas to stay for part of  
13 the time while I was in Texas. She would ride a bus to see me  
14 on weekends.

15 Edwards (Peg): In a misnamed place called Paris, Texas.

16 Edwards: And it had a sign on the bus saying black...

17 Edwards (Peg): A sign in the town of Greenville.

18 Edwards: The sign over the town of Greenville, Texas  
19 saying, "The blackest land, the whitest people" and Peggy  
20 couldn't avoid sputtering every time she went underneath that.

21 Edwards (Peg): George kept saying I was not going to make  
22 it through there.

23 Edwards: I kept telling her she better shut up when she  
24 came to visit me. I'd go visit her in Dallas when I could get  
25 leave and when I couldn't get leave she'd come to Paris, Texas  
26 to see me.

27 Edwards (Peg): You were assigned from Paris, Texas to the

1 Pacifictheatre. War was still going on.

2 Edwards: To go out to the war in the Pacific. And I  
3 finally made it on to a boat and the boat went up by the  
4 Aleutian Islands which struck me as a hell of a strange way to  
5 get to the South Pacific. But, finally came back down and  
6 landed me in Manila. In Manila the war had ended by then and  
7 they sent me in to see an officer who was in charge of making  
8 assignments and he offered me various choices. Oh, he read  
9 through my, whatever we called them, the record...my records and  
10 he -said, "Why, why you're a lawyer." I said, "Yes." He said,  
11 "What are you doing in the infantry?" I said, "Well, it was  
12 very simple, I just held up my hand and swore/ I got to <sup>to obey and</sup> be an  
13 infantryman. "Well," he said, "we'll have to find something for  
14 you. How would you like to be an officer in the Military  
15 Police." I said something like, "God forbid." and he went  
16 through several other things and I said, "Well, I'm not  
17 enthusiastic about any of them." He said, "Well, what about war  
18 crimes? They are building up a contingent of lawyers to deal  
19 with war crimes in the Philippines." I said, "That's for me."  
20 So, then I served in war crimes trials. There were some very  
21 interesting developments there.

22 [end side 5]

23 Downs: This is tape three, side six. George, we just had  
24 you in the Philippines and you were going to be with the section  
25 dealing with war crimes, so let's take it from there. The  
26 fellow found out that you were an attorney and an officer and  
27 wanted to know why you were in the infantry and <sup>he</sup> was offering you



1 different jobs.

2 Edwards: (~~inaudible~~) it was easy. No sweat at all. I  
3 just did what they told me to. ~~Saluted and went about my~~  
4 ~~business.~~ He said, "Well, we ought to be able to find something  
5 for you to do since you're a lawyer. How would you like to be  
6 in the M.P's and I said, "God forbid" or something similar  
7 thereto." "Well," he said, "then how about war crimes?" "Oh," I  
8 said, "that's right down my alley." Now that one I could work  
9 on. So I ended up in Manila in a burned out department store  
10 building, sleeping on a cot on...in a building that was all just  
11 empty concrete slabs. We got going to try to find out what had  
12 happened in the Philippines that represented war crimes. Well,  
13 turns out that a hell of a lot happened. Almost nobody in  
14 this country knows anything about it because there was so much  
15 else going on, nobody was paying much attention. The people who  
16 were involved in investigating the war crime situation sent  
17 people like me out to the scene of these alleged war crimes. To  
18 see if we could find out what had indeed happened. I didn't  
19 know anything about this. I didn't know whether there was going  
20 to be anything there and I was highly skeptical about it, to be  
21 frank about the matter. But, what the Japs had done was  
22 really gross. In the town of Laguna De Bay, I believe, they  
23 had...all the people had heard that the Japs were coming and  
24 they had gathered in a church thinking that the Japanese would  
25 respect the church. In point of fact the <sup>Japanese</sup> poured gasoline on  
26 the church and burned it down with the people inside it and shot  
27 those that ran out of the church. They crucified a couple of

1 priests.

2 Downs: By crucified, do you mean in the in the biblical  
3 crucifixion sense?

4 Edwards: Yes. Then there was the commander General  
5 Fugashigi and the person immediately in charge of the events,  
6 was lieutenant, I know his name was Kanishi (?), and I think he  
7 was a lieutenant. The Court tried them. We presented the evidence.  
8 I helped organize the  
9 evidence for the prosecution, there was a lawyer presenting it  
10 to the court and they were <sup>both</sup> found guilty and they were ordered to  
11 be shot. Both Kanishi and Fugashigi greeted this with joy  
12 because they had thought they were going to hung. Being <sup>hung</sup> was a  
13 disgrace and being shot was a military ending.

14 Downs: And this was the United States military court.

15 Edwards: United States military court.

16 Downs: Was the theory the same as the Nuremberg trial, or  
17 what.

18 Edwards: It wasn't any better than. It probably was about  
19 the same.

20 Downs: And being shot was a military honor.

21 Edwards: That's the way the recipients of the sentence  
22 treated the matter.

23 Downs: I had never heard that story before.

24 Edwards: Nobody paid much attention to that aspect of WW  
25 II. The massacre at Malmadey where pris<sup>were</sup>oners/ killed in  
26 Europe. It was the same sort of thing.

27 Downs: The difference here was that these people had gone

1 into a church for sanctuary.

2 Edwards: Maybe a little worse,

3 The basic underlying  
4 message.

5 Downs: How <sup>long</sup> did you work on the war crimes? Was it weeks  
6 or months? When did you come back?

7 Edwards: At some point I was trying dig out of Peggy's  
8 book how long I was actually on the island.

9 Downs: You came back...

10 Edwards (Peg): We found that out last night.

11 Downs: You came back from the Philippines.

12 Edwards (Peg): Two years. In January and you left in  
13 January.

14 Downs: So you came back from the Philippines and then what  
15 did you do?

16 Edwards: I came back I had run for re-election for the  
17 Council.

18 Downs: That's when Peg got you elected president by, what  
19 the most votes?

20 Edwards: Peggy got the most votes for me and I was elected  
21 president of the Council and displaced a man for whom I had a  
22 great deal of respect, although he was as conservative as  
23 could be. His name was John Lodge. He had been  
24 president of the Council, I came back as the elected president  
25 of the Council.

26 Downs: Then how long. Let's see, then you're on the  
27 Council. Then what was the next.

1 Edwards (Peg): He ran for mayor.

2 Downs: Then we had the. That campaign I remembered  
3 because Gus Scholle assigned me...I asked to work with you on  
4 that campaign. That was, shall we say, an ill fated campaign,  
5 or what.

6 Edwards: Snake bit.

7 Downs: Snake bit.

8 Edwards: It wasn't meant to be. Years later someone at  
9 Gross Pointe (?) explained that...the next thing I ran for was  
10 juvenile court in Wayne county. In that campaign... No?

11 Edwards (Peg): No, you ran for mayor.

12 Downs: We have it. We talked about it.

13 Edwards (Peg): You're through with that.

14

15

16 Downs: In that campaign I remember the...

17 Edwards (Peg): We were going to put a black family in  
18 every neighborhood.

19 Edwards: Well, that was <sup>the opposition's</sup> slogan. If Edwards was elected  
20 there will be a black family in every block in the city of  
21 Detroit. How do you deal with that? You say I'm not going to  
22 put a black family in every...

23 Downs: We can laugh now, but it was not funny then.

24 Downs (Bette): One of the things I remember about that  
25 campaign was a photograph of you in jail during the Yale Towne

26 strike. That Floyd McGriff published in the Redford  
27 Record.

1 Edwards: Well, that was helpful, too.

2 Downs: Then there was the picture of you and some black  
3 ministers that was distributed all around the white northwest  
4 Detroit. I remember that. Than Frank Martel, as I remember,  
5 I'm the one doing the talking now, was afraid that if you were  
6 mayor some of that would hurt the AF of L. Is my memory right  
7 on that?

8 Edwards: Oh, yeah. He came out for several.

9 Downs: He was more against you, I think, than for Cobo  
10 (?), or was it some of each?

11 Edwards: Against... Oh, he came out for Cobo.

12 Downs: Yeah. He was concerned if you were mayor, why the  
13 CIO would take over the whole.

14 Edwards: Sure. That was a dandy affair. We lost in the  
15 primary. Before the election there were sort of straw polls  
16 taken and I was running way ahead and...

17 Downs: That's before the primary?

18 Edwards: Yeah, before the primary. Then Eugene Van Antwerp  
19 and Cobo and I were all running. Maybe there were other  
20 candidates for mayor.

21 Downs: Those were the three big ones I remember.

22 Edwards: I had thought that Van Antwerp was the most  
23 formidable of the opponents and sort of ran against him. It  
24 didn't turn out to be the case. The newspapers all  
25 switched to Cobo and they backed him lock, stock, and barrel.

26 Downs: The Free Press, also?

27 Edwards: Everybody. All the newspapers as far as I know.

1 Edwards (Peg): And Mennen Williams did not really give any  
2 support.

3 Edwards: (inaudible)

4 Downs: See, Mennen was governor then, wasn't he?

5 Edwards (Peg): He had just been elected, or was just  
6 running.

7 Downs: He was elected in '48 when Harry Truman was.

8 Edwards (Peg): That was '49

9 Edwards: That's '49

10 - Edwards (Peg): And George has been defeated, or George was  
11 running and he is not going to get anything. Hicks and Martha  
12 are very sure to get him out of it.

13 Downs: Keep <sup>Mennen</sup> out of it.

14 Edwards (Peg): And from their point of view it was very  
15 wise.

16 Downs: That's the time, I think that's the year we found  
17 the phony precinct delegate petitions by the teamsters and some  
18 of the others. I'm trying to think if that was later or before.

19 Edwards: No, it's not that.

20 Downs: That was a different time.

21 Edwards: That's later.

22 Downs: That was later.

23 Edwards: Yeah, that's later and that's in a gubernatorial  
24 campaign.

25 Downs: That's right, that was later. I'm trying to. You  
26 are the one who ran, not me. So then... And labor, Martel was  
27 opposed to you, Mennen Williams was pretty much neutral, Hicks

1 and Martha were neutral, is that it?

2 Edwards (Peg): That's true (?)

3 Downs: Yeah.

4 Edwards: I think that is pretty much true. 1949 was a  
5 disaster from...

6 Downs: Now, the UAW supported, but not, oh, I remember the  
7 slates (?) were put out for you very strongly.

8 Edwards: We certainly had, we had a campaign and there  
9 were a lot of people who fought bleed and died for me right down  
10 to the last ditch. Johnny Penczak was one of those. We had a  
11 young man who had driven me a lot during the campaign. The guy  
12 was awakened at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, when he had just  
13 got to sleep and he'd, I guess, had too much to drink and ran  
14 into a telephone pole and killed himself.

15 Downs: Oh, no.

16 Edwards: I had to go out and see his wife the next day, I  
17 guess. I don't know (inaudible)

18 Downs: Well, let's get on to the juvenile court. Now, did  
19 Mennen first appoint you, or did you first run for juvenile  
20 court?

21 Edwards: My recollection...

22 Edwards (Peg): He became active in the 13th congressional  
23 district.

24 Downs: You became very active in the 13th.

25 Edwards (Peg): And that was the first partisan thing he'd  
26 really ever been involved in.

27 Downs: Oh, that's interesting. Then the first time you

1 were active in the Democratic...the Council had been  
2 non-partisan.

3 Edwards: Non-partisan, yes.

4 Downs: Then the first active Democratic function was in  
5 the 13th congressional, is that correct?

6 Edwards: That's correct.

7 Edwards (Peg): That's when we were all building the party.

8 Downs: We were all building the party then. Then you were  
9 active there. Then did Mennen appoint you as juvenile court  
10 judge or did you run for it the first time. My recollection  
11 was...

