

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Ohio Democratic Party
Tape #5

Personal Experience

O.H. 954

FRANK O'CONNOR

Interviewed

by

Mark Connelly

on

April 16, 1975

C: This is tape number five of the interview with Mr. O'Connor. It is still April 16, 1975.

You said that if you are going to win, you would have to concentrate on one man.

O: Right. So I said, "Who ever they put up, and it is my information it is going to be Judge Powers," I said, "we will go in there by different doors so that nobody spots the fact that we are all together. And when the chairman opens the meeting, all seven of you will jump to the floor and shout for recognition." I said, "You make a speech, but you do not name the man you are going to support until the last thing when you sit down. And when you say, 'Spagnola,' and sit down, the other six of us will angrily want to answer you. And nine chances out of ten the chairman will recognize another one. And we will use that strategy as long as it works."

C: And all of you will still get up there for Spagnola?

O: Yes. It worked like a charm. Poor O'Neil did not know what hit him. One after another. He had one man that finally got a crack in for Powers and then it was right back, Spagnola, Spagnola, Spagnola. There is something about mass psychology or crowd psychology. When this happens and the crowd thinks that everybody is one way, it glues them to their chairs. They will not get up and they will not open their mouths. And you just absolutely silence them. This is the way the machine did it, time after time. I gave them a dose of their own medicine. And it really worked. Finally O'Neil, in desperation, because he was not there as an independent, they were to put it over for Powers, he turns the chair over to me and goes out on the floor to make a speech for Powers because he could not get anybody else to get out of their chair.

C: Did they realize what he was going on after, did everybody realize by then?

O: Oh, they never. Even he was taken in. By this time, he thought the crowd was for Spagnola. And so I am chairman, and I thought to myself, here is my chance, I could put it to a vote. But what about the future repercussions? I took advantage of the chairmanship, which is the thing I have been condemning all along; abuse of the chair and outrageous favoritism to whatever the chairman wants. So I thought it might ultimately work against me instead of for me. So when O'Neil got through with his speech, I stated that, now that the chairman has seen fit to take sides in this, I do not think it is out of order that the secretary also takes sides. So Mr. O'Neil, I think that was his name, said "You take the chair and I will take the floor." So I turned the chair back over to him, but he could not very well take the floor away from me, see?

So I summed it up. I said, "Now, tomorrow night you are going to be up on a roll call vote under intimidation, afraid of your jobs and afraid of saying what you believe." I said, "Here, tonight, we can take a secret ballot. You can voice your opinion on the secret ballot, without any fear of retaliation or any purchase, who you really want for chairman. I move that we take a vote here and now." And one of my boys seconded it. And then

you get the situation that always occurs. When you get them legally in the proper manner, the motion properly made and properly seconded, the chairman just ignores you.

C: So O'Neil ignored it?

O: He ignored it.

C: As an independent, he ignored it?

O: Yes, so I appealed a point of order. As a point of order, I appealed the decision of the chair. I said, "There is a motion properly made and seconded before the house and I demand a vote." And he ruled against me. So "point of order" and I kept the floor. In order to get the crowd away from the thing, he started recognizing women in the back of the hall. And after this has gone three or four women, he thought I would give up the floor, but I would not concede that point. O'Neil, he took this attitude, he said, "Well it is obvious we cannot agree on who we want for chairman here tonight. So from now on, we will just discuss procedures of the matter tomorrow night." And one of my boys got up and said, "What happens tomorrow night if someone makes a motion and the chairman refuses to recognize it?" He said, "You appeal the decision of the chair." And somebody up in the balcony started to titter. And it was almost a full minute of silence. That titter spread, they started to laugh and then the audience just roared. And they practically laughed him off the stage.

C: How many people were there?

O: Almost the entire committee. So Powers was such a dead duck as candidate that his name never came up the next night. They put ex-sheriff, I cannot recall his name right now, in the chair temporarily, and the Sawyer forces and the Spagnola forces. Again, you might call this the Spagnola forces by that time because he was planning to run for mayor. They put up a candidate for temporary chairman and they did not get enough votes to elect a temporary chairman. And they walked out, they did not leave the meeting, but a bunch of the Italian committeemen walked out in the hall. And I carried on this fight for rules. I suppose they could have come back in, but I think they felt that they could not muster enough votes to do anything. But they were primarily interested in Spagnola's chance of getting elected mayor. When their candidate as temporary chairman was defeated, they reasoned that they would not put Spagnola up and have him defeated, which would hurt his chances for mayor. So I did not know what they were going to do, but I had my Boardman committeemen solid, and Sawyer men there.

I made a fight for a secret ballot. When they came in with these rules written that would turn all the power over to the chairman, I moved to amend the rules and by-laws to provide for a secret ballot. And now, of course, if I had one match, that would have just been the beginning. I would have rewritten the entire thing, because the minute that power was broken for the secret ballot, then you could write a decent set of rules that

would protect the voter and his rights. You elect committeemen supposedly to represent the people who live in the precinct, not to be puppets for a county chairman that tells them how to vote or else. It is a complete reversal of the Democratic process. And I do not understand why the press does not constantly bring this before the public. Maybe they figure that it is useless. The attitude is, the public is so dumb they do not care anyhow.

C: Would you go so far as saying the Vindicator was owned by Shutrump people?

O: No. As a matter of fact, I thought the Vindicator was quite opposed to them. But I think the Vindicator would also be in doubt as to what my motives would be, or anybody that opposed Shutrump. But how would they know whether these people really, sincerely want good government? Everybody says they are for good government.

C: Did you ever go out and talk to the people there?

O: Well, Clingan Jackson has been fairly close to me all over the years. In fact, I backed him for state senator. And he got it, in spite of the machine. He was also secretary of the Sid Allies Committee when I belonged and wanted to alert this country to do something. Being a political reporter of the Vindicator, he had been present time after time when I made a fight. And while I have never been taken into their confidence in strategy meetings, they undoubtably and must have done that at the Vindicator. Probably the owner and maybe his editor, city editor and maybe Clingan Jackson and others. I had hoped at some times that Clingan would have pushed me further and I would have gotten fuller cooperation, but he might have been overruled. When I ran for state representative, the Vindicator all but endorsed me. In fact, they gave me a better boost in their editorial column than they made for their endorsements. There were seventeen candidates who filed for it. They gave their endorsement to Panno and some other fellow, I understood, mainly because they felt they had a better chance to win. And then they went on to say, "But O'Connor also has the qualifications."

