

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Ohio Democratic Party
Tape #4

Personal Experience

O.H. 954

FRANK O'CONNOR

Interviewed

by

Mark Connelly

on

April 16, 1975

C: This is tape four with Mr. O'Connor. It is June 16, 1975, and it is approximately 9:00 p.m.

O: No we were discussing how the political machine operated and a particular fight that we had. I think in the year 1936 when Governor Daley was running for renomination, Shutrump was chairman and while the newspapers kept referring to me as Shutrump's foe and trying to put me definitely on one side, I as a matter of strategy, argued that we had not made it, and we had not made a decision and it would be by secret ballot in our organization. So I would answer that we had not decided, we were examining the evidence. Now what we were really doing was building up public attention on what our club, the Chadum Club, which was then the consolidated results of both the Young Men's Democratic Club and the Chadum Club, to concentrate public attention on it so that our endorsement, when we made it, would have dramatic effect.

Now I did not know for sure that the boys would go the way I thought they ought to go, but as time went on it seemed as though they had more and more respect for my leadership and what I was trying to accomplish. My main aim was to try to change the rules of the party so that it was truly Democratic, so that in some way, even if it is remotely, reflect the will of the members of the party through elected committeemen. And the way it was worked it was nothing of the kind. I felt that the first thing I had to accomplish was to get a secret ballot adopted, at least on important questions and always on personalities, which includes the officers' endorsements and things of that nature, wherever the name of a personality came into it. And I think, on very serious questions it ought to also be secret. This would prevent a political boss or dictator intimidating a committee or purchasing the committee, which is what goes on, enough of them so that even a discussion is useless. And it never happens. I do not recall in the forty years that we ever had a discussion for the good of the country or the good of the party, what consisted or what we meant by good environment.

C: We have talked a lot about purchasing committeemen. About how much did it cost to buy off a committeeman? Back in 1936 how much did it cost?

O: Well, I was, now I could not name who it was by many times I would see over in the corner, a guy getting a pint of whiskey for his vote. I know of cases where a fellow worked on a split shift in the mill, he would not come to the meetings, except that they paid his wages that he would have lost. The opposition could not do that. It was not organized in the first place and they had no funds.

C: Where did this money come from?

O: When you consider that the gambling rackets alone probably take six or seven million it was estimated, out of the county every year and there was all other kinds of rackets. Then there was the legitimate business people who want favors

or lobby to have special laws favoring them, even the legitimate labor unions and legitimate cooperations.

C: So they give this money to the Democrats?

O: And it all goes into a campaign fund some of which, much of which I doubt is ever accounted for, often whoever is behind it and I doubt if even under present law it is reported because I know from experience that one letter alone mailed to every registered voter in Mahoning County, the postage and envelopes alone would cost you about fourteen thousand dollars with free help to stuff them and print them and whatnot. It is just incredible how much material comes through the mail that you know had to cost more than the limits.

C: Would you be willing to say that in the thirties, in the mid thirties that Shutrump, that this money was funneled directly to Shutrump who decided who was going to be paid off?

O: If he was the actual boss, and I think he was then, but thinking a thing and being sure enough, politically, to act on it if he was not the boss, he was the agent of the boss, but I think he was the boss then.

C: If he was not the boss, who would you say was?

O: Well it could have been some powerful racketeer that had a lot of money.

C: Do you have any idea who might have been? You do not have to mention him, but do you have any idea who it might have been if it was not Shutrump?

O: At that time I doubt if there was anybody other than the chairman handling it, but doubt or suspicion, this is not proof, I do know that he was a big contractor himself and he was supporting Governor Daley who was proved in court later that in his administration, state highway department, that there was rigged bidding and there was even what was known as the hot mixed cases. I think it was three hundred thousand dollars. It was either one or three hundred recovered by taxpayers suit. However, as far as I know, I do not think anybody went to jail, these public officials.

C: Do you know if Shutrump ever paid out of his pocket directly out of his pocket? I remember you told me he was offering you . . .

O: Yes, he always showed me the money but he never paid any out, but there was a night I saw it being paid out. Now what he was paying it for, I do not know.

- C: Now this is beside the incident when he handed the roll to you? He was going to hand you the roll?
- O: But if you saw a man at a fire with a gallon can of gasoline and a torch and every place he ran in a door and, when he came out there was a fire, you would have a good suspicion who was doing it.
- C: Did you see him paying anybody else besides that time he offered?
- O: At the meeting we really broke his control although it did not appear right then it was complete, by telling you about the meeting I will lead up to that because how I knew about it and how I happened in on it was part of the meeting. But let us get back to the fact that we campaigned to get as many committeemen elected. Out here in Boardman I tried to get all, which was the only district in the county that really produced a solid front. The machine had put a candidate against me. My opponent got only three votes, which I doubt if he even voted for himself.
- C: Why not?
- O: I think he was forced to run against me and he did not like it.
- C: It was not a secret ballot though was it?
- O: No, this was the election of committeemen. He signed my petition, but I did not get his wife's signature and I figured every jobholder would be under pressure to run against me so I got every jobholder to sign, but his wife was persuaded to run against me. And it was my suspicion that they did not even bother to vote for themselves because they only collected three votes in the whole precinct. One of the psychological effects was that it was almost the first precinct to report in the county because it was small and it ran as much . . . well Harry Knupp, one of our club members, wanted to run for State Central Committeeman, and when I told him that a job like that, there was I do not know how many candidates running, the machine would elect their man. There was nothing we could do about it and that he did not have a ghost of a chance and he got a little bit huffed about it that he thought I was letting him down. I said, "Harry, you are new at politics. You have not got a chance, but if you only carry one precinct in the county, you are going to carry mine." And I got in the club endorsement by persuading the boys to vote for him. You could not have an out and out machine against a machine because there was; I do not know whether there was a flock of them. I think Judge Powers ran as a machine candidate.
- C: Is he still alive? Is Judge Powers running now or Attorney Bowers now?
- O: No I think that is a different one, the Former Munciple Judge. He was in on this several

ways. When we defeated Shutrump in his home precinct by that three way, we threw our weight to Ferrager. Ferrager did not even know what happened until afterwards. And by the way, a little point on this, after the election and he had won it, then Shutrump wanted to give one of his boys a job and Ferrager called me to go make peace and how he thought Shutrump was a fine gentleman and took me down to his home.

C: To Shutrump's?

O: Shutrump's home and I asked Shutrump again, point blank, if he would obey the law and that is all I wanted. I had nothing against him personally and he turned me down flat.

C: How did he put it? What did he say?

O: He was just not interested.

C: Not interested in what?

O: And that was the second time, even before the election I met Mr. Cos, who was the County Secretary and Shutrump down at the board of elections one day and I told them that I was not opposed to them personally, but I wanted the party running on such a manner that laws would be enforced in this county. And their reaction: "We always ran it that way and we are not breaking any laws." But they would not change the rules so that it made it possible to break this thing up. You see, the way it was, an honest man that attempted to do anything about it could not get an endorsement and therefore almost impossible to get him nominated and if nominated he could not get elected.

C: When you went and talked to Shutrump, you would support him if he upheld the law?

O: If he made rules in the party that made it possible to get law enforcement.

C: Did he say that he was not in favor of law enforcement did he say he was not violating any laws?

O: He just would not change any of the rules. That was their story.

C: They did say they were not violating laws?