12 Edwards (Peg): He appointed him.

13 Downs: That he appointed you and then you ran and easily  
14 won the election.

15 Edwards (Peg): Mennen appointed George three times.

16 Edwards: Yes, I think that's right.

17 Downs: What were the three times? The juvenile...

18 Edwards (Peg): The juvenile, circuit and supreme.

19 Edwards: Circuit and supereme court, yes .

20 Downs: Did you run for each one of those subsequently?

21 Edwards: Yes.

22 Downs: And you won each one.

23 Edwards: I think so. Yes, I know that I won in each  
24 election. And one of the quotes that I loved was a fellow from  
25 Grosse Pointe who explaining why he was voting me for juvenile  
26 court and opposed me for mayor, <sup>he</sup> said that "He would trust me  
27 with his children, but not with his tax dollars."



1           Downs: You ought to mention a few of the changes you made  
2 as the juvenile court judge.

3           Edwards:                 There were a lot. It was about as  
4 hostile an environment for children as I've ever seen. The  
5 first day I went in to take a look at the juvenile detention  
6 hall, a little kid                 , I don't know how old he was, but  
7 he couldn't have been very old...he might have been 7 or  
8 something like that. Anyhow, he was in the juvenile detention  
9 home and I was going through there and he came up and he grabbed  
10 hold of my two fingers on my right hand and he just hung on.  
11 Somebody started to take him away, and I said "no." He went with  
12 me everyplace I went. All the way through the day of looking at  
13 the juvenile court. (Inaudible) Now I've lost it. Maybe it'll  
14 come later, but it was an impressive experience because he was  
15 so young. Oh! I had said, "Son, what are you in here for?" and  
16 he said proudly                 "B and E'ing." I didn't know what B and E'ing  
17 was. That is breaking and entering. It turned out that he  
18 really had just, I took an interest in finding out who he was  
19 and what he was doing, just didn't have anybody and he had  
20 crawled into a vacant house and gone to sleep on the floor. He  
21 was in there for B and E'ing, a criminal. Then...

22           Edwards (Peg): You got the girls out of uniform.

23           Edwards: Oh, Yes. The girls...I went through the girls  
24 detention home and I saw the girls were in sort of uniforms.  
25 Some of them were in pink uniforms and some of them were in blue  
26 uniforms. I didn't go into this with any great degree of  
27 immediacy, but at some point I decided I just had to know why

1 pink and blue uniforms. So I asked this rather hard-boiled  
2 matron, who was in charge of the girls side of the juvenile  
3 detention home and she looked at me and said, "Why Judge you  
4 know what the answer to that is." I said, "I don't know what  
5 the answer is, and I want to know." "Well," she said, "the  
6 girls who are virgins have blue uniforms and the girls in pink  
7 uniforms are not virgins." I said, "Get rid of that, now!"

8 Edwards (Peg): All they did was go out and try to come  
9 back with a different color.

10 Edwards: When they, when the girls left the juvenile  
11 detention home they would lean out the...somehow or another they  
12 had some access at some point and the ones who had, had the blue  
13 uniforms, <sup>called back,</sup> "We'll have a pink one when we come back."

14 Downs: Now, George, I had heard that from you years ago  
15 and I told people and nobody would believe me. You just...

16 Edwards: That's just true.

17 Downs: How did that get started? How long and it been  
18 going on?

19 Edwards (Peg): I understand it got started...I don't want  
20 to say this on.

21 Downs: Let's go...

22 Edwards: Let's try to think through, Peg.

23 Downs: So, you changed that immediately. Had there been  
24 any problem when you changed it. Did anyone object?

25 Edwards: At some point... No. At some point I decided  
26 that I'd better... Oh, I also <sup>had</sup> discovered that the Society of  
27 St. Vincent de Paul was taking kids from the court on court

1 orders ...and was charging for their upkeep, but was  
2 placing them with families, which is perfectly alright except  
3 they kept on charging the court. That was obviously cock-eyed.  
4 I went down to see the head of the Catholic church in Detroit at  
5 that time.

6 Edwards (Peg): Gallagher?

7 Edwards: No, I don't think so. Anyhow the Bishop of the  
8 Catholic church and I told him about this practice on the part  
9 of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and to my astonishment, I  
10 thought I was going to have a hell of a battle and he said, "Oh,  
11 I'm so glad you came to me. We've been wanting to...we know  
12 about this. It's wrong. We want to change it. We're going to  
13 change it and this will help me do it." And he did it  
14 change it.

15 Downs: So, he thanked you for letting him  
16 get done what he'd wanted to.

17 Edwards (Peg): You understand that the children went first  
18 to the agency and then out to the homes.

19 Edwards: And many of the homes took them for free, whereas  
20 they were still, Society of St. Vincent de Paul was still  
21 collecting on them.

22 Downs: Well, I'd say those were some pretty major changes.  
23 Do you...I mean I don't want to go into too much detail. How  
24 about the administrative staff. Did you find them good, the  
25 social workers, or many changes in the operation (inaudible)  
26 main ones.

27 Edwards: I think the biggest single thing I did was to get

1 a very fine psychiatrist associated with the court to help  
2 advise on many of the children who were most, the worst problem  
3 children. I wish I could remember his name, but he was  
4 wonderful...

5 [end side 6]

6 Downs: This is side 7 George. We'd run out and I didn't  
7 notice that. You had the psychiatrist for the new court and I  
8 think you said you had a new juvenile home built and then your  
9 choice was to, even though you might have wanted to continue for  
10 a while, you didn't want to spend your life there, but then you  
11 had the chance to go on the circuit court and that was a choice.  
12 Is that...I'm trying to redo what I...

13 Edwards: Should I put this on the tape?

14 Downs: Yeah, put this on the tape because I...

15 Edwards: Are we on the air now?

16 Downs: We are on the air now.

17 Edwards: Well, I was confronted with the choice of either  
18 moving on or staying at the juvenile court for a lifetime and I  
19 just wasn't prepared to think that I could continue to give  
20 a sort of caring attention for a lifetime that I thought people  
21 ought to have from judge in the juvenile court. I decided that  
22 I ought to leave and I did leave and I did run for the, I think  
23 it was the circuit court and then for the supreme court.

24 Downs: Then who was your successor of the juvenile court?

25 Edwards: Jim Lincoln.

26 Downs: Did you have confidence in him?

27 Edwards: I had...that was a help to me because I had  
confidence in his innate decency and concern. I think he did a

1 good job in the juvenile court.

2 Downs: Yeah, I heard from Jim recently and I know him.

3 Edwards: Now, let's see.

4 Downs: You ran for the, you were appointed to the supreme  
5 court, state supreme court. Then you ran, and how did that  
6 election go?

7 Edwards: Was that the one where I got the (inaudible)?

8 Edwards (Peg): Well, you ran twice. Once you, Eisenhower  
9 was running and you got even more votes than he got and he won  
10 big.

11 Downs: Now, is there anything particular when...now all  
12 your opinions are published, no need to repeat those, is there  
13 anything particular you want to say about your term on the  
14 supreme court or administrative changes?

15 Edwards: Well, there were two cases that I think make some  
16 sense to talk about. I had them and their gone. Oh, one of  
17 them was Comstock v General Motors and I won't give you all the  
18 complex facts of Comstock v General Motors, but the essence of  
19 it was that for Michigan it required automobile  
20 companies that made, that put on the market and sold a car that  
21 was defective to recall that car and make the repairs that were  
22 called for. The case is a fairly complicated set of facts, but  
23 that was the holding and that was the result.

24 Edwards (Peg): Was that the first recall of cars?

25 Edwards: Yes. The first legally mandated recall of cars.

26 Downs: Was that a unanimous decision, or split. Do you  
27 remember?

1 Edwards: I think it was unanimous.

2 Downs: That, of course, we can look up.

3 Downs: So, that was new law in Michigan.

4 Edwards: It was new law in Michigan. I based it on a case  
5 decided by Cardozo in the New York Supreme Court, or at least I  
6 used that as the precedent. What was the other case...

7 Downs: Maybe it will come back later.

8 Edwards: Yeah. It was...it was similarly precedent  
9 setting.

10 Downs: Where did you go from the supreme court, then.

11 Edwards: Well, ultimately, you know, I left the supreme  
12 court of Michigan to become police commissioner in Detroit to  
13 try to prevent the repetition of the earlier race riot in  
14 Detroit and I took the police department job with that in mind  
15 and that was...those were a couple of <sup>the most difficult</sup> years that I ever spent in  
16 public office because the Detroit Police Department didn't want  
17 to be taught new ways. I was determined that we were going to  
18 end some of their practices and we did end some of their  
19 practices, but it was..."blood on the floor"

20 Downs: Do you want to tell some of the major changes.  
21 Mayor Cavanagh appointed you, is that correct?

22 Edwards: Cavanagh asked me to take that job, Yes. He  
23 indicated he would back me, and he did to some degree. He ended  
24 up not being too happy because of the effect on the police that  
25 they were so unhappy with me. I made the changes and I got a  
26 good, solid police superintendant and Jim Lupton as his deputy.  
27 Who was my police superintendant...a big former miner from

1 Pennsylvania. He was very effective and upton was very  
2 effective.

3 Downs: What were a few of the major changes you made?

4 Edwards: I set up a community relations division to reach  
5 into the communities and to talk about the people in the  
6 neighborhoods reporting crimes and reporting things to the  
7 police. This got to be a very successful program and we ran  
8 meetings on this topic in all different sections of the city of  
9 Detroit. It helped to make the people understand what the  
10 police were having a hard time understanding that they were no  
11 longer to use blackjacks and billys on people in the process of  
12 arresting. I had a session with all of the top officers in  
13 relation to a case where a prisoner had been brought in and had  
14 his head split open on top of his skull and the police report  
15 said that he had gotten that injury by falling on the station  
16 house steps. I told my officers that I could see a lot of  
17 reasons why maybe he might have been subject to being subdued if  
18 he was wild or fighting or drunk, but couldn't conceive of how  
19 he could have gotten/<sup>the top of</sup> his head split open by falling on the  
20 station house steps. And I indicated that there would be trial  
21 boards if there were more episodes like that. Then we had some  
22 trial boards where officers had beaten up a man in the basement of  
23 his own home, about five officers had and I...my two top  
24 officers, they were

25

26

27

1 Edwards (Peg): Berg.

2 Edwards: Two Bergs. Jim Berg and Louie Berg. Louis Berg  
3 was the smoother of the two. They resisted at every turn of the  
4 road.

5 Edwards (Peg): But they took you to lunch.

6 Edwards: And they took me to lunch on Belle Isle at the  
7 yacht club and they told me about how they wanted to work things  
8 out with me and everything would be alright if I would just let  
9 them handle all the cases...complaints. I told them that I  
10 didn't think I could do that because it didn't seem to me that  
11 the complaints were getting properly investigated. Then I  
12 learned, I guess I learned it primarily from Vincent Persante that  
13 they had called, subsequent to that abortive meeting  
14 on Belle Isle, they had called a meeting of all the top officers  
15 and had said that they had to get rid of me. And I think the  
16 only one who said anything contrarywise, both Bergs spoke and  
17 several other officers spoke (inaudible) and the only one that  
18 said anything to the contrary to that was Vincent Persante, who  
19 said he didn't see how I could do anything to them since they  
20 had charter protections in the jobs and, but he was the only one  
21 who spoke to the contrary. At that point I decided that I had  
22 to get rid of them and I...