Then the Boardman News outright endorsed me, which was a big surprise to me, because some years before I had politically collided head on with Darnell, the owner, or one of the owners, and I did not expect it. But I think they probably learned to respect my ability then whenever we were on opposite sides. In fact, this is one of the curious things that happened; I have got more favors and more friendly overtures from fellows that I have fought bitterly, politically, and some of my best friends do not even bother to go vote. You never have a citizen say to you, "Well thanks, you did a good job," or, "Too bad you were not able to accomplish it," or that they are even interested or that they even noticed it. An amazing number of times, some of the people I did the biggest favors for and did the most for do not even bother to show up to vote. It is just incredible, the difference and the apathy.

C: Did you notice this throughout all your years here?

O: Yes. Back during the Depression, we were able to get people to move simply because, being unemployed and starving, they were desperate to do something. But I found that many of them, when it came to a showdown, would have sold out in a minute for a favor. It was not a matter of principle. Another man that I think honestly tried, and I had several occasions where we came together, was Lamar Armstrong. In fact, he walked out on me back there in the Young Men's Club because he thought that I would sell out to the other side. And he found out that I did not. And then after the war, he was a committeeman here in Boardman and they tried to move the rackets into Boardman. That was a story in itself. And I fought that, too.

C: Does he know a lot about that?

O: Oh, yes. The night that this happened to me, when a deputy sheriff and assistant prosecutor openly discussed getting their money from racketeers, the assistant prosecutor turned to me and he said, "O'Connor, when you grow up and find out how the big time operates, you will not see anything wrong with it either." In other words, I was a stupid kid.

C: What year was this?

O: Oh, this was right after the war. 1945.

C: That was the assistant prosecutor here?

O: Yes, right in an open meeting of the committeemen, and Lamar was there. After the meeting, I met him out in the driveway of the house, a private home. I said, "Lamar what are we going to do about it?" They openly admitted that this is their chance to clean up. They get the campaign funds from the office of the county sheriff. Langly was sheriff then. He said that there was nothing wrong with Langly getting his funds from there. He said, "All the others do." It was just open, blatant admission. And they were going to open the Poland Country Club as a gambling joint. Supposedly, the rumor was that the two Budeck's that just got out of the Federal Penitentiary were going to run it. Lamar told me he would introduce me to the president of the club over there and that he did not want it either. But they claimed that the fix was in and that the prosecutor would guarantee them against prosecution and the sheriff would guarantee them against arrest. They wanted me to run as constable in Boardman to make sure that they were not interfered with here.

C: Why would they pick you to run if they know that you are attached?

O: Well, I heard a district comment: "O'Connor has got a lot of friends and he will strengthen the slate." You see, they were going to put up a slate for all the township offices. Well, I turned it down flat.

- C: They believed that you still could be bought, even after the past experiences?
- O: Yes, but these boys did not know me at all. In fact the prosecutor got the horselaugh downtown. He said, "Of all the guys and you do that in front of O'Connor."
- C: Did they not check with anybody?
- O: Apparently not. See, I had been in the Army and I was disabled for a long period of time. They thought that I was a newcomer. They did not know I had run the party out here for twenty years. And they spilled it right in front of me. Now, here is the peculiar part of this. We were getting away from the story, but this is more recent. Right in front of the committeemen, openly. Now, I wanted to know what I could do about it. So I called several committeemen who were there at the meeting.
- C: And heard this?
- O: Yes. And I said, "Well, what did you think of it?" "What are you talking about?" They did not hear it. And the guy stood up right up in the middle of the room and they were all sitting around there looking at him. Either they did not want to remember or they were too dumb to understand. Even to verify something that you were right there and heard it and all heard it together. I want to know if I challenged this, how many people would back me up. But they were too scared. Now, this ended and they were trying to defeat me for committeeman, which they failed.
- In the end, I ran the acting chairman. He had resigned before it even came to a vote. And the fellow that tried to oust me was thrown out of the meeting with nothing. I put Jimmy Moderelli in as the chairman of the Boardman Committee. I wrote the constitution of the Boardman Committeemen. And they still vote secret ballot. I checked the other night: they had an endorsement for trustee. And one of the committeewomen called me and told me what happened. And I said, "Did they vote secret ballot?" And she said, "Yes." They are still using the secret ballot in Boardman, in spite of the fact that I am out of there. But I wrote that constitution twenty-five years ago. Now the records are lost and I doubt if they even have a written copy of it. But the principle is established. And you are supposed to vote until somebody gets a majority.
- I think they hired a felon to put a bomb on my car.
- C: This is in the 1940's?
- O: Yes. The dog alerted me and I knew that there was somebody in the car. They are birddogs and they point. Both of them were pointing to the garage. So I figured that there was a guy in there. And because this thing was pretty dangerous, being that they had police protection and everything, there was no one that I could call for help. So I went on the north porch here where they could not see me and fired the rifle in the air two or three times and then turned the lights out.

C: This is right here?

O: Yes. I figured if I were in there and somebody started firing a rifle, I would panic. I figured he would run, and he did. As soon as I figured that he cleared the area, so I would not have to shoot him or him shoot me, I turned the lights on again and started shooting up over the back there. I did not know just where he ran, but the neighbor told me the next day he went down across the back lots there. And then two years later they found equipment for putting a bomb on a car down by the turnpike. I think he dropped it, but I have no way of proving it or connecting it. I think he went down, hitchhiked to the turnpike, and back to Chicago or wherever he came from.

The same night they burned Bowman's home out here in Beaver Township. And Bowman's son was trying to get the slot machines out of Beaver Township. I always suspected, I strongly suspected right then, now understand, that they were openly saying that the prosecutor and the sheriff is on it. And the storekeepers that had the slot machines assured me to my face that I had absolutely nothing to worry about -- the fix was in. I told Sakas over here, I said, "Now Sakas, I do not want to be the goat. They always get some little guy and make him an example of how they enforce the law so the big guy eats off him." I said, "I am going to a meeting tonight and I am going to raise the roof about this."

C: You were afraid to call the county sheriff?

O: I had been assured by the deputy in the chair that the fix was in and that they wanted me to help.

C: So the fact that there was possibly a bomb planted in your car, the county sheriff would not have done a thing about it?

O: Not only that, but within two seconds of the time that I fired that rifle, a deputy sheriff car pulled up at my mailbox and two uniformed deputies got out and looked around the bushes, apparently for their passenger.

C: Their passenger. Obviously you mean the man?

