

1 TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW BY TOM DOWNS

2 OF ZOLTON FERENCY 7/15/88

3 DOWNS: Zolton, we talked about this. I want you to be
4 sure to understand the procedure. You will be taped here, and
5 this will, if it is agreeable to you, end up with Phil Mason,
6 who's curator at Wayne University. He was formerly State
7 Historian, you probably know him. Then, before, when it is
8 done, it will be transcribed and you will have a chance to edit
9 anything out you want edited out. Don't worry about the
10 grammar. And then, if there's any part you want sealed for any
11 period of time, you have that prerogative. Now, the ultimate
12 use will be that probably sometime some scholar's probably
13 going to want to dig up what actually transpired in the period
14 we're talking about, and when we're going, I don't want you to
15 worry about any logical sequence or an exact date or time, kind
16 of a free-flow. I'll ask you a few things. Does that, is this
17 agreeable?

18 FERENCY: Yes, that's fine.

19 DOWNS: And, and with that, we'll start. Zolton, just a
20 little of your background. Where were you born?

21 FERENCY: I was born in Detroit, June the 30th, 1922.

22 DOWNS: Was that down in Delray?

23 FERENCY: Delray, right.

24 DOWNS: Now that's the southwest. I'll tell you a real
25 quick story of Delray. I was down there, I was campaigning and
26 I spoke to one of the groups there, we're interviewing you but
27 you'll get a kick out of this. When I got there, and I was

1 introduced as an Italian. And I knew one fella there, and
2 afterwards I said, "Gee, everybody's very polite, clapped,
3 tough questions, and that's pretty good with my WASP
4 background, being introduced as an Italian." He said, "You
5 know what an Italian is? That's a black turned inside out. So
6 the minute you were introduced that way, there would be no
7 questions, polite applause and yet the one vote () when I
8 came in. So, I know a little bit about Delray.

9 FERENCY: Well, Delray was, of course, the major Hungarian
10 community in the Detroit area. At one time there were 85,000
11 Hungarians there. But the community also included Polish
12 people, heavy segment of Armenian people, practically all the
13 Slovenians, Croats, ah, sort of central Eastern European. No
14 Germans, no Belgians, they were over on the east side. And we
15 had a whole colony of blacks who had settled there right after
16 the Civil War on south Rademacher, just north of West Jefferson
17 Avenue. And, there was a black church, and all those kids went
18 to school on an integrated basis and didn't know, apparently,
19 what they were doing, integrating the school. It was a natural
20 type of thing. And we had some very good black athletes,
21 Debbie Miles I remember, and you might remember a track man,
22 who later became somewhat active in Detroit politics. Willie
23 Joe Benham, Willie Joe ran for the school board and things
24 like that. He was one of my classmates.

25 And so, one grew up with a, an appreciation of other
26 people, other cultures. You learned enough of the other
27 language to at least swear in it and to greet each other, and

1 ah, I thought it was a typical example of what this country
2 could be.

3 DOWNS: That was the public schools you went to?

4 FERENCY: Yes. I went to Beard Elementary, and there's a
5 war story connected to that, which I won't tell here. The long
6 and the short of it was they were going to tear it down a few
7 years ago, and the local community asked me to come in and save
8 it, and we not only saved it, but we got it declared a
9 historical site and put a plaque on the building and now they
10 can't tear it down. And Arthur Jefferson was very angry with
11 me about that. Cause now he has to budget for it. But from
12 there I went to the Ninas Intermediate and of course the
13 Southwestern High School, which is where we all graduated from.
14 Then, I went to college at Michigan State University. My
15 undergraduate education there was interrupted by WWII and I
16 went off to the war and because I was a foreign language major,
17 they sent me to Military Intelligence Training Center where I
18 became ultimately an order of battle analyst, which is a person
19 who's expert on the armament, the morale, the training,
20 disposition of the troops, enemy troops in front of you. A
21 very important segment of the intelligence apparatus.

22 When I came back I graduated and that's when I met and went
23 to work for Bette Downs in 1947, after the war. And I had a
24 B.A. in foreign languages and of course that doesn't get you a
25 whole lot of green stamps, and so on, and so I used my GI bill
26 and I went to Detroit College of Law at night. I was there
27 about the same time George Edwards was going, and ah one of my

1 classmates was Bob Millender and I graduated in '52 with
2 highest honors at the top of my class and was working for the
3 City and then I decided I was going to try and strike out on my
4 own private practice. And so Millender and I, and Steve
5 Sweeney, we rented a storefront on Gratiot and Riopelle,
6 right in black bottom, and we were going to be lawyers there.
7 And, one day he came and said, no, that he was going to be a
8 drag on our firm. And that he thought the two of us were going
9 to do very well and that he wouldn't be able to do very well
10 because he couldn't bring any business in and so on. And, we
11 tried to dissuade him, but no he was going to go do whatever he
12 wanted to do. And so, Bob, I think he went back to work at the
13 post office, I don't know what he did exactly.

14 But anyhow, beginning in 1953, ah, they reorganized the
15 workers compensation department in '55. They abolished the
16 commission and created a department with a director. Ted Bohn
17 was Wayne County chairman at the time. And he promoted me for
18 the director of workers compensation. I had been doing
19 graduate work in labor law at Wayne State University. And I
20 got, of course, acquainted with that firm, with the Rothe firm
21 and with all the other plaintiffs' law firms. I think that's
22 about the time I got acquainted with you, too, somewhere along
23 about there.

24 And, Mennen ultimately picked Tom Quimby, who knew
25 absolutely nothing about workers compensation, but was a nice,
26 bright up and coming person from Grand Rapids out of the reform
27 movement over there, and so I was his deputy. I ran the

1 Detroit office. And then, Frank Blackford got in trouble on
2 the Liquor Control Commission and he had to leave there under a
3 cloud--not any wrongdoing or anything, just politically. He
4 got the legislature mad at him or something, I forget what the
5 hell it was. And so, Staebler convinced me that I ought to go
6 over there and be a liquor commissioner at least for the time
7 being so that we could keep an eye on things. So I did that
8 for awhile.

9 And then Quimby became Democratic National Committeeman and
10 his main task was to get the presidential nomination for Mennen
11 in 1960. And so, he started out to do that, working with Jake
12 Arvey and Carmine DeSappio, which I always got a big kick out
13 of. I mean, I can just see Tom Quimby going into a meeting
14 with Jake Arvey and Carmine DeSappio, trying to sell Mennen
15 Williams as president! But be that as it may, the Republicans
16 in the legislature got madder than hell and forced him into
17 resigning. And so I became director of the workers
18 compensation department in 1959.

19 Then, alot of turmoil occurred in Wayne County, you'll
20 remember, when Sam Olsen became county prosecutor. He had a
21 very heavy Teamster influence behind him, and so on. He had
22 taken money from them, and so on and so forth, and ah we were
23 not very happy with him. We being the organized Democrats in
24 Wayne County. I was the vice chairman for the 14th
25 Congressional District. And so, I decided to run against him
26 in the Democratic primary for Wayne County prosecutor. We ran
27 a good campaign and did alot of important things, but we got

1 beat. Very, very difficult to win against the establishment
2 down there. And at the same time, Swainson was running against
3 Hare for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

4 DOWNS: Let's back up. When you ran prosecutor, I
5 remember the campaign, what kind of support did you get, say,
6 well the Teamsters were solidly behind Olsen.

7 FERENCY: Absolutely.

8 DOWNS: Did you get any support from Frank Martel or Walter
9 Reuther, Gus Scholle, the UAW? or groups like that?

10 FERENCY: What happened was that the practice of the Wayne
11 County AFL-CIO, being the endorsing body, had already been
12 established. And my good old friend from the 14th District, Al
13 Barbour, was the president of the Wayne County AFL-CIO, and so
14 we talked, and he says, Zolton, he says, you're a good guy and
15 we know who you are, and we know what you can do, but I don't
16 think we can do anything. And so, ah, they voted no
17 endorsement--on the board. And so, very interesting, we
18 decided, "we" being our campaign and some guys in labor, to
19 take it to the floor of the convention. So that when the
20 board's recommendation came in for no endorsement, that we
21 would oppose it and urge the endorsement of Ferency. And that
22 would include everybody in the Wayne County AFL-CIO in 1960.
23 And so that's what we did. And when it hit the floor, all hell
24 broke loose, because nobody had ever challenged the board
25 before. And that was disruptive, and so on and so forth. I
26 remember Joe Basso, sheet metal workers, getting up and just
27 ripping me up and down, and did such a hatchet job on me that

1 Paul Silver, who had been ordered to keep his mouth shut,
2 nonetheless got up and said, now just a minute. And began to
3 defend me, and that turned the damn tide. And that wasn't
4 Paul's intention at all, but he just didn't like the way Joe
5 Basso was doing it. And so, low and behold, the convention
6 voted to endorse me against the recommendation of the board.
7 So I had the labor endorsement, but it didn't do very much,
8 because it came late and they didn't put much behind it,
9 anyhow.

10 DOWNS: How about Frank Martel, personally?

11 FERENCY: I talked with him, but he was pretty much along
12 with the old guard establishment. He had had his, ah,

13 DOWNS: And how about Gus Scholle, then, did you..

14 FERENCY: Gus did not take a part in that county race.

15 DOWNS: That was my recollection, saying he was the state
16 pre., how about Walter Reuther, did he, ah?

17 FERENCY: Well, I talked to Roy a couple of times, and I
18 never talked to Walter about that. Ah, but they said that they
19 were going to go along with whatever the county labor did. And
20 so they didn't really take an active interest in it, either.
21 Although, I had alot of important UAW people on my committee,
22 Doug Fraser, Leonard Woodcock, Mildred Jeffrey, as individuals.