O: See there are no real state laws that say how you have to run the party. It just says you shall meet and organize and then every two years you adopt rules. Well they adopt rules that give all the power to the chairman and then the committee loses complete control. And the voice of the people, the grassroots pressure for changing or reforming government is lost completely. They have no influence whatsoever. And many times a lot of these fellows got elected in recent years and originally got their start when I busted

this up before. And like I meet Tom Barrett downtown, we are old friends from the days when he belonged to the Young Men's Democratic Club. He said, "What are you doing Frank?" "Well I have been out of work for a long time." "Well I can get you a job." He was County Commissioner, sure he could if I got over and make an understanding with Sulligan.

C: Did he do this recently?

O: Fairly recently.

C: About how many years ago?

O: I never even bothered to go down because it . . .

C: How long ago was this offer made to you?

O: Now there is nothing wrong with that one.

C: No, I am not saying, but I was just to get a time.

O: Oh I met him, it must have been five or six years ago.

C: About 1970?

O: But many times, this is typical of some of these fellows: "But I have to clear it with the County Chairman," which means I have to agree to take orders.

C: What job was he offering you?

O: Oh it was not anything in particular, but if I wanted something . . . see I am qualified for almost anything. I can qualify in about six professions and cannot get a job.

C: But right now you could have just about anything you want if you go to Sulligan?

O: Yes.

C: What would Sulligan ask of you if you went to him?

O: He would expect me to vote the way I am told from now on.

C: But if you are not even a committeeman now how?

O: If I went after I could probably get it easily, but also this area is building so fast that from

one period to the next, you have an entirely new group of people, new streets all the time. That is why it made it so difficult to hang on to this one and it had been this way for forty years. I originally had over half the township.

C: Who is the committeeman in this precinct right now?

O: In this precinct it is Tesone.

C: Is he your Sulligan man?

O: No, and that is the funny part of it. They launched a campaign against Sulligan and I ran into people that were so fanatically mad at Sulligan that I could not even talk to them. I cannot personally oust him myself.

C: Did they identify you with Sulligan, the people in this precinct?

O: Yes, and Sulligan had just kicked me off as ward captain and took me off the executive committee because I did not vote the way he wanted me to on that . . .

C: Now Sulligan personally kicked you off being ward captain?

O: Well certainly, he had complete control of it.

C: And how did he go about it?

O: The ward captain in this district is a voter in my precinct who is not even elected committeeman.

C: Is there any other precinct in this county that the precinct committeeman is not a ward captain?

O: Oh probably a number of them because you see, the chairman has total power to do as he pleases and he can change the rules to suit himself.

C: As far as you know is Sulligan the only one that did this to you?

O: Oh it happened several times. Whenever I would get on the executive committee because I was so prominent and something or once when we elected Mitchell he virtually admitted that I had the deciding votes because he called me at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and made a confession at one thirty the executive committee would be elected rather than by the districts and rather than being appointed.

C: Was there a specific issue on which you voted against Sulligan's wishes that got you

removed from being ward captain?

O: Oh certainly.

C: What was the specific issue?

O: He wanted Galeris and Kregan for state representative and I was on the executive committee and I wanted to run and of course they set it up that there was no chance of me even having a break on it. The guy that was to nominate me was afraid to get out of his chair.

C: And who was that?

O: A fellow from out in Austintown. When I say he was afraid to get out of his chair, he was supposed to give a nominating speech and he did not. It is my opinion he was afraid to get out of his chair. But the whole thing was a farce. They even had a lunch set up in back of the hall to celebrate the victory over me before the meeting started.

C: What year was this now? 1972?

O: Let us see that must have been five or six years ago. I could look it up. But anyhow, I wanted either no endorsements or a fair chance to get as many votes as I could and I discovered that everybody was afraid to vote other than the way the orders seemed to be and when I tried to approach Sulligan he would run.

C: You mean he would not talk to you?

O: Yes of course because I would pin him down one way or the other. So that is the way the thing was set up. The result of the thing was I would not withdraw so they kicked me off the executive committee and they removed me as ward captain.

C: How many years have you been on the executive committee?

O: Oh off and on ever since, as I told you early in the tape that the first Chairman John Farrell told me he would put me on the next turn that is the second time and I had Yeany put in my place. Then I came over to this precinct and got elected here and for several years led the Boardman group and I was put back on, oh I was on and off it several times. Then when Mitchell got elected of course, I was with the winning team and I went on again then.

C: Were sums of money ever offered to you?

O: Innuendo as I said, chairman many times took out a wad of gold enough to choke a cow.

- C: This is besides Shutrump? This is also Vitullo and also Sulligan?
- O: No Vitullo was more direct.
- C: In that way?
- O: He took me out to lunch. Now this happened just before I went to the Army. I had decided that I would not accept the deferment I was entitled to . . . I was the highest paid salesman in Mahoning County working for Isaly's Dairy Company at the time. They brought the papers out and I legally was entitled to stay home, but I refused to sign them because I figured I would have to answer the rest of my life, where was I when the big fight was on? So I met John Patulla downtown in a hotel somewhere and he took me into The Purple Cow and bought my lunch and there were two or three other fellows there. I do not recall who it was now. I think one of them was Joe Gorman. But I will give you just exactly as about as near as I can remember the exact words. He said, "O'Connor, you are too," and if I remember right he used one of those expletives, "dangerous to be on the other side." He said, "We know what you can do." Because see, he was with Shutrump and he knew that I personally had pulled that job up there in Shutrump's own precinct.
- C: He is remembering this specific incident?
- O: Yes. Now we were coming for the executive committee meeting.
- C: At this time you were on the executive committee?
- O: The central committee meeting. I do not remember whether I was on the executive committee then or not. I was later again. But he said, "Now we will give you any job you want, elective or appointive, in this county if you will just forget about the rules." I do not remember whether he said, "Forget about the rules," but that is what he meant. I said, "Johnny, I would vote for you for your chairmanship or your board of elections job, but I said, "I cannot support the rules the way you want them." He wanted to go back to the old rules. See, under Mitchell I had got a confession of one third of the executive committee be elected from the districts. And when I said that John Patulla said, "We are tearing out our hair. We have got to go ask the executive committee what we can do.
- C: What does he mean? Does he mean we or I?
- O: I. We means his boys.
- C: Do you know who his boys were?
- O: Well you could figure it out easy enough. Get the biggest jobs that he had to pass out. I

think one of them probably his son-in-law, but he had firm control with the top and big jobs are given to the guys that he puts on the executive committee who absolutely he has their vote and there is no question about it. This is how it is done. The executive committee is a hand picked, selected group of yes men with only a couple on there of maybe the opposition leaders who cannot do anything because they have not got enough votes.

C: With this one third now coming from the district election, how much did that really upset him?

O: Well, apparently it upset him plenty because by this time . . . I wanted to lead up to this slowly. I had almost given up hope that I had accomplished anything and I had been practically inactive in any broad sense. But we got ahead of our story, but I will finish this about Patulla. I said, "I am going to the Army and I am not interested in a political job." He said, "Well we will get you a commission in the Army."

C: Did he say how he would do it?

O: Oh he did not have to say. I know how it is done. All he needs is a congressman and a senator's signature and you are appointed.

C: Who was the congressman and who was the senator?

O: Then it was Kerwin and I believe it was one of the senators, but when the county chairman of one of the strongest political machines in the state asked a small favor and legally that was the way it was done. You are just appointed as an officer. You are recommended as having the qualifications and that it could be done there was not the slightest doubt in my mind at all.

C: At this time would you say that Patullo could tell Kerwin what to do or was Kerwin in a much stronger position than Patullo?