23 Edwards (Peg): How did you learn of that meeting?

24 Edwards: I think Persante told me. He was there. Then I  
25 invited both the Bergs to have lunch with me at the Book Cadillac  
26 and told them that everything is going to have <sup>to change or I had</sup> to get other  
27 people to take their jobs and they could take three months to



1 make such adjustments as they wanted to, but I no longer thought  
2 that it was possible for them to change and that I had to have  
3 people who were going to try to handle the jobs according to the  
4 law as I saw it. They said that they were going to go along  
5 with me and all that. That's what they said on Belle Isle, but  
6 then immediately subsequent to that I learned that they had this  
7 meeting at the pizza parlor and there the preached "get rid of  
8 Edwards". And just let things go to hell until everybody  
9 understands that the department can't be run the way I was  
10 trying to run it. At that point I called in (inaudible)

11 Edwards (Peg): George, you've written all this.

12 Edwards: Where have I written it?

13 Edwards (Peg): In the manuscript that's at Wayne.

14 Downs: It has been written, but it hasn't been published,  
15 is that right?

16 Edwards (Peg): That's right, but isn't all this in it as I  
17 remember it is.

18 Edwards: It may be.

19 Downs: Well, we won't need to go into too much, but did  
20 you tell the mayor you had made this decision, or did you do  
21 it...

22 Edwards: I talked to the mayor before and he had said...

23 Edwards (Peg): He didn't like it.

24 Edwards: He didn't like it but if I had to I had to.

25 Edwards (Peg): I think one thing was left out, George, it  
26 was very important to the people in Detroit. I mean, when you  
27 went there blacks were being stretched over their car constantly

1 and you went on television and said that people could call you  
2 at home and report. It made it lovely at times.

3 Downs: Did that make your line busy, Peggy?

4 Edwards (Peg): Unbelievable. I mean no police  
5 commissioner has ever...

6 Edwards: Ever done anything like that.

7 Edwards (Peg): Certainly none of the inspectors had their  
8 numbers in the book.

9 Edwards: I took to riding cop cars and watching what was  
10 happening on the street at night. I did a lot of things that  
11 were just not appropriate, you understand, for a police  
12 commissioner.

13 Downs: What about the "big four". Is that a term  
14 (inaudible).

15 Edwards: Yeah, the "big four" was a heavy car. A car that  
16 went to the episodes where there was thought to be major  
17 violence. A potential for major violence. Then there was an  
18 episode where they found a guy in the basement of his house.  
19 We got a complaint from a woman who said that there was a man  
20 who had threatened her with a gun and we trial boarded ...

21 Edwards (Peg): Are you talking about Daniel?

22 Edwards: Yes, the Daniel's case. This woman had made  
23 this report and the police officers had got there and went to  
24 the house where she indicated he had gone. I guess it was his  
25 house. At the...he had allegedly threatened her. The police  
26 went in, four or five of them, and the wife denied that he was  
27 there. They went down to the basement and they found him hiding

1 in the coal cellar. Well that was an indication that there was  
2 some slight difficulty in relation to something or other that he  
3 had done. It was bothering his conscience. But, what happened  
4 next was that they started trying to extract this information  
5 from him by beating him. They hit him three or four times in  
6 the stomach and then one of the officers hooked his billy  
7 through his handcuffed hands and racked them back and forth with  
8 the cuffs biting into his wrists and threw him down in the floor  
9 and cut his lip. We had trouble on that. That was a big event.  
10 Jack Jensen was my driver and after the trial board, I was  
11 going down in the elevator with Jack and he said, "What  
12 happened?" I said, "Well, they found the officers not guilty."  
13 Jack said, "Oh, that's great commissioner. I'm so happy for  
14 you." I said, "Jack, I dissented." That's the point at which I  
15 decided that I had to get rid of both Bergs and did.

16  
17 Downs: Was there any repercussion after you got rid of them?

18 Edwards: Yeah, I think that's putting it mildly.

19 Downs: No, I mean, after you got rid of them, the  
20 department...

21 Edwards (Peg): The night after you got rid of them you  
22 had the Gotham Hotel raided.

23 Edwards: Oh, that's right, but the raid was a couple of nights  
24 later.

24 Downs: I think wives often remember the tough things.

25 Edwards (Peg): Do you remember the Gotham hotel? It was  
26 the big social center of black life in Detroit.

27 Edwards: Gotham.

1 Edwards (Peg): Gotham.

2 Edwards: Gotham, okay. Yeah. Just as soon as I got rid  
3 of them...

4 Edwards (Peg): That day.

5 Edwards: I don't think it was that day, but very shortly  
6 thereafter, maybe that day, maybe the next day. Very soon.  
7 There was an inspector whom I had learned to trust named Sage.  
8 I had Sage set up a raid on the Gotham hotel. Which was  
9 headquarters for the numbers racket in Detroit and which I knew  
10 it was the headquarters for the numbers racket.

11 Edwards (Peg): Al Fuller didn't like that.

12 Edwards: And we raided the Gotham hotel. We loaded up  
13 the police officers, they didn't know where they were going but  
14 we had maybe 20 or 30 police officers and we had units from the  
15 FBI and the State Police, also. We got the hotel in full  
16 operation. There were gambling games going on, on the top floor  
17 and rooms where different forms of numbers operations were going  
18 on. They were counting the work from the numbers take, the  
19 numbers had been running full in Detroit. I can't remember the  
20 amount of loot that was either on the tables or in the gambling  
21 room on the top floor or in these counting houses, but it ran  
22 into...I think it ran over a hundred thousand.

23 Edwards (Peg): Wasn't the counting being done behind some  
24 sort of a closed metal door? It's in your writing, (inaudible).

25 Downs: Then, were there any... So then after you had  
26 fired these fellows and the trial board and so on, you succeeded  
27 in that raid. Then did you find that the police officers

1 generally tended to go along with you. I mean, were these  
2 "clear signals" got down to the precinct level?

3 Edwards: Well, they were clear enough signals and life  
4 did straighten out and things did get better. But, to say that  
5 I ended up being the most popular police commissioner that ever  
6 came along in Detroit, would be pretty hard...

7 Downs: Were at the point here now...

8 [end of side 7]

9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27

1 EDWARDS: John Carlisle came over one day and invited me to  
2 have lunch with him and Ernie Patton at the ....Detroit Club.

3 (inaudible)

4 No, he wasn't, but the Detroit News had set it up. And he said  
5 that his paper wanted to arrange for me to testify before the  
6 McClellan Committee in Washington. The McClellan Committee was  
7 investigating organized crime nationally and the biggest splash  
8 that was made before the McClellan Committee in terms of  
9 national publicity was the testimony of a gangster named Joe  
10 Valachi. And I testified about Detroit organized crime  
11 immediately thereafter. And we had done quite a job on getting  
12 a picture of the numbers racket, its various stations, and the  
13 various enterprises of organized crime in Detroit. Most of it  
14 was centered in the Gotham Hotel, which both operated gambling  
15 on its top floor and had the pick up people for the numbers  
16 racket coming in to count the work in the Gotham. So, we  
17 prepared with some considerable care for testimony before the  
18 McClellan Committee and then went down and testified right  
19 after Joe Valachi had been on the witness stand. It pretty  
20 well wrote a complete record of the sort of crime that had been  
21 tolerated in Detroit and could not have failed to have been  
22 known to my predecessors. Why they didn't do anything about it  
23 is for them to say. It was all there. When we came back from  
24 that affair, I found that,

25 the superintendent had  
26 ordered round the clock surveillance of our house and they had  
27 a police car out in front of the house and one in the driveway

1 with the motor running, because it was cold and they had to  
2 stay warm. We had two nights of that I think, and I told them  
3 to take it off and I doubted if anybody was gonna kill me.

4 PEG EDWARDS: Now while he was in Washington testifying,  
5 the boys and I were home alone.

6 TOM DOWNS: That's where the danger was.

7 PEG: Yes, that's when our neighbors were using their  
8 curtains. But I didn't want those cars in the driveway.

9 GEORGE: Peggy didn't want any part of it.

10 -PEG: I understood [Sophie's didn't?].

11 GEORGE: Well, that had quite an impact on

12 PEG: The ACLU opposed you.

13 GEORGE: The ACLU

14 PEG: Even though you may have been a card-carrying member.

15 TOM DOWNS: Opposed you on what basis?

16 PEG & GEORGE: Civil Rights,

17 These people were

18 The Mafia

19 GEORGE: I was making unsupported charges and they had a  
20 big, they had a big meeting, a protest meeting, about my  
21 testimony, and I, and they said that I had, that I had given  
22 this testimony where it was sheltered from any libel because it  
23 was being given to a Congressional Committee and I wouldn't say  
24 these things out front, so I arranged to have a meeting where  
25 there was no, and we had a, it wasn't a caucus club, it was, it  
26 was a big bar in downtown Detroit with a dining room, and it  
27 was pack jammed and I gave this testimony all over again out in

*Veterans Bar?*

1 the open and said, anybody wants to challenge any of this, let  
2 'em sue. Nobody sued. Nobody ever sued about anything.

3 TOM DOWNS: Now did you get, let's see, they saw you took  
4 that approach, you showed you did it openly, did you get  
5 support from, oh, the newspapers, News, Free Press, on what you  
6 did when you went to Washington?

7 GEORGE EDWARDS: Well, I think the news, the papers were  
8 generally favorable.

9 TOM DOWNS: How about general public support, is that too  
10 vague a term?

11 GEORGE EDWARDS: Well, you know, I went on through life and at  
12 various and sundry clients, I needed public support and I  
13 always had it.

14 TOM DOWNS: You got a big vote on the Supreme Court.

15 GEORGE: Yeah.

16 PEG: That was after that.

17 TOM: No, that's after the Supreme Court.

18 PEG: Santo Perrone was shot, in the trunk of his car, was  
19 found George's testimony, a chain, and the gun.

20 GEORGE: A shotgun.

21 PEG: It was thought that he was going to kill George, but  
22 that the Mafia itself bombed him.

23 TOM: Why?

24 GEORGE: Blew his legs off.

25 PEG: Because they didn't, George was too hot.

26 GEORGE: It was a gentle way of saying, we don't think you  
27 ought to do this. As a matter of fact, I think that we



1 ultimately got some tapes that indicated that they had told  
2 Perrone not to.

3 TOM: So your best protection was the fact that you'd  
4 spoken out so, so that if anybody killed you there would have  
5 been, ah, pretty rough on them. Is that?

6 GEORGE: Yeah, well that, that'd be one way of putting it.

7 TOM: Had you anticipated that?

8 GEORGE: They thought I was too hot.

9 TOM: Yeah, I remember now the Perrone thing. Now,

10 PEG: We haven't done anything on George's reaction to  
11 Mennen, building the party, and his contribution.

12 TOM: We haven't even, we got to, we're in the 13th  
13 District, you were active, you want to go in some on how active  
14 you were in the Party? Probably one reason is, I know so much  
15 of that, I just assume that,

16 GEORGE: You know, the thing that made the most copy was,  
17 was my handling of recounts.

18 TOM: Yeah. Why don't you start with that?

19 GEORGE: You remember some of that, I assume.

20 TOM: In fact, I was in the session when the discussion was  
21 what lawyer to hire and they were thinking of bringing someone  
22 in from Pennsylvania and I made the big pitch for you, which  
23 I'm glad I did. You and Ted Souris and many others, Ted Bohn were  
24 very active,

25 PEG: Al Fitt.

26 GEORGE: Al Fitt was in it. Ted Bohn ah,

27 TOM: Now you were the head, what was your role? I know  
you were the chief lawyer on it, but I mean let's get it on the  
record here.

1           GEORGE: Well, I think I was the chief lawyer in, in  
2 Detroit, in the recount.

3           TOM: Joe Kowalski and I were in charge of the tables and  
4 getting the protests up, and you were the chief attorney that  
5 handled the recount in Wayne County.