23 DOWNS: How about Ken Morris? Do you remember..

24 FERENCY: Ah, he was leaning toward me, but he decided to
25 stay neutral.

26 DOWNS: Was Doug, was he president of DeSoto local then, or
27 do you remember?

1 FERENCY: I think he was on the staff.

2 DOWNS: Leonard was on Walter's staff, I think, wasn't he.

3 FERENCY: Ed Purdy was the CAP coordinator.

4 DOWNS: Now, did the Democratic Party make any, make any
5 endorsement in the primary? They took hands off?

6 FERENCY: Right

7 DOWNS: How about the black community?

8 FERENCY: Well, it wasn't as well organized then as it is
9 now, but I had alot of support. For example, John Conyers was
10 on my inside campaign committee.

11 DOWNS: How about Millender?

12 FERENCY: Yes,

13 DOWNS: Horace Sheffield, do you remember Horace?

14 FERENCY: Yes, Horace, and ah, so anybody who was
15 politically active in the black community was supporting me, no
16 question about that.

17 DOWNS: You mentioned, I just wanted to show that, Bob
18 Millender was a black, he happened to be a very good friend of
19 mine, I think just an unusually competent person. I'll tell
20 some stories sometime if I'm taped. How about Sweeney, was he
21 black or white?

22 FERENCY: Steve was white.

23 DOWNS: Ok, so that takes you through, how close was that
24 election?

25 FERENCY: About 90,000 to about 60,000. 3 to 2, something.

26 DOWNS: Were there any threats on you from the Teamsters?
27

1 FERENCY: The usual, crank calls and things like that, that
2 I never paid a whole lot of attention to.

3 DOWNS: Ok, well we got you through that. And this is the
4 type of thing, Zolton, that's extremely interesting and this
5 would never show up in ordinary history books, that the central
6 body's board was neutral and then you were able to have the
7 rank and file delegates come out for you, and the role of Basso
8 and Silver, I mean, I know them both, and whoever does the
9 ultimate scholarly research will have to check on Basso and
10 Silver. But ah, that's ah. OK, so we got you through there.
11 Just a couple other things. What were your, were your parents
12 living while you were growing up?

13 FERENCY: My Dad died in January 1940. I was 17 years old
14 at the time. My Mother never remarried, and she lived a very
15 long life. She lived to be 92. And she never remarried.

16 DOWNS: What did your father do?

17 FERENCY: Well, my Dad came over in 1913, and his first job
18 was in New York, like all immigrants, he had a job at an
19 all-night restaurant as a dishwasher, whatever. And then the
20 war broke out, WWI, and he heard that Detroit was gearing up
21 and hiring, the word went through there, hiring in Detroit, so
22 he came out to Detroit. My older brother was born in New York.

23 He came out and located in Delray in about 1915. And he went
24 to work for Whitehead and Kales, as a paint chipper. And then
25 he went to work for Timken Axle as a machine operator. And he
26 saved his money and he ultimately went into a business, one of
27 these little working man storefronts, with snuff and gloves and

1 short order meals that my mother prepared with a 6-tool
2 counter, and so on. And I, I of course grew up in that.
3 Waited tables, cleaned tables, went to the store, bought the
4 stuff and carried the empty bottles down, you know, the things
5 that the kids do. And that grew a little bit, and he ended up
6 with about 22 tables, as a restaurant. And then he got cancer
7 and died. And my mother sold the business and I went off to
8 college.

9 DOWNS: Did you have any brothers?

10 FERENCY: Two older brothers.

11 DOWNS: What do they do?

12 FERENCY: My older brother is of course retired now. He's
13 born in 1915, so he's 73, or will be, and he has been a, I
14 guess you call it a sales engineer, making estimates, he never
15 graduated from college.

16 My middle brother graduated as an engineer from the
17 University of Detroit and worked for General Motors at first,
18 and then ended up with Wyandotte Chemical as a heating and
19 ventilating engineer and he retired from there.

20 DOWNS: Were your parents generally liberal, or what kind
21 of a..

22 FERENCY: Well, most Hungarians are fiercely independent
23 people. They, ah, very individualistic. But they are outgoing
24 and very interested in things. My Dad voted for Roosevelt, I
25 know, in '32, and then, because he was a small businessperson,
26 became disabused of all the regulations that came with the NRA
27 and everything else, and got madder than hell at Roosevelt in

1 '36, and of course, he died before Roosevelt ran again.

2 DOWNS: Ok. Well now I think we got you up to where you
3 met John Swainson, didn't we?

4 FERENCY: Well, I was in that '60 primary and so was he.
5 And, but, you mentioned while we're talking here, while in
6 college, before I went to the war in 1942, I heard and met
7 Norman Thomas and he convinced me that I'm a socialist. And
8 I've been one ever since. The problem with that is, there
9 isn't much you can do with that. I've tried a few times to be
10 a socialist in politics, but nobody paid any attention to that.
11 And so, like alot of other people, some of whom you know, of
12 course, who were old socialists, we worked in the Democratic
13 Party to do whatever we could do.

14 DOWNS: Well, actually were you a member of the Socialist
15 Party in Detroit?

16 FERENCY: There was a student organization on the campus.

17 DOWNS: At MSU.

18 FERENCY: Right.

19 DOWNS: But you weren't in where Walter Reuther and Emil
20 Mazey and Leonard Woodcock, Bette, my wife, and that whole
21 group was?

22 FERENCY: No. As I say, I was really exposed to it in
23 college, studying foreign languages and history and political
24 science and so on. Ah, an intimate or a more intimate
25 acquaintanceship with it, after Norman Thomas came to speak,
26 and so on and so forth.

27

1 Ah, after that, well I met Bette four years later. And, ah, we
2 were all kind of set in our ways by then. As to what our
3 outlook was. And what it was we hoped to accomplish,
4 politically. And so, anyhow, in '60, Swainson was successful.
5 I was not. He got elected.

6 DOWNS: Did you support him?

7 FERENCY: I was in a primary, so I stayed neutral on that.

8 DOWNS: You talked about the Olsen primary?

9 FERENCY: Right. So I didn't want to get involved in the
10 gubernatorial primary, and I did not. Our whole campaign
11 thought it would be unwise to alienate the Hare forces or the
12 Swainson forces, because they were both rather well organized
13 in Wayne County and so there 's nothing to be gained by that.
14 And I didn't, I knew Jim Hare very well, when I was with the
15 Housing Commission under Jim Inglis. Bette, I was relocation
16 director. And Jim Hare was a truant officer at the Jefferson
17 Intermediate School, and he and I used to ride around in the
18 same car together, looking for the kids, as to where they had
19 gone, and so I knew him quite well. I didn't know Swainson
20 very well. So, he got elected and then I'm told about 90 days
21 later, ah, his office, the Governor's office was not running as
22 smoothly as he thought it should be. They were 117
23 appointments behind on the boards and commissions, for example.
24 And so, ah, Dave Lebenbom, who was the County Chair, Democrat,
25 and Joe Collins, took me out to dinner and said that they
26 thought that I was what Swainson needed, because I was
27 thoroughly familiar with the Democratic Party, I knew how to

1 run agencies and what the liaison was between agencies and the
2 Governor's office, and plus the fact that I had alot of
3 experience already in politics and government and that's
4 seemingly what he needed.

5 I did not want to go to Lansing and my wife resisted it.
6 But finally I agreed to go, and it was then in 1961 when it was
7 90 days after he was inaugurated, I moved to East Lansing and
8 I've been here ever since, and I went to work for him.

9 DOWNS: Had you been, in the Williams campaign, were you
10 too young for that?

11 FERENCY: Oh no. Hell, I worked with you in the recount.

12 DOWNS: That's right, I remember, on the recounts. It's
13 funny how these things come back. You were active then, then
14 when you were in Europe, is that in Europe where you were you
15 said in WWII?

16 FERENCY: Yeah, I served in the European theater.

17 DOWNS: Whereabouts?

18 FERENCY: Well, I was a specialist and so my permanent
19 assignment was with what I called the War Department, we were
20 honest in those days, we didn't call it the Defense Department.
21 And I was sent out for duty with various organizations who
22 needed our type of experts, we had a team of 3, order of battle
23 specialists. I ended up with the 42nd infantry division in the
24 7th army, and I finished the war with them.

25 DOWNS: In what part of Europe was this?

26 FERENCY: Southern Germany, Bavaria.

27

1 DOWNS: Were you in any of the administration of, the
2 occupation?

3 FERENCY: Well, only in this sense. We were among the very
4 first troops into Dachau (?). The concentration camp. And our
5 assignment was to seize the records for use in the war crimes
6 trials. And, um, there was still shooting and everything else
7 going on when we got there, although the Germans had pretty
8 much abandoned not only Dachau, but the whole community around
9 it, and ah we did that task.

10 DOWNS: Do you remember your reaction to Dachau?

11 FERENCY: Oh yeah, I recorded it on film. And I left the
12 film with my commanding officer. I took pictures of things
13 that I had witnessed. And, I went through it. There were alot
14 of Hungarians in there. Hungarian Jews. And a couple of them
15 showed me around and we talked and so on. And, we saw exactly
16 how the thing was operating, and it was just an unbelievable
17 scene. I mean, you can't describe it nearly as well as you can
18 experience it. I mean, you can't tell what people's bones
19 look like when they're protruding through the skin from
20 malnutrition and so on. You can't talk about whole mounds of
21 human hair and spectacle frames and everything else. They
22 didn't waste anything. They saved everything. The only thing
23 they disposed of was bone and flesh and I suspect they may have
24 rendered that. I don't know. For munitions purposes, or for
25 soap, or whatever. Just an incredible operation. And
26 well-organized, assignments clearly established and carried
27 out. Like working in a factory, processing people. Just ah,

1 unbelievable. So anyhow, that was in April of '45, as I
2 remember. And then we had VE day and then a captain that I had
3 known in Military Intelligence Training Center, ah requested my
4 reassignment. I thought I was going to wait things out there
5 and go home, and I was reassigned to the 18th Airborne Corps
6 under Matthew Ridgeway and we came back to the states for
7 retraining in Japanese order of battle. And we were supposed
8 to be in the advanced group that went in to Honshu Island
9 in gliders and so on. I was a qualified glider person. And
10 I'm very happy that they dropped the atom bomb before that
11 happened.