O: By that time, Kerwin could have been strong enough to have defied him, but it is not practical politics to do it unless you have to. And unless you have some strong motivation to try to change the setup you are just asking for a drag out, show down fight that can cost you your career. Even Sulligan one time when he appointed Allen to a state liquor department, which is another time that I challenged that in the executive committee and won the fight, but the newspaper never mentioned I was there and I made a trip clear from Athens to come up here to embark that. But at that time I felt that Sulligan figured he had a hot potato and he did not know which way to go and he was waiting to feel out what the committee thought. And I off set the apple cart and eventually won it and they turned down. They almost rioted over the thing. While the newspaper reported verbatim the speeches made against me, it was not ever mentioned I was there and this kills you

politically.

C: Yet you actually carried the vote?

O: Yes and won it. And at that time I was making the fight they thought Sulligan was on the other side, but Sulligan was himself worried because look, he had no candidate and if he bucks the governor and the patronage of the state comes against the machine he has got a fight on his hands.

C: Why did the Vindicator cover it that way?

O: I do not know whether they thought they were protecting me because I had made it very plain that I thought the racketeers were behind it and they were using the party scripts to hide behind.

C: And were they?

O: Well, a pretty good guess. Why were they out to get Allen?

C: But did you have any other more concrete proof than that?

O: When you go back to the history of this thing, a total breakdown of law and order, even the grand jury of the county said there was an absolute, total breakdown of law and order in this county and that the prosecutor was in on it and that he wanted him to, the letter was in the Vindicator that the prosecutor himself wanted the grand jury to sign and praising the law enforcement body for an excellent job of running the county. And they printed the letter unsigned and said that because the prosecutor had interfered that it was impossible for them to get evidence, that there was a total breakdown of law and order in Mahoning County and asked the Governor to appoint a special prosecutor, which did happen and a year later about twenty-five of them went to jail.

C: Who was the governor at that time?

O: I think that was between Shutrump's defeat and Patullo's election or at least the time that I am talking about before I went to the Army and that was around 1943.

C: You were not around for Patullo's election were you?

O: Yes, I was there that night. Now, I told Patullo that I absolutely would give up my fight for better rules and that I was not interested in a political job and he offered me this commission and which I turned down too. Now the central committee meeting, which comes right after the election, by state law, when I come up to Central Auditorium I believe they had the meeting, and I came late to the meeting because I figured that by this

time any chance of fighting the thing without any help was hopeless. Many of the fellows that had been with me had given up and figured that we were just wasting our time because there was no apparent public support for what we wanted. So as I came up the steps I was a little bit late and everybody was in there, but Patullo was standing at the top of the stairs waiting for me. And as I came up the steps he said, "Well O'Connor did you think it over?" I said, "Look Johnny, I told you the other night that under no circumstances," I said, "No one has ever told me what to do on that committee floor and no one is ever going to." And I walked into the meeting and I left him standing there. And that night, again, I made the motion for secret ballot when they offered the set of rules that turns all the power over to the chairman and while they always insist on a role call vote so they can pinpoint who is for and against them so that you are a dead duck if you are not on that list the right way as voting the way you are told. Now the meetings get so bad that they even come with a written script as to who is going to make a motion and who is going to second it and what the motion will be and everything else.

C: Who carried the script that night?

O: Oh they had them all over the hall. You could see the fellows taking them out of their pockets. Recent years I have not noticed them, whether they are concealing them better or whether they have them, but many times they were printed, typewritten or mimeographed.

C: One brief digression, who right now sets the script for the Democrats because obviously it is not Sulligan?

O: Joe Gorman was the architect of writing it out as far as that goes. At least that was my understanding. But whether he had any authority on his own. In fact, at some times I thought maybe Joe had some real power. In fact, I had gone to see him about getting a little favor that I wanted that was legal and legitimate and I did not want to go over to Sulligan and have him put me on the spot that I had to support him. But nothing ever came of it so I do not know whether Joe had any power or if he was . . . But we were very friendly as friends from way, way back. He was one of the young fellows I was with. In fact, Joe Gorman was with the guy I beat for committeeman the first time and told me what went on in the other camp that time. In fact, Fullmeyer was telling me that Joe was telling him one day how the night that I beat them at the Young Men's Club. They thought they had me beat at ten o'clock and at eleven o'clock I was back in control. Of course, I never lost control, they just thought I did.

C: Let us get back to Patullo's election night.

O: You have slipped three very important things that happened before that to get this picture. Now we were coming up to the election of Governor Davey and Shutrump. Well we have defeated Shutrump. Governor Davey who they had called on. We heard that they

went to Columbus to get his help and then we heard the radio speech where he said that Mahoning County would be the valued decision in the election. Well I had called him at the State Young Men's Convention on that and focused attention on Mahoning County and we delivered. There was 88 counties in Ohio and they carried 86 of them and lost Mahoning, the one that was supposed to clinch the election.

- C: We covered that part I think. All right, now the state law requires then that the county clerk, I believe it was then. Anyhow he was with the Sawyer forces. Sawyer?
- O: Sawyer won the nomination for Governor. He had promised our committee when we went or when our committee went to see him they asked him whether they would jobs, point blank, outright, no diplomacy. And Sawyer said, "If you are well qualified for the job you will be considered." But he said, "If I am elected Governor, I am going to give the taxpayer a dollars worth of government for every dollar they spend." And apparently he meant it. He was later appointed to Truman's cabinet. But anyhow, he never got elected governor. According to the newspapers, the democratic machine made a deal with the Republican machine to split the patronage and they crucified him in the general election and Bricker got elected governor. And of course, that further discouraged people that were with me here because we have nothing. Locally we are still nominally in control of the party machine but we hurt it very badly. But anyhow, at this organization meeting, to organize the party then, to break Shutrump's control who was the boss and we did not just want another boss, we wanted the rules changed, Shutrump could not come into the meeting because he was not elected.
- C: Because he was ousted as a committeeman?
- O: Yes. Now he would not even come into the meeting let alone be chairman. However, as I say, they would adopt any rules they want so they just changed the rules, take in outsiders.
- C: Who changed it?
- O: Well if he still has enough votes to control adoption of his rules the way he wants it . . .
- C: Do you remember who proposed it?
- O: He put the dummy up as chairman and he appoints outsiders and including Shutrump back to the committee. He does not have to get elected if you are in control. So I had to break the control. Now because Shutrump could not be chairman, they wanted to confuse the independents and the very nature of independents is that you are not organized.
- C: How many independents were there?

O: Well there was an independent for this reason, there is an independent for that reason, there was a sorehead that lost a political job that was out to get him, there was another guy running for mayor. Spagnola had a bunch of Italian committeemen and he wanted to run for Mayor, see. There was no coordination, never even met him or discussed it with him see as to what they intend to do. But because they felt there had been discrimination, they were against him. There are millions of reasons why you might be against him as an independent or it might be interest in good judgement, which is a rarity. I could not name more than a dozen guys in all the time I have been in politics that I sincerely thought meant it that they wanted good government and I might mention a few names, Alfred E. Halfred, he was our secretary, undoubtedly was one of them and Cliff Passmore that helped me . . . Joe Parish from down in Campbell, John Barlett, who was chairman of our executive committee. This cannot be left out of this. I have got to get it in because right now they are going to jail for exactly what they offered us.

Now I have had all these innuendos, these offers, and even outright officers of jobs, which I do not know whether the law clearly made it illegal then, but I always understood it was illegal to concretely offer a favor for a specific . . . Now to give political job because of past, that has nothing to do with that, but when in advance, you buy support directly like cash on the barrellhead with a clear understanding of what you are to get, it was illegal now I think it was then. At least it was unethical if it was not illegal. And the machine is built on that. It survives on that. I saw men break down and cry that had families to support that knew what was going on in this county and were ashamed of it and bitterly opposed but did not dare vote against it because they were told according to them, of course, I was not there, but they told us that they were told, clear cut, they would be fired Monday morning if they did not vote the right way and undoubtedly that was true.