6           GEORGE: There was, who was the fathead that they had  
7 allegedly working on,

8 -----  
9 TOM: This is the end of the tape of November 19, 1988,  
10 Saturday, and I will start another side for November 20. This  
11 is the end of Saturday.

12 -----  
13 TOM: It's now, we're starting the tape Sunday morning,  
14 November 20. I think you had brought out how close you were to  
15 Walter Reuther, you'd worked in Kelsey-Hayes with Vic Reuther,  
16 I mentioned Gus Scholle. As you know, I worked with Gus for  
17 many years, but do you want to tell a little about your  
18 relation with Gus, when you got to know him?

19           GEORGE: Well, I can't really remember when I didn't know  
20 him.

21           PEG: I remember when he moved to Detroit.

22           GEORGE: You do.

23           PEG: Yeah. We knew him right away. We met him right  
24 away. When he came from Toledo.

25           GEORGE: From Toledo to Detroit.

26           PEG: (inaudible) in the CIO. And the AF of L.

27           TOM: Yeah, then it was the CIO. He was Allen Haywood's, I  
think, number 3 organizer.

1 PEG: We met him right away.

2 GEORGE: Gus was a very common-sense, direct, down to earth  
3 person, and all of my contacts with him, I ended up with great  
4 respect for him.

5 TOM: Now, I think we talked a little last night about your  
6 role in the Democratic Party, which kind of overlapped with  
7 Gus. Do you want to maybe go into the two of those together?

8 GEORGE: Well, the, to my recollection, he was the first  
9 one to start moving UAW toward affiliation with the Democratic  
10 Party, or support for the Democratic Party, would be a better  
11 way to describe it. And he maintained that position all the  
12 way through, as I recall it.

13 TOM: Were you active in the 13th District?

14 GEORGE: I was chairman, I became chairman of the 13th  
15 Congressional District of the Democratic Party.

16 TOM: Was Gus involved in the election of precinct  
17 delegates that supported you for that?

18 GEORGE: Yes, he was. And we had, we had a faction, I  
19 guess a Teamsters faction, that ran phoney petitions for  
20 delegate positions. And I think I filed a lawsuit to expose  
21 them, and we proved that they had round-robined them, had six  
22 or eight people sitting around a table and the same signatures  
23 came up in the same sequence.

24 TOM: Now this one, George, I remember very well, in the  
25 17th. As I recall, the court said this was a political thing  
26 to be solved ourselves, and we had, this wasn't the 13th, the  
27 17th we had a screening committee and Marty Taylor, I think, it

1 was Adelaide Hart and Al Myers, none of whom was particularly a  
2 physical person, and I think it was the Teamsters and  
3 [inaudible] tried to force their way in and those got thrown  
4 down, and there was a program of blood on the streets, I mean,  
5 if you knew Adelaide and Al Myers and Bernie Taylor, you know,  
6 one-eyed veteran, it was pretty hard to think of them as being  
7 the rough-tough goons, but,

8 GEORGE: Well, that would be a hard, hard picture to  
9 conjure up.

10 TOM: There was that period, and Phil Mason has taped me on  
11 some of that, where Gus took the lead in getting people as  
12 precinct delegates, and then Mennen, your district you became  
13 chair, Nick Rothe became chair of the 14th District, you may  
14 recall, so I don't know if you want to go on on your role in  
15 the Democratic Party there, certainly the chair of the 13th was  
16 an important spot.

17 GEORGE: Well, it was, but I didn't stay with it very long,  
18 and I don't really remember exactly what transpired, but I  
19 think I moved on to something else.

20 TOM: Well, do you want to go into a little more on the  
21 recount, you just started on that, that you were the attorney  
22 in Wayne County.

23 GEORGE: I was the attorney for the Williams forces in the  
24 recount, and that's a long story, and kind of an interesting  
25 one. The election was between Williams and Kelly. Had Kelly  
26 been governor?

27 TOM: No, one was Kelly and one was Alger, then in that one

1 I did on Bill Doyle, I think it came out that the Republicans  
2 didn't like Kim Sigler, this was pretty well established, so  
3 they were willing to let Williams serve one term and then they  
4 were gonna, after the two-year term, then they were going back  
5 to the old established Republicans. And then that's when the  
6 recount was, the first recount.

7 GEORGE: Well, I never heard that. At least if I heard it,  
8 I've forgotten it. What I remember best is the recount itself,  
9 and I represented the Williams forces in the recount, and, who  
10 worked with me, you?

11 TOM: Joe Kowalski and I did the floor work. We organized  
12 the people to bring the challenges up. Then at the legal  
13 table, you were there, as I recall, Ted Souris, Ted Bohn,  
14 several other, Al Fitt, I believe, I'm just going way back.  
15 I've done this for Phil Mason awhile back, so it's fairly fresh  
16 in my mind. Then I remember one of the things, we'd have  
17 shifts,

18 GEORGE: The guy on the other side was Stanley Beatty.

19 TOM: That's right.

20 GEORGE: And Beatty was a pompous fathead.

21 TOM: Harvard graduate.

22 GEORGE: Huh?

23 TOM: Harvard Law School.

24 GEORGE: Harvard Law School graduate. And, ah, we had this  
25 counting table and there was a panel of people who were  
26 effectively acting as electoral judges in relation to decisions  
27 that were being made on all these ballots. Ah, Chris Youngjohn

1 was the chairman of it. And, ah,

2 TOM: I'll interpose here. Those were all paper ballots at  
3 that time.

4 GEORGE: Yes, they were all paper ballots, and there were  
5 all sorts of ways of objecting to the validity of a ballot. If  
6 there was a spot in or on the paper, somebody would make an  
7 objection to it, depending on what way the ballot had been  
8 cast, and they were called distinguishing marks. And a  
9 distinguishing mark would invalidate the ballot, because in the  
10 earlier period there'd been a pay-for-votes scheme in  
11 Hamtramck, I think, and the distinguishing marks were the basis  
12 for paying off. I don't know if there were any distinguishing  
13 marks involved in the election that I was involved in, but they  
14 ended up being the subject of objections to the ballots and  
15 we made just as many objections to ones that did not favor us  
16 as did the other side. What happened was, that Stanley Beatty,  
17 who was sort of a pompous fella, grandeloquently passed various  
18 of these distinguishing mark arguments and the net result was  
19 that we were objecting, I would say, yeah, that's right, this  
20 is not a distinguishing mark, but since the objection has been  
21 made, I'm going to enter this as one of those that we're  
22 objecting to, even though I think that the panel ought to allow  
23 this vote to be counted. We had objections stacked up,  
24 substantially <sup>in all categories</sup> and they had none. And finally, they got  
25 another lawyer, who came in, and he watched this procedure for  
26 awhile, and finally slammed his hand down on the table and  
27 said, to Beatty, you're not objecting to, you're not recording  
your objections on any of these. But it was all too late.

1 TOM: So just go into that, the objections.

2 GEORGE: The truth of the matter is we had the votes all  
3 the way, in everyone of these situations, although it was a  
4 quite close election, we had the votes in fact as well as the  
5 way it turned out.

6 TOM: Those objections were, would be exhibits, is that,  
7 when you say objections, those ballots would be set aside?

8 GEORGE: Yeah.

9 TOM: Yeah. I remember two other things, my claim to fame,  
10 I went out to Hamtramck where a seal was, nobody could follow  
11 the number, and it was something like 69018, and I think Nick  
12 Rothe sent me out, or you did, and what had happened, they  
13 read it upside down, because it was embossed the 6 could be a  
14 9, and that one cleaned up that, and I think there was, only  
15 the margarine votes were counted against Mennen, alot of  
16 strange things,

17 GEORGE: Now let's, let's I can do that oleomargarine.  
18 This was in , as I recall it, and ah, the election  
19 was, you know, the Detroit Times came out with a headline the  
20 morning after the election, "Kelly by 10,000." So that there was  
21 an announcement that Kelly had won against Williams. Remember  
22 that?

23 TOM: Yeah, I remember that.

24 GEORGE: And it was shortly discovered that there were some  
25 discrepancies in the Mt. Clemens vote count. And no one  
26 understood what had happened, but the poll workers had one  
27 score and the tally sheets for that box had an entirely

1 different score. And the difference was enough to possibly  
2 determine the outcome of the whole state election. I was  
3 called and asked to go up there, and represent the Democratic  
4 forces, and all I could gather was that there was a bitter  
5 dispute between the personnel in that polling box and the board  
6 in Mt. Clemens that was in charge of the totality of the  
7 county. And, I went up there without any idea as to what had  
8 happened, aside from the fact that there was alot of confusion.  
9 We got there, and I decided the only thing to do was to try to  
10 start examining everybody as thoroughly as we could, and find  
11 out what had actually occurred. There was an old fella who was  
12 the chairman of the polling booth involved. And, in the midst  
13 of this discussion, he pulled out from his pocket a piece of a  
14 school child's, a small tablet, and slammed it down on the  
15 table in front of the officials who were in charge of the  
16 recount and said, I don't care what anybody else says, that's  
17 the real score. And he had written down, I don't remember the  
18 numbers, obviously, but Williams 183 and Kelly 110, or some  
19 such division as that, which made the difference in the whole  
20 gummed election. Well, I was confident that that wasn't gonna  
21 be highly persuasive to the officialdom of the county, and so I  
22 just decided the only thing to do was to start in saying,  
23 what's the first thing that you did, and we took 'em from the  
24 point where they opened the box and where they spread the, they  
25 did several things that were dead wrong. Ah, they had, they  
26 divided up,

27 PEG: They opened the book and divided the pages, not the



1 ballots, the pages of the recording book. The book they  
2 recorded these answers in, since they divided them when they  
3 put them back together, they didn't meet.

4 GEORGE: They took the polling book apart and they had the  
5 names here and then they scored across these pages, and then  
6 when they put the pages back together, the oleomargarine vote/<sup>totals</sup>  
7 were opposite the names of candidates, rather than just dealing  
8 with the oleomargarine vote.

9 TOM: Oh.

10 PEG: On half the page.

11 TOM: Oh, so it wasn't the ballots counted that/<sup>were</sup>wrong, it  
12 was they were recorded wrong.

13 GEORGE: It was that they never should have been taken  
14 apart, and as a consequence of taking them apart, they were  
15 recorded opposite the wrong identification over here on the  
16 left hand side.

17 TOM: Yeah, I got it.

18 GEORGE: I don't know how easily to explain it. But, at  
19 some point it began to come clear to me what had happened and I  
20 dove for the material that was spread out on the table and  
21 grabbed it before somebody else who was also reaching for it  
22 could get it, and put these pieces together and there it was.  
23 And it was so obvious at that point, that that was the end of  
24 the ballgame.

25 TOM: And that took care of it.

26 GEORGE: That took care of it. And it, the old man who had  
27 the piece of fool's cap in his hand was dead right.

TOM: Oh, he was right.

1 GEORGE: Oh yeah, absolutely.

2 TOM: He was right all the time.

3 GEORGE: He was right all the time.

4 TOM: Here's jumping way up to another thing, George, I  
5 don't know if even you remember this, the actual details, but  
6 when there's a matter of a vacancy for the U.S. Senate, and we  
7 had the meeting, Neil was there, Gus Scholle, our whole policy  
8 committee of the AF of L, CIO, yeah, I think we were merged  
9 then, I forget if we were or not. And the matter came up who to  
10 recommend, and you were, I don't know if you were ever told,  
11 you were unanimously recommended for it. I think that's the  
12 one where Moody got, but at least, to show there was that  
13 strong labor support, I think on the committee, well Gus of  
14 course was the chair, and the regional directors were there.  
15 This is going back to my memory, you know it's hard to, I  
16 couldn't say under oath the exact ones, but as I recall, Ken  
17 Morris, and Ken Robinson, Al Barber,

18 PEG: I don't think Neil was in on that.

19 TOM: Oh, Neil sat in at the meeting.

20 PEG: Maybe, but Neil and Mennen were not about to appoint  
21 the recently defeated candidate for Mayor of Detroit.

22 TOM: But, anyway, that name was given, I mean your name  
23 was forwarded, obviously you didn't get it, but I just thought  
24 you'd like, I mean, (inaudible) indication of that strong labor  
25 backing for that.