12 DOWNS: We're at the end of the tape here.
13 This is side 2. OK, we're ready to go. So, the dropping of
14 the bomb meant that you didn't go to Japan.

15 FERENCY: Right. I had too many points to be shipped out
16 again and not enough points to be discharged, so I stayed in
17 Camp Campbell until November of '45 and then I finally got out.

18 DOWNS: Now, we got you back, it doesn't have to be in
19 logical sequence. We had you in, they would now call it chief
20 of staff. What were you called then?

21 FERENCY: Well I was the executive secretary.

22 DOWNS: Executive secretary. I remember you in that role,
23 of course, but you want to tell a little bit about how that
24 operated?

25 FERENCY: Well, that was an interesting job. I looked at
26 it again since then and I just can't believe the transformation
27 of that office and that job. We only had about 6 people. We

1 had Bob Derengoski, the legal advisor, and Dick Miller, who was
2 our legislative liaison, and myself and Ted Ogar who was the
3 PR guy, and maybe one or two other staff people and that was
4 it. That's all we had in the Governor's office. We were all
5 tucked in there, two or three rooms there in one wing of the
6 Capitol.

7 DOWNS: Do you know how many there are now?

8 FERENCY: I can't count 'em all. I mean, they're all over
9 the place. How many are there?

10 DOWNS: Apparently the explosion came under Romney. Is
11 that your recollection?

12 FERENCY: Oh, yes. It's, ah just dozens of people there
13 now. All kinds of people. We didn't have that, so we had a
14 tight little operation and we had typical problems like
15 scheduling the Governor was a very serious problem. And so I
16 took hold of that and got that all straightened out. Made sure
17 he was going where he was supposed to go and get there on time
18 and so on and so forth and not wasting his time going to places
19 he didn't need to go. And there was nobody making those
20 political judgments. And they were receiving invitations and
21 sending that man all over, or not letting him go, or whatever,
22 it was a disaster. Ah, then the internal workings,
23 politically, were very bad. People were clamouring for these
24 appointments. Judgeships and agency appointments and so on,
25 and all the hangers-on came out of the woodwork, even those who
26 had been refused by G. Mennen Williams were trying again now,
27 and so I had to become the buffer between the Governor and

1 all these jobseekers. And I did that willingly, because
2 somebody had to do it. There's just no way all those folks
3 could get in to see the Governor, and so that was one whole
4 thing that I did.

5 Then we ran into some very serious political problems, as
6 you'll remember. He was a new Governor, untested, and the
7 legislature as it will do from time to time decided to try a
8 few of its own things and one of the things, for example, was
9 the Bowman bill, where Sen. John Bowman from Macomb County,
10 after Detroit passed its first city income tax, wanted outstate
11 legislation to prevent the taxing of people who did not live in
12 the city of Detroit but worked there. And remember, Swainson
13 was only there for two years. These were two year terms in
14 those days. You no sooner got in there and you were running
15 for re-election. And so, this is part of what happened,
16 because the Democratic Party, as I said then, and will continue
17 to say, did not do justice by its Governor. They played
18 politics with this issue locally. And one of the, and I said
19 it then and I'll say it now, one of the weak characters was Joe
20 Collins. I always thought that a party chair had the task of
21 keeping the party in support of the , of certainly of the
22 Governor, and other important elected officials. And then,
23 once a decision governmentally was made that they had a task of
24 selling it politically. Well, hell he wouldn't even go near
25 Macomb County. And things were just bursting out all over down
26 there. They were holding anti-Swainson rallies and so on. And
27 he and I, the Governor and I, asked Joe, what are you doing

1 about this? Well, you know, we're working on it, and I'm
2 talking to a few people on the telephone and so on. Well
3 you've gotta go down there, and you've gotta tell em why we did
4 what we did and you gotta get those people in support.

5 DOWNS: You're talking about after the Governor signed the
6 bill?

7 FERENCY: And while it was being considered. And both.
8 That was one. The milk bill, you'll remember. Where, well
9 I'll never forget this. Ah, I can't exactly remember what that
10 milk bill was all about, but labor wanted it very badly. I
11 know Gus wanted it very badly.

12 DOWNS: The dairy workers pushed it. It was the pricing, I
13 was on a milk commission at that time, and the milk drivers
14 were being squeezed out by the chain stores. And price-fixing,
15 really it was a price-fixing bill.

16 FERENCY: And so, ah, I remember he went over across the
17 street to the Roosevelt Hotel to make a speech at noon, to tell
18 them what he was going to do with the milk bill, which was
19 going to be a very bad message. He came back, and I said, did
20 you tell em? He say, no. And I said well when the hell are we
21 going to tell em and how? So anyhow, those were the, and the
22 guy didn't deserve all that political turmoil.

23 DOWNS: You mean the bad message being that he was going to
24 veto it.

25 FERENCY: Right.

26 DOWNS: And he promised that he would sign it?

27 FERENCY: Not quite. He promised that he would give it

1 consideration.

2 DOWNS: I was on the fringe of that,

3 FERENCY: Now Gus always said that he promised. But, I
4 don't think he promised. But, you know, John was such a decent
5 guy, such a nice guy, he always found it hard to say no to
6 anybody about anything. And, of course, that became my task
7 and I got all the lumps that went with it.

8 DOWNS: Now did the UAW take a separate position on that
9 bill?

10 FERENCY: No.

11 DOWNS: You remember, the dairy workers hung a wreath over
12 their hall after that?

13 FERENCY: Right, up in Highland Park. I'll never forget
14 it. And ah, but the UAW, they took hands off on it.

15 DOWNS: Now what was, ah, with the legis, was Joe Kowalski
16 speaker at that time?

17 FERENCY: Yes.

18 DOWNS: What was your relation with Joe?

19 FERENCY: Well, ah, it was pretty good. Ah, Dick Miller
20 was our liaison and he ultimately ended up on Kowalski's staff,
21 you remember, when we lost, and so we got along pretty well
22 with him. To the Governor's credit, he believed in carrying
23 forward a Democratic Party program, especially if he or it had
24 said that it would. Either in his campaign speeches or in the
25 platform, and so on. And of course in the legislature, alot of
26 these guys were not interested in that. And so we had that
27 friction and John had been a member of the legislature, had had

1 very good rapport, and that began to deteriorate. When he was
2 chief executive, that was a different rela., and they couldn't
3 understand that. They thought that, you know, this guy's
4 getting high and mighty and so on, but the job is, they're two
5 different jobs.

6 DOWNS: Getting back to the milk bill, no not that, the
7 income tax, if he had let that become law without signing it
8 would that have eased things for him?

9 FERENCY: Well, I think it would have won him a reelection.
10 Remember, he lost to George Romney who was a very powerful
11 candidate, loaded with money, excellent public relations image,
12 and we lost by less than 100,000 votes. And you can look in
13 Macomb County, Tom, the figures get a little hazy now, but we
14 carried Macomb County in 1960, when John was elected, by
15 124,000 votes. And in 1962, we carried it by around 40,000
16 votes. There were enough votes in Macomb County to elect him.

17 DOWNS: Well I heard that Bowman didn't really want the
18 bill passed, he just wanted to be able to go back to his
19 constituents and say I put it in.

20 FERENCY: You said that, I didn't.

21 DOWNS: I wondered, if you, did you,

22 FERENCY: I think it was a local thing, and ah, I had had
23 conversations with John Bowman then and since, and you know him
24 as well as I do, maybe a little bit better, and there were
25 times when he was looking for a way to pull that bill back in
26 exchange for some other things, which we could never come
27 together on, and so, it went, but I think it got away from

1 Bowman, and it became a cause celebre, as they say, and it got
2 bigger than Bowman.

3 DOWNS: It got a dynamic..

4 FERENCY, Oh, in western Wayne County I had a lot of
5 problems out there, too. You know, we got 27 little
6 governments out there.

7 DOWNS: And was a certain amount, was there some
8 anti-racial undertone in that, or,

9 FERENCY: It was totally racial. I mean, I'd go down,
10 because Joe Collins wouldn't go, I'd go to Macomb County to
11 speak for the Governor, and I'd have people getting up in that
12 audience with the press present, in the Colonial Hotel and
13 other places in Mt. Clemens, saying things like, why the hell
14 do you think we moved out here? To get away from those
15 goddamned[#] niggers[#], and now you want us to send our money back
16 to support em? You're crazier than hell. And they said this
17 openly. And we're supposed to deal with this politically. Now
18 there's the beginnings of the backlash. Civil rights movement
19 and the white backlash and all the rest of it, very very
20 difficult times, politically speaking.

21 DOWNS: Did labor do much in Macomb County to help on this?

22 FERENCY: They tried, but they couldn't do anything either,
23 and I got, you know, I got messages from Solidarity House that
24 this is a bad one, we admire the Governor, we think he's right
25 on it, but we're having trouble selling it to the rank and file
26 and I said thanks alot, you know.

27

1 DOWNS: As I recall, Millie Jeffrey was jumping up and down
2 when the Governor vetoed it, thinking of being very supportive
3 of that. Is that, ah, is that correct, or am I,

4 FERENCY: Now,

5 DOWNS: Millie Jeffrey supported the Governor, vetoing the
6 income tax.

7 FERENCY: Oh sure, and I think alot of other UAW people did
8 too. But they couldn't do anything with the rank and file.

9 DOWNS: OK, so we got through the Bowman bill.

10 FERENCY: And then another thing that was happening, that
11 became important. ConCon was meeting. And I don't have to
12 tell you about that. A malapportioned constitutional
13 convention, revising the state constitution. And, making the
14 most of it was George Romney, whom we all knew was going to use
15 it as a launching pad for Governor. So I became the Governor's
16 liaison to the constitutional convention, if you'll remember.
17 And I used to sit there by the hour, watching the proceedings,
18 and going back and reporting how they were going, consulting
19 with you, with Harold Norris and Mel Nord and Adelaide Hart,
20 and so on, Bill Marshall, and of course, it was a disaster for
21 us, because the votes weren't there. They could pass whatever
22 they wanted to pass. And so, Romney made the most of it, and
23 one of the things that came out of that, you may not have paid
24 as much attention to it as I did, but they organized this state
25 around the passage of that thing on April the first, 1963.

