

California State Archives  
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

**Leroy F. Greene**

California State Assemblyman 1962 - 1982  
California State Senator 1982 - 1998

July 19, 1999 and July 26, 1999  
Sacramento, California

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### Interviewer/Editor

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### Interview Time and Place

July 19, 1999  
Leroy F. Greene's office in Sacramento, California.  
Two sessions of two hours.

July 26, 1999  
Leroy F. Greene's office in Sacramento, California.  
Two sessions of one and a half hours.

### Editing

Dr. Seney checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings and edited for punctuation, paragraphing and spelling and verified the proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the introductory materials.

Mr. Greene reviewed a copy of the edited manuscript and approved it with only minor corrections.

### Papers

Mr. Greene made available to Dr. Seney a large volume of well-organized papers from his service in both the California State Assembly and the California State Senate. Those papers are now housed in the University Archives, California State University, Sacramento.

### Tape and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the University Archives, The Library, California State University, Sacramento, California. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Leroy G. Greene was born January 31, 1918 in Newark, New Jersey. He attended public school in Newark and Irvington, New Jersey. Mr. Greene graduated from Purdue University in 1941 with a degree in engineering. He married Denny Miller that year and began work designing bridges for the Indiana Highway Department.

At the outbreak of World War II he was exempted from military service due to poor eyesight. During the war years Mr. Greene worked on a variety of war related projects that his engineering background qualified him for. He was finally drafted in 1945 and spent nearly two years with our occupation forces in Japan and Korea.

In 1947 he returned to the United States and worked for a private engineering firm in Chicago, Illinois. When the opportunity presented itself, he took and passed the examination for an engineering license in California after coming to California. Mr. Greene worked for the California State Department of Architecture checking school construction plans. With that experience he formed the firm of Leroy F. Greene and Associates, Consulting Engineer in 1952. He operated this firm in suburban Sacramento, where he lived, with an office in Fresno.

When the 1960 census required that another assembly district be established in Sacramento County in 1962, Mr. Greene decided to run for the Assembly seat as a Democrat. He was successful in this first try for public office and continued to represent a portion of Sacramento in the Assembly until 1982 when he was elected to the California State Senate.

During Mr. Greene's long service in the Assembly, he served as chairman of the Assembly Education Committee for fourteen years. During this period he sponsored a great deal of legislation dealing with the construction of schools as well as matter of curriculum. He paid particular attention to matter affecting his district as well. In 1967, he sponsored legislation requiring that all newborn babies in California be tested for phenylketonuria (PKU) a somewhat rare condition that, if undetected and untreated, will cause mental retardation.

During Mr. Greene's sixteen years in the Senate he served as chair of the Senate Education Committee for eight years. There he continued to help preside over the California educational system. In 1998, he left the Senate as a result of the recently voter imposed term limits.

Mr. Greene continues his interest in education as head of Leroy F. Greene and Associates, an education consulting firm.

Session 1, July 19, 1999

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

SENEY: My name is Donald Seney. I'm with Senator Leroy Greene in his office in Sacramento, California. Today is July 19, 1999.

Good morning, Senator.

GREENE: Good morning, sir.

SENEY: As I said, I want to start with "the earliest times," and if you want to use that line, that's fine.

GREENE: Well, the way I would start off my life story is say something like: Well, when I was born, I was very young. In fact, I couldn't even say a damn thing and I couldn't even walk.

But I got past all that, you know, and after being toilet trained and then winding up going to school and stuff of that kind, I found that I wasn't too much of an academician. In fact, my high school yearbook, when they tell you how did you graduate and so on, and it said of me how I graduated was by "outwitting the faculty."

SENEY: You were born in 1918.

GREENE: I was born on January 31, 1918.

SENEY: So today you are 81 years old. And this was in New Jersey.

What part of New Jersey?

GREENE: Newark, New Jersey.

SENEY: How long did you live in Newark?

GREENE: Well, the first eighteen years of my life was spent in Newark, or an immediate suburb to it called Irvington. Newark and Irvington, we lived in those two places. And when I was 18 is when I went off to college, and I wanted to be an engineer.

SENEY: I want to ask you about your mom and dad. What did your dad do?

GREENE: My dad was an insurance agent. He worked for the Prudential Insurance Company for about 47 years. Started out when he was about a 17-year-old, or something like that, and he spent his entire life working for Prudential.

My mother was an 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduate, but she was the reader in the family. She read an awful lot, my mother. My father was the highly educated one. I think he got to two years of high school. He was the educated guy.

SENEY: Well, that wasn't uncommon, was it, in those days?

GREENE: No, it was not at all uncommon.

My mother never worked for money. She worked endlessly to raise a family.

I have a sister. She was born in 1924. There's about six, seven years between us. And that meant, when there were that many years between my sister and myself, that my relationship with her was one of affection, and we were sufficiently apart in age that there was no rivalry.

The only thing I didn't like about my sister was my mother told me that I was supposed to watch her when I wanted to go out and play. That was the only resentment I had of my sister.

But I remember her with great affection because on a Sunday, you know, back in those days -- we're going back to the '20s and '30s -- that on a Sunday you'd go out for a drive, and so on, and we had one extremely unusual experience. It was in the wintertime and it had been snowing. And my little sister is about four years old, or three-and-a-half, or something like that. So she's standing on the floor of the backseat of the car, against the door and looking out. The door opened and my sister fell out of the car. And I said, "Dad, Dad, Doris [Greene]<sup>1</sup> fell out of the car!" It took about a half a block to stop.

The most fortunate thing in the world was it was the wintertime and the snowplow had been through. It piled up the snow against the curb and she fell into a bank of snow. Saved that little girl's life, by falling on a bank of snow. We ran back and grabbed her and she's complaining, she's crying, "You left me! You went away from me. You left me here."

Anyway, that was a very strange experience to have.

SENEY: How do you count your parents' influence on you?

GREENE: Well, my mother and I used to fight a lot, and it took until I was middle-aged to figure out what that was all about. It was not because we were different, it was because we were alike. She was a stubborn lady, I was a stubborn kid. I thought I knew everything there was to know and she thought she did, I guess. I think that's a little bit unfair to my mother, but she was a strong-willed person.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, material in brackets was inserted by editor.

I can remember the kind of phraseology we would use. I remember one argument. She says, "You know everything I'm trying to do is for the best for you." And my reply was, "Well, what do you think I'm trying to do? Something that's not the best for me?" And she said, "I could never win an argument with you!" But that was the nature of the friction there was between us.

But my mother was a very loving woman. She was a very loving woman. And my sister took after our mother. My sister was a talker, and she's a little girl who's quacking away like a damn duck to anybody and everybody around, and my mother and I would look at her -- she'd come back and she's telling us all that's going on in the neighborhood -- and we're saying "You know, if Doris is learning all of this about the neighbors, what is she telling people about us?" She was friendly, she was happy, and she was attractive. She was a pretty little girl.

So that's a memory of my sister from way back when.

But my mother never worked for money a day in her married life. Her job was raising the kids, and of course, we're back in a time wherein the family, was a mother and a father and kids. The mother ran the household and did the shopping and took care of everything. The father was the one thing that brought home money. And that's about the total connection he had with the family unit. He's the guy that brought home money.

He used to take me to baseball games. He took me to prize fights, and he took me to wrestling matches, and as I thought about this later in life, I thought: I'll

bet you anything that he did that because my mother made him do it. My father was a guy that would -- I wouldn't say he was a drunkard but I would say that he could never get past a Saturday night without getting drunk. He and another guy, they were both insurance agents for the same company. They went out every Saturday night, and they'd come home plastered. And that was it until the next Saturday night.

My mother wasn't very enthusiastic about that. For one thing is that yeah, he worked all the time, and then he and his friend would go out on a Saturday but who was going to take her anyplace? So that was something.

We would go to the seashore in the summertime, a couple of weeks, and rent a cottage or somebody's house, and go down the beach.

We were Jews and were not Jews, both. In terms of ancestry, I come from an endless line of Jews. In terms of religion, I had no religious interest whatever. I don't remember ever discussing religion with my parents or my sister nor anybody else. It was not a matter of interest. Is there a God? Isn't there a God?

I don't mean to be flippant but what difference does it make? If there's a God, he or she, or it, will attend to its functions, whatever they are. And if there isn't, so then there isn't. Why would a supreme being care what I thought of it? If the supreme power is observing each of us, the billions on this planet, and if it is so personal that every one of a billion people has a direct line and there's always some master intelligence out there, why would it care what the people felt or thought about it? What difference does it make? What difference does it make if

you're cussing out God or if you're blessing God, if you're praying or you're not praying? Shouldn't it all depend on simply how you conducted your life?

I had a cousin -- I had many cousins, aunts, and uncles; there were a lot of us -- and my cousin Bud Myers, his mother told us one time that Bud, when he was a little kid about, say, three or four, somewhere in there, he asked his mother one day could he bring his little friend home to play, and she said, "Of course!" He brings this little boy to the house and they play. After the little boy leaves, my aunt says to my little cousin Bud, "I didn't know that your friend was a little black boy," and Bud said, "I don't know, I'll ask him."

That's how much you knew about such things, prejudice is learned, it is not a product of birth. Many years later this thought led me to write a story, a sort of tongue-in-cheek thing: Pity the blind man. He can't look at somebody and be prejudiced; we have deprived him of the right to be a bigot. He can't. He doesn't know what color anybody else is, and he doesn't know what color he or she is either.

Then I wrote, much later in life, when I'm in the Legislature, and we have the Hispanic Caucus, the Black Caucus, the Women's Caucus, the Rural Caucus, the Urban Caucus, and the caucus, all these caucuses. I would like to dump all of them. Look at everybody in all these caucuses. You're not going to find anybody that doesn't have two eyes, one nose, two ears, one heart, brain, stomach etc. Excusing some plumbing differences, the males and the females are pretty much alike too. So why not dump all these caucuses? Concentrate on a human caucus.

If someone is not being treated properly as a human being, let's see what we can do to solve the problem. Do away with these subdivisions.

Sacramento has a basketball team so the locals rah rah the team and follow their team of millionaires and you boo the enemies, the way you were in college. Another, albeit weird example of a caucus or "in" crowd.

I went to Purdue University. The other school in that state was the University of Indiana. These are the hated rivals.

The Sacramento basketball team, none of them are from this area. They come and go, they're traded here and there. What's the connection between me and them? Why am I supposed to rah rah this rich group instead of some other rich group?

The human behavior pattern, is irrational.

SENEY: You know, bigotry is something that we frequently learn at home. I take it that--

GREENE: Not frequently. It's always learned. It's not in the package at birth.

SENEY: I take it your mother must not have had these kind of views?

GREENE: No. I think my father did. I think my father was anti-black. It's nothing that was particularly around, but I think he was afraid of black people, for one, and therefore hated them because he was afraid of them.

The only thing that I ever remember that touched us at all was that we had a car, and my father was looking for a garage for the car. There was a vacant garage a short distance away and the owner tells my father, "Sorry, it's taken for."

My mother, trying to be helpful, she runs across the same garage and she wants to rent that garage. And the lady says, “Yes,” she says, “There was that Jew around a couple of weeks ago but I wouldn’t rent to him.” That was the only personal sign of bigotry we faced, we usually lived in neighborhoods where being Jewish was not uncommon. We lived in neighborhoods where Jewish people might have been the majority. In high school, the schools were down for Christmas, a religious holiday.

On a Jewish holiday, a so-called High Holiday, the Jewish kids would not be in school. The non-Jewish kids wouldn’t be there either. Everybody looked at that as we look at Christmas. So there was nothing too strange about that.

SENEY: Was your last name anglicized? It must have been. What was it originally?

GREENE: It was Greenberg, but it was something before that, because even to say Greenberg is English. It’s an English word. People were named at Ellis Island.

SENEY: That’s right. They anglicized people’s names.

GREENE: For example, my first wife -- I met my first wife Denny [Miller], which we’ll talk about a lot more later, when she was a 17-year-old freshman on a scholarship at Purdue, and I lost her, when she was 71, to cancer. She’s the brightest person I ever ran across in my lifetime. I never found anybody could match her IQ on anything.

She graduated from Purdue University *summa cum laude*. I graduated from Purdue University by sliding under the door. That woman, was something very special.

I don't know what got me into this; I had some point in mind.

SENEY: We were talking about names and anglicizing them.

GREENE: Oh, yes, yes. Well, one of her sisters told me that their name in Europe had been Mendelkern but at Ellis Island it became Miller. The guy couldn't spell Mendelkern, or whatever, so he said, "You're Miller." Just like that.

So where do my ancestors come from? In a sense I know exactly and in a sense I don't know at all.

SENEY: How do you mean?

GREENE: I mean that they came from somewhere close to Warsaw. But, prior to 1918, that was Russia. After 1918, that was Poland. So where do my people come from? I don't know whether to say they're Poles or Russians.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: As far as my recollections are, my father was about nine, I think, when he came here. The oldest brother came first and he wound up as a conductor on a horse-drawn trolley car in New York City.

Then he would save money. My father tells me he was about nine when he came here. But the one thing he did not know is what year was he born? There was no record. And so when he died, he was 78, plus or minus two.

But then there's the nature of the family background. There was no expression of religion. Now, at the High Hallowed Days, Yom Kippur -- or what is it?

SENEY: Rosh Hashanah.

GREENE: Rosh Hashanah, yes. The family would meet all the aunts and uncles and cousins. The little cousins would be at a little side table, a bridge table, card table, and then here's the adults. And my father's eldest brother -- my uncle -- would do the ceremony in, I thought, Hebrew, but I doubt it.

SENEY: Maybe Yiddish.

GREENE: Probably Yiddish. And the youngest male would ask four questions, in Yiddish, why do we recline instead of sit, why do we eat Matzah rather than bread etc. It's all in the four questions but they've escaped me.

SENEY: You're doing very well actually.

GREENE: But I got my dollar, you know, when I was the youngest one that did it.

SENEY: Oh, you got a dollar for doing it?

GREENE: Oh yeah. The kid got a dollar for doing it and then each youngest male cousin each year. But it's always the boys. In those days, boys were Bar Mitzvahed when they became 13. At the age of 13 you became a man.