O: Yes, exactly what I suspected. Prove it another thing. But they never came in and asked me who was doing the shooting. I stood out there in the woods and watched them. But I had already gone to the sheriff who I had known for years and asked him to do something about his deputy, who openly bragged in a meeting. And he did not do anything. On top of that I laid a trap for him to see whether he was on the up and up, and he fell into the trap.

C: This sheriff had been sheriff how many years, approximately, by this time?

O: He replaced Elser. I do not know how long he had been sheriff. It was Langly. Now I told him to back off at this meeting. It was supposed to be cut and dry that I would be the candidate for constable. I told the deputy, who was chairman, before the meeting that I would not accept it.

C: Is this deputy still around now?

O: No, he left town. He resigned everything from deputy sheriff. He was on the executive committee. He was committeeman. He was chairman of the party in Boardman here, so he claimed.

C: Do you know his name?

O: Sure I know what his name is. But, you see, there is the trouble with this thing. How many of those people were at the meeting? Now I am pretty sure Lamar will tell you something. He was there.

C: So, there was your corroboration.

O: But, as I said, I met Lamar out in the driveway and here is what Lamar said to me: he said, "They are just using my good name to hide behind. I am going to resign." And I said, "Mar, if you just give me your word, I can count on you. Alone you cannot do anything. You have got to have enough votes." "Oh," he said, "they are entrenched so deep, you could never budge them." Now, Lamar is of Protestant faith, and he probably assumed, because the sheriff and the prosecutor both were, at least claimed to be, the same church or faith I am, see? Now, it was a natural assumption back in the 1930's and he told me afterwards that he did not run for reelection because of that. I defeated him in spite of that. And he read it in the paper. When I saw Lamar, Lamar said to me, he says, "O'Connor, twice I have made a mistake with you, never again." I know what he was thinking, and I think he would verify it.

Of course, if that was what he was thinking, it was my assumption, not a fact stated, but I think it was the background of it that was the right conclusion. He figured that all these people were in collusion with each other and they all stick together. And there is a good basis sociologically that ethnic groups, religious groups, racial groups tend to do this blindly, but not me. I had no use for that whatsoever. The United States Constitution is one shining attempt to bring equal justice to everybody, regardless. And the whole principle in American government is based on that. To make it live is going to take generations, but if we do not start somewhere, if we let these guys sabotage it for greed and political favors, we never get anywhere because we are defeated before we start.

Now you got me off of the critical part of this that I wanted to be sure that you got. This meeting, the night that we really broke Shutrump's power, it also tells about where I saw this money. Now I wish I could remember the name, it is not Knox. An ex-

sheriff was in the chair anyhow and he seemed to be trying to pretend that he was fair, either that or he was slow-witted, because instead of just slapping me down by arbitrarily ignoring the thing, he tries to make a pretense of being fair. Now what happened? When I moved to amend the rules and by-laws to provide for a secret ballot, I had a motion properly before the house. And they, at that time, thought that I had a majority of the committee. They were afraid of me, the secretary. The strategy then was to riot, make a lot of noise, and then pretend that it was our people doing it. And then the secretary announced that if they did not quit rioting and making noise, he would announce it passed without a vote. Then he proceeded to start calling the roll call announcing we were voting on the rules. And I raised a point of order that the amendments to the rules must be voted on first. So the chairman then appoints Powers, the guy who he defeated the night before, a former Municiple Judge, as parliamentarian. And he supposedly makes the ruling that you always vote on the main motion first and the amendments afterwards. They put about six or seven lawyers up there. I was in my twenties then.

What they were trying to do was to get me to admit that they were right. But the very fact that they had six or seven attorneys up there arguing with me, I knew doggone well that I was right. And I understood that there is supposed to be some other authority in parliamentary after I wrote several constitutions. I studied it for strategy reasons, Robert's Rules of Order. It is a matter of fact that there is no doubt about this one at all. Every parliamentary procedure, every legislative body, the House, the Senate, the State House, every organization, the procedure is to vote on the amendment and then after the amendment is either passed or defeated, you clear all the amendments and then you vote on the main motion. So they were doing them absolutely backwards.

Now in the rules that they wanted to adopt, it required a two-thirds vote to change it. So what they were going to do was pass that thing, and then insist on a two-thirds to change it. Well, you do not need a two-thirds vote to get it up in the first place on the amendments; the majority of the votes is enough. So they recessed the meeting and they were arguing there, the attorneys with me and the chairman, and they were trying to bluff me into believing that I was wrong. Well, everybody that knows anything in parliamentary knowledge knew perfectly well that I was right. And it was just a little bit too raw to override. They were trying to figure some strategy to get around it. While this was going on, every move that was being made, I could see runners coming up the aisle and whisper and then a change of strategy. Well, I was making up my own strategy as I needed it from knowledge and experience. But the people who were running the meeting were getting their orders from somewhere else.

C: Who?

O: Well, the boss. So after I spotted these runners several times, I knew that the orders were coming from a little doorway in the back. As I recall, they had it set up somehow that the chairman was at one end of the hall and the stage was at the other, because that was at the back where the stage was and there is a dressing room behind the stage there. So while this recess was on, I suddenly made a move and followed one of the runners back. I

yanked open the door and there was Shutrump sitting at a little table with money stacked in stacks all over it, money in both fists and bags on the other side of the table with their hands out getting it. So there was no question what he was paying for. He was not buying bushels of oats or betting on the horses. He was there to control that meeting. So, any jury in the world, I think, that would have seen what I saw, would have concluded that he was paying off his supporters to control the meeting.

C: Did he see you?

O: Oh, of course he saw me. As usual, I opened the door on a secret meeting.

C: What did he say?

O: What could he say?

C: Was he embarrassed?

O: Oh, you could not embarrass those guys, no how. The prosecutor would not prosecute him. You could not get a witness to testify with you, they are all his boys.

C: Did he say anything to you at all?

O: I do not recall whether we said anything or not. I think it was a couple of gaps. I opened the door on that situation. But then I went back. Now they kept this uproar up, and finally said, for the benefit of the press and how to get the public, I said, "I do not care whether you run this meeting backwards or not, as long as the chairman will make a ruling and agree to make a ruling, that a majority vote carried regardless. I am not going to let you pull this two-thirds business on me because you did this thing backwards. If you do it backwards, it makes no difference to me as long as the majority vote on the amendment." So they agreed. So they take a roll call on the adoption of the rules and then they promptly table the amendment. Now the effect of the tabling of an amendment is to table the main motion. So as far as I was concerned the meeting was totally illegal from there on. And the newspapers must have said so in the press.