26 DOWNS: I was very aware of that.

27

1 FERENCY: Ok. They had people paid, working full time, to
2 get endorsements from everybody from the Audubon Society to the
3 Zonta Club. All these good, grey, civic, social organizations.
4 And, there's no way we could compete with that. And I tried
5 to tell Joe Collins and labor and everybody else, we've got to
6 have some sort of a back fill on this sort of thing, I mean,
7 they're running away with this thing. And we never did. All
8 we had was labor, NAACP, and I think one other organization and
9 that was it.

10 DOWNS: Zolton, I was in the meeting when Gus said we could
11 fight and UAW and Roy said they had, oh the fella from, well
12 the Democratic pollster,

13 FERENCY: Lou Harris

14 DOWNS: Lou Harris, () they sent in, and said there
15 was no way to defeat it, and afterwards, I got a letter from
16 him saying he was wrong, we could have defeated it.

17 FERENCY: Well, let me tell you about that. We hired Lou
18 Harris. The Democratic Party did. And, I was chair, see I'm a
19 little ahead of time now. I'm now the chair of the Democratic
20 Party, waging the campaign against this constitution on April
21 1, 1963, and so Lou Harris comes into the Michigan union
22 building, were you at that meeting?

23 DOWNS: At the Admonson room of the Michigan union
24 building,

25 FERENCY: Were you at that meeting?

26 DOWNS: I was there, yeah.

27 FERENCY: And he said things like, I have never seen such
an overwhelming sentiment for something in my whole life.

1 This is worse than the right to work law in Ohio, and so on.
2 And what he recommended was, that we do an about face and
3 support the document in order to save John Mackey and Lynn,
4 whatshisface, Bartlett, and so on and so forth. And I went
5 after him, because I'm party chair. And I said, there's no way
6 in God's world at this stage of the game we can go against it,
7 not only on principle, but even in politics. And so, we had
8 our differences, and they culminated, you'll be surprised to
9 hear. I was invited to speak at a Congressional committee in
10 Washington about political polling and its impact on politics.
11 And I went there and I delivered myself of one helluva tirade
12 against political pollsters and used this example, and Lou
13 Harris followed me in front of that committee, and he met me
14 when I was leaving the committee room, and he was ashen. And
15 furious, and called me all kinds of names, and I said, Lou, you
16 were dead wrong, and I gotta tell these people. I said, and
17 what really you were wrong about is not the figures, what you
18 were wrong about as a political pollster telling us what to do
19 politically. That's where you were wrong. Pollsters are not
20 supposed to do that. Well, anyhow, that's another old war
21 story.

22 DOWNS: Now we jumped you up to state chair. Let's go into
23 how. You worked for Swainson in the executive office, then

24 FERENCY: We lost the election.

25 DOWNS: We lost the election.

26 FERENCY: In '62.

27 DOWNS: And I think your point that we allowed Romney to

1 build around ConCon.

2 FERENCY: And, I was convinced, and the Governor was
3 convinced, and I can say that now, that we couldn't leave the
4 Democratic Party in the hands of Joe Collins. The guy was a
5 complete failure. I mean, this would be the first time since
6 1948 that the Democratic Party would not have a sitting
7 Governor as the head of the Party. And we both were convinced
8 that something had to be done about it.

9 DOWNS: How did Joe Collins get to be chair?

10 FERENCY: He was campaign manager for Swainson in the 60
11 primaries.

12 DOWNS: How did Swainson happen to pick him? Do you
13 remember?

14 FERENCY: I can't tell you that. I think maybe he raised
15 some money for him.

16 DOWNS: He was from Jackson,

17 FERENCY: Right. He was Jackson County chairman. And, I
18 think he raised some money for him.

19 DOWNS: Ok, well then let's

20 FERENCY: So I made my feelings known, I'm the one who
21 could close up the Democratic regime in Lansing after that
22 loss. I handed the keys over to Dick, the lawyer from Oakland
23 County, Romney's right hand bower,

24 DOWNS: Dick VanDusen.

25 FERENCY: Dick VanDusen. I said here are the keys, Dick.
26 Swainson was with Dr. Fill down in Jamaica, or someplace,
27 sunning himself. And, so I went home.

1 DOWNS: Let's back up. How did you do with Dick VanDusen,
2 did you have much relation,

3 FERENCY: I got along well with him.

4 DOWNS: How about Doc Fill? What was his role?

5 FERENCY: Heh, heh, well, that's a story for another day.
6 Remember Gus used to criticize me, maybe you heard it, I had my
7 office on Townsend Street before we moved to the John F.
8 Kennedy house, and ah, I had a picture of Dr. Fill on my wall,
9 with a dart right in the middle of it, and Gus of course was a
10 friend of Dr. Fill's, and he used to say, he never said it to
11 me, but he used to say to other people, what kind of a state
12 chairman is this that's got a picture of the member of the
13 State Board of Education with a dart stuck in the middle of it?
14 And, heh, heh, he never liked that.

15 DOWNS: Can you tell me why you had it stuck

16 FERENCY: I think you know why, I had it

17 DOWNS: I think I know, but I think somebody looking at
18 this tape,

19 FERENCY: Well, I don't want to say, the man's dead now,
20 and you never speak ill of

21 DOWNS: He is dead?

22 FERENCY: Oh yeah.

23 DOWNS: I didn't know that.

24 FERENCY: And ah, died a few years back. And he was
25 primarily a fundraiser. And, very successful at it. He raised
26 alot of money for John Swainson in that primary, and in the
27 subsequent election, and ah, but he was also a person who

1 believed in the reward system, let us say. Where, if you are
2 good at raising funds for politicians, those self-same
3 politicians ought to be good at rewarding you for your efforts.
4 And so, he made no bones about using political influence for
5 this, that or the other.

6 DOWNS: What would he get as a reward?

7 FERENCY: Well, he became a member of the State Board of
8 Education, as one,

9 DOWNS: Yes, but that's no great, a little status, but ah,
10 there's no financial reward.

11 FERENCY: And then he had access to the Governor, and the
12 use of the Governor's name in raising money for his own private
13 pursuits, ah, I think that's a typical way that major
14 fundraisers behave with presidents and governors, and so on.

15 DOWNS: And I think he owns a nonprofit hospital,

16 FERENCY: Yeah, well ah, he and Gus and John were in
17 business together in the mouse house.

18 DOWNS: In the what house?

19 FERENCY: The mouse house.

20 DOWNS: What's the mouse house?

21 FERENCY: They were raising mice for experimental purposes.
22 They were in business together. Gus, and Swainson, and

23 DOWNS: Where did they raise the mice?

24 FERENCY: Out here, outside of Lansing.

25 DOWNS: And then they'd sell those, to ah,

26 FERENCY: Oh yeah, it was a regular business. They were
27 raising laboratory mice.

1 FERENCY: You mean, you never knew about that? That Gus
2 had a share in the mouse house? So anyhow, ah, the long and
3 the short of it was, we decided to make a challenge for the
4 state chairmanship, I got elected on February 1, 1963,

5 DOWNS: See, in the mouse house it was Gus, Swainson and
6 Phil,

7 FERENCY: And Swainson's brother-in-law, doctor, he was a
8 veterinarian or something.

9 DOWNS: And Phil was probably the organizer of it.

10 FERENCY: Oh yeah, he put up most of the money.

11 DOWNS: OK, so, let's go ahead.

12 FERENCY: Ah, that became one helluva convention, if you'll
13 remember. It was the ninth most important news story of 1963,
14 according to the AP. It ran for days. That was the day of the
15 convention, of the Morton House Caper, ha, ha, ha, I have to
16 write that thing up one of these days. That was a, that was a
17 most interesting political even that I've ever participated in.
18 Those few days. It was just a weekend in Grand Rapids. But
19 anyhow, we won. So I became party chair.

20 DOWNS: What was the vote on winning? How close was that?

21 FERENCY: It was close to start with and then they started
22 switching, and ah, we never did get, we never, we still don't
23 know what the 12th District did.

24 DOWNS: Now the chair before you, it went from Staebler to
25 Collins, well from Griffiths, from the change,

26 FERENCY: From Hicks, to Neil, to Joe to me.

27 DOWNS: To you.

 FERENCY: Right.

1 DOWNS: Now, as far as the groups there, my recollection is
2 alot of people were saying you didn't have a chance, labor,

3 FERENCY: Oh yes.

4 DOWNS: Where was your support really coming from?

5 FERENCY: Rank and file. And, I campaigned like hell that
6 weekend. I went to all the caucuses.

7 DOWNS: How about, well let's take Walter Reuther, Gus
8 Scholle, Leonard Woodcock,

9 FERENCY: I had Leonard Woodcock and Doug Fraser. I did
10 not have Gus. Oh strongly, Leonard spoke for me in the UAW
11 midnight caucus and then came up to my room and said we
12 couldn't carry it off because we need 60% and we didn't have
13 60%, and so I said, well, what does that mean, do you want me
14 to get out? he says, NO, we'll just see what we can do.

15 DOWNS: How do you explain that Leonard and Doug Fraser
16 were actively for you and Gus was not.

17 FERENCY: They were for me in '60 when I ran for
18 prosecutor, and I have to believe that those two people are
19 principled and were principled people who truly believed in
20 programatic politics. And they knew they weren't going to get
21 it from Joe Collins.