Enough votes on the controlling committee as guaranteed controlled by the chairman of this system that it completely defeats democracy or a discussion of which way ought to be right. Honest men can differ but in those cases it is not even a debate. It never comes up as a discussion. It is cut and dry ahead of time. Now to confuse the issue they come up with a strategy of getting a phoney independent to split us because they were afraid that we had maybe enough votes. I had been defeating them on every front. Their candidate for state central committee and in this precinct got one vote and Harry Knupp, an unknown kid, I think he only carried one or two precincts in the county, got eighteen over them. And those kind of returns come in over the radio in every saloon in town before any other precinct reported and it was just like the roof fell in on them. We beat Governor Davey in this precinct. The vote was about, I think, 15 to 10, a small precinct but the percentages were way off. And the joker of that was that I got more votes than both candidates for governor and for committeemen. And they were out to beat me. I think only three votes out of the . . . and there was only about 30 Democratic votes in this precinct.

So anyhow, that plus the fact that we defeated the chairman, the fact we defeated the governor, and most of the candidates; I would say 90% of the candidates machine endorsed went down. I heard many times in the next two or three years, the statement,

"Do not endorse me it is the kiss of death," by candidates running for office and when you determine a machine that bad, their endorsement no longer had the value. And whatever went wrong, that they did not control that grand jury, then they admitted to the public there was a total breakdown of law and order.

C: This breakdown came before Vitullo?

O: No. This came between.

C: Right between?

O: Yes, after Shutrump. In fact, I think it was even after Mitchell. I do not remember exactly when that happened because I was working as Isaly's and I was very busy. I was working 12 to 18 hours a day and I was trying to rebuild. I had been out of work for a long time and I had spent most of my savings and I had pneumonia and been sick for a long while. Then they put me down in that stone quarry. Even on WPA I could not get anything worthwhile. So I was trying to rebuild my own position. And some other things happened, personal things that of course, disrupted my attention. And at no time did I get any hint this was going on. I was never called before the grand jury although I knew as much as many of them did. Of course I could have testified to the fact that the big numbers racket was operating right under our noses in public and the police did not bother them.

C: How come you were not called to testify?

O: I do not know how they controlled that. I suppose the prosecutor, maybe that is why the grand jury said there was a total breakdown of law and order. He said the prosecutor was interfering. They could not even get the evidence.

C: What about when it finally came out that there was a total breakdown?

O: Well that came a year later.

C: But you were still never called?

O: No, never called. In fact, I have always wondered exactly how the grand jury is selected as to whether or not they can get their own men on there. I have never had it explained how that is protected and it is not easy to find out. Anyhow, the grapevine gave me the story that they had a strategy meeting and they were going to put Judge Powers up. Now here is how they were going to do it: They got a city councilman, I think his name was O'Neil' and another guy, I cannot remember his name; issued cards to call the central committee ahead of time to a private official meeting.

- C: Were you on the committee at this time?
- O: Yes I was on the committee.
- C: But they were not going to call you right?
- O: Oh yes, see they were going to make this appearing to be the independents. This was to get Shutrump's stooge in as chairman and then he had be the boss yet. Now I checked with Ralph Elser, the sheriff, as to whether or not my other information was accurate and he nodded his assent that he had been there and knew that was a fact.
- C: Who was your source of information on this?
- O: I had a number of them, but one of the men I had verify these things with, that I had a lot of political patronage, sat in on some of these strategy meetings.
- C: So he did not give you your first lead. He just . . .
- O: And I never gave him away that he was informing me either. But I never trusted and one source. So if I did not get it from four or five different places, I was not sure that I was not getting conned.
- C: Why would somebody risk it though, informing you?
- O: To put any big deal together you got to let a lot of people know it and it leaks seven different directions. However, when you think you got information, if you cannot verify and check it with somebody you have some respect for that was on the other side, you do not know whether you are conned. Just like we held strategy meetings when the spy was present. The information he gave was not only worthless, it caused them to run all over the place and try to counter moves that we never made.
- C: What I do not understand, if they had such tight control, it seems every time they tried to pull a fast one on you, you still had the information.
- O: Dictators always surround themselves with a bunch of dummies that will take orders. If they had any brains, they would not be wrecking our government. They are greedy short sighted, stupid men. They may think they are very clever.
- C: I still do not understand why these people leak the information of they were so closely attached.
- O: Well you see, now, like Elser, I could give him, and did give him, a lot of support.

- C: I could see him. I could see him because obviously he is a man with some integrity. What about the other ones?
- O: The other ones were some of my boys that pretended to be on the other side and attended the meetings.
- C: Did you have like a counter spy sort of?
- O: Oh sure, but you can never trust any one because you never know when a guy is conning you.
- C: But you were not even sure of your own personal spies?
- O: Oh heck, it was so bad that sometimes when I made these moves to beat the other side, the night I was elected president three of my men walked out of the meeting because they thought I had quit. If they had any brains they would have known that I was not going to quit. It was just a matter of strategy to confuse the other side. Even on a secret ballot after I withdrew I only lost by one vote and three of my men walked out of the room. I would have won by at least two votes. If I dared take them into my confidence and I could not because if I did someone would leak it to the other side. They could never tell what I planned to do because even my closest supporters did not know. They just knew that I would have a way and when I gave the signal to jump, they went with me.
- C: Were any of your informants ever found out by Shutrump or Patulla?
- O: No, no, as a matter of fact, Shutrump never found out that Patulla gave us five dollars to campaign. Patulla gave us five dollars.
- C: This was not much of a contribution?
- O: No, but it was something. It was peanuts to him but just the same it was a gesture. I used to kid Vitullo. "What the hell do you take orders from that guy for when all these Italian committeemen are loyal to you personally?" I said, "You could be the boss yourself." And you could just almost see his ego swell.
- C: Do you ever think he thought of taking over?
- O: Oh certainly and he did.
- C: Yes, but in good time.
- O: But then he wanted to get the rules back the way Shutrump had them and I did not

want that.

- C: So while Patulla was Shutrump's main man, did you consider him a person that you could deal with?
- O: To that extent that I would rock the boat, get the lieutenants to dump the boss, the internal fight as to who was going to control it, they get mad at each other. That is the easiest way to break up a dictatorship there is if it works and it usually works. And I had worked it, not only that case, but other cases that I could go into that are relatively minor. But I would break up the combination by playing one against the other. You did not get this by reasoning. You played human emotions. I would find out one guy was double-crossing another guy.
- C: Would you say double-crossing in Youngstown politics is a rule rather than an exception?
- O: Now to get back to this meeting, they were going to put up former Judge Powers, the former Municiple Judge, as chairman and the Shutrump was supposed to give the orders. When I checked with Elser he said that is exactly what they were up to. So now the stunt was to head off any chance that they would name who would be chairman. They called this meeting to get the independents together, but it was phoney because these guys were machine men, but they had to make a pretense of independents. Now here is the way it developed; nearly the entire committee showed up, Central Auditorium, the night before the official meeting. And I believe his name was O'Neil, I have a vague recollection of it, but as chairman, he asked me to come up on the stage as secretary and I did not want to be compromised that way because I figured what they were doing was using me because I was the symbol of independence by this time, leading the youths in an open opposition to county chairman and we had won round after round. I had them so stymied by that time they could not believe what was happening because they would have the most secret meeting and I would open the door and say, "Good evening boys. Having a good time?" Meeting after meeting and they could not figure out how I was finding out.
- C: Again, would you wait for at least a couple sources to inform you of meetings?
- O: Oh sure. I would make a trip downtown, just open that door to let them know I knew everything that was going on. Anyhow, I could not get anybody else to take it and I had to go up on the stage, but I was afraid it might backfire because I did not want them to use me and this I knew was what they were doing. This added prudence to the idea that the meeting was independents, which we knew it was not. About an hour before that, Bill Quinlan had called some of the Sawyer supporters together who were elected committeemen and he told them, they were

almost all strangers to me from the different parts of the county. I think there was about seven of them there, six or seven men, and he said, "We made a mistake. We were so interested in nominating Sawyer that we did not pay attention to this committee. Most of you have no exceptions at all. O'Connor has been on the committee," and he said, "if you will listen to him and follow his lead, maybe you can accomplish something." So, in a way he used his prestige to turn them over to me as willing followers. On the sidewalk walking from that meeting over to this meeting I laid out the strategy.