26 GEORGE: I think I had less sense of frustration or  
27 bitterness about that than you would normally expect, because I

1 recognized that to run on the heels of defeat in the mayoralty  
2 election was not really a politically likely prospect.

3 TOM: Well, I think of one of Joe Kowalski's famous  
4 comments, remember that nobody owes you nothing, you get  
5 support where you don't expect it and don't get it where you do  
6 expect it. That's kind of a truism. Well, we've gone pretty  
7 well, and George, as far as the role of the Supreme Court, the  
8 Court of Appeals, just, those are all published opinions. You  
9 did tell something about one of your interesting Supreme Court  
10 cases, I don't know on the Court of Appeals, and certainly we  
11 don't want to go into anything confidential. I think that  
12 would pretty much know. Now there are some of these other  
13 things, such as your special tour to Guatemala, your one to the  
14 Pacific on trying to straighten out the trusteeship there, do  
15 you want to go into any of those things? I don't want to  
16 repeat just what's already been written up.

17 GEORGE: Well, we've written on Guatemala and those  
18 pamphlets are available and I think they probably say  
19 everything better than I can repeat from memory now. Ah, have  
20 you got those pamphlets?

21 TOM: I got those and read them very briefly, kind of  
22 sped-read them. We have them in the files, which I use. Now I  
23 know, well I'm just thinking of the labor people I know you  
24 worked with. I know Al Barber is one of your strong  
25 supporters, I know you worked with all three Reuthers,  
26 certainly the regional directors, Ken Morris, I know, Kenny  
27 Robinson, Emil you've known, well I'm just thinking, George

1 Adde's, I guess, well that was within the left-wing/right-wing,  
2 involved in all of those things, which are pretty much already  
3 known. Are there any, I think we're getting about ready to wind  
4 up. Is there anything more you want to add? I suppose to say  
5 you've led a full life. That goes without saying.

6 GEORGE: I think that my wife thought it was pretty full.

7 TOM: A little overflowing at times, Peg?

8 PEG: That's for sure. George has been a workaholic all of  
9 his life and his career has come first.

10 GEORGE: Second only to Peggy. A little dispute there.

11 BETTE : I think there's room for discussion.

12 PEG: That's right, and family, I think. George loved his  
13 family very much and always has, but his work, saving the  
14 world, was

15 TOM: Phil and Jane Hart had a similar discussion.

16 PEG: Well, it's true. You know, you can't be involved in  
17 something that takes 16 hours a day, five days a week and have  
18 much left over.

19 TOM: Well, and the, I don't mean to get into personal  
20 things, but certainly as a minimum your marriage has survived.

21 The members of Congress I know, it's one, two and three  
22 marriages and it's fine people, I've known both the husband and  
23 the wife.

24 PEG: They may be younger. I think that politics is very  
25 hard on the woman. And I think Eleanor Roosevelt's letter on  
26 that, in this book, which Joe Lash put into his second book.  
27 She says that it is very, very difficult for the woman, but if

1 the man is successful, he will never leave it, because it's  
2 bigger than anything he can do as a private person.

3 TOM: And Peg, I've heard wives say this, that in the  
4 middle of the campaign somebody won't want to bother the  
5 candidate, but they'll come to the wife

6 PEG: Oh, sure,

7 TOM: and say, don't tell your husband, but this is so.

8 PEG: Or, do tell him.

9 TOM: Or do tell him.

10 -GEORGE: This is going wrong.

11 PEG: They brought you all the grief that they were afraid  
12 to give to him. You had, and when he was attacked, he had a  
13 way to respond, but you had no way to respond. And, many of  
14 the wives we knew were alcoholic, and Jeffries' wife died  
15 alcoholic, seriously. Or they were, there wasn't much divorce  
16 in that early group. I think the ones you're talking about are  
17 younger.

18 TOM: Yeah, these are younger members of Congress. I don't  
19 mean to name them, but I

20 PEG: No, but it's much more

21 TOM: think of one, two, three, oh four or five, and they're  
22 all, in all the cases I knew the wife somewhat and the husband,  
23 and you'd ask, they're just fine people.

24 PEG: It's a very demanding work, but it's also satisfying.  
25 When George was out of office and was practicing law, and we  
26 were rich as we have never been again, he was not, and he was  
27 chairman of the 13th, he was not satisfied. And he said, if I

1 can get one park, I have done more than I can ever do in pro  
2 bono work. So, it was a big pull to be back in it. And I  
3 understood that.

4 TOM: And there is that question as to why,

5 PEG: And George was a good father, you know. He taught  
6 George, he taught Jim how to play tennis, he taught George

7 -----

8 [end of tape]

9

10 -

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

1 Downs: I just remember the kids, I mean the close family  
2 relation you all had.

3 Edwards (Peg): Well, George was very good father. He  
4 taught our son George to read, he taught little league baseball,  
5 he taught the 13 year old Babe Ruth league. He taught Jim to  
6 play tennis, that's how fell and broke his back, he went horse  
7 back riding at camp. I mean, he was...maybe nowadays they refer  
8 to it as quality time because he didn't have a lot of time with  
9 them, but when he had time he spent time with them.

10 Downs: And there is that...I remember that a friend of  
11 mine said, "Well, got the phone call Sunday at dinner time  
12 because people knew they would be home then."

13 Edwards (Peg): We got them all the time. Our phone  
14 numbers were always in the book. I can remember Doris Morris  
15 coming over one afternoon to sit and talk and she asked, "Do you  
16 always get this many business calls at home?" And we did. The  
17 Morrises phone wasn't in the book. None of those UAW people  
18 were in the book. None of the police people were in the book,  
19 but we were in the book. Mennen Williams was in the book.

20 Downs: I remember Mennen was because...

21 Edwards (Peg): He and George both felt it was part of  
22 being a public servant.

23 Downs: I drove up to the National Chair from Indiana, you  
24 know how I get lost, Peg, so I went in the gas station and  
25 phoned and he said, "How did you find the number?" It was in  
26 the phone book. Who answered, oh, I said, "Mennen did."  
27 (Inaudible) he actually answered the phone. Well, he was so

1 surprised that the Governor's name was in the phone book.

2 Downs (Bette): He wasn't used to trying to look it up  
3 because it never occurred to them.

4 Downs: Mennen answered the phone instead of...

5 Edwards: There was an episode where I got a call at the  
6 house from somebody who refused to identify himself. He said,  
7 "You got a copper drunk in Palmer Park. And you otta do  
8 something about it." I asked who he was, he said, "Don't bother  
9 me about who I am, you just go to Palmer Park or just send  
10 somebody." Well, this was at some odd hour in the morning, like  
11 maybe three or four o'clock in the morning or some such business  
12 and I called Palmer Park station and I said, "I've been told  
13 that there is an officer with a badge number such and such in  
14 Palmer Park, drunk..."

15 Edwards (Peg): You go get him.

16 Edwards: "... You go get him."

17 Edwards (Peg): They thought that George had spies  
18 everywhere.

19 Edwards: Later it was reported to me, by somebody that the  
20 discussion in the Palmer Park station was not particularly over  
21 the fact that there was a police officer drunk in Palmer Park,  
22 it was how the hell did I know it! And then, somebody said,  
23 "Well, you don't suppose that son-of-a-bitch has his phone  
24 number in the phone book. Do you?" And they looked it up. He  
25 does!!

26 Downs: He does. Well, you know Pat Babcock does that same  
27 thing, head of mental health. He would drive around and stop in



1 the agencies unannounced at six in the morning. It just shook  
2 them up. Are there any other...

3 Edwards (Peg): We still haven't been able to think of the  
4 superintendant of police (inaudible).

5 Edwards: Lupton was Deputy.

6 Edwards (Peg): Above Lupton.

7 Edwards: And uh, the Bull of the Woods, they called him.

8 Edwards (Peg): Yeah, we've said that, but...

9 Edwards: I'm trying to trigger my...

10 Edwards (Peg): Insert it. We'll look it up and insert it.

11 Downs: Peg, you have been kind of quiet on the, do you  
12 want to say something about the role of the wife? You did a  
13 little bit on how, I mean you termed the term the "hello Joe"  
14 party, I think, originated with you.

15 Edwards (Peg): Well, I think the role of the wife is very,  
16 very difficult. I have a letter from Eleanor Roosevelt saying  
17 that if a man is successful in politics, he will never leave it  
18 even though it is a very difficult life for the wife. That's  
19 because it is so all-consuming. The wife is torn between  
20 whether she ought to go with her husband, be with him, or  
21 whether she ought to be home with the children.

22 Downs: Or have her own career.

23 Edwards (Peg): Well, that wasn't a...

24 Downs: That wasn't...

25 Edwards (Peg): That really wasn't an option then.

26 Edwards: That wasn't an option back then, not for most.

27 Edwards (Peg): Not like it is now. Now, they have their

1 own career and that's decided. If the man wants to run, he  
2 runs. Much more sensible arrangement. Nancy is the one who  
3 sort of started women being so deeply involved in the whole  
4 coffee klatch thing.

5 Downs: You mean Nancy Williams.

6 Edwards (Peg): Yes.

7 Downs (Bette): Adelaide Hart played a role in that too, I  
8 think.

9 Edwards (Peg): Well, she set them up. Nancy was willing  
10 to do it and saw it as a very important part of their campaign.

11 Downs: You know and Adelaide was unmarried and had her  
12 whole life...

13 Edwards (Peg): Oh sure. Wrapped up in this.

14 Downs: In this. And her teaching job had certain confined  
15 hours and difficult but vacation periods, which was entirely  
16 different. Burnette had some, we talked with Burnette on this,  
17 too. And Nancy certainly put her whole life into the campaign.

18 Edwards (Peg): You saw a great deal of the same people  
19 over and over again. That's where the term "hello Joe" parties  
20 came from. Because we all knew each other, but you also went to  
21 dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of meetings which were  
22 new. Italian meetings and Armenian meetings and black meetings

23 You know I did Mennen's schedule and  
24 then I did the Ad Board schedules through three campaigns and  
25 everybody thought that their meeting was the most important  
26 meeting in the world and that you personally didn't want the  
27 candidate to come. But the candidate, himself, was very anxious

1 to do this and if they, if you would just let them speak to the  
2 candidate instead of speak to you, you would come to the "We will  
3 arise" party. That was a constant scheduling problem.

4 Downs: So the scheduling is not simply scheduling, but  
5 being a buffer between the outraged constituents and the  
6 candidate.

7 Edwards (Peg): And trying to get the maximum...you know  
8 you couldn't schedule one on the far east side and ten minutes  
9 one on the far west side. You had to have some idea of how many  
10 they could make in an evening. You had to consider proximity.  
11 You had to say which door you went in to the school, which room  
12 it was going to be in. All the same time for the candidate. He  
13 didn't have time to fish around after he got there for exactly  
14 where the meeting was.

15 Downs: You're talking about the Ad Board, Mennen, George,  
16 any campaign.

17 Edwards (Peg): Any candidate. And I learned an awful lot  
18 doing that. Learned how to find an awful lot of things that I  
19 can still find. It was interesting work, but it was very  
20 demanding. I can remember sitting on an election day at the  
21 office. It was really the only day we didn't work our heads  
22 off, we had done it all. When in would come a letter from Neil  
23 Staebler, saying we ought to prepare our thank you notes and get  
24 ready for the next campaign.