C: Do you have a clipping of that?

O: Well they ridiculed it and, as I say, candidates started saying, "Do not endorse me, it is the kiss of death." So two years later then, the real payoff came. While he seemed to control it, it was little effect. They made this deal with Bricker. This was headlined in the newspaper. I do not know whether you could prove it in court or not, but at least the newspapers said so. And it was widely believed, that the machine men worked for Bricker, Democrats. They are no Democrats, but the paid agents of a political machine. They will tell the rank and file, "party loyalty," and then themselves will double cross

them in a minute for pay. There was a time, I was not able to check the facts, but I was told that John Vitullo had two relatives working for the Republican, I think it was the auditor. The Republicans carried the one office. And while the Democrats could win this county almost two to one and was almost a dead ringer since that. They could take that office, no candidate filed and the candidates that were going to file were discouraged from filing on the argument that some powerful figure endorsed by the machine was going to get it. Nobody filed, which disfranchised the average voter. Now these two party deals go on. So party loyalty to them is a farce also. They will tell the rank and file guy and they raised the very devil if I bolt the party.

C: Would you say that this continues right now? Would you say that Ray Davis is in collusion with Jack Sulligan?

O: I would not say that because I do not know. If I was well financed and had an organization that was interested in some productive end that I put my time to it, I could find out in a hurry.

C: How else could you explain Ray T. Davis being elected?

O: Well he puts a lot of Democrats on to the jobs, and he has a two party, the same as Hunter.

C: So the same thing, right?

O: Right, but basically the reason that exists is that a lot of Democrats are fed up with machine politics. They know that it is a phony. So they vote for the Republicans because they know the bums that the party is putting up. The party can put up men that were indicated for crimes as the best men the party had to offer as they did when I ran for State Representative. Now understand that Cregan, I do not want to say he was arrested, but I have a vague recollection. Anyway, he was supposed to have broken into Maag's home, the owner of the Vindicator.

C: This is Attorney Lawrence Cregan?

O: Yes. Everybody discussed it. I do not have any proof of it, but I think it is a matter of record in the newspaper, and Maag was angry because he was never prosecuted. I do not know why or how. But the argument given by his friends was that he was too drunk to know what he was doing.

C: What was the purpose of this break-in according to scuttlebutt?

O: I do not know what the purpose was. Maag was a wealthy man.

C: Why would an attorney break into a house? Why could he not find someone else?

O: The excuse given that he was too drunk to know what he was doing. Now the other city councilman, Toben, had an insurance swindle. They printed fake accident reports, pictures, and whatnot, mimics from the newspaper to submit to the insurance company. And this was done by the Glaro's Printing Company. Gaul was indicted along with them, but he was never prosecuted.

C: Who was the prosecutor at this time? It was not Gilmartin, was it?

O: I do not know whether Ambrose was still prosecutor or not. I would not want to say, because I do not remember. But anyhow, his friends, when he was running for state representative, gave the reason that he was not prosecuted because he was too dumb to know what he was doing. Well, I think he was a very shrewd businessman. But I also know that he did a lot of printing for the Sulligan. Now why he was not prosecuted, you could figure. But this is typical of what went on. If you know the right people, you can just about get away with anything.

I do not know how it was disposed of, whether he could still be prosecuted. I suppose there is a statute of limitations on it. But his partners went to the penitentiary. Now Sulligan wants the party to put up these two men with this record as the best men the party can find to run for state representative, to go down and write laws in Columbus.

C: Did you see at the meeting that he endorsed these two?

O: Well, that was an executive committee and out of the entire committee, I got five votes. I got Clingan Jackson's and three women's from Boardman, and I forget who else.

C: What did Sulligan give as his reasons for supporting these men?

O: They did not do it in the open. All I knew is that I suddenly discovered everybody was scared to give me any support. The orders were out to vote for these two guys.

C: So he just walked into the meeting and said we endorse this and this one?

O: He even pretended that he had not taken part in it.

C: Was there any discussion held in the meeting?

O: No.

C: He just came in and said this and this?

- O: It is an open vote and you have not got a ghost of a chance because the guys are scared to vote for you. They would be out of a job.
- C: I cannot imagine a meeting, especially a meeting of this importance, without any discussion going on about who to vote for.
- O: As a matter of fact, the fellow that was to give my nominating speech did not get out of his chair. And Sulligan conducted the meeting and just ignored it. But really, I was not nominated. They went through the form of vote as if I was not. At least I did not here my name mentioned. But anyhow, I had sent letters to everybody and everybody knew that I was running for it and that I was asking for the endorsement. However, the brother of a fellow that was supposed to nominate me was president of the Boardman Men's Democratic Club. And his picture suddenly appeared in the paper that he was appointed to a ten thousand dollar a year job. And I learned that the executive committee of that club, of which I was a member, had a meeting without me being notified and the vote was three to three to do nothing.
- C: Which meant that they would do that then?
- O: And he personally apologized to me afterwards because after he got double crossed and he did not get the job, he felt a little sheepish about it. Mr. Bannon was the treasurer, but the next meeting he resigned and the club broke up over it. Then they organized this South County Men's Club and I did not go to the meetings because I felt that if I got too close to Bannon, that might ruin his chances, but when he ran, I donated to his campaign. I did everything to get him elected and he was elected trustee of Boardman.
- C: Can we get back to that Vitullo election?
- O: I was trying to get that secret ballot which, as I say, was only the first move. And that night they broke every rule in the book and arbitrarily declared themselves back in office, is what it amounted to. Now they picked their own executive committee. They set up a set of rules that they could appoint Shutrump back to the committee and he was not even elected.
- C: Now this is happening that night?
- O: Yes. So they just wrote the rules to suit themselves and that is the way it was done. We did not even get a real vote on it. You see, a secret ballot gives you a different answer all together than an open vote. Because on the open vote, the guys that are paid off, the guys that are threatened with their jobs, they might be swearing under their breath that they would like to get those SOB's that are

putting them in that spot. And they would like to change the system. They do not dare, see. Now in a secret ballot, you can hand a guy a fifty dollar bill to vote your way and he could vote the opposite way, he would not know the difference. It is a very ineffective way to buy an election when there is a secret vote. So they knew that was critical. Shutrump knew it. Vitullo knew it. Vitullo was afraid that I might be able to do that again. And I did make the motion that night. This is when I went to the Army. I do not believe more than ten percent of the committee, on a voice vote, supported my amendment and I heard a voice in the back of the hall second the motion. I had not talked with him or discussed it with him. And I did not expect to win. I just wanted to put in on record.