22 DOWNS: And how about Gus?

23 FERENCY: Well, I'll leave you to judge that. Gus was not
24 nearly in that same category. Gus was more of a political
25 operator, let us say, that he had to make do with whatever he
26 had. Recalcitrant legislators, the other side, the Chamber of
27 Commerce, and so on. UAW didn't have that problem. UAW could

1 take a position as to where they were, philosophically,
2 especially with a guy like Walter, and go with it. And say,
3 this is what the UAW believes. Now, Gus has got all those
4 myriad unions in his outfit, and a day to day responsibility
5 for accomplishing things politically. Well, he doesn't have
6 that luxury of taking positions like that. But I got along
7 well with Gus, and the best example I can give you, I think.
8 There came a time when finally under the revised constitution
9 we were going to have an auditor general of the state of
10 Michigan. No longer elected, but appointed, right?

11 DOWNS: Right.

12 FERENCY: And, ah, Kowalski wanted Albert Lee, and I knew
13 Albert Lee. I knew him from Wayne County politics. He was a
14 CPA, but beyond that, he had absolutely, he's dead now, too, he
15 had no credentials for this job. It was strictly a political
16 appointment on a personal basis, as a reward for past political
17 favors. Including fundraising. And I knew that. And I said
18 we shouldn't do that. And so, I came up with the idea of
19 Richard Austin, heh heh, a CPA, and so on. First black to be
20 anything anyplace, if we can get him. And so I talked to Rus
21 Leach and to Gus Scholle in a hotel room, in the Porter Hotel,
22 on an afternoon, and I said, Kowalski and all the rest of those
23 guys want Albert Lee. I think we ought to go for Richard
24 Austin. And Gus says, you sonofabitch. You're right, but how
25 the hell are we going to do anything about this? And I said,
26 we just gotta do it, that's all there is to it. And Russ, of
27 course, was a very good liberal guy, he was anti-war, by the

1 way, when the UAW was still in favor of Johnson's war, he was
2 against the war. But anyhow, we decided, well we'll do what we
3 can. And so, I announced that we're for Richard Austin and I
4 announced that the UAW and the AFL-CIO was with me on this. It
5 and Kowalski exploded! What the hell are you guys doin? Well
6 we lost it.

7 DOWNS: The legislature

8 FERENCY: Yeah, we couldn't carry it off because we didn't
9 have any votes over there, but that's a perfect example of how
10 Gus, when called upon to do so, and given reasons for doing it,
11 was even willing to take political chances if it was the right
12 thing to do. He didn't have any problems with that.

13 DOWNS: And Gus and Joe were very close.

14 FERENCY: Oh, I'll say. I got the whole blame. That crazy
15 Hungarian got all the blame for it from Kowalski. Heh, heh, I
16 mean, I am the one who put Gus up to it, according to Kowalski.

17 So anyhow, that was one example of how Gus operated. So
18 anyhow, I'm now party chair, I'm a programatic liberal and I
19 believe in political philosophy and I believe that our
20 officerholders ought to carry out platform promises and that we
21 ought to make progress for the mass of the people, and so on.
22 And I behaved as such, as you'll remember. I went after Romney
23 hammer and tongs, I got cartoons all over my study at home that
24 the newspaper cartoonist did about me slashing at Romney and so
25 on and so forth. And, I was a good party chair. So much so, I
26 got elected in '63 and got reelected in '65, still against the
27 desires of some of the, they all opposed me in '63. Everybody.

1 DOWNS: Everybody, you mean,

2 FERENCY: The whole power structure. Except for Leonard
3 and Doug, who were acting as individuals,

4 DOWNS: How about Neil Staebler? What was his role?

5 FERENCY: Absolutely in favor of Joe Collins.

6 DOWNS: Well how about, at that time, Neil,

7 [end of tape] We were at the end of that tape. I think
8 you'd said T. John was against you, Neil Staebler, Mennen,

9 FERENCY: All party establishment.

10 DOWNS: Mennen sent word from Africa, and I think you'd
11 said this was, I thought the tape was still running but it
12 wasn't, I think you said everybody except Doug Fraser and
13 Leonard Woodcock.

14 FERENCY: That's on the tape.

15 DOWNS: Is that on the tape?

16 FERENCY: Yeah, I heard that. So anyhow, I got elected
17 party chair and I did what I did. The '64 election was very
18 important. I'm party chair, Neil's running for governor
19 against George Romney, first time since George has gotten
20 elected. And ah, Johnson's running against Goldwater. Very
21 important. You'll remember, and so will everybody else, that
22 the central theme was that Goldwater was a lunatic, right-wing
23 fringe person. He couldn't be trusted with the presidency. Ah,
24 I didn't like the commercial, and I said so when Doyle, Dane
25 and Burnbach showed it to us in Atlantic City, about the little
26 girl counting petals off of the daisy, 10, 9, 8, 7, and then
27 the atom bomb would go off and then the caption would be "Vote

1 Straight Democratic." And I said, now that is very
2 inflammatory political advertising. "Well, that's what
3 Goldwater, he's for bombin' 'em back to the stone age," and so
4 on and so forth. So anyhow, Lyndon was not about to send
5 American boys ten thousand miles away to win a war that Asian
6 boys had to fight and win. And so, for all practical purposes,
7 Lyndon Johnson ran an anti-war, anti-militaristic, anti-nuclear
8 bomb type of campaign and tried to paint Goldwater as a totally
9 irresponsible, former bombardier, who helped matters by saying
10 that if you have atomic weapons in your arsenal, you oughta use
11 em if you want to win a war. And so, that was the campaign.

12 In addition, very important, 1964, Atlantic City
13 convention, to this day is still being reported in the
14 left-wing press as a watershed with the Democratic Party's
15 relationship to the black community. Fanny Lou Hamer, James
16 Foreman and others came to Atlantic City to seat the
17 Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party instead of the racist
18 regular organization in Mississippi. Before we went there, we
19 had been contacted by those people here in Michigan.

20 DOWNS: By the Freedom Party?

21 FERENCY: Yes. And at our convention, state convention,
22 prior to going to the national convention, we passed a
23 resolution unanimously supporting the Mississippi Freedom
24 Democratic Party and calling for seating it instead of the
25 regulars from Mississippi.

26 Well, we go to Atlantic City. We haven't got time on this
27 tape to tell that whole story.

1 DOWNS: Well, tell, let's tell

2 FERENCY: Well, I just haven't got time. Ah, there was a
3 change in philosophy, in mood, from on-high down, from the
4 president on down. I got there on Monday of convention week,
5 and I got a call from Jack Conway, said he wanted to have lunch
6 with me. And he spent an hour and a half trying to tell me
7 that Michigan delegation had to abandon their position in favor
8 of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, 'cause the
9 president didn't want any trouble at the convention. And I
10 said, you can't do that. These folks all voted for that. And
11 I said, I think that's the way they're gonna be. Well, I have
12 five tapes of the caucus and so on. I don't know if you were
13 there or not.

14 DOWNS: I wasn't.

15 FERENCY: Horace Sheffield was so angry he got up and went
16 home. He flew home, he was so embarrassed. Charlie Diggs, Jr.
17 came in to speak for the administration, telling us that
18 instead of seating the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, we
19 were going to give them two honorific seats in the gallery, and
20 we were going to seat the regulars. John Swainson and I and
21 Andy Wisti led the fight against that position. Ah, once
22 again, Pat McNamara, everybody, was fighting for Lyndon
23 Johnson's Happy Birthday on Thursday - he didn't want any floor
24 fight. And so, we fought it out in caucus and we lost. 70 to
25 30, something like that. And everybody was madder than hell.
26 Russ Leach told me that that episode is what caused me not to
27 be the candidate for Lieutenant Governor on the Staebler ticket
and they went for Bob Derengoski instead.

1 That didn't bother me in the least. I could care less
2 about it. But that's how strongly they felt about it, and that
3 was the beginning of this wide division between myself, the UAW
4 and the rest of organized labor. And I have been persona non
5 grata every since.

6 DOWNS: And when Jack Conway was the administrative
7 assistant to Walter Reuther at that time, and when he spoke he
8 was speaking for Walter,

9 FERENCY: They made no bones about it. The press reported,
10 I was on national television with Robert Neuman, the guy that
11 tells you how to speak good English, and he found me and we
12 went on national television and he had already learned that
13 Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Martin Luther King, Jr.,
14 Walter Reuther, had met and had decided that this is the better
15 way to go.

16 DOWNS: Now, the attorney for the, oh, the attorney for,

17 FERENCY: Joe Rauh?

18 DOWNS: Joe Rauh.

19 FERENCY: I have a picture in my file somewhere. That's
20 when I almost got bludgeoned by some, what we call labor goons,
21 on the boardwalk. Right after this picture was taken. I'm
22 standing there talking to Joe Rauh, and if my wife hadn't been
23 with me at the time, I think I'd have been floating in the
24 Atlantic Ocean.

25 DOWNS: And Joe represented the Freedom Party.

26 FERENCY: Yes, he did. And ah, we were trying to work out
27 strategy. And of course, it didn't work out, and the campaign

1 went as it went, but that began in my opinion, the current
2 problem that we have between middle of the road and right of
3 center democrats, who are in power today, who are willing to
4 turn their backs on blacks, on the peace movement, on the
5 feminist movement, on the environmentalist movement, anything,
6 the gay movement, anything that causes them trouble. They
7 don't want to have any part of it. Because it's Death Valley
8 days at the ballot box. And that was ah, one of the beginnings
9 of it.