25 Edwards: That was a killer.

26 Edwards (Peg): That was a...

27 Downs: And Neil meant it.

1 Edwards (Peg): And he meant it.

2 Downs: Yes, he did mean it.

3 Downs: You knew Neil fairly well, both of you, did you,  
4 or...

5 Edwards (Peg): Oh, yeah.

6 Edwards: Oh, yeah. I think so. We felt, we felt close to  
7 Neil and we felt that we were on the same wavelength all the  
8 way.

9 Edwards (Peg): We had no social life  
10 really. All these many years through labor movement and through  
11 political. Other than, you know, once in a very, very great  
12 while we'd go out in Lansing and Mennen and Nancy would come and  
13 you would feel that Mennen had put on the schedule, Nancy needs  
14 an evening out. He would thank the hostess for giving Nancy  
15 such a nice time.

16 Edwards: Clearly implying that he didn't really...

17 Edwards (Peg): That he had wasted his time, but it was  
18 alright if Nancy was happy.

19 Edwards: I was going to recall another aspect of life.  
20 While I was police commissioner we had three major gatherings to  
21 explain what I was trying to do with the police department. The  
22 first one, I think, was all of the ministers in the community.  
23 Then we had all of the top school people. And there was a third  
24 category, social agencies. In this process, I got a chance to  
25 reach people who contacted or were contacted by the police over  
26 and over again and to indirectly get back an influence on the  
27 police department. Because all the top brass of the place were

1 there at all of these sessions available for discussion and we  
2 would have them break up into areas of the city and the  
3 principals of a particular section of the city would meet with  
4 the inspector for that area and vice versa, all the way through.  
5 I thought that it probably did more, those meetings probably did  
6 more to defeat the Pizza Parlor Putsch, than anything else,  
7 because even though there was real objection in the police  
8 department, the message as to what we were actually trying to do  
9 was getting down to the grass roots.

10 . Downs: How did you recruit the police officers once you  
11 were police commissioner? Was that just done through civil  
12 service or was there any other standards?

13 Edwards: Well, we tried <sup>to</sup> make it open so that we could get  
14 a beginning of black recruitment. This was very, very difficult  
15 to do. It did not really, I would say that, that, that was  
16 probably the area that frustrated me more than any other because  
17 blacks didn't apply. They didn't feel comfortable in the police  
18 department. It was relatively rare that we could get good  
19 people like George Hards <sup>or</sup> to come in and go through what they had  
20 to go through in order to live with the white police force,  
21 basically white police force and begin to move up in the ranks.

22 Edwards (Peg): When you first went on the, became a police  
23 commissioner, one of the police officers, I don't know what  
24 grade he had, came out to the house to talk to you and he had a  
25 masters degree. But he had never gotten anywhere in the  
26 department. They were not really allowed into the DPOA.

27 Downs: This was a black police officer you are talking  
about...

1 Edwards (Peg): Yes.

2 Downs: ...with a masters degree.

3 Edwards (Peg): Right. It had been really hopeless up to  
4 the time. Tell them about the meeting of the Muslims. I  
5 thought that was a very fascinating.

6 Edwards: I've forgotten it.

7 Edwards (Peg): No, you haven't. You had to leave your  
8 gun. People had to leave their guns.

9 Edwards: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

10 - Edwards (Peg): There had been a riot...

11 Edwards: There had been in San Francisco,  
12 Edwards (Peg): Los Angeles.

13 Edwards: Los Angeles, and black Muslims and the police had  
14 clashed and maybe people had been killed on both sides. In any  
15 event, it was a major incident and then the head of the black  
16 Muslims, who the hell was that?

17 Edwards (Peg): Elijah Mohammed.

18 Edwards: Elijah Mohammed came to Detoit. They announced a  
19 major, mass meeting for Elijah Mohammed and I thought, oh, how  
20 could I be so lucky as to have a protest meeting in Detroit for  
21 Elijah Mohammed's protest about the police departments of Los  
22 Angeles, but that was what I had. So I decided that we were  
23 going to do everything possible to do two things. One, to  
24 prepare for trouble and two, to avoid it. We had 400 police  
25 officers in the gymnasium at a school close to, what auditorium?

26 Edwards (Peg): I think it was on Grand River.

27 Edwards: It was on Grand River.

1 Edwards (Peg): That great big colosseum where they used to  
2 play hockey.

3 Edwards: Yeah.

4 Downs: Olympia.

5 Edwards: Olympia, yeah. It was Olympia.

6 Downs: It's torn down now, I think.

7 Edwards: Yeah. And this protest meeting about police  
8 brutality in Los Angeles developed a very substantial audience  
9 in Detroit. I called all of the people working on developing  
10 the rally and offered them the use of the police department  
11 board room for doing their planning for the rally. I told them  
12 we would give them appropriate protection and traffic control  
13 and we went over all the details of the meeting. Well, the  
14 Elijah Mohammed people were kind of rough. The Bergs were still  
15 in the office at that time, in the police department and I  
16 discussed with them what I was doing and said that I was going  
17 to the meeting. They said, "You can't do that." And I said, "I  
18 not only can, but I am going." I said, "You don't have to come.  
19 I'm not demanding you come if you're worried about the matter.  
20 Why just forget it. But I'm going."

21 Edwards (Peg): They said they couldn't go because they  
22 couldn't leave their guns.

23 Edwards: Oh, yes. They said they couldn't leave their  
24 guns. I said, "Well, I won't be armed so that doesn't offer any  
25 problem to me." Well, we went to the Olympia for the meeting  
26 and at the outset...

27 Edwards (Peg): Who was we?

1 Edwards: Well, I didn't take you.  
2 Edwards (Peg): Jack. Maybe you took Jack.  
3 Edwards: Jack Jensen, I guess was with me.  
4 Downs: This was your driver?  
5 Edwards: Yeah. And they searched us and they searched us  
6 quite roughly. And with considerable show of hostility. Then  
7 they escorted us into the meeting and all of a sudden the whole  
8 situation was different because. They had saved some places  
9 down on they main floor, for us. Whoever was with me and I sat  
10 down there and all of a sudden I began to spot black officers  
11 who were literally encircling me. Very obviously there to  
12 reassure me. It was a, I was kind of a sticky thing with a very  
13 wonderful outcome. There was no trouble of any kind either on  
14 the street before or after or in the meeting. Jack Carlisle, I  
15 think, had come up and said, "I want to go to the meeting with  
16 you." And I said, "Jack, you're nuts. This could be trouble"  
17 He said, "If you're going I'm going." I said, "Alright, but  
18 there are a lot of people who would think you were crazy." He  
19 did go with me, and sat with me. Elijah Mohammed got up and  
20 started off the meeting my saying that this was a different  
21 police department than the police department we had in Los  
22 Angeles and the commissioner has met with us to work out the  
23 plans for this meeting. By the time he got through all of the  
24 tension was out of the situation. Really that was just a matter  
25 of treating people as people rather than as enemies...  
26 Downs: You had met with him ahead of time?  
27 Edwards: Yeah -- with his people,



1           Downs: How long a period, ten minutes, an hour, two hours  
2 or do you have any idea?

3           Edwards: We had several meetings...

4           Edwards (Peg): You met with his subordinates who were  
5 planning things.

6           Edwards: Yeah, I don't know that I'd met with him in  
7 advance. I know that I'd met with his people. They were  
8 planning where they were going to put cars, and how they were  
9 going to put, where they were going to have people in the  
10 building and all...

11          Edwards (Peg): They filled the Olympia.

12          Edwards: And the Olympia was pretty well filled.

13          Downs: Well, this is on a much smaller scale, but when  
14 Walter Adams was acting president of MSU. The students were  
15 anti-Viet Nam and taking over presidents offices, so he led the  
16 march with the students down to the captiol protesting Viet Nam  
17 and... it meant that there was no trouble.

18          ~~Downs (Bette): It was a (inaudible)~~

19          Downs: To paraphrase him I guess, Walt was I don't care, I  
20 won't be here so if you something like that, but it meant that  
21 there, and he was strongly anti-Viet Nam, but it meant there  
22 were no problems. That was a much lesser, not near the  
23 dynamics of what you had.

24          Edwards (Peg): George, do you want to talk about the  
25 Martin Luther King meeting, because that was as big a meeting as  
26 there was in Washington, and you haven't mentioned it.

27          Edwards: Yeah. That's right.

1 Edwards (Peg): It was a couple of weeks before the  
2 Washington.

3 Edwards: It was announced that Martin Luther King was  
4 going to come to Detroit and he was going to talk at Cobo Hall...

5 Edwards (Peg): You'd of thought the devil was arriving.  
6 people panicked.

7 Edwards: ...and there was going to be a march to Cobo Hall  
8 and people just got scared to death about it. Again, we had the  
9 planners of the meeting come in to the police department  
10 boardroom and plan the march, in the police department board-  
11 room and the...

12 Edwards (Peg): You told the police on duty to leave  
13 their...

14 Edwards: Leave their guns, oh no, wait a minute, leave  
15 their billies in their lockers, keep their sidearms...

16 Edwards (Peg): And to smile.

17 Edwards: ...and to smile. We had, I think, a bigger march  
18 than the march on Washington that got so much copy. It started  
19 way up at...

20 Edwards (Peg): At St. Johns about Hancock...

21 Edwards: About Hancock and moved on down, Martin Luther  
22 King was...

23 Edwards (Peg): Was on Woodward Avenue.

24 Edwards: It was on Woodward Avenue. Martin Luther King  
25 was there and a lot of dignitaries. George Hardege was  
26 designated to be the personal bodyguard for Martin Luther King  
27 and...

1 Edwards (Peg): He was the first black inspector, wasn't  
2 he?

3 Edwards: Yeah. First black lieutenant.

4 Edwards (Peg): Lieutenant.

5 Edwards: And my wife marched with a Episcopal Society for  
6 Cultural and Racial Unity unit, which at one point was behind a  
7 banner which some character had created and was carrying, saying  
8 "kill the pigs".

9 Edwards (Peg): I thought that would make a great picture  
10 in the paper. It was a joyous happy day.

11 Edwards: It was a...

12 Edwards (Peg): I mean hundreds, two hundred thousand  
13 people marched on Woodward having a wonderful time.

14 Edwards: They did. It was a great event.

15 Downs: What did they do about bathroom facilities?

16 Edwards (Peg): Nothing.

17 Edwards: Nothing.

18 Edwards (Peg): Nothing.

19 Edwards: They handled that on their own. Used their  
20 pocket (inaudible).

21 Edwards (Peg): Nowadays they have to do...we didn't do  
22 anything. I never thought of it. I who has to go constantly.

23 Downs: Yeah.

24 Edwards (Peg): I couldn't get in the Cobo by the time I  
25 got there.

26 Edwards: I had a hell of a time getting in there. Who was  
27 the character who was...  
[end side 12]

1 Edwards (Peg): I don't remember. What did he do? The  
2 thing really went off fine, so there is no point in thinking  
3 about it.

4 Edwards: Okay.

5 Downs: Well, I remember either reading, George, or  
6 somebody told me there was some kind of racial sit-in in one of  
7 the banks or public buildings, a kind of passive resistance.

8 Edwards (Peg): Well, George had them carried out by  
9 integrated teams.

10 . Downs: Yeah. And they carried them out on stretchers,  
11 remember that?