SENEY: Were you Bar Mitzvahed?

GREENE: Yes. At the age of 13, I was Bar Mitzvahed.

Later on, many years later, they added something they called the Bat Mitzvah, which was for girls.

SENEY: Right. I think that's common today.

GREENE: Yes, it is common today, but it really is a social change that, in my opinion, has no religious origins. Because in religious origins there is a distinct wall between male and female and what their roles were in life.

SENEY: In the Jewish religion.

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Well, others, too, for that matter.

GREENE: In Hebrew. The widows were entitled to glean the fields after the harvest because they had no man to take care of them. But that's wandering far away from--

SENEY: No, it's not really. This is exactly what we want, sort of your background and your thinking.

Of course, we'll get to your interest in education and your long service as chair of the committees in the two houses, but I want to ask you about your education, what I would take would be the Newark public schools?

GREENE: Yeah.

SENEY: Tell me about your recollections of your primary and secondary schools and your teachers.

GREENE: When I went to school in Newark, my first schooling in kindergarten, my mother sent me off to school at a very early age. I think I was four something. Four or four-and-a-half, or something like that. And she sends me off to school and a short time later the nurse sends me home with a note. I don't remember the content of the note but it informed my mother that I was cross-eyed, and I was. My left eye was turned toward the nose, the right eye was okay. It scared the hell out of my mother. And what I remember so clearly is standing in the kitchen, and my mother says to me, "Look at the clock and tell me what time it is," because she's in a panic, because she's back at a time when I can't tell time. But she's

asked me this question. And my answer was, “Well, I can’t see the clock because the door is in the way.”

Now, the translation of that was I can see the clock and I can see the door and one is superimposed upon the other. But I said, “I can’t see the clock because the door is in the way.” I didn’t mean it. Literally, I didn’t mean that. So that started the problem. My mother took me to a chiropractor who laid me on a table and started banging away on my back. Then she wound up by taking me to an ophthalmologist, and she tells me that I hated him. And this is many, many years later. She’s telling me I couldn’t stand him, I fought like a mashed cat, I didn’t want to go there. And I said, “But why? Why did I hate him?” She said, “Because he wore glasses. You’ve got an eye problem. If he’s wearing glasses, how’s he going to fix your eyes?” Interesting, isn’t it?

It reminds me of my very earliest recollection of anything. I have a picture in my mind, I’m in a stroller and it’s made out of wicker. Seems to be a dark color, like brown, or something like that, and my mother is pushing me in the stroller and she’s talking to another woman, and I think it was one of my aunts, her younger sister. They were going down the street, and it had been raining and I have rubbers on my little shoes. The rubbers were white and I hated them with a passion. They should have been black. They were white rubbers on my feet, and I was outraged and enraged and everything else. But my mother’s busy talking to my aunt, and I’m kicking at the rubber and finally I got them off. They never noticed.

That's my first recollection of anything in my entire life cycle. Why would I be wheeled in a stroller rather than walking? I must have been about three, somewhere in there, and that's as young as anything that I can recall.

SENEY: Do you remember your first day at school? Do you remember going to school and what that was like?

GREENE: What I remember is not quite that, and I don't know if it was or wasn't the first day. It was either the first day or darn close to it. My mother was a wreck over my going to school, and I say that in retrospect because what I actually remember is my mother standing on the street corner watching me out of sight. Well, she's not going to walk me to school, you understand, but she's going to walk me to the corner, and then she's going to watch to see that I get safely across that street and then go around the corner and out of sight.

My mother used to infuriate me because, as I told you earlier, she was a very loving woman, and what she did to me, I'd come home from school, you know, "Oh, there's my darling boy." She's pinching my cheek, "Oh, you're so cute, you're so sweet. Did your teacher kiss you? How could she resist a darling little boy like you?" And she made me so damn mad. Little boys don't want to be kissed by anybody, mothers included.

I also remember, though, is when I was that young, kindergarten age, when it came Halloween I was afraid. The mask on a kid or an adult was reality to me, and I remember how I got over that fear. It's Halloween and the principal came in the room, and here's a little kid with a mask on, and the principal made like he

was afraid and the kid was chasing him around the room. The appearance was so ridiculous to me that it solved the problem.

I can also remember two other things from being very young at kindergarten age. One was the teacher taking the whole class to a blacksmith's shop. We watched the blacksmith shoe a horse. He puts the horseshoe on a fire, and it turns red then orange and then yellow. And he's got this mallet, and he's wanging away on this horseshoe, and he's taking a knife and he's carving at the hoof of the horse, and I got the shudders. Well, that's like my fingernails. He's cutting the horse's fingernails. The nail was not a round nail. It was a four-sided thing.

The other thing I remember from that early was that I went home and told my mother that I needed an eggshell. Take an egg and just take off the top one-fourth of it, then we took the eggshells to class and we'd put some dirt in it. I think it was a lima bean that we put in the shell and watered it, and watched a plant grow.

Those are the earliest memories I have.

SENEY: Did you enjoy school? Did you like it?

GREENE: My recollections are kind of mixed there because I can recall notes from a teacher on my report card that said something like "He spends his time staring out the window." Daydreaming. I was a daydreamer, is what the teacher said. And I was a clock watcher, and I was bored.

SENEY: What I'm trying to get at, Senator, is a connection maybe between your own personal experiences in school and your later interest, deep interest, in education that persists to this day. Do you see any link there?

GREENE: No, I don't see any link at all. I liked to read very much. In fact, I remember that -- this is jumping -- but I remember when I was married a couple of years after graduating college, I decided one time to just write down the title of every book I read for a year. I was curious to know how much I read in a year. That year I read about 105-or-6 books. That's not particularly impressive because books were nowhere near as long as they are today. But that meant, that I was reading a couple of books a week.

I find that more recently, I'm not reading anything like that number of books, but I think I'm still doing about the same volume of reading. Writings connected with work as opposed to just leisure reading. In fact, actually to this day, my wife buys books on tape, and I never go anyplace in my car without playing a book on tape because it makes the time go so much better. And when I was working in Chicago, I had to get on the train and go downtown and then I'd walk about six blocks to work. I figured out a way to read while I was walking and be able to find where the curb was, because if you hold the book just so, the street's down there, you can watch the--

SENEY: You can see below the book.

GREENE: Yeah. And you can tell if you're watching, by a little reminder in your head: there's the curb. That made that time pass better. And of course, when I'm on the train I could read too. But this shows, an affection or a liking of reading, and so I did a lot of it in my lifetime.

SENEY: What about your memories of high school? What was high school like?

GREENE: In high school it was a little difficult time for physical reasons. The high school that I graduated from didn't exist when I went off to begin high school. In my first year of high school, they sent us to an elementary school that was next door to where our high school was being built. That's where I spent the ninth year. The first half of it was spent at another high school five, six, seven miles away. In the second half of the second year, the high school that I was to go to finally opened, I had about two-and-a-half years there. But I had just two or three or four kids that went all the way through with me from elementary school. I was in the ninth grade in this elementary school, immediately adjacent to where they were building the high school. We could watch the school being built. And it was interesting to go back there to visit many years later.

Here's a high school, a big city high school completed in 1933, about three stories high, and here's a playing field for football and track. And around the parameter of the track there were little plaques in the ground in memory of the boys that had gone to that high school and were killed during World War II.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

SENEY: Senator, a little bit of what you were saying--

GREENE: I was about to make the point that I went around the track and recognized all those names, I was recognizing a bunch of Jewish names. But the school behind me, when I turned around and looked, maybe thirty or forty years later, -- there was a large percentage of black kids and other minorities, and the Caucasians were not

necessarily Jewish; there were various Christian faiths. There was quite a change over time as to the makeup of the student body of the school.

I remember that our commencement speaker, [Ernestine] Gilbreth [Carey]. Do you remember the book, *Cheaper By the Dozen*?<sup>1</sup>

SENEY: I do remember that book.

GREENE: Written by a woman. Ernestine Gilbreth Carey. She was an industrial engineer, I believe, and she was our commencement speaker. When I got to Purdue University, she was the first speaker to the freshman class at Purdue.

SENEY: Was she a faculty member at Purdue?

GREENE: No. Her husband had been an industrial engineer and so had she, and they had about a dozen kids. That's why there was a book called *Cheaper by the Dozen*. And one of the stories there was that somebody had turned the bathtub water on and forgot about it. The parents were not home so the eldest boy, I think it was, in the family made the youngest kid take a bath so not to waste the water. I also remember Amelia Earhart. If I'm not mistaken, Amelia Earhart's plane, I believe she got through Purdue University, whether she was on the faculty or attached to the faculty. It was before my time. I was at Purdue between 1936 and 1940. Amelia had some association with the school at that time.

SENEY: What led you to go to Purdue?

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<sup>1</sup> Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey. *Cheaper by the Dozen*. T.Y. Crowell (New York) 1965.

GREENE: Well, actually, I wanted to build bridges. That's what I wanted to do. And so when I looked at universities, I ran across Georgia Tech and Purdue University, those were the choices relative to money and so on. We couldn't afford places like MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology].

SENEY: What made you want to build bridges?

GREENE: It just appealed to me: It's fascinating, how do you do it? When I got to Purdue, I discovered very quickly I did not want to build bridges. I was wrong. I wanted to design them. I wanted to know why is this column this big? Why are these piers this far apart? Why did you use steel instead of concrete? How did you know how many rivets to put in this place? How do you figure all this stuff out? I was curious about that. So it wasn't to build the bridge, it was to design it. Because having designed it, hell, anybody can take this erector set and put these things together, understand? That was it: to be able to design a bridge. That was my purpose for going to school. I was a lousy student. I was a sophomore and I met this little 17-year-old female from Michigan City, Indiana. Before I went to college -- a slight digression here -- I told my folks, I told my mother and father. "You know, the chances are very strong that the girl I marry will be somebody I meet in college at the university. And the odds are overwhelming, folks, that she will not be Jewish."

You know, "I'm warning you," so to speak, to my parents. And what am I then? I'm about 18 years old.

But I went to college, and I met the girl and she did happen to be Jewish. I made a discovery there I can't explain too well, and it is that the thought process of people of this particular background, there's something about the thought process that is nontypical, and yet, it's typical among them. When I left Newark area, I went to the Midwest, with people whose thought process is about the same as mine. I meet this girl and it clicks. This thought process is about the same. Except she's much smarter than I am in this particular case. As I say, she graduated with the highest possible distinction. But what that meant -- I graduated in '40, she graduated in '41 -- but what that meant is that this young female genius, with her summa cum diploma, could get a job as somebody's secretary, and the day after I graduated from the university, I went to work for the Indiana Highway Department in the Bridge Division, while she could have gotten a job there as somebody's secretary.

SENEY: What was her degree in?

GREENE: She majored in English and minored in psychology, in the School of Home Economics. See, at that point, the basic reason -- and this is an opinion, not a fact, this is my opinion. The few women that were at the university, were sent there as the best hunting grounds to find a husband. That's an opinion, that's not a fact. My wife was not sent there for such a reason. But I can remember meeting a girl or two that were only there for one year because that's all their family could afford to get them to find a husband in that year.

And I remember thinking how strange it was for females, that when she got married, her life, her future, depends on who she selected for a husband. And when you were a young female -- and love, this emotion is such an important thing. She may make some interesting mistakes in the sense of what her life's going to be like because she's picked a guy who's never going to make a nickel. Or she turned that millionaire down because she didn't love him. You know what I mean. She you may have been right. But the financial dependency of the female on her mate really was a shocker to understand. She was gambling far more than he was. A wife was a wife was a wife. You loved her, you were going to have children with her; you hope she's a good cook, hope she's a good housekeeper, and so on and so forth. But this is the role. The only thing for women professionally was to become a nurse and she could become a teacher, and if she became a teacher, understand something: You cannot get married. If you do get married, you get fired. It's automatic because teaching is a job for women who do not have husbands to supply the income to the family unit. The only women we allowed to teach children are women who don't have any, which is an absurdity. I remember one of my female relatives getting married. It was a secret for about three or four years. Nobody could talk about it because she was a teacher, she'd lose her job.

SENEY: There was a lot of that.

GREENE: It was common. It was just part of the culture, but that was it.

SENEY: When did you and your wife get married?

- GREENE: We got married in 1941.
- SENEY: So just after you graduated and she graduated.
- GREENE: Well, it's the old-fashioned thing. We didn't get married while we were in college. I graduated one year before she did. She graduates in June of '41 and we get married in July of '41.
- SENEY: By this time you're working for the Indiana Highway Department.
- GREENE: Right.
- SENEY: What are you doing for them?
- GREENE: Well, I was in the Bridge Division. I started off as a draftsman, drawing up various portions of bridges. A year or so passes and now I'm getting into the design of the superstructure -- the bridge. Some of them still exist out there in Indiana. It was interesting.
- SENEY: Did you enjoy that?
- GREENE: Oh yeah. I've had several careers and they were all fun.
- My wife and I wandered a lot. When we got married, I was working, as I say, in Indianapolis -- we lived there on East Meridian -- and I would go up to Purdue, which is in West Lafayette, Indiana. She had two brothers that were also at Purdue at that time. Marty Miller was the elder of her two brothers, I would stay with him in his room in the dorm when I came up. That was hard sleeping because he slept on a cot that was only as wide as one person. The two of us survived.
- SENEY: Right, exactly.

GREENE: I remember that I'd go up to visit with her and stay with her brother. And then when she graduated we got married and we took out an apartment, paid fifty bucks a month for an apartment. I was getting paid \$150 a month. I'll tell you something -- I can remember it so clearly -- I can remember saying that if somebody would give me a contract for \$2,000 a month, I'd sign it for life -- if you can imagine such a thing. Incredible.

SENEY: What did you do once the Second World War broke out? You'd only been married a few months.

GREENE: Here's what happened. We got married in July of '41. December '41, war breaks out. I was turned down by the Navy for a commission because of the eyesight that I mentioned earlier. I never could appreciate that. I thought I could see anything that you or anybody else could see. Many years later I found out that it was not true.