10 Now, I worked hard in the '64 campaign. I was party chair,
11 I worked for the ticket. I drove Neil Staebler around quite a
12 bit in that campaign, and we did well in Michigan, except for
13 Neil, he lost by 400,000 votes when Johnson was beating
14 Goldwater by over a million. And so, anyhow, right after that
15 campaign, right after Johnson was inaugurated, he began to
16 escalate the involvement of this country in the war in
17 Southeast Asia by sending more troops there. Kennedy had left
18 him with about 18,500 advisors, etc., etc., etc., and he began
19 to introduce more. That started the anti-war movement. That
20 started,

21 DOWNS: The escalation, rather than what Kennedy did. Is
22 that what you're saying?

23 FERENCY: Absolutely. Ah, the very first teach-in was at
24 the University of Michigan, ah, in late January, early
25 February, about the war. Arnie Kaufman put it together,
26 professor of philosophy, a friend of mine, went down in a plane
27 in California not too long ago. Helluva guy. By the way, it

1 was at his house, in Ann Arbor, where he and I and Allard
2 Lowenstein put together the Dump Johnson movement. Which is a
3 story for another day. But anyhow, ah, we had a teach-in at
4 MSU. And I attended. I didn't have a speaking role, but I was
5 there as party chair. Paul Adams had a speaking role, good ol'
6 Paul. And, you know, we're talking about the war, and the
7 involvement, and I was talking about a complete about face from
8 the position that we had taken against Goldwater. And I said,
9 this is politically irresponsible. You can't do this. You
10 can't run for office and get elected, and then do a complete
11 about-face and start carrying out the, Barry Goldwater said
12 that Johnson was doing a better job in Vietnam than he would
13 have done. He said that, he's been quoted in the papers as
14 saying it. And it was true. And so, I started to do what I
15 can. Now, one of the reasons that I did, that has gotten lost,
16 a very important reason, is that the party chair has a
17 responsibility of holding together, as best she or he can do,
18 the various constituent elements that make up the party, and to
19 our credit, we had attracted the liberals, the intellectuals
20 from the campuses, I know Mennen had a group that he called,
21 Frank Blackford was one of the early ones and so on, I did too.
22 The blacks, certainly we had to maintain relationships with,
23 and so on. And so, I argued in party councils that no matter
24 where we were on the war, and no matter what the president was
25 doing, we had an obligation of allowing our various constituent
26 elements to participate and to make their point. And, of
27 course, they were a vast minority in those days. I mean, all

1 they were was a nuisance element--the peaceniks in the
2 Democratic Party, from the standpoint of the elected officials.
3 Well, to make a long story short, beginning in '65, ah, the
4 ruptures that ultimately fragmented the Democratic Party began
5 to take place. And it's never recovered. Jesse Jackson's
6 campaign is a perfect example. How Jesse Jackson can run on
7 the platform that he ran, in these primaries, of economic
8 violence perpetrated by the corporations, especially oil
9 companies, and so on and so forth, and about the need to
10 withdraw from Nicaragua, and about the need to do this and that
11 the other thing, and then Dukakis turned around and picked as a
12 candidate for vice president a guy who was against every one of
13 those positions. And that's gonna come out, and that has not
14 come out yet in the paper. It isn't the way Dukakis notified
15 Jackson that bothers me. It's the way he picks a guy that's
16 unalterably opposed to every position that Jackson took in
17 those primaries. Every one. Gun control, prayer in schools,
18 anything. MX missile. You name it. Bentsen has been on one
19 side, of course Jesse Jackson's on the other. And that's all
20 gonna happen. But it's only additional evidence of why the
21 Democratic Party is not winning elections and why it looks
22 nothing like it used to look in the days of the New Deal and
23 shortly thereafter. It does not represent the mass of the
24 people. And the strategy is, you can see it in the Dukakis
25 campaign, we're gonna lose some black votes. No question about
26 it. Those that Jesse would bring on. But in exchange for
27 them, we're gonna get all those rednecks, those Pabst Blue
Ribbon white sock votes and so on and so forth, the ones that

1 we've been losing to the Republicans, and that's a fair
2 exchange. Because that'll be a victory. The hell with the
3 issues, the hell with leading the country, the hell with
4 telling people what's really wrong, the hell with talking about
5 drugs from the proper perspective, or housing, or jobs, or
6 farmers, or anything else, as long as we win. That's what's
7 important. And so, ah, there had to be a coming-apart of
8 Ferency and the Democratic Party. And ultimately it happened
9 in '67, when it was clear, we had a meeting in the Executive
10 Inn in Port Huron, chaired by Congressman Jim O'Hara, and they
11 were all there, all the congress people were there, and Martha
12 was there, everybody was there, and we were debating in late
13 summer, early fall, 1967, whether or not we were going to
14 support Lyndon Johnson in the presidential election. And
15 everybody says, that's not even a subject to debate. That's a
16 foregone conclusion. Is there anybody in this room who thinks
17 that that isn't going to happen? And I raised my hand. I was
18 the only one in that room - the state party chairman, with all
19 of these elected officials and so on, Frank Kelley, all of 'em,
20 and I made my speech about the fact that Lyndon Johnson was not
21 going to be re-elected, that there were going to be too many
22 defections, that his posture on the war was untenable, that the
23 American people were not going to vote for him, and I gave 'em
24 the best evidence, was the election in 1966. He wins by an
25 outstanding majority in '64, and the entire Democratic Party
26 nationwide took a bath in 1966. Everybody. Mennen Williams
27 lost to obscure Robert Griffin by over 400,000 votes in 1966.

1 Try to explain that if you can. And so, the thing became clear
2 to me, and I'm not suicidal or masochistic, no matter what
3 anybody says. And I wasn't going to sit there as party chair,
4 try to run a party that was going in this direction, when I
5 thought it oughta be going in this direction. So I resigned.
6 And, I went to work for Eugene J. McCarthy. I went to 36
7 states for him, to speak and raise money. I was the only state
8 party chairman who came out against the President in the fall
9 of 1967, and I showed him how to campaign in New Hampshire, at
10 plant gates, he had not done that before, he's a nice guy, kind
11 of a poet, walked him around, not truly in tune with politics
12 and so on, but a nice man. Ah, he did well in New Hampshire.
13 People forget what we had agreed to do in the McCarthy
14 campaign, was to participate in 6 primaries with the war as the
15 issue. That's what we had agreed to do, and we were organized
16 to do that, and we were doing it. After the New Hampshire
17 results, he decided he wanted to run for president, nationwide,
18 on all issues, wherever, and we thought, well hell we're not
19 equipped to do that. We don't have the money, we don't have
20 the troops, we don't even any people, we're not even on the
21 ballot in some of these other states, and but it went anyhow.
22 And they wanted me to chair that whole campaign in Wisconsin
23 when it started to fall apart, and I said, no, I'm not gonna,

24 DOWNS: When you said six states in the primaries on the
25 war issue,

26 FERENCY: Yes, that's what he announced.

27 DOWNS: that was not necessarily to win, but just to

1 heighten the issue,

2 FERENCY: Absolutely.

3 DOWNS: Am I reading, I don't want to put words in your
4 mouth.

5 FERENCY: Absolutely. That's exactly what the campaign
6 started out to be. It was not a campaign for the presidency.

7 DOWNS: And then what happened? Gene got

8 FERENCY: Well, he got fever.

9 DOWNS: He got the fever.

10 FERENCY: Well, I mean, you know, he did real well in New
11 Hampshire.

12 DOWNS: Well, now, in New Hampshire you won. When did
13 Johnson, ah, make his announcement that he wasn't running?

14 FERENCY: Ah, Allard Lowenstein and I and Arnie Kaufman met
15 in Ann Arbor. It was in October. And we decided we better get
16 a candidate against Johnson. So, I was assigned George
17 McGovern. Try and get him. Allard was going to try and get
18 Eugene G. McCarthy. I flew to Rapid City, South Dakota, spent
19 a weekend there, and I walked up and down the streets with
20 George McGovern, trying to talk him into running for president.

21 He would have none of it. He says, I got a whole bunch of
22 problems trying to get re-elected here in South Dakota. And so
23 on and so on.

24 DOWNS: He was Senator then.

25 FERENCY: Yes, and so I drew a blank. Lowenstein got what
26 he got from McCarthy. The six-state approach type of thing.
27 And so,

1 DOWNS: Is that what the three of you'd agreed upon in Ann
2 Arbor,

3 FERENCY: No, we were looking for a candidate, but that's
4 the best we could do. And so, that was the best we could do,
5 and we started out with it, and then after New Hampshire, blah
6 blah blah blah, then on March the thirty-first, at eleven
7 o'clock in the evening, I'll never forget it, Lyndon Baines
8 Johnson told the American people on live television that he was
9 not going to be a candidate for President of the United States.
10 I was practicing law in Flint. The very next morning, I had a
11 call from Ted Kennedy, whom I had done some things with in the
12 past. And he says, Bobby is going to run and we want you with
13 us. And I said, wha's that? He says, well, now that the
14 President is out, blah blah blah blah blah. And I says, now
15 wait a minute. I says, you know, we've been pounding the damn
16 pavement for a helluva long time here, with McCarthy and
17 everything else. I said, where the hell have you guys been?
18 And so on. Well, you know, blah blah blah blah blah blah.
19 I said, no, Ted, I'm sorry, in my culture you always go home
20 with the same woman you took to the dance. I mean, it's bad
21 form to do otherwise. So I said, no I'm sorry. And so, the
22 Kennedy campaign got launched. And, you know, the world knows
23 what happened. Ah, April, 4th or 5th, Martin Luther King is
24 assassinated. Ah, comes May. June 4th or 5th, 6th, Bobby
25 Kennedy is assassinated. Shortly after the Bobby Kennedy
26 assassination, here comes George McGovern, and says, I'm a
27 candidate for President of the United States and I'm gonna take
up where Bobby Kennedy left off. And I said to myself, why
that sonofabitch. Heh, heh, I said well that takes a helluva

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1 lot of goddamn nerve to sit on your fanny in South Dakota,
2 while guys like McCarthy and everybody else are out running
3 against a sitting President, and then when they all get killed
4 and everything else, you just move in and take, I couldn't take
5 that. And to this day, I have never answered another piece of
6 mail or anything else from George McGovern. Nothing.