C: What is the justification given by people like Sulligan for an open ballot? What do they say? What justifies it in their mind when people question them about it?

O: They say, "Party responsibility."

C: What does that mean?

O: You got to be responsible to the chairman to take his orders, that is what it means.

C: We know what it means, but what was their excuse given? In what kind of veneer do they clothe these things?

O: Oh, I argued that with Joe Gorman and he came up with this party responsibility. Of course, it is phony from start to finish. They are afraid of the secret ballot. And I demonstrated in the Young Men's club that we could beat them politically and use the secret ballot. Now an important thing that I felt out of this was that we built up to that election to focus public opinion on what the Tri Dem Club was going to do. And you would hear this comment, you would go into a saloon, and one guy would say to another, "What is the Young Men's Democratic Club going to do? Or the Tri Dem Club, what are they going to do?"

So three or four days before the election, after building up to this, every time I would try to say I was on one side, I would say, "We are studying the evidence and when we have all the evidence in, we will vote on it." So I announced it publicly and this was a bomb shell. I invited all the candidates for governor, which meant the Republicans as well as the Democrats, to come or send representatives to talk to the executive committee. Now, why the executive committee? They had been offering me all these, what amounts to, bribes, outright. And I could have sold out at any time for a job.

C: How much did the bribe amount to?

O: Name your job.

- C: Usually it was for a job?
- O: A job or cash. In fact, one suggestion was that I go to California and live, and they would pay all my living expenses.
- C: For how long?
- O: They did not say. I suppose until I had no chance to rebuild political power here.
- C: What was the largest amount of cash that they ever offered you?
- O: It never came down to that. Shutrump would wave this big roll of bills and say, "Come up to my office, I want to talk to you." Well, as far as I was concerned, that was a meaningless thing if I ever tried to make any charge out of it. And I wanted something concrete that I could say to the public. "This is corrupt. It is on record. I have got witnesses and there is no way you can get out of it." So this is what I did.

We had eight, I think it was eight members on the executive committee. I do not remember all the names. Walter C (inaudible) was one. Art H (inaudible) was one. John B (inaudible) was one. There was one of the Simmeneli brother's, Betty Jones, myself. If I go back through the list there, I could probably get the rest of them. But there were eight of them, eight more. So the night came that they were to talk to us. Bricker sent, I cannot remember his name, it was in the newspapers at the time. Knoff, I think his name was. And of course, the implication of that statement was that if we did not stop these crooks in the primary, we might even bolt the party. He did not say it, but that was the implication. So we let the Republicans present their case, too. The newspaper says that Carl Armstrong came over for Sawyer, but in my memory it was Lamar. Now, I did not know them too well then and they kind of looked alike and I mistook one for the other, because I knew Lamar in later years much better than I did then. Carl Armstrong, I think, had been postmaster and was active in politics here. That was, I believe, Lamar's father. But I thought it was Lamar himself that came over there.

Anyhow, the Republicans appreciated the possible political implications, and we gave a little spiel for Bricker. Armstrong gave the same story that Sawyer had given us, "A dollar's worth of government for every dollar." But the secretary of the party came over, apparently in the official representation of Shutrump, or whoever the boss might have been if it was not Shutrump. First of all, he pounded on the table and he demanded to know whether this was a Democratic or Republican, what kind of an organization it was, because they were very highly offended by the fact that we would invite the Republicans. And we told him in no uncertain terms to present his case and we would consider it. So we proceeded to say that they would put all of the committee on the state payroll as of last month, which is just what these boys were indicted for here recently. That they would pay all the debts of the organization. They would put cash in the treasury to run it and recognize us as bug wheels in the party. Now, I do not know what

more they could offer. So we told them we would examine the offer and let them know, and dismissed them.

We took a vote, secret ballot, the executive committee. There were seven votes for Sawyer. I do not remember whether there were just eight there. I think it was more. But it was unanimous for Sawyer, except for one blank ballot. One of the guys did not agree that we turn it down. I did not know which one, I have my suspicions to who it was because one of them was pretty sore about it. We were all unemployed in the Depression and you could understand that there was a real break, and we turned it down flat.

After the vote in the executive committee, we went out on the membership floor and gave the recommendation of the executive committee and what the vote was to the floor. We took a secret ballot of full membership in attendance and, again, it was almost unanimous, with a blank vote, for Charles Sawyer in Cincinnati. We charged the governor and his administration with virtually everything in the book; where as certain evidences are turned up. We mentioned the hot-mixed cases, which later we even recovered the money for in court. And we mentioned Lee Bradley, that governor they had arrested for, I think, criminal libel. Even the governor had gone to testify against him and the jury had acquitted him. In other words, they believed that what he said of the administration was true. And he said that, in effect, he had convicted the governor; that he charged him with all kinds of criminal activities. We said that there were young men devoted to good government and that we were ashamed that we ever supported the man for public office and recommended that he be defeated. The result was that we almost smashed the machine completely here.

Now, there were a few rough edges, things that overlapped. A case where we endorsed one man that the machine had endorsed, because he got the majority of the vote on the secret ballot, not because I wanted it. But to be consistent, you cannot always run an organization like a dictatorship and call it democracy and actually go through the forms of letting it go to a secret ballot and then like the results. I did not like the results, but I went along with it because I thought that he was a machine man from start to finish. But he was the only one, practically, of the machine men that survived. There seemed to be somewhere around three thousand votes, all down through office after office, that we had swung stronger than the machine. It was a tremendous blow to it and I do not think that they have ever been defeated before, or since, in such a broad manner. But then the spiel was made that the picking be split at two-thirds the Republicans, and one-third the Democrats. Now this was carried in the newspaper. I do not know whether it is true or not. But professional politicians believed it and Democrats went out and worked for Bricker and Sawyer and got defeated.