In any case, I then went down to Knoxville, Tennessee, and I went to work for TVA -- Tennessee Valley Authority -- and we were working on hydroelectric projects at that time. We designed eleven power plants for the Russian government because the Germans had pushed them across European Russia, right up to Moscow. The Russians were losing their power sources, their electrical power sources. We designed about eleven different power plants up in the Ural Mountains for the Russians. What was fascinating about this, and drove everybody crazy, was that we'd do things in feet and inches, and they were metric. But the motors and generators would come from Baldwin Locomotives in the

USA and Westinghouse. So everything is the feet and inches bit. I've got to make that wall a foot thick. Well, that's the damndest number you ever heard of when you convert that to centimeters. We were driving the Russians crazy. But here's this Westinghouse generator and it's bolted down. It's 10 feet from here to there, etc. We had to convert all of this stuff to metrics. Now you've got the notes on the drawings and you're writing notes in English. But we had Russian translators. The translator would take the notes on the drawings and translate them into Russian.

Then there was a way to wireless the drawings to Russia. I don't know what that's all about. But there was some way to do it. Maybe it was by wire, I don't know, because you had some telephone lines under the ocean that went there. I say wireless. I shouldn't have said that because I don't know.

Anyway, that was in the earlier parts of World War II.

Now, in the meantime, right next to us in Tennessee there's the nuclear power plant at Oakridge. My wife is working out at Oakridge; secretarial work for one of the contractors that's working on Oakridge. And this was a year that one of the candidates for President -- do you remember Wendell Wilke?

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: So the joke at that time was that this secret plant out there at Oakridge, they were making Wilke buttons for the next election. Nobody knew what the hell was going on.

SENEY: Yeah, that was part of the Manhattan Project.

GREENE: Yeah. It was part of the Manhattan Project, which started out under the bleachers at the University of Chicago, where the first nuclear reaction occurred.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: Anyway, when we finished with these various hydro projects, I went to Charleston, West Virginia, and worked for a private engineering firm -- Ford, Bacon and Davis -- where we were designing a plant that would make the chemicals from which you would make synthetic rubber. The Japanese had pushed us out of the Malayan Peninsula, which was the source of natural rubber. I was working on these butadiene, ethylene, and styrene recovery units, these chemicals. It's all steel framework, and I'm a structural guy, so we're designing this chemical recovery plant. From this plant, chemicals flow across a fence line to a Firestone plant and tires are going to run out of the other end of that. Put roughly, but that was the nature of the beast. So that's what we were doing. And in those days -- it's still true today -- that the engineers at TVA, the law said that you couldn't pay any of the TVA people any more than the salary of a U.S. member of Congress -- senator or representative. And the max salary then was \$10,000. We're talking about 1941-42. So the chief engineer's getting \$10,000, the assistant chief engineer is getting \$9,999. You know, everybody -- compaction. You've heard the word, compaction. Well, hell, was jammed up against the roof, and a goodly portion of the engineers at TVA came from the Scandinavian Peninsula -- Norway, Sweden -- because that's where the most

activity had been happening earlier in hydroelectric power. Many TVA engineers came from the Scandinavian Peninsula. So these were the guys that came over. Just like after the end of World War II, this is why [Werner] von Braun and other rocket guys came from Germany over here. This is what happens.

Anyway, we did that work then, as I said, went on to the chemical plant design in West Virginia. When that was completed I came to California and was working and living, my wife and I -- oh, while we were in West Virginia she was working for some other defense contractor in secretarial work. We came out to California and went to Oakland where I worked for Kaiser Engineers on a plant to make six-inch shells for naval guns. Cannon shells for warships.

SENEY: Now, let me ask you. This is all war-related stuff, so this is how you got shifted around? There must have been an office that said, "We don't need Leroy Greene here anymore, we'll send him out to Oakland to work on shells"?

GREENE: No. No. Each one was an independent thing: Thank you for doing our work, we're going to start reducing staff, so you start looking. It's not that somebody here is saying go here, go here, go there. If you were in the military it would have been that way. But no, this was all private employment. I went to Oakland and worked -- 1924 Broadway in Oakland, I think was the address -- and again, as I said, we were designing a factory to produce cannon shells. Then my draft board from Indianapolis, Indiana, I had written them, saying, "I'm changing jobs. If you're going to draft me, please let me know and do it now." Well, no, it doesn't work that way. They wait until we get to Oakland, then they draft me.

Next I know, I'm sending my wife back to her home in Michigan City, Indiana, and I'm in the Army. I'm at Camp Beale up here near Marysville, various camps and then I'm shipped out. Oh, they send me to construction foreman school where I'm riding around on big, heavy construction equipment. Then I'm sent overseas on the maiden voyage of a ship called the *Ernie Pyle*.

Do you remember Ernie Pyle?

SENEY: Sure. The news reporter. Right. For *Stars and Stripes*.

GREENE: A very famous one. And long before *Stars and Stripes* he wrote columns, I think it was Chicago papers. I don't remember. But there was the *Ernie Pyle* and we went to Japan. Ship broke down, incidentally, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and we sat there for maybe a day, day and a half, and I was thinking, "Thank God the war's over. All I need is a Japanese submarine to come by. One hell of a target here." But we landed in Yokohama, and I was stationed--

SENEY: How long after the war had been over did you arrive there?

GREENE: This was an occupation army. It must have been around -- war ended in '45. Must have been, give or take, plus or minus, January '46. I don't know, a few months one way or the other.

I was stationed at the Isetan Department Store at Shinjuku Station in Tokyo. And the first two stories of that building was a department store, Japanese department store. If I remember, it was a six-story building. The rest of it was U.S. Army. And up on the roof was a little Buddhist shrine, and we were stationed there. We had a school there, teaching surveying, because there was a

question about the border between North and South Korea, and we were training people to establish the border between North and South Korea.

Now, here I am, just another soldier, but I've got a degree in engineering. I went through every noncommissioned rank there was in about six months. Since I'm a technician type, like a corporal, I was a T-5. Two stripes with a little "T" on it. Next I'm a sergeant, a staff sergeant, then I'm a technical sergeant. Finally I'm a master sergeant,

I was called a master sergeant. The first sergeant was in charge of running the company's affairs, like taking care of the cars in the motorpool, seeing that food was here, assigning duties like who's going to be on guard, that kind of stuff. I was in charge of the mission of the company: What was your purpose for being? I was in charge of that. The first sergeant is to see to it that everything that we need to do this is supplied. So now we wind up and we get sent over to Korea. There is a little town right outside of Seoul, a few miles away. We're stationed there to do this work, to determine the border between North and South Korea. But actually, the way the boundary was determined, was not like that at all. They said, "Well, from that tree over there, to that hill over there, to that house over there, that's the boundary." And I'm here to star shots and compute latitude and longitude and azimuth and they're saying, "It's here to there to there." A hell of a lot of time and energy was shot to hell.

I spent about, give or take, six months in Japan, plus give or take six months in Korea, plus the training thing in the states, and maybe two years, or a year and a

half, or two and a third, something like that, was the military time. And then I came back to the states and got back with my wife.

My wife's family owned a business in waste materials. I guess you'd call it a junkyard. And she spent the war years baling paper: newspapers, magazines, this and that. You've seen bales of cotton. That's what a bale of newspaper would look like, with these steel bands around it, and you dump them in this pit and a large rectangular flat plate comes down and compresses it and you wind up with a bale. And that's how she spent the war years -- my summa cum laude wife. That was her war years.

Anyway, we get back together again, and I get a job in Chicago for a big engineering firm there, Consor-Townsend Associates, and I'm one of the structural people, so we're doing the structural work. Other people are doing sewers and other things. I'm working on some bridges. We did about four, I think, or so, for the state of Kentucky. George Consor and I would go down to Kentucky together, and he would deal with the State Highway people and I would deal with the technicians on the bridges we were doing for them. We also designed sewage disposal plants and other kinds of stuff like this.

Then I was sent to one of the steel plants in Gary [Indiana]. Was it Gary? I don't know. I was sent to a steel plant someplace because the state -- I've forgotten whether it was Illinois or Indiana -- hired our engineering firm because the union, the metal workers, steel workers union, was complaining that the traveling crane wasn't strong enough because they had increased the size of this

bucket that carried molten iron in it, and they felt that it posed quite a risk to the employees because of the crane. A huge bucket of molten metal would travel back and forth on the crane, then the bucket would move side to side to be poured into ingots. So I was sent out there on behalf of the state, which hired my firm, to check it out and see if it worked.

SENEY: Did it work? Or did they need to reinforce it for that newer bucket?

GREENE: If any other engineer had gone out there, he probably would have said it didn't work and they'd have to reinforce it. And I said, "No, it works and you don't have to reinforce it." Because, in my opinion, I went much further than any other engineer would have gone.

You're allowed, for this particular kind of steel, you're allowed to stress it to 20,000 pounds per square inch in bending. I'm going to go technical. The crane beam wouldn't meet this requirement. It was way overstressed. But I asked some questions: "Do you have any copies in your records of the chemical analysis of this particular steel?"

"Probably, because we kept everything."

I said, "Okay, do you have an analysis of any of the physical tests that were made on this batch of steel?" Like pulling apart how many pounds did it take to pull it apart or break it. So they bring me the stuff from the office. For this particular kind of steel, the minimum breaking point would be at say 60,000 pounds a square inch. It's got to meet that because I think this was A7 steel, I

don't remember, some kind of steel, you're allowed a certain percentage of that. So the allowable is 20,000 pounds a square inch if it breaks at sixty thousand.

SENEY: So you're well within the tolerance.

GREENE: That's right. So I looked into that. Instead of this sixty thousand maximum, the steel did not break up until around eighty or ninety thousand. I'm taking the same safety percentages then; this steel's okay. I check the chemistry -- how much carbon, how much silicon, etc. -- then I'm checking, pulling, and bending.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

GREENE: Well, in any case, we found out that this steel was okay and that this mechanism would work, and I signed off on it, and that was the end of that one.

But this was about 1948 and there was a recession at that time in that area, and they were letting people go that had ten more years' experience than I did with that firm. I knew that it was just coming along. So I looked for something else to do, and I saw in the *Engineering News* magazine -- it was a professional magazine -- that the state of California was looking for engineers. This was around the time that this recession hit. But I thought, after having been out there with Kaiser, that I might like to come back to California one day, and this would be an opportunity to be licensed as a civil engineer in California. I wrote to California, saying that I was interested and would like to be tested for civil engineering in California.

Then what happened is they picked a day and time, and a dozen or so of us showed up at one of the meeting rooms at Chicago University and were given this

test. Next the chairman of the California Board of Registration at that time (was a structural engineer) he came out to Chicago for the oral part of the test and dealt only with two of us that apparently had passed the test; the rest apparently had not. And so he started asking questions, and this was the oral part, and I wound up by being granted a license to practice civil engineering in the state of California. Then I got the job offer, and I said, "Thanks, but no thanks." I had what I wanted: a ticket to practice in California. That's what I wanted, I wasn't ready to go there.

But then came this recession that I mentioned to you. Now I'm interested in a job in California, and it was the Division of Architecture that needed engineers. State Division of Architecture. So I came out to California with my wife but I came out by way of L.A. We crossed Route 66 and wound up in L.A. Had some friends down there that we stayed with a few days, I was trying to get a job down there. I didn't want to come up here and work for the state. I couldn't find anything in the few days. I didn't know anybody. I didn't even know where to look.

So we came up to Sacramento and I went to work for the then Division of Architecture in the school checking section. I'm now here checking school plans and the calculations that were made to see that these schools could resist earthquakes and vertical loads and wind loads. There I was doing that--

SENEY: I'd say it doesn't sound too interesting.

GREENE: No. It was very dull and boring. That's when I came to be informed about the Field Act, which is the law under which California public schools are designed.

Well, I worked at that job for about a year and a half. My wife was eight months pregnant when I quit my job. She supported me all the way; she wasn't afraid. While sitting there checking these plans, I could see which architects with building plans that were in trouble and which were not.

I went down to Fresno -- and stopped at other places as well -- but in Fresno I talked to an architect by the name of Horn -- David H. Horn, of the firm of Horn and Mortland. And I said to him, in so many words, "Dave, I know that you've got several schools up in Sacramento being checked, and I see that you're going to have a whole lot of trouble because the engineering is not very good on your project." I said that "I could fix them for you."

And he said, "I've got this little addition to make at a little farming community called Ballico. If you're interested, I've got four classrooms and a toilet to design, and they don't have any money. This has to be the cheapest project that can be made. Would you like to take that on?"

"Sure!" Hell, it was work, man. So I did the structural design on these four classrooms and toilet. It was built at a cost of approximately \$10 a square foot. Today it would probably cost \$150. He was pleased, and an adjacent district, -- Great Western [School District], I think was the name -- "how about doing it for us?"

I'm at a meeting with Horn and these people. "You know, we could do that for you but we shouldn't."

"Well, why not? You did it for them."

I said, "Look, they indicated that they didn't have any money. They didn't care what the maintenance cost would be. They felt their crew could do the maintenance. They simply had to have the lowest cost thing. We can do that for you but we shouldn't. Let me explain why.

"That building has wood windows. Both doors, windows, and their frames are made of wood. They should be made of metal, longer life than wood, and no painting. The roof overhang is too short so it doesn't produce enough shade to cover that door and those windows all day long. That is going to have to be repainted time after time after time because that sun. In this California summer, it's going to be 110 degrees or more. So you're going to spend a lot of money on maintenance. "If we, on the other hand, gave you a metal-clad door and a metal frame, out of aluminum, it can be there forever. And we do the same thing with the windows." Your building would cost about \$12 a square foot against their \$10 but within ten years you would be way ahead. Architect Horn started pumping everything he had in my direction, and he had a lot of work to do. Then I added a few other architectural offices, and we started doing work up and down the valley.

SENEY: This is Leroy F. Greene & Associates.

GREENE: Leroy Greene & Associates, Consulting Engineers. That was created in 1951 and I shut her down in 1978. Twenty-seven years I ran that firm. The reason for shutting down in 1978 was the passage of Proposition 13.<sup>1</sup>

Proposition 13 in California, which was copied in many other states, said you could not put an ad valorem tax on property. That's changed some since but that's the way Prop. 13 was. It said whatever the value of your house was, the tax could not exceed one percent, of its value. And the increase in value, inflation, year by year, cannot be more than two percent. Take \$100,000 house, one percent of that is \$1,000. That's your tax. The next year, maybe inflation was 10 percent; but no, on this house the maximum increase in value is two percent. That's \$2,000. So now the value of the house is \$102,000. And then one percent of that \$1020 is the tax.