7 But anyhow, you remember what happened. The 1968 Chicago
8 convention. It was a beaut. And at the end of it, national
9 television, on the rostrum, when the ticket is formed, they all
10 go up there, Hubert, and there's George McGovern, holding
11 hands, Hubert Humphrey, who was carrying forward exactly the
12 Johnson program, couldn't find a way to get rid of it, it was
13 like a tar baby, couldn't get rid of it if he wanted to, but no
14 Eugene G. McCarthy. He was not up there. Which shows you
15 again the fundamental divisions there are in the Democratic
16 Party, and why they're there, and where they come from, and
17 what you need to do to work at them, and nobody's doing that,
18 nobody even understands the problem. So anyhow, Hubert runs.
19 Once--where the hell was it, Salt Lake City--he makes a speech
20 where he puts a little bit of daylight between himself and
21 Lyndon Johnson. It was long about August, September. And we
22 all said, well, maybe this is the beginning. No, he ran as a
23 Johnson candidate, on the war, the whole thing, and of course,
24 Nixon, tricky dicky, took advantage of the whole situation with
25 a disunited Democratic Party and said he had a secret plan to
26 end the war in Vietnam. Heh heh, and the American people, I
27 mean, unbelievably pick Richard Nixon as the President of the
United States!

1 Now some of us remember, you remember, ah, back to 1946,
2 when he was running against people like Jerry Voorhees and
3 Helen Gahagan Douglas and so on. And he was a dirty, rotten,
4 stinkin' rat in those days. Never changed. The Checkers
5 speech, and all the rest of it. And I was thoroughly
6 convinced, Tom, that never in God's world would the American
7 people ever pick Richard Nixon for President. I couldn't
8 believe it, but they did. And, ah, poor Hubert, I don't think
9 he knew what hit him. And so, after that, I ran again in '70
10 for the Democratic nomination for Governor. I had had it in
11 '66 and ran against George Romney and got badly beaten.

12 DOWNS: Let's back up. In '66 you ran against Romney.

13 FERENCY: Right.

14 DOWNS: What kind of support did you get then? I remember
15 you running.

16 FERENCY: We didn't get any until June of '66, when I spoke
17 to the AFL-CIO convention in the Capitol, in the convention
18 hall here, and I made one helluva speech, and Sam Fishman was
19 delighted. He was my campaign manager. And he says, Zolton, I
20 think they're gonna open up those chests. And we're gonna
21 finally start getting some money from these guys. And so, he
22 went local by local, and he did better in some locals that he
23 did in others. We raised and spent \$285,000, which is nothing.

24 Never had a billboard, 'cept the ones that was hand-made by
25 Local 36 down there outside of Wixom. No billboards. We made
26 a television thing, didn't have the money to put it on the air.

27 And, ah, I mean, the AP, you remember Julius Bud Goodman?

1 DOWNS: How do you explain that?

2 FERENCY: Because he didn't think the war was part of the
3 gubernatorial campaign.

4 DOWNS: Oh, I see.

5 FERENCY: And the only time it became one was when I got
6 asked questions, which was quite often. I remember once, for
7 example, J.P. McCarthy had me on his Focus show or something
8 like that, and he got into how can Mennen Williams be where he
9 is and you be where you are?

10 DOWNS: On the war issue?

11 FERENCY: And I said, well, he's running for national
12 office and he has to speak to it. I'm running for state office
13 and I'll speak to it if somebody asks me, but it's not part of
14 my campaign.

15 DOWNS: When Mennen was running for U.S. Senate.

16 FERENCY: Right. So that's how that happened.

17 So, I lost to Levin in '70. [end of tape]

18 DOWNS: I think you said you lost to ah

19 FERENCY: Levin in August, 1970.

20 DOWNS: I was asking you how close that was?

21 FERENCY: It was a four person race, if you remember,
22 there was George Montgomery,

23 DOWNS: Oh, that's right.

24 FERENCY: and George Paris.

25 DOWNS: George Paris was from Macomb.

26 FERENCY: Right, he was county prosecutor.

27 DOWNS: And Montgomery, how did he happen to get into it?

1 FERENCY: You'll have to ask him that. He just wanted to
2 be governor. And so in that race, I ran second, and I got
3 quite a few votes, but I think Levin beat me by about 3 to 2,
4 something like that.

5 DOWNS: Yeah, Levin had the organization.

6 FERENCY: Well, there's a story there. Ah, UAW met and I
7 go this from somebody who was at the meetings, in February of
8 '70 for endorsements, and Walter said we're not going to make
9 any endorsement. The met in March, and there was pressure to
10 endorse Levin. And, he said, we're not going to make any
11 endorsements. And then, they met in April, same result. The
12 plane goes down in May. They endorsed Levin after that. Very
13 late. And so, that made a helluva difference, obviously.

14 DOWNS: Why do you think Walter was for neutrality and the
15 rest were not?

16 FERENCY: I think it was partly personal. I think he kind
17 of liked me. Ah, Frank Wynn and I used to write some of the
18 anti-war speeches. Frank was, of course, PR for Walter, and
19 also wrote alot of Walter's speeches.

20 DOWNS: Now, how much anti-war was Walter?

21 FERENCY: He was totally anti-war underneath. You
22 remember, Emil was the only one on the staff who was on the
23 forefront of the anti-war movement.

24 DOWNS: He was in the forefront. Then this,

25 FERENCY: That's Emil Mazey.

26 DOWNS. Yeah. You remember, ah,

27 FERENCY: And Russ Leach.

1 DOWNS: ah, the book The Reckoning, did you read that ever,
2 about the auto industry?

3 FERENCY: No.

4 DOWNS: And it's primarily about the auto industry. It has
5 a paragraph there, of a meeting, what's the Jewish, the seder,
6 seder, the religious ceremony, Walter's there, and I think it's
7 Irv Bluestone and their families?

8 FERENCY: Who are they sitting for?

9 DOWNS: What?

10 FERENCY: Who are they sitting seder for?

11 DOWNS: I don't know, but they were there, and then the
12 story was that, I think it was Leonard Woodcock's daughter was
13 going with Irv Bluestone's son, or I forget just what it was,
14 and she pretty much, ah, indicated that Walter's primary
15 concern was the responsibility to the union and to get along
16 with Johnson because of negotiations coming up, and so on, and
17 I ah, now I know both Walter and Gus had this strong
18 anti-Communist, where the Communists were a real threat in the
19 labor movement, I think you're aware,

20 FERENCY: I'm aware of that.

21 DOWNS: You're very much aware of that. So I just, ah, and
22 I think underneath that you think that Walter's socialist,
23 pacifist, ah,

24 FERENCY: No question about it. I think if he had lived,
25 he'd have ultimately come around, and openly. But anyhow,
26 that's what happened. So, when I lost, you remember Jim
27 McClure?

 DOWNS: Yeah.

1 FERENCY: He's dead now. We met in his backyard out here
2 in Haslett. We formed the Human Rights Party. And, the reason
3 being is that we were convinced, as I had mentioned several
4 times here, the Democratic Party is not going anywhere, doesn't
5 stand for anything, is out of tune, out of touch, is no longer
6 representative of the interests that we think it oughta be
7 representative of, and that, ah, we were going to have a party
8 that would speak to these kinds of issues and give leadership,
9 and so on. And so we formed the Human Rights Party in
10 September of 1970, and I was active in that for six years. And
11 of course, that, also, caused all kinds of problems for me with
12 establishment Democrats and organized labor and so on.

13 DOWNS: Say, how did you pick the hippopotamus for them?
14 That's an aside.

15 FERENCY: They ah, the discussion was that you have to have
16 an animal, because the Republicans have one, the Democrats have
17 one, and if you don't pick your own they're gonna give you one,
18 and so we decided to pick the hippopotamus, which is a really
19 placid, vegetable-eating, ah, let-alone-until-aroused, and so
20 we decided we'd go with the hippo. Heh, heh, heh, heh. And we
21 had the success that we had, if you'll remember. I ran for the
22 Supreme Court in '72 as a candidate of the Human Rights Party,
23 of course you don't get that designation on the ballot. I got
24 527,000 votes, which was a helluva lot of votes. Spent less
25 than \$8000. In '54, I'm sorry, '74, in order to requalify for
26 the ballot, I decided to run for governor because I thought I
27 could get enough votes to requalify for the ballot, and I was

1 right, we did. I didn't get a whole lot of votes, but I got
2 enough to get back on the ballot. I was running against Levin
3 and Milliken. In '76, I ran for the Supreme Court again,
4 because, well I was nominated by the Human Rights Party,
5 because I had done well the time before and I thought maybe
6 we'd do it again. I guess I can tell this story now. Jean
7 Nunn called me up and said that she wanted to talk to me. I
8 drove down to her townhouse in the Lafayette Plaisance. I had
9 known Guy and I had known Jean, and of course, as we all knew,
10 Josephine, Jo (Goman), and Jo was very supportive of me all
11 the way through. And so she said that she thought I had a
12 chance to win the Supreme Court and that was important, 'cause
13 there were alot of labor issues, etc., etc., etc., and I was
14 agreeing with her, and she brought Doug Fraser to the meeting,
15 and he was president of the UAW. And we talked, and he agreed.
16 I'm already a nominee of the Human Rights Party. On the
17 ballot. And so we said, let's see if we can get the nomination
18 of the Democrats. So I went to the Democratic state convention
19 at the Sheraton Hotel in Detroit, to seek the nomination of the
20 Democratic Party for Supreme Court. Doug was going to talk
21 to the labor caucus for me, and we put a campaign together.
22 And we did quite well. I know how to campaign at a convention.
23 I went to all the caucuses, and I had alot of old friends, and
24 so on, and we had a strong support from the women. And they
25 were still, they were just now starting to feel their oats, and
26 they had a candidate for the MSU board, Carol, she's from
27 Kalamazoo, Carol Lick?

1 DOWNS: Carol, not quite, pretty close.

2 FERENCY: Something like that. Can't think of her name.

3 DOWNS: I don't remember exactly.

4 FERENCY: I can't remember her name. I should, I mean,
5 it's hazy.

6 DOWNS: Carol, uh,

7 FERENCY: I'll think of it. Anyhow, Leonard, I mean Doug
8 goes to the caucus, and the Free Press quotes him the next
9 morning as muttering as he emerged from the labor caucus,
10 "These dumb bastards don't know what the hell they're doing."
11 'Cause he lost. Oh year, he lost badly, I mean, and Sam
12 Fishman was the one that really put it over against him. I
13 mean, Sam Fishman was really after me at that point.