Now this meant that there was no state patronage coming in here, which most political organizations live on. Now Spagnola was getting it up for him and I had actually almost got him elected chairman of the party. If we got the rules the way we wanted them, the whole thing would have changed because they thought I had a majority as it was and never let it go to a real vote. But I talked to him afterwards and he said that he would be glad to sit with me anytime, but I could not come right out and ask him to do something for the boys. I thought he would volunteer, he never did. He knew that those

fellows wanted good government. They worked hard for it. And they would have been on his side, but not one favor ever came our way. As the picture developed, the Depression began to lessen and fellows got jobs and the membership began to drop off. Then the building we had down there was torn down. And of course, there was no sign that we were going to be able to do anything about this situation. It just seemed as though they had become accustomed to that. The criminal element practically controlled the town. There was wholesale violations, racketeers operated openly. I do not know, we had fifty or seventy-five bombings and killings here in town and none of them ever solved. Not because I think that they could not have, but nobody wanted to.

I will illustrate what happened to me that destroyed my faith also. One day, one of the pickup men coming down Mahoning Avenue hit a barricade the city had put up for a sewer and knocked it clear across the street. I tried to duck it. I almost went up over the sidewalk trying to duck it. It hit the side of my car and caved the side of my car in. Well, the guy stopped and he gave me a name and address and he claimed his insurance would take care of it. But I wrote down his license number. I found out later his name was a phony. I found out who he was and I went down to his home and his mother told me that I could not do anything because he worked for the Numbers Racket and there was no way that I could attach his wages and he would not pay anything. From inquiring around, I felt that for the little bit of damage that there was, I was going to have a bigger fight on my hands then I wanted to get into.

Then my car was stolen right out of the company garage. And a city detective brow beat me for owning the car. It developed that I found out through my own sources who it was, the gang that stole it. And the man had a police record. They had his picture and fingerprints. They admitted that. And he was parking the car right in front of his house. I could not get the car back. I was told that if I went over there, I was asking for trouble. So I wanted the police to do something.

C: First of all, how did the detective brow beat you?

O: Well he demanded to know why I owned the car and why I was having it in the company garage. And he was very aggressive, as if I did not have a right to have a car. He was nasty about it.

C: What was their excuse for not going and picking it up?

O: He claimed that they could not even question the man. And I said, "Well, he is driving my car. He does not have any proof of ownership." And he said, "Oh, we cannot question him."

C: But why? Did they give you the answer?

O: They did not do a thing. I went down there, I do not know how many times. And finally he took the car up to New York and they left it at a gas station. There was three men in it

and hitchhiked away. Whether they were coming back or not, the gas station owner did not know, so he called the police and they checked it on the stolen car list and found out that it was stolen. They wired me and I took a bus and went up to recover the car. It was so badly damaged I did not even bring it back to Youngstown. I sold it up there. But the police chief there met me on a Sunday. He came out to the gas station and said, "We did not have the car towed in because it would cost you fifteen or twenty dollars and we knew that you were coming out there to meet me." And he says, "What kind of police force do you got in Youngstown? We wired them for information on these guys and they would not give us any information." "Oh," I said, "They even know the man's name that had the car and they got his picture, fingerprints, and everything."

Now another thing that happened during this period of time; it was during the Sawyer campaign. You know I said that I had the promise of every committeeman in Boardman they would stand with me on this change. And in order to kind of cinch it, psychologically, I went around making speeches to the effect that people in Boardman, their word meant something. In other words, they are morally a little more responsible, and I had their word that they absolutely were going to vote with me. Even at the meeting that the Sawyer forces had the night before the meeting down at Quinnlan's office, and they were counting noses on how many votes we would have. And I said that I had eight votes from Boardman. They would not believe me, they put down seven. Well, guys that claimed ten, fifteen votes did not produce any. Anyhow, I had bought Liberty Park. I did not know that it was across the county line there.

C: Trumbull.

O: Trumbull. But it was a meeting of Youngstown people. And I was on the speakers platform early and I made the point, not only that these were mainly young men that were making us fight but, I said that I have the promise of these eight committeemen in Boardman and I made this point there at that meeting. Came down off the stage and went out to get in the car and go home and I hear glass breaking all over the parking lot. There must have been a couple thousand people up there. I got to my car and the window was smashed. I had some clothing, white Panama pants and other clothing in the car. It was gone. And the glove compartment was torn open and things out of it gone. I could still hear the glass breaking all over. I said, "I will fix these guys, I will go down to the police station and catch them red handed."

So I drove out of the lot with my lights out, scooted down to the main police station down in the city of Youngstown, and went to the night policeman there and told him what was going on. He said, "So what?" And I said, "Well there are Youngstown people out there and they are robbing them and breaking their cars." "Oh," he says, "That is not our jurisdiction, it is Trumbull County." I about said, "Pick up the phone and call Trumbull County." I said, "I will pay for the call." He said, "You go out and get a pay station, you cannot use the tax payers phone." Police enforcement, see.

C: Did you tell the people what happened?

O: This thing was going on all the time, everybody knew it. It was a common rumor that you paid five hundred dollars to get a policeman's job. And no proof of it, but that was what everybody believed. They even rigged the Civil Service Test. They got caught once. I do not remember the details of it, but there were monkey shines over that. I would say the grand jury finally declared a total breakdown of law and order. You never heard a mention of it in the paper, just as though it never happened. And they did put twenty five racketeers in jail. This Rigas that we leased that room from, this was the Numbers Racket's main headquarters, right off the square downtown. He paid six thousand dollars and something in fines, and I think he drew a suspended sentence with the order that he would not engage in the business again or he would be in contempt of court. In spite of the fact that the grand jury had said that, even the prosecutor had interferred. There was no discussion of bringing in the public officials.

C: What was Langley's doing?

O: Well now, with Langley, this came, of course being disabled for fourteen years and for a good part of ten-years I could hardly walk. I was in a wheelchair for two years in the Veteran's Administration out in Wood Wisconsin and while I was there, there was a big investigation of the Veteran's Administration. General Himes resigned and General Bradley was appointed to clean it up. They had congressional hearings on it and they came out there to Wood Wisconsin and there was a first class white wash job being done. And they boys in the hospital, I would have been telling them that it was their own fault because they were always so negative. When something could be done, they were afraid to open their mouths. So they came to me and were around my bed in the hospital, "This has got so bad, let us see you do something about it." I said, "If it gets bad enough, I will." They said, "How bad can it get?"

Well I was kind of on the spot, so I went down to be a witness and I waited until last, just as the congressman was about to fold it up and then make the public statement that the newspaper had committed a reprehensible act for reporting things wrong when he had found no evidence whatsoever. But after I got through testifying, he completely reversed himself, continued the investigation and, by the next morning, General Bradley had a press conference and put into effect some of the things they suggested in Detroit, Michigan, and said that they would do it all over the nation if it worked. That some of the things that Congress had authorized legally some years before they just had not done it. The net result was a total reorganization of the whole Veteran's Administration Hospital out there. I got kidded about that from Maine to California and from relatives in France because it was in every newspaper in America.