I've got an engineering firm and we're doing a lot of municipal work. A fire station at one town, and a library at another town, and so on, and those municipalities are saying, "Wait. We have the money to build these facilities, but the lower property tax won't cover employee's pay. We can build it but we wouldn't have enough money, if I pay salaries every year where is it going to come from?" So they pulled back.

In the meantime my interest has shifted into politics, so I said the hell with it and we shut her down, and I just was then, full time, in politics.

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<sup>1</sup> June, 1978.

- SENEY: Tell me about how you got interested in running for office. I knew you had eleven candidates in that 1962 electoral.
- GREENE: There were 11 opponents in my democratic primary.
- SENEY: There were 11 opponents, right.
- GREENE: What happened there--
- SENEY: First of all, Senator, tell me how you built your base, what you did in the community maybe to get yourself known. Did you take part in any other kinds of things?
- GREENE: No.
- SENEY: You didn't serve on a school board or local office or advisory group?
- GREENE: Absolutely nothing.
- SENEY: Zero.
- GREENE: Zero.
- SENEY: Okay, go ahead.
- GREENE: But my wife, my first wife, where we had about 54 years together and about 50 of them were as a married couple, was very much an intellectual, so that was the level of conversations that we would have. They would involve issues of what's going on in the world and what's going on in the community and so on.
- SENEY: She was politically alert and interested.
- GREENE: Yeah. What happened was that in 1960, as happens every ten years, there was reapportionment. And Sacramento County, my home county, had grown faster than the average of the state.

The state is divided into 80 Assembly districts and 40 senatorial districts. And the law, the regulations, require that the Assembly districts be of the same number of people. Didn't say that about the Senate.

What it said was that the Assembly districts represent people, and take the total population itself, say divide it by 80, and that's the number of people you should have in each Assembly district.

SENEY: Well, at this point the Senate was still based on counties.

GREENE: As to counties it said that a Senate district would be made up of one county or two counties, or some other number of counties, but you can't divide a county. It can be two counties, it can be three counties, but it can't be two and a half. So that was the rules at that point in time. They've changed since. That was the rule then.

Sacramento had grown faster than the average, if you took the whole state and divided it by 80, you saw a bigger portion in this county. So where we had two Assembly seats covering the county, because you couldn't split counties-- it changed to three Assembly districts. The new district was actually called the 3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District, starting with number 1 at the Oregon border and running down to the 80th [Assembly District] down in San Diego. This was a third district added to Sacramento County, which meant there was no incumbent, which meant there was no real strong political organizations there.

In 1960 is the census, 1961, reapportionment. In 1962 comes an election and I decided that I would run for that new Assembly seat. I talked it over with Denny,

my wife. Well, we were always interested, and she says, “You do a lot of complaining like everybody else about the government.” I said, “Well, if I’m supposed to obey the law, I’d like more voice in what the law is, so I want to run.” We sat down and thought about this: What will it take? You don’t have money and nobody knows you. So how would we approach this? I got some elderly gentleman who worked for a congressman and talked to him about what would it take. He told me something I didn’t want to hear. He said the only way you can do it is by walking. You’re going to have to see people. Walking? Well, he’s right. He’s right.

Okay, two things here. Nobody knows who I am. I have to get the highest number of people to recognize my name. That’s one thing. The other thing is that when they recognize my name, it must be positive, it can’t be negative. There’s nothing else here but that. I said, “You know what? I’m a bottle of ketchup, I’m a can of beans, and I’m on the shelf in the supermarket. So this can of beans is no different than that one or this bottle of ketchup. There’s really no difference. If you’re blindfolded you won’t be able to tell much, so I’ve got to get the right bottle, the right label that would be attractive, and the right shelf space. I’ve got to be at that woman’s eye level as she comes down this aisle and is doing her shopping.” We’re talking politics, but this is what it’s about, okay? It’s this PR stuff. How do you sell this product? I am the product. Since it’s an open seat, there are 12 candidates. There are 8 Democrats, and I’m one of them, and there’s 4 Republicans. And here we go. I got to thinking, well, so long as none of

the others are engineers. If any of them are I've got a problem. Fortunately none of them were. Not only that, very few of them have any kind of a technical background.

Now, in my district, I have Aerojet General Corporation, which is space-age stuff -- rockets and so on -- and at that time they were employing a little more than 19,000 people in Rancho Cordova.

Then I got Douglas, the Signal Corps, and the Army Depot. And I've got Mather and McClellan air bases. I'm an engineer close to technicians of all kinds. I've got to pull everything I can out of those places, then I've got to get a fair share on anything else shared among these eight Democrats. I have no interest right now on anything but the primary. Forget the general. Take every single thing you have or can conceive of and throw it into this battle for the primary. There's no point in reserving anything for the general because if you don't get there, you're dead. So what am I going to do? Well, I'm going to have to walk. I have an advantage then over all other opponents in that I am the principal of my firm. All the others are employees of firms. So I can say to my crew, "Fellows, I'm sorry, you've got work to do, if it's a rainy day, I'll come around to see you, or if some emergency comes up. Other than that I'm out walking."

It seems to me that I've got to go out into the hinterlands, as far away, as rural, as I can get that's within my district and start there. I'm starting this campaign five months before the primary election that's in June. So I've got January,

February, March, April, and May. That's what I've got, wintertime, rainy season, whatever.

I've got some very tiny communities like Michigan Bar, Clay Station, Wilton, little bitty places like Dillard. I'm going to start out there, because nobody else is going to, it's going to be so unusual they'll remember. It's very difficult because the houses are a half mile apart. In the city you walk twenty feet and you've got the next door. As you're approaching election day you're coming into the core area. I'm carrying some material with me. I've got the precinct sheets that tell me who's Republican and who's Democrat, and it's in the street order that I have this -- address order.

I need something to leave at each household. I need a brochure.

SENEY: The one you've just handed me says, "Re-elect Assemblyman Leroy F. Greene."

GREENE: Yes. That was in my second campaign.

SENEY: This is a nail file.

GREENE: Right. I wrote all my own brochures. All the written material came from me. I checked out signs all over deciding that the PR people have concluded that the best combination of colors on ads are red, white, and blue. So I got white paper, used a blue line and a red line, and left a lot of space between paragraphs. And I take the piece of paper and I cut off the corner, like this. Anyway, not very important, but then I figured that--

SENEY: Well, it might have been. I mean, you're trying obviously to set yourself apart from your opponents.

GREENE: As a campaigner there's so much I've got to tell people but the more I write them the less they'll read. I really need a lot of white space, a few sentences, or very short paragraphs, with a lot of space in between. I'm assuring you, you don't have to read it. But it will help if you look at it. It's all right if you look at it. But then I'll take one side of the brochure, or one column, something like that, and I'll jam it up with everything. If somebody's that curious, give them more information.

Now I'm out walking, but before I go out, I now have those brochures, and at night, when I'm home, I'm going to take 100 or 200 of those brochures and I'm going to write on top of them, "Sorry I missed you, Leroy Greene." And I put those in my left pocket. Take another hundred or two that I didn't write anything on and put them in the right pocket. I ring your doorbell. If you come to the door, I hand you one without the handwritten message. I ring your doorbell. If nobody comes to the door, I stick this signed one in the door. Now I'm set. Now I start walking.

It is probable that either nobody's home or a woman will come to the door, not a man. Because this is 1962 and this is new territory. These women are of childbearing age. They're going to have little rug rats or whatever, but this is the era of the one-income family. Woman are at home. So I'm going to be addressing women and I want to make it memorable. They need to remember me. Because just being a salesman coming to the door, leaving a potholder, or whatever, accomplishes nothing.

If she wants to talk, I'm going to stand there and talk as long as she wants. If she looks like she's under stress, I'm getting the hell out of there as quick as I can. Somebody comes to the door and she's got a kid in her arms, I'm getting out quick. "I'm running for...if you have a chance...tell that kid when he grows up he should be a Democrat too. I'll make a remark like that. She'll laugh or snicker. She'll remember because I said that.

Woman comes to the door and we chat a little bit and she says, "Mr. Greene, have you rung a lot of doorbells?"

I said, "Lady, that's my doorbell ringing finger; it used to be much longer than that one."

SENEY: You're holding up your index finger and your middle finger. The tape won't see that.

GREENE: Yeah, that's right. I hold up my index finger, then the middle finger, and say of my index finger, "It used to be much bigger than that one."

I did all kinds of little things. I'd come to the door, and this is a split household, my information tells me, because if this was two Republicans, let's say, I wouldn't have bothered to stop here because I have a primary ahead of me that I'm interested in. So I ring the doorbell, and I know that she's a Democrat and he's a Republican, and she comes to the door and we chat: "I'm Leroy Greene and I'm running for the Assembly," and so on and so forth. I say, "You know, ma'am? I've noticed something very interesting here. In these split families like yours -- you're the Democrat, your husband's a Republican -- what

I've observed is that it's always the woman that's the brighter of the two." She'll laugh.

SENEY: And she'll remember.

GREENE: She'll remember. So I did these various kinds of gags.

SENEY: Now, you never worked on other people's campaigns? Because, you know, you're doing pretty good here. You've got an instinct, a feeling, for it.

GREENE: Well, yeah. That's what it's all about. As I thought back later, many years later, I'm thinking -- what moved me? It occurred to me that when I went to that new high school, starting in the middle of my second year, that there were ten homerooms at my level, in the second half of the year. Around 30 kids in a class, and there's ten classes. So that's about 300 kids. And I recall that basis I was the class president. I recalled that. It showed some kind of interest in politics." It didn't occur to me that I had done that, because there was nothing that suggested to me that I was particularly popular or interested in politics.

And then about half a dozen of my cousins, female, all female, died of the same disease. It's known as Crohn's disease.

SENEY: That's peculiar to Jews, is it not?

GREENE: I really don't know.

SENEY: Is it genetic?

GREENE: I didn't ask that but I did ask, "Does it relate to either sex? Is it female or male?" and I was told, "No, that the odds are about the same." But there's something flowing through the paternal side of my family where I lost about six cousins.

One got Crohn's when she was in her 50's and lasted until 70's, but one died at 19 and the rest in between those. And one of my aunts said to me -- her daughter, my cousin, Maxine, died at 19, she was about two years younger than I was. We were in the same high school. Her mother told me, "You know," she said, her daughter Maxine had said, "You know, Leroy's the one to watch."

I could not think of any reason for that because my cousins were smart kids. They all had better grades. They were all much better students. Maxine said, "Watch Leroy," and I started thinking about that. Why would Max say that?

In any case, so I'm out there ringing doorbells. Then one time I'm at a meeting in Fair Oaks, a little town nearby, and this is the Fair Oaks -- they have a little community center and maybe 150, 200 people, something like that, were all jammed in there. Oh, it was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the community of Fair Oaks. That's why they were having this event. The ladies did the cooking and there were speeches, and we're having this luncheon affair.

The first speaker is a woman, a middle-aged woman, who's a historian, and she's telling us about who was here before Fair Oaks, and she brought some artifacts along about the Indians who had lived along the American River. "Here's a little ax handle and here's the spear point," and so on. And she had the medicine man's, the shaman's rattle. It was like a hammer, and it had some little pebbles inside of it that would make it rattle, and there were feathers. This would ward off evil spirits. Now, this was Republican territory, in this little community, very, very strongly Republican territory, and part of my district--

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

GREENE: This lady, who's a historian, is telling us about the people that were there before Fair Oaks ever became a community. And she was telling us about the Indians that had lived next to the river and some of the artifacts that had been discovered and that she had brought with her, such as the ax handle and the arrow, the feathers, the spear point, and she had the shaman's rattle -- and the shaman, of course, is the medicine man -- to ward off evil spirits and whatever else they were supposed to do with these things. But here was a handle like a hammer with a head on it that was hollow and something inside like little pebbles because it would rattle like a baby's rattle. And there were feathers attached to it, this was the shaman's gadget.

And then after our historian spoke, a man got up to speak, and I don't recall why he addressed us this way, but he started off his speech by saying, "Well, I'm a Republican," the instant he said the word "Republican," I grabbed that shaman's gadget and I, their incumbent legislator shook it in his face. That house roared. The whole house roared.

SENEY: You've got a great smile on your face, Senator.

GREENE: Well, if only there was an election that day. I had them, dammit! I had them! They were going to forget who's the Republican and who's the Democrat, because as I left there, several of them said, "Sir, you really have a sense of humor," something like that. I bought the crowd at that instant.

To me, that's what it was all about, because there's a huge difference between being electable and being a good legislator. I don't care if it's President or dogcatcher. Because the electability has nothing to do with your ability to do the job. And your ability to do the job is not too closely tied to your electability. Electability is what people think of you, okay? And they're not thinking about the job. This was my stock in trade. Humor

I go before a committee of the Assembly. With term limits, there's so many legislators in and out I don't know these people anymore. Even when I was still in office, which was up until December '98. I'm in front of [Assemblywoman] Carol Migden's Assembly committee on Appropriations. I've got some bill before her committee. They take a vote. I haven't got the votes required. She says, "I'm sorry, you're a little short."

I get my 5ft 6 inches up and pretend to be extremely indignant: "Why do you have anything to say about my height at a time like this? So you create a reaction. "I like that guy; he's funny." That's what it's all about. This was what campaigning was all about.

SENEY: And you came out pretty good?

GREENE: I had people say to me, "Well, who else is running?" I'd say, "Look, 8 Democrats, 4 Republicans are running. There's 120 members of the Legislature. Eighty of them are in the Assembly, where I'm seeking a seat, the other 40 are in the Senate. Here's a rundown of who they are." I had this in my brochure. So many business people, so many educators, so many government employees, so many

retired, etc. And I had engineers -- zero. I said, "Now, if you elect me, we'll finally have the House in perfect balance," and I'd get the laugh or the snicker out of that. This was the basis of the entire campaign: increase the number of people who can recognize your name, and it's got to be a favorable response.