14 DOWNS: Oh, Sam was after you, even though he'd supported
15 you for,

16 FERENCY: Oh yeah, well he didn't support me, he worked in
17 my campaign. He was on loan, you know, how the UAW loaned me
18 Sam Fishman. But anyhow, we got along alright, but politically
19 we were poles apart.

20 DOWNS: But Doug supported you for the Supreme Court and
21 Sam opposed you.

22 FERENCY: Right.

23 DOWNS: In the UAW caucus, the labor caucus.

24 FERENCY: Right. But we were still doing very well at the
25 convention, 'cause the women were for us. So, anyhow, there
26 came the night when the women's caucus met to make the
27 endorsement for Supreme Court, and I spoke and I can talk on

1 feminist issues. And, they were all for me. Odessa Komer
2 comes in there, and says to the women, "If you go for Zolton
3 Ferency for Supreme Court, you can kiss Carol goodbye on the
4 MSU board and everything else, because we're not going to vote
5 for her." She did a hatchet job on me you wouldn't believe.
6 And, so, it worked. Except the women went for me anyhow! And
7 you know what they did? They dumped that woman and put Mike
8 Smydra--heh heh--they nominated Mike Smydra. You remember Mike
9 Smydra? Who ran away with all the money and everything?

10 DOWNS: Yes.

11 FERENCY: It shows you how labor works sometimes. They
12 dumped Carol, what the hell was her name, she ultimately got
13 elected to the board next time around, but anyhow, that's how
14 that one went. And I lost there. And ah, Blair Moody, Jr.,
15 was running, and there was an opening, and they put Charlie
16 Kaufman on. And Charlie's an old friend of mine. And Charlie
17 was madder 'n hell at me at the convention. He says, what are
18 you, what are you bothering around here? I said, Charlie, you
19 know, this is politics. And so anyhow, oh, and Ray Gribbs,
20 nominated Ray Gribbs. Who was an Olsonite, if you remember.
21 He was the chief for Olson

22 DOWNS: He was mayor, wasn't he, at one time?

23 FERENCY: Yeah. And so, anyhow, I beat, I beat Horace
24 Gilmore, and I beat Bob Evans, the first time around, and I
25 beat all these characters the second time around, but I didn't
26 get enough votes to get elected anyhow, and the Republicans
27 won. And so, that was '76. Then, you should know, they passed

1 the Campaign Reform Act. And they provided for gubernatorial
2 funding. So we had a meeting. In the Human Rights Party. And
3 we decided, with few exceptions, to disband the Human Rights
4 Party, and I would run for governor on the Democratic ticket,
5 and avail ourselves, heh, heh, of public funding. And so, I
6 went back to the Democrats in the late fall of '76, in
7 preparation for this, that campaign reform act is dated 1976,
8 and ah, we did, I ran for the nomination in '78 against ah,
9 Fitzgerald, oh, couple of other people, I can't remember.

10 DOWNS: Weren't there several running at that time?

11 FERENCY: Yeah, lots of people. I ran second. I ran well
12 but I ran second. And, ah, then in '80, I ran for county
13 commission and got elected here. In a Republican district, in
14 the Reagan landslide I get elected. I don't know how that
15 happened. Ah, so, then in '82 we tried it again. I was gonna
16 run for governor, and I did, and Billy Fit, no Billy Fitz runs
17 second, Blanchard runs first, Plawecki, I think, ran third, and
18 I ran fourth, 'cause what's-his-name, the doctor from Ann
19 Arbor, Ed,

20 DOWNS: Pierce.

21 FERENCY: Pierce came in and wouldn't get out, even after
22 he promised me he would, and so anyhow, that's the way that
23 went. So he took,

24 DOWNS: He had split votes,

25 FERENCY: And money.

26 DOWNS: And money.

27 FERENCY: Yeah, he took away alot from Ann Arbor. So
anyhow, that was '82. Ah, '84 I ran for county commission

1 again after they had redistricted and lost. '86, you remember
2 that. I became an independent candidate for the Supreme Court.
3 And 23 other guys found out how I did it and they all got into
4 the race.

5 DOWNS: Were you the first one?

6 FERENCY: I was the first one, I was the first.

7 DOWNS: I had thought you were going to make that one.

8 FERENCY: I thought so too.

9 DOWNS: How close did you come on that one?

10 FERENCY: I did pretty well. I just thought of the money
11 again, I can't remember.

12 DOWNS: But Jean Nunn was the one that pushed you before.
13 I knew Jean. Used to work in the same office. And she got
14 Doug Fraser, I think you said, to,

15 FERENCY: 1976.

16 DOWNS: But they couldn't swing the UAW,

17 FERENCY: Couldn't put it over. Interesting, isn't it?
18 Well, you see from this whole story, my only purpose in
19 politics has always been to try and accomplish something. I've
20 never made a dime out of it, as a matter of fact, it's cost me
21 a bundle. I gave up lucrative law practices and everything
22 else to do this, my wife has always been angry with me, and I'm
23 not wealthy, I teach, I earn enough to get by, my house is paid
24 for, my car is paid for, my kids are grown up, I got nothing to
25 worry about.

26 DOWNS: I've heard some of your students, who don't know I
27 know you, all spoken very highly of your teaching.

1 FERENCY: I do well in the classroom, I guess. Now, ah, in
2 keeping with my interest in politics, to try and use politics
3 and political system to gain some sort of, again, make some
4 progress, I'm a progressive, I mean, you are too, and I spent
5 all my life at it, 40 years. I've decided I'm going to run for
6 office this year. I'm going to file next week. And, may need
7 your services.

8 DOWNS: What for?

9 FERENCY: I'm going to run for the United States Senate.
10 As an independent.

11 DOWNS: As an independent. On the theory, ah, let's

12 FERENCY: The statute's too late.

13 DOWNS: How many ah, I'll have to check the law on that,

14 FERENCY: The statute's too late.

15 DOWNS: You mean as a write in, or,

16 FERENCY: No, I'm going to file, same as I did for the
17 Supreme Court. And they're going to have to put me on the
18 ballot.

19 DOWNS: I'll have to check that, but that certainly
20 prevailed on the Supreme Court, and you know they never got the
21 law changed on that,

22 FERENCY: Yes they did, but they did it too late.

23 DOWNS: Well, they did it too late.

24 FERENCY: Right, for this year.

25 DOWNS: For this year, but I forget if that applied to the
26 Senate or not. What will your campaign be?

27 FERENCY: Well, I'm going to start out with a very

1 important issue that I want to address, and that's the
2 poisoning of Michigan by the deposit of radioactive waste.
3 That issue is just burning, burning, burning, and nobody wants
4 to do anything about it. I along with Mary Sinclair and some
5 other people, and you know I've not been close to those people,
6 but I admire the hell out of them, I mean she kept that Midland
7 plant from going up all by herself and took a helluva beating
8 personally for it. Anyhow, we met with the governor's staff a
9 week or so ago, trying to get him to give us some leadership
10 and saying we don't want Michigan to become a site for the
11 dumping of seven state's nuclear waste. And I think the people
12 of Michigan would be with us on that kind of an issue. Well,
13 he's dilly-dallying, he won't do anything, and Riegler won't
14 answer. He sends form letters back. And so, we decided that
15 one way to draw attention to this issue is to get it into the
16 campaign somehow, and this sure as hell is one way of doing it.
17 Now, I'm not going to raise \$5 million, which is what he has,
18 I'm not going on television, but I think I can get a dialog
19 going in the media.

20 DOWNS: On the radioactive waste issue.

21 FERENCY: Yeah. Then of course we'll go into the other
22 kinds of things, like what are we doing in the Persian Gulf?
23 What are we doing shooting 290 innocent men, women and
24 children? Ah, all kinds of problems that nobody wants to talk
25 about.

26 DOWNS: I want to just jump back to a couple other things.
27 You have two sons now, don't you, and what are they doing?

1 FERENCY: My older son, after some delay, eleven years,
2 went back to law school and he's now a lawyer, an assistant
3 county prosecutor.

4 DOWNS: Whereabouts?

5 FERENCY: Ingham, and he has 3 children, those are my only
6 grandchildren, and he's a nice guy, doing well, I'm told, the
7 judges tell me he does well.

8 DOWNS: I think we're about wound up. What did you say,
9 your second son?

10 FERENCY: Yeah, he's a free spirit, he's a product of the
11 Vietnam period, and he graduated from the U of M in psychology,
12 but he'd rather work as a carpenter, and so he frames houses,
13 and he's not married.

14 DOWNS: And your wife's teaching?

15 FERENCY: She retired, after 25 years.

16 DOWNS: I remember one time, we were at a dinner, you and
17 I, and your wife didn't know we were friends, and she sat
18 between us and we started ribbing each other, as we do, you
19 remember that?

20 FERENCY: Oh, yeah,

21 DOWNS: And she thought it was serious and got very
22 defensive of you, and,

23 FERENCY: Well, she's never been in favor of my political
24 activities. She understands what I'm doing and why, and so on,
25 but she always sort of wishes that I wouldn't and that somebody
26 else would do it. For example, I haven't even told her about
27 this venture next week, and I don't know when and how I'm going
to tell her. I just don't know. And it's going to be one

1 helluva battle. She won't talk to me, a day at least.

2 DOWNS: I remember her as a very fine person, a little bit
3 like my first wife.

4 FERENCY: Oh, this one is a gem.

5 DOWNS: Anyone who could put up with you is obviously, a

6 FERENCY: She's going straight to heaven when she dies.

7 Good Irish Catholic girl, and

8 DOWNS: either a masochist or a good martyr, but, and it is
9 tough, the campaigns are tougher on, and well we know Peg
10 Edwards and George, and those campaigns were always tough.

11 Well, I think we're set. I think this has been just what
12 we wanted. We'll get it transcribed, this is always a problem,
13 but,

14 FERENCY: Well, after you transcribe it and look it over,
15 whatever, and you think you want me to fill in some gaps, we'll
16 do it again.

17 DOWNS: Ok, thanks.

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