C: To who?

O: To these fellows. Now I said, "If we are going to defeat them we have to concentrate on one name. We cannot split seven different ways. As it appears, Spagnola has a lot of the Italian support and I also kind of figured maybe Patullo and his boys might lean a little bit or at least split up. If we try another other . . . But I think when they realized that I had such overwhelming power there, they changed they plans. In fact, they changed their plans on the membership because of that. I had more help outside than I had inside because, you see they knew what the membership inside had been and for a month they had been buying them off with jobs and all kinds of threats. Some of the guys got scared and would not even come to the meetings. So this may have occurred. I do not know. I just know the result was that we had a great drop off of people who had been at the other meeting.

C: That is understandable. So this is even more reason to say, How did you do it then? How did you defeat all these machine candidates when all this was going on? When a lot of it was determined to you?

O: It was mainly psychological. As the power of a machine come down on us to whittle away our membership, we kept putting in the paper all these new names, new members admitted.

C: Where did you get the names from?

O: Oh we kept getting them. They were actual. And for awhile, as I say, I even had some of the guys vote against issues where they thought that was my strength so that I would not look too strong. See if I backed a motion and everybody voted for it, they would think I was too strong to beat and quit and I did not want it.

C: How did you get your membership to vote against something, to vote the way you wanted?

O: Oh I had a half a dozen. . . we had strategy meetings. Now this time, make it look

like they almost dropped me, see.

- C: Well did the membership just go right along with it?
- O: No I had some boys that were fighting the same machine and honest fellows that knew what we were up against.
- C: Was basically the whole membership attuned to what was going on?
- O: Oh no, there was about a dozen of us, maybe even less than that where we planned strategy, that is even on a secret ballot. That is if one of you in a group of 30 vote one way with a purpose and you change sides, that is 12 votes. When you take six off of one and put it on the other side that is 12 different, see. It is amazing what a small minority can do if they had given up. They were not digging up members. See they had job holders they could feed in, but every time they fed one in, we got a couple, every guy can join. So all of us were out digging up all our friends and relatives and everything else to come down there. I paid the dues of a dozen guys that did not have a dollar to join that is, say we were willing. Some of my most enthusiastic fellows come down there, work all day, did not have a dollar to pay dues. Here is what would typically happen; we would go down there, scrub dirt all day, scrub those walls down, paint them, move furniture, get it fixed up so it would be a presentable place, six or eight guys, work all day, no meals. Around ten or eleven o'clock at night I would taketh six of them over to one of the restaurants, coffee and doughnuts for each one. It cost me sixty cents to a dollar and it was breaking me night after night after night. My God, I could not even raise the ten dollars to pay the lease money. And there was nothing in the treasury because who was going to give us much money? And what little money did come in, we have a stag party, and raise a little money and they bought off the guy that was in charge of the stag. And I suspected early and tried to get, according to the constitution we had to turn over the money to the treasurer immediately. So we called a meeting right after the stag, "Turn it over," and he gave some song and dance to the committee to the effect that he did not have his records and the majority of them said, "Give him until the next meeting." He never came back nor did we get the money either. But he had a political job for years afterwards.
- C: This was your treasurer?
- O: No it was not our treasurer. He was in charge of that stag party, but the constitution said that you had to turn the money over to the treasurer.
- C: Why did you not just have the treasurer run the stag party?

- O: When you are trying to keep an organization together, you got to pass the honors out, give everybody a job. You cannot give it all to one guy, see.
- C: Well how did you go about selecting these people?
- O: A committee and they picked him.
- C: Even though you could not trust him?
- O: We did not know we could not trust him until after this happened, but his behavior was such that I suspected what he was up to.
- C: How many times did you have people walk out with the money?
- O: Once it happened that way and another time we wanted to get, I do not want to name this guy, but we wanted to get one guy out of the office. And you are not going to be successful in business or in politics or anything else if you are not pretty good at character analysis ahead of time. And I figured the guy, given the opportunity, would make a grab for money from his own personal statements and attitude and whatnot. So we set it up in the constitution and in the bylaws that you could not be chairman of a major committee and an officer at the same time. Then shortly thereafter we set up this chairmanship to handle the money. He resigned as officer to get the chairmanship. We knew he was going to steal the money.
- C: And did he?
- O: The bills he was supposed to pay came into the treasurer and they come up with a meeting and he claimed he paid them, they claimed he had not paid them. And it got stall, stall, stall and finally one night I left the chair and installed on a motion by passes on from the floor that if he did not account for it by the next meeting . . . it was the next meeting or else.
- C: Or else what?
- O: And after the meeting he tried to start a fight. So we never did get it accounted for. But these are internal problems you always have and you have your nationality squabbles, clannishness and whatnot, and balancing the group so that they do not get mad and walk out on you. One of your first troubles right at first was that we had a super abundance of one nationality and as I told them, "If we are going to lead the use of the whole county, we cannot have all one nationality in office. We have to have all different."
- C: Those are the Italians right?

O: Of course, in every group there are intelligent ones and then there are the hot heads that go for that. Well world over that is what bigotry is based on and wars and internal dissention. In that particular case we happened to have a group from Briar Hill and a group from Campbell and if it came down to nationality, they were one block but if it came down to neighborhood, they split. So I said to Johnny Barlett down in Campbell, I said, "this has got to be stopped because they were going to wreck the organization." I said, "You seem to be a little bit cooler on these things and can think straight. If you can handle this, I will get my boys to elect you chairman of the executive committee, which was, under the constitution, actually strategically more powerful than the president. And because I was President, I could not have both. So the strategy simply was: when the Briar Hill boys would nominate somebody from up there, Barlett is going to nominate one from Campbell. And between the two of them, they annihilated each other and it worked as smooth and nobody's feelings got hurt and we solved the problem. So Johnny Barlett was our Executive Committee Chairman. Now another thing, I would say that the campaign, while there were many phases, there was four specific strategy that we had to carry out successfully. One was: knock the chairman out of the committee by going into his home district and defeating him for precinct committeeman; impossible.

C: This is Shutrump himself?

O: Shutrump himself. Now, being a prominent man, living in a very large house, he had to be known very well. His name was in the front page of the paper everyday. He was the County Chairman. He could easily have appointed fifty people their political jobs right out of the precinct. He picked the election board that counts the votes and that is a big strategy because they are there and they are almost sure of the vote and you appointed them so they will vote for you nine times out of ten unless one of them has got a personal grudge that, under secret ballot, he can do as he pleases. But in the natural course of things, this gives a slight advantage to the guy that is already in. Now, that was a tough one and who did we have to run against him? Clifford Passmore was a member of our club and he was around 21 years of age, unemployed and lived over in the poor section of that precinct. I think it was over on Indianola Avenue, but he lived in that precinct. And it was simply because he lived in that precinct that he was the boy that was to run. Cliff says, "I will never defeat him. He is on the front page of the paper everyday." I said, "Cliff, it is not important that you win. It is only important that we knock the county chairman out. I will help you every way I can and your job is to take out the county chairman." Of course Cliff is kind of appalled by all this but he was willing.