C: How big of a story did the Vindicator cover that?

O: I had never had anybody mention that they heard about it in Youngstown and I have never gone up to the library to check and see. I do not think they even carried it.

C: What year was this?

O: Oh, that would be around 1943. It would be in the congressional records because that was an official stenographic record. Congressman Donminue from Louisiana conducted the hearings at Wood Wisconsin. And I really shook the Veteran's Administration up, clear to the top, in about two hours of testimony.

C: Do you remember what time of year this was? About what month was this?

O: I think it was in the summer. And my wife could remember, she was a nurse there. Practically everybody on the staff thought I was an FBI investigator that had been faking being sick after that. There was a Major Froming; he was sort of a defense attorney for the administration, and I studied his technique for about four or five days before I got up there. He did not know what was happening to him. That man got so frustrated because every time he would press me to try to concede that something I said was not wholly true, I started out with an English understatement, and every time he would press me I would make it worse. And every time he did that, I took him down the same primrose path. It got worse and worse and worse. He did not know how to cope with it. But that was something. I kind of suspected that it was not carried in the Youngstown paper, although it might have been. The Chicago Tribune was there.

C: Why did the Vindicator not cover it?

O: I do not know. Usually when a hometown boy does something somewhere else, they make a big feature out of it. I have never had anybody mention that and, coupled with the fact that these other things happened, I began to wonder whether I was getting the silent treatment. And yet Clingan Jackson is the political editor and he has given me some pretty glowing tributes in his column at various times. I even thought he was the reporter the night I lead the fight in the executive committee. I was the only one that said anything about dropping it. I seconded the motion to drop it and made the only speech, and yet it was never mentioned. The write-up was in the paper and they quoted, verbatim, the guys that spoke against me, almost to the point you thought that somebody was trying to give me the silent treatment.

But nevertheless, and along with other things, I do not want to get paranoid about it, but I had a sequence of things that happened that will fill a half a dozen volumes that are just incredible. Even down to my GI rights to college education was suddenly canceled, no reason given. And I exhausted every appeal until I joined the DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and then it was immediately restored with no explanation of why it was every canceled. They panicked me into investing in a business and my health was bad and I was trying to carry a college course. That is when I raised every bearing strawberries. After I bought all the equipment because I had given up any hope of being able to go to college, right in the middle of the term. No tuition, no dependent allowance, no pension, I was not disabled, they said. And yet the doctor who made the

examination was trying to put me in the hospital because he said what my health was breaking down, that even the school work was too much. So I got saddled with almost impossible odds and I still managed to graduate highest man in the class.

C: This is from Youngstown State?

O: Yes. I got the National Sigma Kappa Phi in Accounting and I won the Vindicator Award in the social field and I was not even studying the social. I learned all these things from the experience years before and I was not some green kid. When I went to take the written examination, I knew as much about it as some of the professors.

C: About what year would this be about?

O: Oh, let us see, I started about 1948. I graduated in 1953. I think it was my second year I got the Vindicator Award, the Maag Scholarship. And then the dean and the head of the economics department came to me and offered me a faculty appointment, or tried to get it for me. But they said that I would have to have a masters degree and they would get me a scholarship. And I did get one from New York University and one from Athens, Ohio University. But when I checked the cost of living in New York, I decided that it was just out of the question to have a home here and there, too, for two years; where down here in two semesters, starting in October and June, I had a masters degree and I got an A on my thesis and completed it. They said that that had not ever been done before.

Doctor Cruson, who was just appointed president of Ohio University, was the chairman of my thesis board. He told me that even the faculty really learned something from my thesis. It is on the energy and the aluminum industry. I chose it because it uses a lot of electric energy and I wanted to get into this worldwide problem. I even learned then that it was printed in 1954, about the energy shortage that you are talking about now; twenty years ahead all the time, on not only one thing, but a dozen different things. I have always been twenty years ahead on practically everything. But anyhow, you keep getting me ahead of the story.

When this meeting was over then, for all practical purposes, we had injured the machine as a political tool so serious. And I even felt that, eventually, the reason that grand jury got out of control in past years was no grand jury every mentioned it. Now why did it happen then? Because the power had been broken to the point that it was in disarray. And I do not know how it happened, but I would really like to know myself just how that came about. But they called it in no uncertain terms. The prosecutor himself had blocked their investigation.

At this time I was so busy trying to rebuild my own financial position and working on the milk route, building routes for the Isaly Dairy under Joe Richstone. I got an award there for super salesmanship because I was the outstanding salesman for the whole four and a half years. I won every sales contest from the time I started until the time I left, with the exception of one, which I did not compete in. And I did it deliberately. I told the boys ahead of time. "The boss is putting up prize money and you

fellows quit because you just assume I am going to win." I said, "This time I am not in it." And then when I went to the Army, I got a Water Chief's rating in electronics. So I got a pretty varied background.

I do not want to get into it all, except that the fact is that I can show unusual abilities in numerous fields, and still I could never get a job. And just enough evidence that I know that there was interference and could trace it back in some cases. There was a member on the Board of Trustees at Youngstown University who I did not pay any attention to and should have. I had collided head on with him once before and had to go down to the Vindicator and get Clingan Jackson to replace a reporter that was covering in another institution. Ultimately, that ended in him not being reappointed as trustee and the commissioner who appointed him was defeated in the reelection because the Vindicator called him an outright crook. I think that I started the investigation that led to that. Although they never took me into their confidence, I felt that they would go all the way and they never did. The result was the commissioner tried to intimidate me by threatening to have me prosecuted while bringing in evidence.

C: On what charge?

O: The charge he said he was going to bring us? Let us see, what was it? Accomplice, before and after the fact, in interstate transportation of dope. And I never saw the dope and never had anything to do with it, but I reported to him that a certain party had found some and could not get results and wanted it reported. So I went to the highest authority I could find. But then I discovered I was being intimidated instead of getting results. And that was only a side issue anyhow of the main thing that I went to talk to him about. I immediately called the Federal Narcotics Agents to bring them in on it so that I would have some protection, and discovered they were already on the case and even knew some of the parties. So I had nothing to worry about there. But this is the kind of thing you constantly run into, just enough that you know that you are being threatened, that you are under pressure, but not sufficient to make a case in court yourself. Or if you attempted to do it, you would find that the prosecutor that was handling it may be in on their side instead of on the side of law enforcement. Now this is a sad situation.