Then there were those that were negative or mad at you. I had an ad in the newspaper and it listed lots and lots of supporters. This lady says to me, "I'm not going to vote for you and I want you to know why. I bought some furniture from this man in your advertisement, he was listed as one of your supporters. The sofa I brought from him had something wrong with it and he would not fix it. And if those are the kind of people that are supporting you, I'm not going to vote for you."

And I said to her, "Lady, your reason is better than most I've heard."

SENEY: Did it surprise you when you won the primary? Or did you feel pretty good as you were going along campaigning that you were doing the right thing and heading in the right direction?

GREENE: I felt reasonably confident, I felt that I did all that I could to win the primary. On the night of the general election, my daughter, who was, I think, nine at the time, was with me, and we're at Channel 3. The reporter's talking to me about the election and he turns to my daughter, and he says to her, "Well, how can anybody beat your father?"

And she said, "With a stick."

SENEY: A chip off the old block.

GREENE: A chip off the old block. I loved that girl.

One time I said to her -- oh, this is an interesting little sidebar -- that when my wife was pregnant with our child, I said to her that "If it's a daughter, I want to name her. If it's a son, you can name her. Is that a deal?"

"Okay." Because I had something in mind. My wife's name was Denny. My name is Leroy. I named her Dennie Lee.

SENEY: Tell me when she was born.

GREENE: Nineteen fifty-one. And through her years I rarely called her Dennie Lee. Well, I did call her from time to time, but I usually just used her initials and called her D. L. This reminds me of something else I did. It's interesting. You got me here doing this, so things come up.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: She was a little bitty thing, and I taught her that "Your daddy is a genius, and you're a bug-eyed monster just like your mommy." We're in a restaurant and the kid stands up, "I'm a bug-eyed monster just like you, huh, Mommy?"

SENEY: Was this the first your wife had heard of this?

GREENE: No, she had heard. Oh, the other thing I did, come to think of it, I used to write little fairy tales for my daughter. Or that is, I didn't write them, I just thought them up, and my little bitty girl is hearing them. So I told her about the three fairy sisters. They were all little white fairies and they had little white wands, and one day one of them looked very, very sad. And what was she sad about?

She said, "Well, look at us."

“We’re all white, and why can’t we be different?”

And so my next three stories are about how the blue fairy became blue, the red fairy became red, the green fairy became green. Then my wife says to me, “Why don’t you write these things down or record them? Do one or the other.” And she said, “You should record these stories because she’d like to listen to it. She can’t read.” So I did; I recorded it. And I can see her sitting in front of the fireplace with the earphones on, listening, staring into space and listening to her little stories. Many years later, she turned around and transcribed them by typewriter: *How the Blue Fairy Became Blue.*

SENEY: Let me go back to the campaign of ’62, if I can. After you won the primary, did you get any help from the Assembly Democrats? [Assembly Speaker] Jesse Unruh?

GREENE: Yes. Here’s what happened. People would say to me when I’m running, “Yeah, but nobody knows who you are and your opponent” -- after the primary --[is James R. Cowan.] A very nice man. He had been the superintendent of the old Arcade Elementary School District that was combined into the San Juan Unified District, and he became an assistant superintendent. A very nice man. In fact, of all the people I’ve ever run against, he was the only one who ever called me and congratulated me on the victory. There were two phrases that I used during that first campaign that I created: “Tax the imagination first, the people last.”

Do you like that one?

SENEY: I like that.

GREENE: The other one I used went something like, “Converting a notion to a sound idea and a sound idea to reality. That’s what my profession is about. And more importantly, that’s what good government is about.” Those were the two phrases I used.

But the “Tax the imagination first, the people last,” We’re on a platform at one of these debates, my opponent Jim Cowan says, “Good heavens. If you elect Greene, he will even put a tax on imagination.”

And I said, “That’s all right, Jim. If you don’t have any, you pay no tax.” In the second term I was running, Aerojet General had about close to 19,000 employees in my district.

SENEY: Yes.

GREENE: And come lunch time they had huge dining areas, and an intercom system, There’s about 4,000 people having lunch at the same time. And they had a “Good Citizenship” campaign in those days. They would invite the various candidates for Congress, for sheriff, or whatever to speak. They’d have us up on a platform and each have a couple of minutes, to speak to the crowds. The Republican that was running against me at that time -- I believe it was my second term -- very fortunately spoke before I did. Very fortunately. He says something like this: “How can you expect economy in government from your representative when your representative rides around in the most expensive car manufactured in the United States of America?”

My turn. I got up and I said, "You know, he's right. He's absolutely right." I said, "You've got to understand my problem." I said, "You see, there's a particular shade of blue that's my favorite color. This is the only car they make in my color." I said, "You know, they give us an allowance. If we want something that costs more we pay the difference. I pay the difference," and then I went on. I killed it. If you're ever going to go on a platform with an opponent insist as the incumbent, that you speak last. If I'm here to be challenged, I'm saying, "I'm the incumbent. If somebody wishes to challenge me, somebody says they can do things better, or somebody says that whatever I did was wrong, then let them get up here and say so and I will respond to it." That was just the way I would operate. And if they would tell me that's not suitable, that we want to run a random pattern, I would say, "In that case, I will be here in the audience and I will remain here until after the session is over, and if anybody wants to talk to me, I'll be very happy to answer their questions," and I'd just sit down.

In one of my campaigns my opponent's people got an idea. They're going to salt the audience and get someone to ask me the zinger question. They're going to really get me, you see. Law and order is always an issue. It doesn't matter where or when or what the election's about, you've got law and order. Drugs, gun control and abortion are always fair game. These and education are always issues.

I'm on the platform with this challenger. This is at a time when there's a lot in the newspapers about the fact that somebody shot a burglar and that somebody is

being sued by a burglar because the burglar was not a threat to that person's life when he was shot at.

There was a situation, for example, where a couple of guys had climbed up to the roof of a school building and one of them fell through the skylight and got hurt and sued the school district.

SENEY: Successfully.

GREENE: I don't know.

But my opponent tried to catch me off balance. Years later one of their dirty-tricks guys told me they had set up a deal to catch me off guard on tape. This guy gets up at a candidate's forum and asks me a question. He says, "Suppose you came home, you had a gun on you, you came home. and you opened your front door, and here's a guy coming down the stairs carrying your TV set and he walks past you out of the house. He's walking away. What are you going to do about it?"

My answer was, "I can't tell you what to do about it. That's up to you. I can only tell you what I would do. I would shoot him."

"When I said that, they packed their gear and left. I'm not going to tell you to do anything illegal, but I'll admit that I would do something illegal. Then in one of the campaigns I decided that I still have to meet the greatest number of people I can, but things have been happening over time. Districts are getting bigger in terms of the number of people, and a much bigger percentage of the women are working. So rather than going door to door and finding nobody home -- I walked

a whole block and nobody was home, on either side of the street! I'm not getting anywhere. So I thought, well, let's do this town hall meeting thing instead. And this was one my wife worked out. She said, "Okay, we'll pick a school or a church somewhere. We'll give them a call and ask if we could have the use of their meeting hall, we're going to bring in somebody from the sheriff's office or the city police to talk about security at your house and in your neighborhood. Assemblyman Greene will introduce these officers, and they'll tell the local residents about Neighborhood Watch programs."

But as soon as I did that once -- I'll do it thereafter. The officers are going to come here and they're going to tell the people about the problems they're having, that they don't have enough equipment, that they're understaffed and they're underpaid, and their response time is...

No, that's not helping the people at all.

SENEY: And then they're putting heat on you instead of being helpful.

GREENE: Well, even if they're not putting any heat on me it's no good. It's no good. And I know what to say, having listened to these people. I can tell them, "Plant pyracantha bushes under your bedroom windows because they stick the hell out of people and nobody can get past them."

I can tell them that whatever their house color is painted, that "If you have your house number on, it should be the greatest possible contrast so the fire department or the police department can easily recognize your address."

I can tell them that if that door opens 'in' as opposed to opens 'out', the side the hinges are on makes a difference because "If the hinge is on the outside, a criminal can pull the pin right out and lift the door out. And I can tell you how to prevent that from happening. If the hinge is on the outside, take the head off a nail, a big heavy nail, drive the nail into the frame, close the door enough so that the edge hits the nail, then drill a hole at that spot that the nail will slide into. Now if you take the hinge off you still can't get the door out."

"Suppose you're a woman, you're home alone and somebody comes to the door and it's midnight. The person rings the doorbell and says, 'I've got a flat tire. Can I please use your phone? Your answer is, 'I'll call for you. Who would you like me to call?'

Or, you say something like this. 'Hey, Gorilla, will you get the door, please? I'm busy. Oh, never mind, I'll get it.' Give the impression that somebody's with you and call them. Give them some name that sounds like he's a great big guy." So my people would call the school district, church, whatever, get the use of a hall for a neighborhood town hall meeting for people to know how to best protect themselves against theft, etc.

Then we set up a phone bank, and we would call a half a dozen precincts that surrounds that school or church, then we would write to them. We would send them a communication. And with that combination of things, we would then have our meeting.

- SENEY: When did you start to notice that walking the precincts didn't do any good anymore, that there was nobody going to be home and you had to switch your tactics to the town hall meetings?
- GREENE: I had a record of that at one time but I don't seem to have -- I thought I had kept it. Sorry.
- SENEY: That's all right. But again, what year do you recall that being, Senator?
- GREENE: Probably in the 70s.
- SENEY: I need to take you back again to the '62 election, because I want to know what Jesse Unruh, who was then the Speaker, did for you once you became the nominee. I'm curious. I know he would reach out to the nominees. Did he have a candidate in the primary, by the way?
- GREENE: No. I don't think so.
- SENEY: Because it wouldn't be unusual for him to put someone forward, would it be?
- GREENE: No, that's right. In fact, [Assemblyman Edwin L.] Ed Z'Berg -- remember him?
- SENEY: Sure, I do. You bet.
- GREENE: Ed was one of the Assemblymen from this area at that time, and [Assemblyman Walter W.] Walt Powers.
- SENEY: Mr. Z'Berg was more out toward the west. Was he?
- GREENE: I think he had the major portion of the city itself, and Walt Powers had been the mayor of North Sacramento before it became part of Sacramento. So he had the northern area there. They were the two Assembly Members at that time.

I'm not aware of anything involving Speaker Unruh or the party during the primary. I think they just felt there were too many Democrats in the primary, and nothing particularly stood out to them. Because it was a new Assembly District there was nothing outstanding. After the primary, things changed, in that there would be a meeting in town. There was a cafeteria downtown -- Hart's -- and once a week they'd have a lunch meeting there. I went to one of those meetings which was way outside of my district. Of course, my district ran all the way out to Folsom. And I said something like this, "Look, we're meeting here but none of my voters are here. They're out there and I think that I could better spend my time with my potential voters."

A short time after that, I met [Assemblyman Jerome R.] Jerry Waldie (D), the Majority Floor Leader, he represented Contra Costa County. He now lives up around--

SENEY: Placerville, I think.

GREENE: Placerville. Saw him just a few days ago at the [former Assembly Speaker] Willie L. Brown, Jr. bash that they had Monday, week ago.

I met Jerry who said, "Oh, you're the guy that wouldn't come to these local meetings."

"Anyway, [Assemblyman] Tom Bane (D), who was the Chairman of Rules and was one of those political types that was deeply involved, told me -- well, he had a extra hundred or two that he'd like to make available to me for my campaign. At that time, I didn't want to be obligated to anyone. I said, "Well, thanks a lot,

but I'm doing fine. Maybe you'll find somebody with greater need. "I wasn't going to get close to anybody that's going to influence me in any way.

SENEY: So you wouldn't have taken money from Unruh if he'd offered it, and I guess this was Unruh offering actually.

GREENE: I would say that it was a directed offer. Unruh would have said to anybody who's got money to donate, "I want you to do this, I want you to do that." But no, I wasn't about to take any money from anybody. At a later time, once I was in office, one election I remember that Jesse gave me some money. And I said, "You know, Jesse, I feel strange about asking you for help because I'm voting against these very people you're getting your money from." He called me Roy. He didn't call me Leroy.

He said, "Roy, don't worry about it. I need you more than I need them."

SENEY: That's interesting.

GREENE: And there was another time with Jesse, several years later, there was one year when I got it into my head that I was thinking about the possibility of running for Lieutenant Governor. So I went to Unruh and I said, "Jesse, I'm thinking about running for Lieutenant Governor. What do you think?"

He shook his head, "Uh uh, no."

"Why not, Jesse?"

"Roy, you never learned how to suffer fools."

At least he gave me a message. He was right, and that was the end of that.

SENEY:       Why don't we stop there, Senator, for a while and talk about the Legislature when we get back from lunch.

[End of Tape 2, Side B]

Session 2, July 19, 1999

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

[A little more than two minutes of recording time was lost at this point due to a failure of the tape recorder. That material is covered below. Ed.]

GREENE:               Wherever a new member of the Assembly came from, they will have a district office, and there will be somebody managing the district office -- perhaps another Administrative Assistant -- plus a secretary, or depending upon the size of the district, like maybe it's up in the north here, somebody might have six, seven, eight, ten, and eleven counties in one district because of the scattered population. So there might be more staff for that reason. Well, then in the month of January they're making these decisions.

Now, Ed Z'Berg, who was the Assemblyman from this area, was very strong on matters of clean air, clean water, environmental issues, way before those phrases became popular. He was an environmentalist. And he recommended to Jesse Unruh, Speaker at that time, that I be put on the committee that would take care of such things, and he recommended that I be on the Labor Committee. And I said to Unruh that I didn't want him to put me on the Labor Committee because my background experience was such that I didn't think that I was going to be an easy call for labor, so if they're looking for something like that, don't look to me. I'm not saying I'm going to vote against them or for them.

SENEY: Sure. You're not from a labor background.

GREENE: I asked to be put on the Education Committee. At that time the Education Committee had about fifteen or so members. I think right now it has more than that. Might even be nineteen now. They had around fifteen members, and I told Jesse that, "There's something about education that I have unique knowledge of not shared by anybody, my background is that I was an engineer -- I ran my own engineering firm for 27 years -- and in that period of time we designed literally hundreds of schools all over the place, in many different counties," I knew about the physical plant. I knew that area in a way that nobody else knew and I wanted to be on that committee. He put me on the Education Committee.