C: Was he afraid?

O: Well naturally. That is a job that I would be afraid to tackle myself today that is from the standpoint of the probability of accomplishing it. You do not like to take defeats when you know ahead of time. Although I have done it many times because if you are going to accomplish a purpose, sometimes if your strategy is oblique to what you are aiming at . . .

Any hunter knows that if he goes directly at the quarry, they are alerted and they run, but if they go at an angle, they think that you are doing something else and you can get a lot closer to home before they are alerted. So I was once accused of not telegraphing my punches, but when you are dealing with people that will stoop at anything, you cannot inform them exactly and how you are going to hit them because you are disadvantaged to start with. It is like David and Goliath. The odds of you winning anyhow are almost impossible, but it can be done.

Now here is what we did in that specific thing and this is one of the 4 or 5 different things we set out to do. It took the nominating petition and this is where we need a reform. You can run for governor of Ohio, for any office in this state and get signatures on your petition by yourself or have a friend do it and he does not need to take a notary with him. But if you want to run for precinct committeeman, you got to find a notary who will go with you and see every signature, and if he does not see one of them, you are thrown out. Now the machine always collected these at a meeting and illegally notarized the whole block and they never saw any of them. This practice was continued clear up until . . . I think what broke it was when Secretary Cox got challenged and taken to court that he had done that and got the petition thrown out. And he had ideas of being county chairman at the time. Years later, but all these years when I was running, I knew that if I did that I would be the shining example of everything that law. And the public would be fed the line that they are making me an example to prove that it should be done. But nevertheless, it is awkward to have to find a notary that will go with you and spend his time and then you have people think it is not important. They will walk out in the other room and try to sign it or something. And you have to insist they do it right in front of the notary because if they can prove that he did not see every one of their signatures and you needed at least five and they must be registered voters in your party, that is reported in the primary in your party; if you do not have a voters list as many do not know how to go about getting them or anything, you are blind and you do not know this and you may get a signature that is not a registered voter in this and is thrown out. There are all kinds of technicalities.

Of course, Cliff, this newcomer, did not know anything. So I went with him, we got the signatures, we got the notary, we got everything perfect. I went down with him to the Board of Elections to file it and who comes to the counter but John Pattula, First Lieutenant of Shutrump. Of course the party boss appoints the Democratic members of the Board of Elections.

C: This your first actual meeting with Pattula?

O: No, I knew him before that because I knew who he was.

C: This is the first time you ever went head on with him?

O: Yes, head on. And Patulla of course, takes the petition and going down over it and looking at it and all of the sudden he looks up and he said, "You know whose precinct

this is?" Startled. I said, "Johnny of course I know whose precinct it is." I said, "You fellows filed a state liquor store employees' wife against me after he signed my petition." I thought I had nailed down every political job woman in the precinct so that it would be awkward for them to run against me and I missed one of the wives. Now I said, "If you think this is going to be a one way street you are badly mistaken." I said, "When you play poker over at the High Hotel you draw cards every time." Now I said, "You are going to knock me out? I am going to take Shutrump out." Of course he hot footed it right over to Shutrump. There is no question that they were forewarned. So they knew not only that it was going to be done, but I was going to do it, but what they did not know was how.

Now this was the how of the thing and this was done deliberately and calculated so that it would work. Cliff says, "His name is in the front page everyday." I said, "Now wait a minute, a lot of people, if they do read it they do not associate with that neighbor because they do not think and add together. Very few people pay attention to what is going on." Now I said, "I want you to get dressed in your best suit, put on your best smile . . ." A young man, green as anything, "knock on the door. Introduce yourself. I am Clifford Passmore and I am running for precinct committeeman." And I said, "Tell them I am running against Mr. Ferragan that lives in that house over on the corner. Do you know Mr. Ferragan? No? Well his boys play basketball and he is the foreman." We had all the dope on Ferragan, "down in the mill, real nice guy, but we are running against each other. Do not vote for me, vote for him. I do not want no hard feelings." If they say, "Well what about Shutrump?" "You never mention his name, never any circumstances! If they bring it up, you do not know him!" That was the campaign. And I went house to house the same way. "Mr. Passmore or Mr. Ferragan," but never mentioned Shutrump. We got rumors toward the end that they were paying fifty dollars a vote. Now I could not prove it but that was what the rumor was.

- C: This will be in the 1930's still?
- O: Yes. In the hopes that they make sure that did not happen, but they were fighting Passmore. And as far as I know, even Passmore voted for Ferragan. Cliff cooperated I think, right down to the line, even to that.
- C: Even he did not know? Did he know what was the whole strategy here?
- O: Oh sure. As Cliff's wife told me some years later, Cliff never got over telling about the time he took the county chairman out. Now where was Ferragan at? Ferragan had a couple boys or three boys I do not remember now, that played basketball. Anyhow they were about the age they want jobs and nobody could get jobs then. And I guess he had gone to his neighbor, Shutrump, who was a big contractor here and had plenty of jobs privately as well as political and apparently would not do anything and got sore. So he filed. Well Ferragan never knew, even till the campaign was over, what we were doing. We never talked to him, never approached him, nothing. He never even knew what was

going on. Well Ferragan gets elected committeeman and Shutrump is out. Two votes, two votes we beat him.

- C: These people that were paying off the people living in the district. Shutrump's people do you know of they were paying them to vote for Shutrump of . . .
- O: Well it was supposed to be for Shutrump.
- C: Or did they work that they vote against this other guy?
- O: I do not know, but I think that they fired most of their ammunition against Passmore thinking that we were putting up a fight and they missed the cue altogether that our strategy was to elect Ferragan.
- C: So in other words, they did not tell them to vote for Shutrump, they just told them to vote against this other . . .
- O: We just heard rumors that there were fifty dollar bills being passed out over there. Now whether those rumors were true or not I had no way of checking. But the fact that votes are bought and paid for, even committeeman's votes, I have seen the transaction take place. Many times I did not know who the guy was all except that he was a committeeman. Now there is 400 and some, then I think there was 200, 250. It kept getting bigger as the county grew. I heard fellows that worked in the shift down in the mills, split shift. They say, "Well I will lose a turn in the mill if I come to the meeting. Well if you were on the machine's side, you would get your wages compensated.
- C: How?
- O: Well they would just give you the money.
- C: Oh, they would pay you?
- O: But if you were on the other side you came at your own expense because there was nobody had any money for you there. Opposition was sporadic independents who were not organized.
- C: What was Shutrump's reaction to this?
- O: Of course this was the bomb shell that he, by law, could not walk into the committee meeting and therefore could not be elected chairman. Now of course, where you make up the rules, as we will come to it later, they tried to change the rules to have outsiders appointed and then have his stooge appoint him and he was

back in. But the power had substantially weakened because we had demonstrated that it could be beaten. Not only that, we demonstrated that every endorsed candidate could be beaten. And we heard the cry over the next two years: for heaven's sake do not endorse me at the kiss of death. Now when you hit a machine that way, they have lost a great deal of power.

C: So that was the first step, you had dumped Shutrump in his own precinct. What were the other 3 or 4?