I have several suggestions as to what I think could be done to make changes. The party machinery, even by state law, should not be permitted to dictate from the top. There should be protection of law of the committeemen that they cannot be deprived of their effective ballots. The same thing they had to do in some of the labor unions to prevent racketeers from taking over the unions. They even killed fellows that dared to run against them in some cases. You got federal observers on the elections to see that they are protected. The same thing should happen in the party; in all the parties. A person can neither be bought nor intimidated. And no one can have any record of how he voted.

Now, another thing I have noticed is that much of the financing came from the various gambling rackets. And Ohio has a constitutional provision that forbids any kind of a lottery in that state of Ohio. Now, recently we made an exception: the State Lottery. But it is a state law; yet the state of Ohio has no authority to enforce it. It has to be

enforced locally. What happens when the people in the district are not in sympathy with the state law? They elect people who will even promise them not to enforce the law. I remember hearing a candidate for prosecutor saying, "If elected, I will not enforce it." He says, "Everybody likes to gamble." The fault lies in that you have got state laws dependent upon local enforcement. If you are going to have only local enforcement, that will be local option. But if it is a state law, there ought to be authority in the state to enforce the state law.

It seems to me that there ought to be a more effective way of bringing public officials to time when they do not enforce the law. Either the federal government steps in, or the state governments step in, if the local enforcement officers fail in their duty. I think that is possibly in that law now as an obstruction of justice, but there does not seem to be any effective enforcement. Because it goes on and on and nothing ever seems to come of it. You rarely hear the top guys going to jail or the public officials involved in various schemes ever being jailed over it. It just seems that the top boys get off all the time, or they get such a minor penalty it means nothing. It seems the bigger the crime you commit, the smaller the punishment.

Just the other night in the newspaper there were two articles side by side. One guy was supposed to have misappropriated some three million dollars and he got a suspended sentence for two years and a guy below only stole a third of a million and he was going to jail for five to twenty years. He did not steal enough, apparently. That kind of thing I have heard of cases where on a third offense they have put a man in life imprisonment for having a pint of liquor in his pocket; third offense in Michigan. And the same judge apologizes to some their that stole in a bank a vast sum of money. A public official, in addition to other things, is a public trust and I think that they ought to be held to a higher standard than anyone else. There are numerous changes that could be made but the problem is this; that both parties seem to make common cause to keep the law the way it is and the average citizen is so apathetic, he does not effectively organize to do anything about it. Now whether a citizen's committee can be organized to bring enough pressure on a state legislature to get laws pass even when they are clearly needed. The party officials are not going to do it. They like it the way it is.

C: Would you say apathy is probably the main thing?

O: Oh, that and there is one step beyond that. There seems to be an almost total moral breakdown behind it. People seem to, even in their religious attitude it is all symbolism empty; no essence. They do not seem to relate to everyday life. Now I went to an ecumenical discussion on the request of some of the women who come to me in my own church.

C: How long ago was this?

O: This was just about three years ago.

C: Are you talking about this breakdown as being recently?

O: No, it has been going on for a long time, but it has reached the stage that it is incredible. It is what socialists call symbolism, empty symbolism; but it had no real name. They say prayers as though they are empty magic words, with no thought as to what it means. There is not much difference between the witch doctor in Africa and some of the things we see in our modern Christian churches. Now this happened. The ecumenical discussion was organized on a lesson plan and there were well-prepared pamphlets, some twelve of fifteen, and fifteen to twenty people would meet for three hours and discuss, supposedly, what was outlined in the pamphlet. You were supposed to read it ahead of time so that you would be prepared. Well, this particular night, to make this point without taking an hour to do it, the pamphlet called for applying Christian principles in everyday life to assist, specifically in business, in politics, in social affairs.

A young businessman was moderating the meeting that night and the discussion took off in every direction but that. I finally called his attention to it, that the pamphlet called for us discussing applying Christian principles in everyday life. And I said, "Let us discuss what we came here to discuss, applying Christian principles to business." And he told me in a very aggressive manner, very emphatically, that the Christian principles were too impractical to be used in business and that I was wasting the groups' time and that I should shut my mouth. I did not want to make it a personal squabble, so I turned the other cheek and I said, "Well let us discuss applying Christian principles in politics." I figured I had enough experience to add something to the discussion there. And some women piped up, "What has politics got to do with religion?" Yet the pamphlet she was supposed to have read before the meeting clearly emphasized that. So I thought, social is all that is left. When could I so broadly misunderstand and mean so many different things? I thought what social problem is so prominent that he could not possibly mistake it.

So I said, "Well, then let us discuss a social problem. Let us discuss war, what causes it and what could be done about it." And another women pipes up the fact, she says, "What has war got to do with religion? I do not like the way the priest is running the parochial school." And she takes off in that direction. The result was no discussion at all. Now, here is a meeting sponsored from the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church right down to the parish to find out what they are doing wrong that is causing them to lose out to the Communists. They ask the laymen to come in with suggestions, and this was the product of it. And yet when you attempt to come to grips with it, they do not even know what you are talking about and do not care. When I attempted to get the priest at the end of the session to make a comment on this, he ducked the issue. I wrote it up because I was to make a critique. I spent three days writing it up and submitted it to him. It has been three years of four years and I have not heard from him yet and I do not expect I ever will.

Some express that what we need is morally re-armed, and this, in essence, is really the truth. There was a public opinion poll the other day that forty-seven percent of government employees would not sign a portion of the Declaration of Independence

stating, "Life Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness," and did not even recognize where it came from. Now I find, even in reading and writing and arithmetic, when I was teaching at the university, I found students that could pronounce the words but they could not read. That is, you give them a textbook and they stand up and they will pronounce it perfectly and then you say to them, "In your own words, explain what that means." And they have not the least notion. I found students with a high school diploma that could not add or subtract even a two digit figure. And it was not just an isolated case.

I had a class of forty in which I gave a six grade beginners test in arithmetic, incorporating all the different things, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and whatnot. The simplest kind of thing that any six grade child ought to be able to get a hundred percent on the test. I got five zeros and the average of the whole class was below twenty. I could not believe it. And they did not seem to come from all one high school either. It was from all over. And what is wrong with the educational systems that this happens? I am afraid it is beginning to happen at college levels; with this easy entrance and fail-pass system. They seem to be reducing the standards all the time until the diploma does not mean what it used to mean.

End of Interview