We originally averaged about four committees. There are 80 members in the House, 40 in the Senate. All the Assembly committees are larger than the Senate committees because there's only half as many Senators.

When I was on the Ways and Means Committee, more recently called Appropriations in the Assembly, there was about twenty-one members, something like that. On the Senate side there was about thirteen.

SENEY: And that's a big committee because so many people want a spot on Appropriations.

GREENE: Yes. Well, there's the so-called juice committees, and a juice committee is a committee where the third house, the monied interests, are involved; we're spending their money on the people running for office. What it means in very plain English is this. Let's say that I'm on the Labor Committee, and I come from

a labor background so I'm always voting for labor. Well, if that's the case, then management and ownership, they're going to spend their money backing my opponent, whoever he is. They want me out of there because I'm a lousy vote. Labor thinks I'm the greatest thing that ever came down the pike, and they're going to put their money behind me to see to it that I'm not removed from office.

Both sides are playing to their own self-interest, and they really don't care who I am, it's just how I vote. There are certain committees where issues involving special interests are important. And there's other committees where it just doesn't matter at all.

Let's say it's the Judiciary Committee, and you might find that the lawyers have a great interest. Are you for or against the positions they take? There's a lot of battles there because, for example, the lawyers would want unlimited rights to sue for unlimited sums.

On the other hand, if you were physicians or manufacturers you would like to find a way of limiting liability and limiting damages

Opposing forces, made up of people that have money, parcel it out in these elections to defend or defeat a candidate. There are those who want to take my seat away because they don't like the way I vote while others support my efforts.

And this is the norm, and it's most unfortunate because it doesn't matter what level of government you're talking about. For example, if you were talking about a county board of supervisors -- now a county board of supervisors, make decisions on zoning and on planning. Here comes developers and real estate

people seeking various permits. Do you suppose they might be campaign contributors?

SENEY: And the banks.

GREENE: Well, the real estate people specifically and the developers. They're the ones that want to change zoning --this is zoned agricultural and we want it to be residential or commercial because we want to buy up a thousand acres and plan 4,000 homes. So this becomes a big money interest, and guess what? If you're running for county board of supervisors, most of the money you're going to see is going to flow from the sources that has an economic interest in your vote.

Washington, D.C., it's the same thing all over again. Now you have a bill in Washington, let's say, that's on gun control. Well, there are a great number of people that hate the notion of guns and want them all eliminated. On the other hand, you've got the gun lobby and gun manufacturers. So on the one side you have a large number of people that are anti-guns opposing people with money that manufacture them plus gun enthusiasts, we find about a 50/50 match up. Certain kinds of legislation are very difficult to pass, not because of their merits but a lot of money on one side facing a lot of people on the other side, money often has a pretty loud voice. One of the very last bills I carried in my final term in the Senate was SB 50<sup>1</sup> which had \$9.2 billion attached to it. This was school construction money. It went to a vote of the people. They voted for it.

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<sup>1</sup> 1997 - 1998 Reg. Sess., ch. 407, Stats. of 1998.

SENEY: Well, my understanding is -- let me say, that was quite a feat on your part to get that through the Legislature and past Governor [Pete] Wilson.

GREENE: Yes, it was. But it also meant I had to accept a lot of crap that I didn't want.

SENEY: What do you mean by that?

GREENE: All right. I could have gotten the bill in the shape I would like it to be in through the Senate. I'm convinced of that. But there was no way I could have gotten the bill that I thought was a proper bill through the Assembly because of what different interests within the Assembly wanted. They forced the budget crap on me because I had in mind that -- I hated some of this stuff, but my target is \$9.2 billion for building new facilities and fixing up old facilities and wiring for computers, and so on. I had to give up a lot, I had to take stuff that I did not want--

SENEY: What did you have to take that you didn't want?

GREENE: Well, I can name some of those things, but the point was that I required a two-thirds vote of each house, and when you have to have a two-thirds vote, and you've got a minority group that's bucking you on something, you have to pay some attention.

For example, the Assembly was enamored of the notion of stock plans, meaning a set of plans for a school that you could pick up and build anywhere. Now, as far as I'm concerned, and as someone who has designed buildings of all kinds, that's nonsense. It doesn't work. It's a stupid idea. But I had to put it in the bill.

If you're in a given school district, and that district is growing rapidly, then that district knows that in the next five years they're going to need, say, three more elementary schools. They can use the stock plan. They can tell the architect, "These are the sites," and so on, "Draw us up a set of plans for the school, and we want to reuse it."

But if you're going to do that, the architect may say, "Well, then we have to be careful about the sites, because that can make a big difference."

"Why?" Well, if the transportation is such that people come to the site from the West including cars and trucks and school buses, but the utilities -- water, gas, and sewage that's taken away -- comes to the site from the South; therefore, we have to face this school in one direction. But on that other site it's going to have to face in a different direction. If you do that the sun is in a different position, and so the hot side of the building, etc., etc., so that this is not a suitable plan if you change the direction.

SENEY: I see what you mean.

GREENE: Right.

[BREAK]

SENEY: Well, Senator, we were talking about, sort of jumping ahead a little to your bond bill, you were talking about "crap," I think in your term, and you mentioned the -- we were just talking about the school siting business, the stock plans.

Let me ask you, I take it probably one or two members were interested in this. What would be their motive, do you think? Just they thought it was a good economy idea? I can't imagine the architects were behind it.

GREENE: We're talking about a bill that had a lot of money in it but had a lot of other things in it as well. And I mentioned to you, for example, that some of the people in the Assembly wanted an element on stock plans because they said they were going to save all this kind of money. And I'm trying to tell them it doesn't work that way; that if you have a set of plans for buildings on top of a mountain someplace, and so you had to design it to take a heavy snow load and it needed a big heating plant in it, and if you said you liked that plan so you want to build it down in the desert, it's not going to work in Palm Desert. Now you need a cooling plant, not a heating plant, and you don't have a snow load; and besides, the orientation is different as to direction. And furthermore, the materials in that building are more expensive than what you would use in this other location. And maybe it's two or three years later and some of the equipment you have listed is no longer manufactured, which means spending money.

SENEY: Do you know what I'm missing? What do you think the motive was here?

GREENE: Stupidity. I'm sorry. That's the wrong word. Ignorance really.

SENEY: Okay. I can't imagine the architects wanted this done, or the school districts wanted it done.

GREENE: No. But they are not the legislators voting on the bill. Here's what happens. You have an image. Here came a developer and he bought up, say, a thousand acres of

land and he's going to build a couple thousand houses on it. And he's got five different floor plans, okay? And you think, well, when it's massed produced that way look at how much money you can save; it's so much cheaper.

But I'm saying, all right, let's take that exact circumstance but let's say you're only going to build one of those houses every year. There is no savings. Let's say you're going to build them all the same time but in a thousand different locations. There's no savings. So now when you're talking about building a school, you're not going to build a thousand schools one day at one time, at one place. If you're going to a formal affair, you're not wearing the same clothes as if you're going to go work on your car or go gardening. It just doesn't work that way, okay?

So what I've tried to do, even though I'm not in the Legislature anymore, talking to some of the staff people, is suggesting to them that I would like to get some of these errors out of that bill. It's now the law, and I'm suggesting that the right thing to do then is we amend that section out of the bill and say in its place that any set of plans that's been approved and built in the last five years is available as a stock plan? Take the crap of out there and put that in its place. Nobody is ever going to use it, I'm telling you. Even if you said something is a stock plan, and you want to make any change in it, how can you do that unless you go back to the original architect? Who owns what?

SENEY: The copyright being with the architect.

GREENE: Who owns the copyright? Is the owner still alive? Does the school district own the plan or does the architect who copyrighted it own the plans? And without regard to that, if you're going to change the plans, who's responsible now for the building as soon as you touched it?

Suppose the circumstances are exactly the way they were five years ago when this plan was put together, but that heating and ventilating and air conditioning equipment is no longer manufactured, we now have computers that we didn't have before and we have to wire this differently, and so on. What if the design codes have been changed? So when you get all done making these changes, what do you think you've saved?

SENEY: What other "crap" did you have to take in that bill?

GREENE: Some legislators insisted that the state delays everything and always takes too long to put the plans through the state agencies, and it's the state's fault." We're being fed a crock of nonsense, because what's happening is since there's a lot of construction projects, architectural firms are overworked. They've got more work than they can handle. And their school district is screaming at them and they are saying, "Well, but it's not our fault. We sent the plans up to Sacramento and they haven't returned them yet," or "They haven't approved them yet." But they neglected to tell the school district that what happened was that they sent the plans up to Sacramento, and Sacramento told the architect, "I'm sorry, we're not going to start on these plans because they're not complete, and when you give us a complete set of drawings, then we'll start checking."

I was on the Allocation Board that allocates money for these purposes, and I therefore said to the Allocation Board, "Look, if the State Architect's office has to delay checking for this reason, you don't send that letter just to the architect, you send a copy to the school board so he can't pull this story on you, saying that it's the state's fault."

They put in the bill that every city or county building department should be able to check these plans of the school. And I said, "But they never heard of the Field Act, they don't know this kind of stuff. They can't do that. I want that nonsense out of the bill and put in its place"--

SENEY: The Field Act is the Earthquake Safety Act for the schools.

GREENE: Yes. And if you would put in its place something like this; that any firm of architects or engineers who have designed and have had built any school are qualified as plan checkers, rather than talking about city and county building departments. I'm trying to persuade some legislator to take that on and do it. I don't know if it's going to work out. Things of this kind, are the annoyances that bug me.

There's some bigger ones than that too. For example, the law says you've got two different kinds of programs. One's called 50/50 and the other one's 80/20. If you're building a new school and you meet certain kinds of conditions, the state says, "I'll pay half and you pay half." If you're fixing up an old school, the state says, "If you meet certain conditions, we'll pay 80 percent of the cost, you pay 20."

Well, that's what it says but that's not what it means. And nobody knows that except me, and now as I tell you, too.

SENEY: So I keep quiet about this?

GREENE: No. It doesn't matter. I'm not going to give you real numbers because I don't remember them. For example, they said, "Well, if you're going to build a new school, and it's a high school, we're going to give you, say, \$5,000 for every kid. And if it's a middle school, \$4,000; if it's an elementary school, \$3,000." Those are not the right numbers.

SENEY: But rough proportions.

GREENE: That's the notion of the thing. Well, but they are assuming that that's 50 percent of the cost. Because what they're saying is "When we give you that money, it's your money; if you have anything left, it's yours," which is absurd. We never did that in the past.

In the past we said, "We'll allow you so many square feet per student and you can do whatever you want with each square foot, but we have a value. We'll give you 'X' hundred dollars for every square foot you put in the toilet. We'll give you so many dollars for every square foot you put in the classroom," and so on. "So you tell us how much square foot you have in this and that and the other thing, and we'll multiply out by our dollar numbers." "Came out with \$10 million? Okay, you have \$10 million for the school." "You went to bid and it came at \$9 million? Then we give you \$9 million, we don't give you ten." Instead, they've changed it, going backwards, and now say, "We're going to give

you 'X' dollars per student, not per square foot. And if you have any change left over you keep it." Which means, in turn, that some of these school districts will immediately start building poor quality to reserve as much of that money as they can get their hands on for other purposes that we wouldn't otherwise let them do.

SENEY: I've got to see the hand of the school board lobbyist in here, this Superintendents Association--

GREENE: No, they don't know that much about this kind of stuff. An educator's an educator. What in the hell does he know about the construction of buildings? He's not thinking about these things.

SENEY: How did this get in there then, do you think, Senator?

GREENE: Because somebody thought he was real smart and this is the way to save money. The Governor's office decided we're spending too much money. They do things that are more expensive, not less expensive. But it's interesting -- let me tell you something. You remember Proposition 13, [June] 1978.

SENEY: Of course I do.

GREENE: Proposition 13 increased the amount of money we spend on schools. It didn't decrease it. You know why? Because there was the Leroy F. Greene Lease Purchase Act of 1976,<sup>1</sup> and it set up the conditions whereby we would -- lend you money -- for the building of schools. And prior to that time, that was the system. This was a loan from the state. That meant that every district would have to go to

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 32, 1975 - 1976 Reg. Sess., ch. 1007, Stats. of 1975.

its voters and ask permission to increase the tax on their houses to pay back this loan, and it took a two-thirds vote.

When Prop. 13 passed, Prop. 13 says, "You shall not put a tax on property." No ad valorem tax on property. If you couldn't tax the property, then how do you pay back a loan? So the program that had been a loan program became a grant program. Now we will give you money that you don't have to pay back and now there is no local vote. So now nobody is saying no. You don't need a two-thirds vote. You don't need any vote. So the demand for schools went right to the heavens because there was nobody to say no. So hooray for 13; they cut the property tax and increased the cost of public facilities.

SENEY: And give the decision to the state rather than the local governments.

GREENE: Well, yes, that's right. That's right. Then I carried, the following year, I carried AB 8.<sup>1</sup> I was in the Assembly. AB 8 shifted in the first year \$4,849,000,000 from the state to local governments. Because if you can't put an ad valorem tax on property, then how do you build schools? There's no local source of money. What does the sheriff do? How do you get a library? Local government was really hit hard, and in the first year of this bill, they lost about \$5 billion of tax resources they otherwise would have had.

So I come along with AB 8 (1979). [Assemblyman] [T.] Leo McCarthy was the Speaker of the Assembly at that time, he called me one day and he said that I

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<sup>1</sup> 1979 - 1980 Reg. Sess., ch. 282, Stats. of 1979.

had AB 8, which is a very low number bill -- it was put in January -- and, Leo said, "just about every committee has bills flowing through from various members because of this property tax situation we're in. We have them in the Rev[ue] & Tax[ation] Committee, we have them in the Housing Committee, we have them in the Local Government Committee." Leo wanted to stop all these bills, and he wanted to use AB 8 as the vehicle to solve the problem.