12 Edwards: Carried them out on stretchers and I saw that  
13 they were, oh God, that was some episode.

14 Downs: What about the, Peg, about the...

15 Edwards: There was a picket line that had been formed in  
16 front of this bank and they had chosen an hour when the traffic  
17 would be very heavy and the picketers joined hands so that it  
18 was, so that they were blocking traffic to the bank to some  
19 degree and I told our officers that we were going to have to  
20 clear a path for pedestrian traffic. Some citizen came up and  
21 very bitterly said, "Is this the sort of thing that you think is  
22 maintaining peace in the city of Detroit?" I said, "Just stick  
23 around for a few minutes and we'll show you what's going to  
24 happen."

25 Edwards (Peg): Arthur Johnson was there.

26 Edwards: Arthur Johnson was there, yeah.

27 Edwards (Peg): He may have been the head of the NAACP, he

*Excerpted from...*

1 was probably the executive director of the NAACP at that time.

2 Edwards: And on signal, our police officers started filing  
3 in right next to the bank, so that they made a solid row. Then  
4 they gradually just pushed the demonstrators out toward the  
5 street so as to leave a clear walkway. Meantime, some of the  
6 protestors had gone into the bank and laid down in front of the  
7 cages so that they were effectively blocking bank business. I  
8 said to get stretchers and carry them out and take them to the  
9 patrol wagons and put them in the patrol wagons and take them  
10 away. They started in with black officers on each end of the  
11 stretchers and I said, "No, no. An integrated stretcher is a  
12 white person, white officer on one end and a black officer on  
13 the other end."

14 Downs: And by that time you had enough black officers.

15 Edwards: By that time I had enough black officers, just  
16 barely, to man the stretchers. Well, the indignant citizen was  
17 reasonably well satisfied. I think all the while that  
18 he really wanted to be well satisfied.

19 Downs: Well, now George, when these things happen,  
20 remembering back, was it newspaper support, or church or labor  
21 or community support, just seems to me that this was, looking  
22 back, could have been a very sticky, I mean bloodshed situation  
23 just turned out very reasonable. I mean the Martin Luther King,  
24 the Muslims, the bank.

25 Edwards: All of it was pretty sticky, but I think the fact  
26 that we had these three big meetings with...

27 Edwards (Peg): Well, George, without the Detroit News,  
though, I don't think you could have, I think you did have some

1 newspaper support.

2 Edwards: We had some newspaper support, we did.

3 Edwards (Peg): Martin Hayden.

4 Edwards: Hayden was...

5 Edwards (Peg): Helped.

6 Edwards: ...Hayden was undoubtedly a...

7 Downs: Compare this with Los Angeles. Did they...

8 Edwards (Peg): Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

9 Downs: ...there is just no comparison.

10 Edwards: Yeah.

11 Edwards (Peg): Now there was this thing that happened at  
12 the very end of your term.

13 Edwards: Oh, yeah. That Scott...

14 Edwards (Peg): Then I think you will have covered most of  
15 it. That woman who was killed by the police.

16 Edwards: Yeah. Peggy and I had gone to Great Britain on a  
17 seminar that dealt with, among other things, some police  
18 problems and while I was away a prostitute by the name of Scott.

19 Edwards (Peg): Cynthia.

20 Edwards: Cynthia Scott was shot and killed by a police  
21 officer under circumstances which were never really completely  
22 resolved factually to my entire satisfaction.

23 Edwards (Peg): Millie Jeffrey was the only person who  
24 called.

25 Edwards: Millie Jeffrey called me, didn't she? Peg.

26 Edwards (Peg): What dear?

27 Edwards: Didn't Millie Jeffrey call me in London?

1 Edwards: Millie Jeffrey was the only person outside...  
2 Edwards: Called me.  
3 Edwards (Peg): ...who called you and said that this is  
4 serious.  
5 Edwards: The department never gave me any warning of what  
6 was going on.  
7 Downs: Millie Jeffrey...  
8 Edwards: Called me in London, I think.  
9 Downs: Oh, you were in London.  
10 Edwards: Yeah.  
11 Downs: Oh, you were out of the country.  
12 Edwards (Peg): And said, "This is serious and...  
13 Edwards: ...you better...  
14 Downs: Oh, but the department did not call you.  
15 Edwards: The department never did call me.  
16 Downs: But Millie Jeffrey did.  
17 Edwards: That's right. Oh, hell, I got back and  
18 discovered that an Aunt that had helped raise me had died. And  
19 I had to go to a funeral, her funeral, before I could get back  
20 to the, get back to the business of Cynthia Scott. I announced  
21 that I would make a careful, personal investigation of Cynthia  
22 Scott problem. And I did make a careful and personal  
23 investigation and then I went on television and made a long  
24 report on the Cynthia Scott case, which defused the public  
25 concerns pretty thoroughly. I did not think that Cynthia,  
26 Cynthia Scott really had to be killed. I think that the  
27 officers who did it, <sup>knew</sup> she had committed a crime. She had done  
something

1 like snatching a purse or some such, relatively minor property  
2 crime and then she had run and they had tried to catch her and  
3 she had fought with them and one of them pulled his revolver and  
4 shot her. It would have been much better if they had just let  
5 her get away. She was a big, tough prostitute and everybody on  
6 Brush Street knew her and they could have picked her up at any  
7 time. But the question was whether or not those officers were  
8 to be trial boarded and I decided that they should not be trial  
9 boarded but I took them off of street duty.

10 - Downs: I had just one example. Who was the police  
11 commissioner after you?

12 Edwards (Peg): Girardin.

13 Downs: Girardin.

14 Edwards: Ray Girardin.

15 Downs: Well, he arranged once for me to go on Saturday  
16 night to one of the toughest areas in a police car.

17 Edwards (Peg): Why?

18 Downs: Oh, I wanted to. I think I was running for  
19 Recorder's Court, it was nothing. You know me, I'm kind of  
20 curious and we went up to this place of trouble and there were a  
21 man and woman arguing and I thought the man was reaching for his  
22 handkerchief, the officer grabs the wrist and there was a gun.  
23 Well, we were having coffee afterwards and I said, "Officer,  
24 you know, that was quick thinking. You know that gun might have  
25 shot me." The Officer just (~~inaudible~~) didn't have thirty days  
26 to think it over. There is that point of what do you do in the  
27 situation. Now, I'm very glad that officer grabbed that person's



1 wrist and he might have just been reaching for his handkerchief.

2

3 Edwards: There is no question that police learn to react to  
4 things that the average citizen would not be able to react to  
5 in time...

6 Downs: And, what is...

7 Edwards: ...and they get an instinct for trouble. If they  
8 survive they do.

9 Downs: In fact, one of the judges told me that when the  
10 police arrest someone, you know they say on suspicion and that  
11 isn't good enough, the officer would say, "I've been an officer  
12 20 years and I've learned to watch people and I know if somebody  
13 starts walking this way and looking over their shoulder that,  
14 you know, a lot of those things could possibly be justified.  
15 Well, I suppose, George, in all these experiences you've led, I  
16 would say, a full life. Is there any you have enjoyed  
17 particularly, or any you have enjoyed more than the other, or  
18 any been more of a headache than the other, or is it just, I  
19 want to ask you too, Peg.

20 Edwards (Peg): The police commissioner job was dreadful  
21 for me.

22 Downs: It was dreadful, that was the hardest. What way  
23 was it dreadful?

24 Edwards (Peg): Well, the hostility of the police officers  
25 to us. When we would go to an affair, we would be practically  
26 isolated. Billy Rogel would walk in, he had voted against a  
27 raise for them, and George had fought like mad for the raises

1 for them but he would get, because he was anti-black, a standing  
2 ovation.

3 Edwards: That's Rongel.

4 Downs: And he'd voted against the raise.

5 Edwards (Peg): Right. That wasn't as important as racism.  
6 The racism itself was bothersome to me, the whole thing was just  
7 a horrible nightmare. I was busy having migraines about once a  
8 week.

9 Edwards: It was very tough on Peggy. One of the...

10 - Edwards (Peg): George liked it.

11 Edwards: ...women said to her, "Why does he stand it,  
12 stand for it?" This was after some...

13 Edwards (Peg): This was in, when the Toronto team was  
14 there.

15 Edwards: Yeah, and Jensen had been primed, my driver,

16 Downs: I knew him well (~~inaudible~~)

17 Edwards: Tiny Loveland's son. That's the reason he got the  
18 job.

19 Edwards (Peg): To know him well, was not to love him. He  
20 is now the police commissioner of Caseville, Michigan.

21 Downs: He is?

22 Edwards (Peg): He is.

23 Edwards: He was the last we heard.

24 Edwards (Peg): Well, he was last summer.

25 Edwards: I think so.

26 Downs: Yeah, yeah.

27

1 Edwards: That's true. Now, wait a minute, where was I?

2 Edwards (Peg): Going to that field day.

3 Edwards: That field day, yeah. I was convinced that Jensen  
4 deliberately delivered me to the field day late. He had given  
5 me the wrong time and I came out and picked up the program and  
6 the program said a different time than the one the Jensen had  
7 told me and a different time than the one the we were actually  
8 travelling on. We were travelling on a program that would have  
9 gotten me there 15 minutes late. I said this is wrong and you  
10 have, in effect, double crossed me. I don't know that I used  
11 that term. Turn your siren<sup>on</sup> and we are going.

12 Edwards (Peg): And get a hold of the people down there

13 Edwards: And get a hold of the people at the stadium and  
14 give me the mike. So I talked to one of the top officers and  
15 told him what had happened and said to hold up the parade into  
16 the stadium by the police contingent until I get there. They  
17 did none of that. We got there and ran up to the, you know you  
18 had to go up to get down into the stadium,

19 Edwards (Peg): Tiger field.

20 Edwards: Tiger stadium, yeah. And just as we came out  
21 into the stadium, the front rank of the police parade entered  
22 the gate. I think everybody in the stadium realized that A.  
23 we were there and B. that something had happened. I left Peggy  
24 in the stands and jumped down onto the field and joined the  
25 reviewing group and I don't know what words I used, but they  
26 were bitter. Addressed to the person whom I had told to delay  
27 the parade for a few minutes. That night was when someone said

1 to you, "I don't know why he stands for this." And that was the  
2 point at which I decided to get rid of the Bergs.

3 Edwards (Peg): But, at the same time we were never able to  
4 really trust Jack again.

5 Edwards: We were never able to really trust Jack again.

6 Downs: Well, he ended up being head of the Wallace  
7 Democrats.

8 Edwards (George and Peg): Yeah.

9 Downs: And that's just an aside. He was going to register  
10 the Democratic Party as the Wallace Democrats and I got to the  
11 registration place five minutes ahead of time. That's just a  
12 little aside. We registered the name of the political party  
13 with the secretary of state. So that's an aside. Then how  
14 long...

15 Edwards: See, Tiny ~~Kevin~~ was an old time friend.

16 Downs: Oh, from westside local.

17 Edwards: From Kelsey-Hayes.

18 Downs: Kelsey-Hayes and westside local and FDR camp.

19 Edwards: Yeah, and I thought I had a staunch protector  
20 here.

21 Downs: How long did this happen after you had been police  
22 commissioner? Was it within the first few months?

23 Edwards: Oh, no. Oh, yeah, the first few months, I  
24 suppose.

25 Downs: Well, then George this, you had anthropology  
26 someplace down the road in college, I assume, didn't you.

27 Edwards: What was that?

1           Downs: Anthropology.

2           Edwards (Peg): Tom keeps talking about anthropology.

3           Downs: Well, the idea of the tribal unity that you go into  
4 any organization and there is that almost a tribal unity that  
5 you come in as an outsider.

6           Edwards: But, it is much exaggerated in police.

7           Downs: And in the police it is probably more so than  
8 others.

9           Edwards: I've never heard it talked of as tribal unity...

10          - Downs: Try that on for size.