O: All right, now the other of course, was when the state machine helped the local machine, then it would dump the state machine. They would tag together. Fortunately for me, I started out first to investigate how corruption could exist to the extent I could not get justice and discovered the whole community was being robbed, systematically in collusion the public officials and that it was widespread. Racketeers operated openly. No obviously, and this is a matter of principle anywhere, when racketeers open and they operate in community, somebody, at least one branch of government, either judges, the police or the prosecution is under the control of people who are being paid by the racketeers approving who it is and which branch. Now they will try for all three, but one is sufficient to break down effective law enforcement. If in the community, you know there is open racketeering over extended periods, now you can hide it for a while in a small scale, but not widespread. You know somebody is one they take that is in a high position. Common sense tells you this. The logic of it tells you this. They cannot operate unless they have protection on that scale. And here is a place that has a permanent location right off the square of downtown and operating months on end. Now what we had done is leased to the headquarters of the most obvious racket, the Numbers Racket, and of course, it was not long before he could add too. Now I suspected behind scene. First, Shutrump's boy probably suspected that Regas was financing us and they started giving him hell and he wakes up to the fact . . . It is almost like the bird that has a nest of little ones and discovers that the predator is right in the nest with them. So Regas tried to break the lease. He will not take the money. Now I am not a lawyer and I knew a heck of a lot less about law then than I know now and I felt, rightly or wrongly whether this would have been the legal consequence, that if I went to court that I would not even get a hearing let alone a trial or get an order or anything until after the election and if we lose our headquarters until after election we are in trouble. And nothing would be as effective as . . . you could see our signs all over the square downtown and the fact that I had it in the situation I had it was causing consternation and troubles I knew among the ranks of the opposition. You can imagine what was going on behind scenes there. Other racketeers, the competition, probably thinking that we were his boys. I wish I knew the whole story, but I was up against it. Not only I did not have the money, I was running out of money, but I wanted to keep that headquarters. Now we even set up a

debate and appointed the mayor and other judges . . .

C: Who was the mayor at this time?

O: I do not even remember. Now that I think about it I can remember. That would be 1936. The idea was to drag the prominent people into that building and out of it so they could not pretend they did not know where the building was. Now this might be a little bit distant but nevertheless it was part of our strategy to make it obvious to the public that the collision was open and complete.

C: When in fact they were coming in to see you and not to see Regas.

O: Yes, and they could not walk past and through and not be aware . . . at least they could not deny they knew the building was there because we could say you were there on such and such a date and they could not deny it because we had witnesses. Now whether they saw what we saw or whether they would admit it would be a different story. But this is all public relations, setup, psychology to emphasize and center public attention on it. I could not begging to tell you all the stunts we pulled to accomplish this. Up until three or four days before election we had set up a situation by refusing to take sides officially. There was a story all the time that we were studying the evidence and we would come to our conclusion, our endorsements and announce it before election, but because we wanted to be sure we only supported honest men for office we made a thorough study of it. Yes we were but we were like a jury that had seen enough evidence already. And of course, as time went on, a lot of the machine boys gave up and did not even come to the meetings. And while our membership attendance fell off, we literally locked the door so the public did not know this. As far as the public was concerned all they really saw was the new members that were being introduced. In fact, they only came to two or three meetings and quit. We did not tell them how many had quit. We were down to about . . . I think there was only around thirty there, toward the end, that were coming to the meetings, but that did not mean anything. We were getting our psychology across. And of course, the Vindicator was giving us support and so was the Pittsburgh Post.

C: As far as people were concerned, you were still the arm of the Democratic Party?

O: That is right. And we were making them eat it. So let us see. Oh, about the headquarters then, to buff Regas so that, not understand the position he was in and while there is no evidence that they were the boys that took people for the ride, there was plenty of people taken for a ride in Youngstown and bombings, all kinds. I think even he was bombed once. The mayor was bombed even after that. There had been fifty bombings that they claim they had no solution, no lead, nothing. IN fact, we got to be known as Murdertown, USA as far away as Australia. And then these wise guys thought that they could counter that by calling it Baseballtown, USA. Of course the rackets also extend into the sports.

That is one of the big gambling, on fixed sports. But anyhow, to stop Regas, now, he was going to throw us out.

C: With Shutrump's blessing?

O: No of course. Now we could not run to the police. We could not go to court because it would take too long. So I had to figure out how can I call his bluff. Can you think of any way?

C: Fool him.

O: Well I read in the paper that attorney Delusa had represented the Maritime Union in some kind if a labor problem and I had also read that the CIOAF and I did not have a meeting hall. Years later they built this big hall and whatnot. And other labor unions had no place to meet and there were not very many places around Youngstown. So I figured there was thirty days in a month and we only need two of them for our meetings or partied and we had two offices that we could have executive committee meetings in concurrently, when someone was using the hall. So I went down to Galusa and I said, "Do you have any connection with the Maritime Union? I want to make contact with them." "Oh," he said, "I still represent them." I said, "Here is the problem: I have got to call Regas' bluff. He will not take the lease money and I cannot afford to waste the time to try to go to court, we might be after election before we get the decision."

You did not know whether the judge would side with them or not because the judges were all elected by the same machine. We would have had about as much a chance as the proverbial snowball in the hot place of getting any kind of a decision favorable to us by law, especially when, as we proved later, there was a total breakdown of law and order. So I said, "Now here is the idea: if you can get ten or fifteen different labor unions, each can have, well we can take care of fourteen labor organization, two nights a month for their meetings if they can arrange their meetings so that they are not in conflict. And for that matter, you can have two or three on the same say at different hours." We might have been able to take care of forty or fifty organizations if they could schedule it right. "And all it will cost them, all of them altogether, is a ten dollar bill. And their physical presence to call his bluff." I said, "I want a committee of about fifteen or twenty of men that are known." He said, "Give me a little time." For them it was a God cent. I did not care who they were.

What their purposes were or what they did in their meetings had nothing to do with us. We just shared the meeting hall. I never had to come up with another dime for rent. But to get back to what happened, about two weeks went by and Galusa called me and he said, "We are ready. Well what time?" So we met down there and he must have had the truck driver's union, CIOAFL, some of the craft unions, the Maritime. I do not know what all the unions we had. I am not even sure which ones, but I am pretty sure the truck driver's was one of them. And this represented a massive political power. And we

all went over there to the pool hall and Regas was behind the desk and Attorney Galusa threw the ten dollar bill down and he said to Sam Regas, he said, "Now we have tendered the lease money payment for the Club and Regas just shoved the ten dollars back to him and turned to walk away. And that is when he said, "We have now tendered this ten dollars. The next move will be to meet us." And he motions that all these guys are with him, they did not just come in there by accident, "in court." Regas stood there and I could see his eyeballs rolling looking at the faces and he must have known most of them. He just reached over and took the ten dollars, put it in his pocket and walked away.

C: So you had the place?

O: I never had to come up with another dime and I do not know, eventually they tore the building down and what they did with the furniture, I do not know.

C: But did all these unions meet there?

O: Yes. Now, out of this developed, some time later, the desire for a public speaking study course and they got a couple teachers from local high schools to instruct and they set up a public speaking class. I could not ignore that this was also a political factor in the election. So being president of the parent organization, in effect, that had the headquarters in the first place and also, maybe learn a little public speaking myself, I also joined the class. It was well representative of various labor organizations around town and Young Democrats who belonged to the club. So it is a little hard to recall who the assigned a three minute talk or a ten minute talk to each member that we pick our own subject and at the next meeting, present it.