I told Leo he's not throwing me a life preserver, he's throwing me a rock. I have a bill sniped at by every damn educational lobby that there is. The teachers want this, the administrators want something else, the school boards want that," all these different interests. "And now Leo's shoving their whole world in my face."

Anyway, we did that. And when we got to the Senate side--

SENEY: And just when the Speaker asks, you pretty much go along?

GREENE: Well, close to that but not exactly. I mean, after all, he's the leader, he's running the place. And he says that "instead of trying to deal with twenty different bills, working this all out, I think that you're in the best position to do this. So I'm going to ask the other committee chairmen to stop these bills," and so on, "and we'll do everything here."

When I got over to the Senate -- I was in the Assembly -- the Senate did an interesting thing. They divided the bill into four different parts. So they said that all those effects on local government, Local Government will handle that.

SENEY: Local Government Committee?

GREENE: Yeah. All the effects on education, the Education Committee will handle that. All those that have to do with revenue and taxation, and so on, you see, it was split up. So I appeared before four different committees with this bill.

[Senator Albert S.] Al Rodda, Senator Rodda, was the chairman of the Finance Committee, now called Appropriations, and Al Rodda said to these various chairmen, "You can amend AB 8 any way you want to, that's okay. We'll consider the bill that way. I will not promise that it will go out the way you amend it, but it's okay to tell us what form you want it in." There were no amendments. It came to Senate Finance as I brought it to the Senate, and it became the law.

SENEY: Tell me what AB 8 did.

GREENE: AB 8, as I said, shifted almost \$5 billion from state resources to local government. The state does not and never did tax property. The state's main sources of revenue are the sales tax and the income tax. Today, one penny -- one penny -- of sales tax is worth approximately \$4 billion. One penny. Those days it was around three or less, but today about \$4 billion for one penny. So you've got the sales tax and the income tax as the two colossal sources of state revenue. Then there's banks and corporation taxes, insurance taxes. We did away with the inventory tax, we did away with the inheritance tax, and so on. So we did away with some taxes, but the rate of inflation was running very high. I was on the Allocation Board for 34 of my 36 years, observing that the cost of construction of the schools in some years was going up one percent per month.

Which meant that the tax on property, the value of the property was going up maybe higher than that. If the tax rate was say \$1 per \$100 of assessed value,” and all of a sudden you double or triple the assessed value, the tax money is pouring into the state, and that’s where you got the tax result that wound up with 13, because Prop. 13 was not the first attempt at lowering the property tax. I think his name was [Philip E.] Watson, or something like that.

SENEY: Right. He was the assessor of L.A. County.

GREENE: And there was somebody before him, and then we had these two guys [Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann] came along.

SENEY: And you, yourself, had put in some changes too, earlier in the decade.

GREENE: Yeah, there had been various efforts. The Legislature did not respond properly. For running schools, there was what was called the computational tax rate, let’s say of one dollar. So for every hundred dollars of assessed value you’re paying a dollar. But if your assessed value doubled, well then you were paying \$2 but your income didn’t change, and yet, the value of your house changed. This was the unfairest tax ever created, but it was so important in the sense that you knew in advance what you were going to get. You knew the value of properties and you knew what’s going to come in.

SENEY: But AB 8 distributed what was a state surplus, didn’t it?

GREENE: AB 8 was distributing what was the state non-property tax to local government.

SENEY: Right. What you’re saying is all this property tax money that’s come in--

GREENE: We shifted almost \$5 billion -- almost all, not quite to local government -- cities, counties, schools, etc.-- then about a few years back, you remember we had a recession that lasted for about six years.

SENEY: Right. We're talking now about the early '90s.

GREENE: The state started taking back some of this money that they'd given to local government, and local government starts screaming, "You're robbing us!" I started reflecting. I said, "You know, we're only robbing them because we gave them something that the people never told us to give them when Prop. 13 passed." Prop. 13 didn't say anything about replacing the local government money lost in Prop 13.

[End of Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

GREENE: With all the fuss and feathers about all the calamity that's going to happen from 13. Nothing happened. Well, nothing happened then, but in the early '90s when we had a recession, and the state started pulling back because it couldn't cover its own bases, well, that's when it finally happened. And the thing about it is, if I had never done AB 8, the hit would have been immediate in the counties and there would have been immediately exquisite pain. Exquisite pain. And the fact of relieving that pain caused a later problem.

SENEY: I've heard it said that what happened was what Jarvis said, and he was the primary person, Howard Jarvis, between him and Gann, was "Well, there's plenty of money and they're just keeping it up there at the state." And sure enough, when

the money was distributed, there was no pain at the local level. And I've heard the political criticism that you're making now that, geez, if you'd only let them sink, then people would have felt that immediately.

GREENE: Well, let me tell you one incident with Gann debating Prop 13. I said, "Look, let me tell you what's so bad about this. Here are two houses," and we're way back in the late '70s, you know, now--

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: "Here are two houses, they're identical, and they're built side by side at the same time, and let us assume that they're worth \$50,000 each. Each house is worth \$50,000, and the man in house A lived there for 30 years, and he's living there today. And five years after that house B was sold for \$100,000. And ten years after that B was sold for \$150,000. These houses are identical in value on today's market, and this guy in house B is paying four times as much tax money as that guy in house A pays. How can that be fair?"

Gann didn't say anything about it, and somebody in the audience says, "Well, what about what Assemblyman Greene says?"

And Gann's answer was, "We can work those problems out."

"How? You can't work those problems out without changing the Constitution again."

And there it was, and yes, that's what's happened before and since Prop 13. It means that if you live someplace for a long time, you're not as likely to move as if this had not happened. Prop 13 affects the housing market as does rent control.

The instant you put on rent control, you've given a valuable protection to the renter and you've given a headache to prospective renters and the owner. The owner now says, "Well, it's a few years later and there's been inflation. I want to sell."

"Yeah, but why would I want to buy rental housing property? I mean, I want a maximum return on my investment and I'm not going to get it from rental units under rent control."

Why would anybody invest in the building of additional rental units? What will happen to existing rentals? Won't owners try to tear rentals down to be replaced by higher return units? Won't rent control make it difficult or impossible to get remodel and repair services or improvement? Won't rent control prevent the building of additional units for future renters? So in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, there's hell to pay [because of rent control].

And what isn't realized at the time, the political environment does not realize, that Prop 13 has a negative affect in discouraging upward mobility. Owners who bought at low cost years ago whose property taxes are low will find overwhelming increases in property tax if they go for expensive upgrades. The house built in Roseville for \$150,000, that house, those plans, those materials, take it down to Beverly Hills and pay a half a million.

My house is on the American River in Carmichael. I bought the lot around 1964. They wanted a tremendous amount of money for that lot. They wanted \$30,000 and I bargained them down to \$25,000 -- 1964, '65.

Nineteen seventy-six, I built a house there for around \$130,000, something like that, with the landscaping and all. When my wife died, I was required to have a reappraisal because of the wills and other things. To make a long story short, today the dirt that it sits on, that I paid \$25,000 for excluding the house, is worth somewhere between \$800,000 and a million. And if somebody were to buy it, do you know what they'd do? They'd either tear down the house and build something else there or live in it and either way pay ten times my tax bill.

SENEY: But my assessed valuation will be at the 1976 level and moved up notch by notch from there.

GREENE: Moved up very slowly, right, unless the property was sold probably for over \$1 million establishing \$1 million as the new tax base. Because what Prop 13 said was that the increased value of the property cannot exceed two percent of the original price, and the tax would be one percent of whatever the new property value is.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: So actions of government have unseen consequences. One of the things that government does wrong, and doesn't seem to understand the economics of it, is this. The Department of Finance, in looking at any bill, in terms of what it's going to cost, and if the Department of Finance says, "Well, here's a bridge that's to be built by the state," let's say, "and it's going to cost \$10 million to build that bridge, and really, we're spending so much money now on highways, we really can't afford that." But if you put that bridge across that river, you're going to find

a bunch of hotels and motels lined up over here where the vacant space is, because when you put that bridge there you've created a transportation corridor into that huge city that's over there. So what you haven't realized is you're going to put in a bunch of gasoline stations, you're going to put in a bunch of hotels and motels and restaurants, and so on, so there's two things to be considered here. One is, What is the financial cost? But the other is, What is the economic benefit? And you only look at one side of this coin and you won't turn the coin over. You don't have the complete picture.

SENEY: And that's what the Legislature has to remind them to do. Isn't it?

GREENE: But the Legislature's no different, because economic benefits are tomorrow's benefits. The financial costs are today, so it doesn't work out. There is not enough thought involved. It's happened in other states, it probably will happen here, but it's happened in other states. You want a major league football team, baseball team, whatever the team, so their local community is bargaining with the owners; and sports owners want tax exemptions. So they get certain credits in order to persuade them because you can see what'll happen if they come here, what the spin-off will be. But what you don't see is that within five years, some other community has outbid you to the extent that they're going to move out of here, and you're left with a white elephant that has no particular value.

The Sacramento Kings illustration in basketball, weren't they from Kansas? And here's the Bulls and here's this team, that team. Here's the San Diego team, Chicago team, when were the Dodgers from Brooklyn? And people are cheering

and hooraying. And you've worked out your deal with this billionaire on the franchise regarding these millionaires who didn't come from here, and if somebody gives them a better deal they'll leave here. Or if somebody doesn't want them, they'll have to leave here. I'm supposed to go rah rah, hooray for you because my city's name is attached to your baseball club, or whatever? This is part of the human equation that's invisible. For example, I'm a graduate of Purdue University, and the other school in the state, down in Bloomington, is Indiana University, so there's rivalry. So I'm cheering my team and they're cheering their team and so on. But what's the importance of this?

SENEY: I want to talk about the Legislature in the first days you were there, because not only were you on the Education Committee but you were on the Public Utilities Committee as well to begin with? I think I have the right list here. Finance and Insurance and on the Joint Committee on Seismic Safety, which makes sense, given your engineering background.

But, you know, you arrived at a time when, as we said before, the Senate was still apportioned according to counties, and the Assembly was still primarily--

GREENE: People.

SENEY: Right. And still a part-time body. I mean, you didn't spend all your time--

GREENE: No. When I came here in 1963 the Legislature would meet annually for a budget session but for general session didn't meet more than every other year. With the passage of time, the Governor started calling us back into more and more special

sessions because of the issues that had to be resolved. For example, today the State of California as an economic entity ranks somewhere around seventh in the world among nations. We're sixth or seventh or eighth, depending on who wants to brag the most, behind the U.S. itself and behind Britain and Japan and a few other nations. So among nations, this state, California is about the seventh most economically viable power.

If you look, for example, at entertainment -- radio, television, movies, sports -- if you look at popular music as well as other entertainment forms, we are overwhelmingly international.

What's happening, however, is that we're losing the base from which we came -- heavy industry, manufacturing. I put it in a very peculiar way: In my opinion, despite being the number one power on the face of this globe, we are having a diminished ability to wage war. We are losing our ability to wage war. Why do I say that? Well, if you look at something like, say, the Chrysler Corporation, and if you looked at where they were in the automobile market, this firm may have made most or maybe all the tanks during World War II but they're not the equivalent of that anymore. Look at how much steel we import now, okay? What's happening to our supply of oil? We're way down as the percentage of oil that's domestic. Coal -- we have a tremendous amount of coal. But our oil resources are going south. We've run out of that range where we got the iron ore from, in the northeast.

SENEY: Mesabi Range.

- GREENE: Mesabi Range is yesterday. And if you look at equipment -- I bought something that had a Japanese label on it and said that it was put together -- that wasn't the word they used--
- SENEY: Assembled?
- GREENE: Assembled in Mexico and I buy it here in California. And as you look at that, what came from Japan 70 years ago, what we got from Japan was junk. The little parasol, you know, made out of tissue paper and a couple of sticks or something like that? That was what we imported from places like Asia. We're so changed in what's available to us and what we do.
- SENEY: Well, I'm told, too, that Jesse Unruh was anxious to make the Legislature more powerful as a kind of counterweight to the Governor's office.
- GREENE: Well, he did.
- SENEY: Were you aware of that and did he talk about that?
- GREENE: Jesse was a very interesting person.
- SENEY: Talk about him a little bit.
- GREENE: Jesse Unruh -- of course, he came down the pike before I did. He was born in Texas. Poor white trash I think might be a proper description. And what made him was the GI bill. He was in the Navy, if I remember correctly. But for the GI bill, he would have never been able to go to college. That did it for him. And then he turned towards politics. He lost an election or two at lower offices. He then made it to the Assembly and he climbed to be the Speaker of the Assembly, and he was a very powerful Speaker of the Assembly because Jesse knew certain

kinds of things. You know, Teddy Roosevelt said, "Walk softly but carry a big stick." Jesse Unruh would squeeze you blind to get what he wanted out of you, with one exception: If he thought that if he were you he would be unwilling to do this, he wouldn't bother you. If he thought you could safely and reasonably do this, he's going to put maximum pressure on you to get you to do it.

SENEY: Can you remember him doing that to you?

GREENE: No.

SENEY: Why not? Why didn't he do that to you?

GREENE: Because he found that the paths I chose was the paths that he would have chosen for me. I remember one occasion -- triggering off something -- on the floor of the Assembly. There was some kind of a thing, engineers versus -- I don't remember who -- and I had talked to the members on the floor that I wanted a vote for this bill that I'm carrying.

[Assemblyman John T.] Jack Knox was one of the major players, a committee chair for many years, and he was going up and down the aisles taking my votes away from me.

Now, Jesse Unruh did something that no other speaker has done or maybe never did. What he used to do, [Assemblyman] Carlos Bee would preside over the Assembly Chamber, and Jesse used to walk up and down the aisles. He would just start in one corner of the room and he'd slowly walk up the aisle, and if anybody wanted to talk to him he would stop and chat, and he did that. He put

out fires before they started going. He was walking up and down the aisles with a pail of water and if he saw a flame, he'd kill it.

So this was his method of operation. No other speaker did that. I had suggested it to one or two of them but nobody ever did it. They were too busy with other things. But Jesse used to do this. This particular day, "How's it going, Roy?"

"I've got this damn bill but Knox is killing me."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well, here's a bill, this is what it does, and I'm trying to get it, and Knox is representing (such and such) an interest and they don't want it, so."