11          Edwards: But, but an organizational unity that rejects any  
12 outsiders control is certainly there.

13          Edwards (Peg): Well, but they feel, they feel that the  
14 outside rejects them.

15          Edwards: They feel discriminated against.

16          Edwards (Peg): Discriminated against. And they work  
17 together and they live together.

18          Downs: This is the only...

19          Edwards (Peg): Remember, they live together, they bowl  
20 together, they do not...

21          Downs: They live together, they socialize together, their  
22 wives are together and it's almost a culture within a culture.  
23 I mean in this where I use the word tribal, Peg, the early  
24 tribe was very loyal to its own members but any outsider when  
25 any doubt killed them...

26          Edward: Yeah.

27          Downs: Their just...

1 Edwards (Peg): Yeah, but you can find that all over in our  
2 soceity.

3 Downs: I think it's more.

4 Edwards: This is more strongly...

5 Edwards (Peg): It's highly.

6 Downs: Also, it true of the political party.

7 Edwards (Peg): It's true in blacks, it's true on...

8 Downs: Political parties want new blood, but they don't  
9 want the new blood to take over. It's true in any organization.  
10 But I think in the police <sup>by</sup> their very nature <sup>it</sup> is more so.

11 Edwards (Peg): It's highly...

12 Edwards: Yes, it is.

13 Downs: And I think you said, George, the police  
14 have the greatest freedom and the least supervision, I mean in a  
15 factory, you have a fellow on the line and a foreman and a  
16 superintendant and the union steward, but the police and they do  
17 feel that they used to be able to use alley justice and can't  
18 anymore. You know the, what I've seen, the studies, the  
19 alcoholism the divorce. I was Wayne County Jail Monitor for a  
20 long time and I know some of that, but it's much more so.

21 Edwards: It's very high.

22 Downs: So, that was the toughest on you, Peg, how about,  
23 let me just check this.

24 Edwards (Peg): The most comfortable is (inaudible) this  
25 job. Because George is not required to go to outside meetings.  
26 We have had a personal social life for the first time in our  
27 marriage. We have time by ourselves, which we have thoroughly

1 enjoyed. And the work has been interesting for George, so all  
2 in all it has been very, it has been the easiest.

3 Downs: Is your name still in the phone book?

4 Edwards (Peg): Oh yeah.

5 Downs: Do you get outraged attorneys who call...

6 Edwards (Peg): No, no, no, no. Nobody calls  
7 (inaudible) judges. We get telephone calls by mistake.

8 Downs: But it is not the outraged attorneys saying you  
9 decided the case wrong.

10 Edwards: No, they don't do that.

11 Downs: They don't do that?

12 Edwards: Uh, uh. I keep thinking back every once in a  
13 while, how in the world did I ever become Judge of the United  
14 States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit?

15 Edwards (Peg): Well, you know.

16 Edwards: Well...

17 Edwards (Peg): Wasn' it Pat, chiefly?

18 Edwards: I had two...

19 Edwards (Peg): Strong advocates.

20 Edwards: ...strong Senators and Pat McNamara was one and  
21 Phil Hart was the other and this was sort of a hit'em high,  
22 hit'em low.

23 Downs: Would you say that Pat McNamara knew the sense of  
24 the power of being the Senator where our good friend Phil Hart  
25 was so sweet, am I putting words in your mouth?

26 Edwards: Well, Phil Hart was extremely effective as a  
27 senator, in his own fashion. But his fashion was quite

1 different. Phil Hart was wonderful in my nomination process and  
2 Pat McNamara was likewise but they just represented different  
3 entirely different approaches.

4 Downs: Two equal, <sup>with</sup> great personal integrity. Just  
5 different. I didn't want to sound too flip. How did you happen  
6 to know Pat and Phil.

7 Edwards: I got Pat McNamara to run for the city council of  
8 Detroit in the first instance. He was one of those Irishmen who  
9 never forgot anything. He never forgot an enemy and he  
10 never forgot a friend. He didn't like the city council. He was  
11 elected easily, but he didn't really enjoy his term there.

12 Edwards (Peg): Didn't like it.

13 Edwards: Didn't like it at all.

14 Downs: Didn't they walk off saying they're a bunch of  
15 jerks, was that Pat?

16 Edwards: Something like that. Yeah.

17 Edwards (Peg): resignation in the wastebasket  
18 once.

19 Edwards: I did throw it. That's right, I did. It  
20 didn't...

21 Edwards (Peg): It didn't take.

22 Edwards: Didn't take. He put it back in.

23 Downs: There was somebody asking how he liked the U.S.  
24 Senate, you know one of those silly questions that regular pay  
25 and no heavy lifting. How about Phil. How had you gotten to  
26 know Senator Hart?

27 Edwards: He was part of the Williams clan.



1           Downs:       So that was the whole recount, Williams  
2 administration.

3           Edwards: Yeah.

4           Downs: How about in Lansing. Did you know him, were you  
5 living in Lansing when he was?

6           Edwards: Tom, I just flat out don't remember. We've known  
7 each other a long, long time. But I don't remember exactly what  
8 our physical relationships were. We weren't always in...

9           Downs: Now, was that from police commissioner you went to  
10 the court of appeals, is that correct? We're trying to think,  
11 Peg, was it police commissioner, I think the court of appeals.

12          Edwards (Peg): What dear?

13          Downs: Was it police commissioner to the court of appeals?

14          Edwards (Peg): Yes. Is that the sequence? Yes.

15          Downs: Yeah, we're trying to remember that, what that was.

16          Edwards (Peg): You had told them you would only stay two  
17 years.

18          Edwards: Yeah, I had said that I would only stay as police  
19 commissioner two years. When I left the police department I  
20 went and was nominated to the...

21          Downs: Wait a second, I think we're at the end here.

22 [end of tape]

23

24

25

26

27

1 Downs: You were going to say something else (inaudible).  
2 We're about all done here. We're winding up on Sunday morning.  
3 I think, George, you had a couple more things to, you wanted to  
4 add.

5 Edwards: Well, I'm not sure that this was what I was going  
6 to say, but it is something that I feel like saying. In the  
7 aftermath, I thought of the police experience as a very useful  
8 one. It certainly put me in touch with aspects of crime and  
9 vice and violence that I never would have known about in detail  
10 the same way. I also gained a great respect for the importance  
11 for the police job, which I never would have understood  
12 otherwise. It's, to me, one of the most important functions in  
13 our society, and it's very important that it be handled  
14 properly. I think that all in all it is being handled somewhat  
15 better than it was at the time I first became police  
16 commissioner. I don't think that's due to me necessarily, but  
17 it's a change in social mores. It's for the better.

18 Downs: Well, I think I told you I had been monitor in the  
19 Wayne County Jail for many years, just part-time and I think  
20 there the effect of the judiciary on the jail system has just  
21 been a very positive influence, and I've heard that on, you know  
22 the Federal impact and so on. The jobs you were in, I say jobs,  
23 police commissioner, city council, juvenile judge, circuit,  
24 supreme court, court of appeals. Which would you say made the  
25 greatest impact on society. I know that's a difficult question  
26 because one court case can affect things for the next hundred  
27 years. impact did your change make in the juvenile court,

1 certainly have a continued effect. The police did, too.

2 Edwards: Well, I would have to say, of course I have been  
3 at the court of appeals job longer than any other job and it is  
4 closer to major decision making power and as a consequence I  
5 would have to say that the court of appeals was the major work  
6 of my life. But I felt all of them were immensely interesting  
7 jobs. I thought the juvenile court was an immensely interesting  
8 job. The only one I was really kind of bored with was the state  
9 circuit court, which was just a trial court.

10 Downs: I have heard more trial judges say that they have  
11 very little discretion, heavy loads, divorce, child support.

12 Edwards: Yes. There is a big work load. It has to be  
13 done and it has to be done right, but compared to the others it  
14 wasn't as challenging.

15 Downs: And then so often, not really much you can do, I  
16 know that. Judges have in criminal cases I thought to be very  
17 frustrating. Whatever happens doesn't seem to be. Now there's  
18 just, George, a lot of other things (inaudible) after you read  
19 the transcript. For instance, I remember you were at the FDR  
20 camp with Gus Scholle and Joe Kowalski and we haven't even  
21 mentioned your private law practice that was very successful.  
22 I'm thinking of Nick Rothe, Charlie Marston. He and I were  
23 classmates, (inaudible) Ted Sachs, Ted Bohn, Jean Nunn. I'm  
24 just thinking that I knew them as well as you.

25 Edwards: Yeah, that law office was in sum total with all  
26 of it's changes and whatnot, it was a very interesting office in  
27 that it produced a lot of valuable people who have moved on to

1 valuable work.

2 Downs: And that was the labor law firm for many, many  
3 years.

4 Edwards: For many years it was the labor law firm.

5 Downs: There were some other good labor lawyers. There  
6 was one case on the opposite side with (inaudible) city of  
7 Detroit and their contracts had been written by various union  
8 and they were all good, but there was only one Ted Sachs, who  
9 was just the brightest (inaudible) they were all good crafts, but  
10 I think that firm had the reputation. Charlie Marston was one  
11 of my best friends from school (inaudible) Ted Bohn couldn't  
12 have a more honest (inaudible)...

13 Edwards: We just, as you know, reinforced the Theodore  
14 Bohn, George Edwards...

15 Downs: Yeah, we just heard about that.

16 Edwards: Relationship.

17 Downs: Yeah, that I think Ted was a certain (inaudible).  
18 George, when we get done with this, I just want to mention  
19 first, I'll get it transcribed as soon as reasonable and send it  
20 to you and you can take any part and either edit or if you want  
21 to take some to seal it, the easiest way to do it is just to cut  
22 it out and put it in the safe deposit vault and say, "Don't look  
23 at it for a zillion years." I'll not use it. The only thing I  
24 caution is first, please don't try to edit it as though this  
25 were a book because this is not meant as a final document. The  
26 research will be used, assuming you want<sup>it</sup> to, it will be at Wayne  
27 University, the Walter Reuther Library. Now, that's open to

1 most all scholars. Some of them there are trying, Phil Mason  
2 that there are a few that are trying to re-write history to say  
3 that Walter Reuther was never at the Flint sit-down and...

4 Edwards: Was never at the Flint sit-down?

5 Downs: This is some of the revision in history going on  
6 now.

7 Edwards: Well, neither of the Reuthers, now wait a minute,  
8 Nick was very much at the...

9 Downs: Nick and Roy.

10 - Edwards: Nick and Roy, yeah.

11 Downs: So, I'm just...

12 Edwards: Walter was never inside the Flint sit-down.

13 Downs: Roy was the one that planned the basic strategy,  
14 but...

15 ~~Edwards: I was.~~

16 ~~Downs: And you were...~~

17 ~~Edwards: I was in plant four.~~

18 Downs: I was his assistant at U of M and we would  
19 hitchhike out, well, that's an aside. So well, anyway, we'll  
20 get the transcript to you and then that's your property to do  
21 whatever you want to with it. Frankly, I think there are some  
22 pieces of history here that just have never been told and  
23 (inaudible) and the newspapers have never picked it up. I'm  
24 just very pleased with what we have and I want you to go through  
25 it. If you want a copy of the tapes, I can give it to you. I  
26 think you'd probably rather have the transcript...

27 Edwards: I'd rather work with the transcript.

1           Downs: Well, okay, then I guess we'll wind it up now.  
2 It's about a quarter to eleven, Sunday and thanks a lot. It's  
3 always been good to see you and Peg.

4           Edwards: Well, it's been a nice visit, Tom, just  
5 wonderful.

6           Downs: Well, that ends it for the time being and we may,  
7 after you've gone over this you may want to come down and do  
8 another tape.

9 [end of tapes]

10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27