Well I remember I had always been interested in economics. In fact, what made me president of the Young Men I think they bought the argument I used in the speeches. There, in that club, occasionally issues were discussed. And I remember saying to the boys before they elected me treasurer and other things, that we were foolish to be selling out for political jobs when the real issue was: get the economy moving and we needed men who would not stoop to that kind of tactics and that we were not going to get that way if we kept selling them out our ability to be effective. And enough of them bought it that . . . And I had always been interested in economics so I thought this night I would make a speech on economics, about the Depression. I had written a piece that, oh, way back in the thirties I spent a whole winter working on it. And Bowers, who was city editor of the Vindicator, had complimented me on it when I presented it there for publication, took me out to his home, I did not have a high school diploma then, and he thought I had gone to college. But he said it was too much over the public's head for a newspaper. And I kidded him about printing Einstein's Theory of Relativity. He laughed about that one because if you ever saw it, you have to be a Ph.D. in Physics to get past the first sentence.

But, having an interest in that line, I thought I would speak on economics that

night and had a prepared speech. But, just before I got up, a young fellow, about high school age, who I had not seen before, came in with three older men that sat behind him, none of which I had ever seen before. And he gets up and gives a speech supposedly for this class, that was a polished, orders, presentation of Adolf Hitler's main theme with quotes right out of Mein Kampf. It was sugar colored in this manner.

They apparently figured out that we were all Young Democrats and labor union men and Detroit and Youngstown, of course, were two of the hot spots in that nation. And it was presented that they would make Franklin Delano Roosevelt dictator and this was a sugar-coated pill see, to sell the idea that dictatorship was such a fine thing and of course, the Nazi philosophy. And I detected that it was a professional propaganda job and the three guys behind him, from reading the expression on their faces, I can almost read minds sometimes, evidently were his trainers and they were there to make sure that it was delivered right.

Well I happened to follow him and I tore up my speech and I lit into him. The essence of what I said would be fighting on the streets before midnight if anybody tried it, Roosevelt or anyone else. And I said, "There are millions more like me in the United States." And I said, "This speech was a put up job. It was trained and sent here to sell it." And I said he was taking advantage of this class and I cannot let it pass. And one after another the labor leaders . . . I heard more swear words that night that I knew were ever used. The guy there from the truck driver's union, he really laid it on him and after a dozen speakers followed, the kid got up and he stammered and stuttered and he lost all his polish and oratory and admitted that he did not know what he was talking about.

After the meeting, these guys got me in the corner of that balcony and the essence of what they said was that if I ever threw another monkey wrench in their machinery that they would kill me and they kept shouldering over into the corner and everybody was leaving and I came to the conclusion they were only stalling until everybody was going and I was going to have trouble right there and then. So I had to make a break for it before everybody was gone and I suddenly put my elbow in one fellows chest and I said, "Oh you guys do not scare me," and I threw my weight against him and he staggered right back and I got through the opening and just in time the three men coming out of the office closed in the stairway behind me and I never looked back. I wanted them to think that I was not scarable. Later I tried to find out who they were but I could not.

In the Thirties and that later showed up a man that was in our organization, they thought that they were going to take over America and they eventually tried to sell the idea to us that they were unbeatable, they were already going to take over and that we might as well cooperate. Even Lindbergh, the great national hero tried to argue that the German Air Force was unbeatable and make book with them. But some of the German population in this country were tempted to go along with it. That and a few other things let me to the expression once that when I was referring to a political dictator and being part German myself, I got a right to say this; one Hitler was enough. We did not want a local one.

C: You never said that publicly though, did you?

- O: Oh I said it among the boys that we did not want any political dictator here either. One was enough in the world. Foreseeing what was happening, it might be important to this because Clingan Jackson was one of the guys who I supported. He was elected too. He was president of the AB Allies Committee organized in the 1930's, a small group of people who foresaw what was happening who tried to offset that kind of propaganda. I got a card there. I was a member of it. There was only about a dozen of us back in the 1930's. That is when I think I first met Clingan Jackson or, well maybe I met him before that, but I knew him well from that organization. And then later we backed him for State Senator.
- C: Was he involved at all with the . . .
- O: Only that he was the Vindicator reporter.
- C: But he stayed clear of most . . .
- O: He came to meetings occasionally. I do not think he took active participation as a member of it.
- C: What about in the Mahoning County?
- O: Oh he had been almost always the reporter, even of the committees. I have some bones to pick with the newspapers in that they do not keep the public aware of how this machine functions. When, for example, an issue comes up and a substantial number of the committee absolutely is against it and maybe a majority votes for it, then they make a second motion to make it unanimous. And no matter how many people shout at the top of their voices, "No, no, no!" It comes out in the paper there was a unanimous vote. They should tell the public that it is a phoney. It was not unanimous, it never was. Passing a motion to make it unanimous does not make it unanimous.
- C: Why would Clingan Jackson . . .
- O: Well they probably figured that it does not make any difference, the public does not care anyhow.
- C: Through your dealings with him, do you believe that is his attitude?
- O: I do not know, but many times, whether the paper as an organization, really knows what it is whole organization is doing or whether reporters reported totally falsely what was going on. In fact, in one case I had to go down to the Vindicator myself and I got Clingan Jackson to replace the reporter. Outrageous abuse of the press, but the owner of the paper may not know at all that this is going on. Now if

they catch one several times and still keep them on where they are playing politics with their job, then you can blame the paper, but there is no way of knowing that. However, I do think the press in general has not done its duty to keep the public informed as to how these machines operate and how phoney the endorsements are and what they really are.

Party endorsements even today, they have gone clear back to what they used to be, are not the endorsement of the party members, is not the endorsement of the committeeman. And even when you are on the executive committee it was a rarity. I can only remember one case that we ever were really left to vote on something and we voted contrary to what the chairman wanted and that was the case of Senator Sleen present Senator, astronaut that just won.

C: Glenn?

O: Glenn Metzenbaum was running against Glenn and in that executive committee meeting, whether it was because Glenn was so strong that Sulligan was afraid to just blunder ahead for fear it would backfire, but he, on the podium, asked the committee in a speech somewhat like this that definitely Metzenbaum would give us a lot of money and he preferred that Metzenbaum get the support of the machine. And the he took a standing vote and I stood up with this for Glenn, which were a majority, but this does not mean that the machine would support Glenn no matter what he did. And the control of the money still could have gone that way. The result was that Metzenbaum beat Glenn the first time.

C: So endorsement is only endorsement in name. The money could go the other way if the chairman wants it?

O: Now, this I think the press has been negligent in stressing over and over all time just how phony these endorsements are. If decided ahead of time and as handed down from the top and anybody that dares to buck it would just end up being kicked off the committee. You rubber stamp what the boss wants and that is it even if went through the form of taking a vote.

C: There was only one time in all your years as a committeeman you saw them go against chairman's wishes on endorsements?

O: It is the only time I can remember that we even voted on an endorsement. Of course, they bring the thing out and they twist arm to sign it. You know of you do not sign it that you are going to have trouble.

C: Like what trouble?

O: Well you get defeated the next time or you have active opposition with the

machine trying to get you out. For years I refused, I think only once or twice I have ever let them use my name on it. I had no particular reason that I knew a definite reason why one of them was not any good, but other times when I knew there were men on there that I would not support under any circumstances, I was not going to let them use my name and I refused. And rarely did the precinct committee sign go up in front of my house. If it went up at all it was down in the field and I do not think I ever put up one of those. The machine puts a lot of pressure to get them up, on all the committeemen. This last time that I bucked the endorsement that the chairman wanted and I ran for state representative when he wanted to, I was immediately removed from the executive committee, removed as ward captain. And of course that and other things that I did not really care anymore or I would not even have filed this last time. It was not worth fighting for because what are you accomplishing? Out of the four hundred men I could not count on one other man. You are not making any reforms unless you have got at least half of them. And under the circumstances where job holders can be intimidated to vote the way they are told, others can be bought, others can be scared unless you have a secret ballot to protect, have a committee . . .

End of Part 4