He grunts and "Okay."

But he's walking up and down the aisles, too, and everything that Knox is changing, he's changing it back.

I got my vote.

SENEY: Why do you suppose he did that? Did you make your case to him well, or did he want something from you later?

GREENE: No, I can't answer the question -- only in speculation.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: I mean, what he did, he did for whatever his reasons were. I simply thought that his position was that what I wanted was not unreasonable, and that yes, I was being out gunned. But on the other hand, Willie Brown did me a tremendous

favor one time. I had a bill<sup>1</sup> -- oh, yes, yes. The Army Depot. On this downsizing, one of the things to be downsized was the airfields, you know?

SENEY: Yes.

GREENE: Additionally the Signal Depot is being turned over to the county, and here came Packard Bell. And Packard Bell says, "Hey, this earthquake in the L.A. area scared the hell out of us. We can't afford that. What we do is too sensitive. We've got to move out of the area."

I think it was Anaheim or some other community, was putting up a battle against me to try to get the Southern California legislators to vote no on my proposal. I went back to Packard Bell and said, "I'm having a problem here, unless you're willing to publicly state that either you come to Sacramento or you're going to Utah or some other state." They were willing to do it. They said, "This Sacramento location suits us fine." If you don't want to do that, "We're going to go to leave California." I got this bill in and what were the concessions? Because I was chairman of the Rev and Tax Committee at the time, in the previous year I had knocked off \$5 billion worth of tax relief bills. You know, the Rev and Tax Committee -- that's the wrong name. It should be called the Revenue and Tax Loophole Committee. Nobody comes in there saying, "We want to be taxed." Everybody says, "Let go of me." That's what it's all about.

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<sup>1</sup> S.B. 344, 1993 - 1994 Reg. Sess., ch. 750, Stats. of 1994.

And here comes [Senator Alfred E.] Alquist, the chairman of our fiscal committee (Silicon Valley), and he's looking for tax loopholes which in my opinion, were give aways. But here comes Packard Bell, and Packard Bell says -- I forgot this economic interest zone, I forgot what they call it.

SENEY: I know what you mean. An economic development zone?

GREENE: Yeah, one of these zones were--

SENEY: Enterprise zone.

GREENE: An enterprise zone. Take a depressed area with lots of dilapidation, high unemployment, very low tax base. Declare it an enterprise zone. The tax base that existed in that area stays as it is. The enterprise zone may offer various inducements to prospective commerce and industry, namely, tax breaks. However, whatever additional taxes area created are kept by the enterprise zone for its own use. The purpose here is to create jobs and a firm tax base.

Packard Bell says to me that "It's not going to work because we will be bringing in 5,000 thousand employees." "The enterprise zone that you're offering us doesn't have enough unemployed or underemployed people of our categories. We can't do it."

SENEY: Doesn't qualify.

GREENE: It won't work.

SENEY: It doesn't qualify under current statute.

GREENE: Right, because here's an enterprise zone that's covering so many square miles of land and we need 5,000 people, and there are not 5,000 people available within

that boundary. It won't work. So I'm adjusting, okay? I have a bill and the bill is three-and-a-half pages long, and I get it through the Senate. I was in the Senate at the time. I go over to the Assembly, and through [Assemblywoman] Gwen Moore. I get it through her committee and it's now going to go to Appropriations. But it did not.

SENEY: Which committee is this? Do you remember?

GREENE: Committee on Utilities and Commerce. I went to the hospital because I had a gall bladder operation, I think it was, and I'm gone for about a week. I come back to the Legislature and I find that [Assemblyman] Johan Klehs had requested that the bill be referred to his committee. My three-and-a-half-page bill was, I believe, now somewhere around 75 pages long. It went to Appropriations. Came out of Appropriations and it's still 75 pages long, and it's now on the floor of Assembly when I come back. I'm enraged: How am I going to save this?

SENEY: What did they add? All kinds of loopholes for other people?

GREENE: All kinds of crap. Three-and-a-half pages to 75 pages. You know, come on. So I'm figuring, how am I going to handle this?

The Assembly is on the floor -- I'm a Senator now -- Willie is in the chair, running the house. I get to the podium and I stand behind him and I wait until there's a break. And I say, "Willie, I've got a problem. Either you can solve my problem or it can't be solved, and it's important to me. I need help."

"What's your problem, Roy?"

He and Jesse were the only people in the Legislature ever called me Roy. He picked it up from Jesse.

“What’s your problem, Roy?”

And I said, “Well, I get this bill out of [Assemblywoman] Gwen Moore’s committee, I get it out of the Senate, it’s three-and-a-half pages. Johan’s asked for the goddam thing, now it’s up to 75 pages.”

“Roy,” he said, “Let me think about it.”

It was toward the end of the session, late in the session. It’s around nine o’clock or so at night and I’m sitting on the floor of the Senate, and somebody taps me on the shoulder. It’s Willie. He gets down on his haunches, alongside me, and he says, “Roy, I think I’ve got a solution for you.” He said, “I think I can handle it for you. I’ll take care of it tomorrow.”

“Gee, thanks, Will. What are you going to do?”

“I’ll take care of it.”

SENEY: And when he said he’d take care of it, he would take care of it, right? I mean, he was a man of his word in that regard.

GREENE: Of course. There’s no question about that. Never was.

So the next day the Assembly’s in session, and in a little break in the activities Willie says a few words. Something like this.

“The action whereby Senate Bill (so and so) was placed on the floor is rescinded, and the amendments put in, in (such and such) committee, is rescinded. The bill

is now in the form that it was when it came out of (such and such) committee. It's back on the floor in that form to be voted on in that form. Any objection?"

You go to the computer, you won't find any of those amendments; they don't exist. The bill came out three and a half pages exactly the way I put the thing into the Assembly, with not a comma change.

SENEY: Why did he do that for you, do you think? Do you have any idea?

GREENE: Well, I'd known the guy for 34 years.

SENEY: That can't hurt.

GREENE: It can't hurt a damn bit. No, he was a friend.

Well, let me tell you one about [Assemblywoman] Maxine Waters then. Maxine Waters had a bill before Senate Ed, and I'm the chairman of Senate Ed [ucation] and frankly, it was put together very poorly. It was a very poor piece of workmanship there. And so I suggested certain amendments to Maxine and she realized as soon as we started talking about it, because of the way I do these things--

[End of Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

GREENE: We were talking about a bill by Maxine Waters that was a very poorly written bill. And the reason why we came up to this thing is we had been talking about Willie Brown, we had been talking about Jesse Unruh, and I'd given some illustrations of a situation where Jesse, on one hand, helped me out on one bill, and where Willie, on the other hand, helped me out on another bill, which was a very big,

very important, very powerful bill. But giving you illustrations of the relationships of people.

So here is Maxine Waters with this bill and it's very, very badly done. Very poorly written. Nothing wrong with the idea that was in mind, but the verbiage was just garbage. So then I propose, "Assemblywoman Waters, what would you think if this read this way?"

"Oh, yes, I accept that as an author's amendment."

And I go two or three things like that, okay? Then finally, I said, "Well, now, let me understand. Now we have a bill that does (thus and so). Is that what your intentions are?"

She says, "Yes."

"Do I have a motion? Any objections? Unanimous roll call. I hear none."

The bill is out.

A couple of weeks later I've got some bill that I'm having a lot of trouble with in the Assembly. I got it through the Senate but I'm having trouble. And Maxine is on the committee that's going to hear the bill. And she's on the floor of the Assembly at that time talking with some Assemblywoman -- I don't remember who it was -- who was her seatmate. And I come up to her and I said, "Max, I've got a problem here. I've got Senate Bill (so and so). I hope you can help me out on it."

And she said, "What's the number?" and she writes it down. She says, "Okay."

Her seatmate says, "Maxine, you don't even know what the bill is."

Maxine was very tough: "I don't give a...what the bill is. It doesn't matter to me.

This man saved my ass just a couple of weeks ago. He can have what he wants."

So that was that. And what I'm telling you is that there are people that on certain issues you're going to go to this guy. On certain issues you're going to go to this lady. This is where the expertise is. And on certain things people are going to come to me. I'm Education.

"Leroy, what do you think about this? Do you think it's a good bill? Do you think it's bad, and why?" Maxine knew me for years, she knew enough to trust my expertise in my own field of knowledge?

I will go to sources; they will come to sources. Sometimes I'm the source, sometimes somebody else is, and you consider that this is a hundred percent reliable. You may know whether they are conservative or liberal or this and that, but I've got an issue here, and you're telling me this column of figures adds up to so and so and I can't make it add that way. Now, does it or doesn't it?

And so the expert says to you, "Look, this is more complicated the way you're viewing it. I'm just going to tell you that this is correct; it works out this way."

"Okay." I cast my vote, accordingly.

SENEY: Well, this is the essence of the committee system, isn't it, to allow specialization in the Legislature?

GREENE: Yes. It's that, plus. The plus is in the relationship with human beings, see? That you live with these people, you work with these people, you fight with these

people, whatever it might be, you see? And this goes on day after day. Weeks and years go by, you know, and you work with people.

And this is one of the negatives about term limits. Terms limits has taken a couple of very important matters out of the equation. It's very unfortunate, costly so. The Senate will always be in a better situation than the Assembly under the current Constitution and rules. Why? Because the Senate will be made up primarily of people who came from the Assembly, which means there will be more maturity. It's not some magic because you've got the word "Senator" after your name. But the fact is -- I don't remember whether we discussed this or not, about [Senator Debra] Ortiz taking my seat--

SENEY: No, we haven't talked about that yet.

GREENE: Here's one of the things that happened because of term limits. Now, term limits in California says that a member of the Assembly can have three two-year terms. That's a total of six years. And a member of the Senate can have a maximum of two four-year terms. But that's as of the date that that law is passed. Now, I may have been in office for 30 years but as of the date the law was enacted I'm entitled to two terms. I was in office for a total of 36 years. I was moved out at the end of 36 years because that was the end of my second term after the term limit bill<sup>1</sup> passed or maybe I'd still be there. I was in the Assembly for twenty years, and it means that it would be very difficult to challenge me during those twenty years,

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<sup>1</sup> Proposition 140, November, 1990.

because unless you've found me sleeping with -- sleeping with somebody else's wife won't do it, but if you slept with her husband, that would do it.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: In any case, it's pretty hard to move out an incumbent, and yet, I said my original class was 34 new Assemblymen, but when I left the Assembly twenty years later, there was only one or two left out of that group. [Assemblyman] John Vasconcellos was elected a term after me, and he's the only person in the Legislature who's still around. He can go one more term, then he would be out, and he would total out at 38 years against my 36. Well, the fact that you have the limited term, then this is what happens. Here's somebody elected to the Assembly and two years later -- they've got three terms in front of them -- but two years later I'm termed out in the Senate. That member of the Assembly with two years of service, what is he or she going to do? Run for reelection or run for my seat? That person will run for my seat. Because if they don't run for my seat, somebody else gets it for the four years that they could remain in the Assembly. So they have to run against an incumbent. But now I'm out, there isn't any incumbent, so the Assembly member who has two-years of service runs for my seat.

But over there among the county supervisors, somebody who's been on the county board of supervisors for ten, twelve years, and chaired it for a couple of years, runs for the Assembly seat being vacated by someone running for my former seat in the Senate. But then somebody on the city council runs for the

supervisor seat, and then somebody else runs for that seat. All because I was termed out. If I were not termed out none of that would have happened.

SENEY: Well, I know in politics they wait for moves like this so everybody can step up.

GREENE: But what it means is that the number of elections goes up, and the amount of money spent on elections goes up because of term limits. This is invisible to the voting public who decided this would be a great idea. That voting public says that everybody knows that politicians are a bunch of people who've got their hands in everybody's pocket but their own. Everybody knows "They are only there to feather their own nest." That phrase, 'everybody knows,' always refers to something that nobody knows, almost invariably. But there it is, you see? And these are among the effects of term limits. And when you try to say to people, "Look, whatever it is that you do for a living, don't you think you're better at it than you were five years ago or ten years ago? Is there no learning process to what you do? Do you think there's no learning process in what I do? Do you think you just walk in there, you know everything, and there's nothing to be learned in the Legislature?"

I'm going to tell you something I find very interesting. Since Adam and Eve and a fig leaf, you've had legislative bodies. You've got the British Empire that's been around for quite a time, and you have the Romans and the Greeks, and many other nations, and you have the USA.

Now, why is it that at the local level, at the city, the county, the state, the fed government level, the United Nations, or whatever, when will we write the last

law? When are we going to finish? We're never going to get through. Well, how come? You mean there's never an end to this?

Isn't that an interesting thought? That there is no end to this?

SENEY: Let me go back again to your first period in the Assembly because I've had other people I've interviewed tell me, and other people write, that the changes that went on during that period, the changes of increasing staff, the annual sessions, the increase in pay, that these created, I'm not sure as great a change in the Legislature as term limits but very great changes.

Have you read [Senator James R.] Mills' book, *A Disorderly House*?<sup>1</sup>

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Did that strike you as accurate?

GREENE: Reasonably, so, yes.

SENEY: And what I'm talking about here is that the argument was that when you first came to the Legislature it was essentially a part-time body. I mean, you'd meet, you'd convene, you'd select your officers, appoint your committees. If it was a budget year most all of you would go home if you weren't on the Budget Committees and Appropriations Committees and Ways and Means. Then you'd come back in your interim committee experience where you'd travel around together and people would come here. You, of course, as a local would remain at home, but I mean these other people would share apartments.

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<sup>1</sup> *A Disorderly House: The Brown Unruh Years in Sacramento*. Heydey Books (Berkeley, Ca.) 1987.

GREENE: Yes. The thing about it was, in those earlier years, part-time, very low pay -- the pay was \$6,000 a year and there was a per diem. I don't remember what it was. But in those earlier days, you had the budget session for every year, then the general session every other year. But as time went on we'd start getting the special sessions called by the Governor. And what happened would be that the members coming from all over the state, they would get groups together and rent an apartment or even a house and share the expense. And some of them would live in motels but make deals with the motels so they could leave their clothes there over the weekend because they didn't want to pay for seven days if they're only going to be there three nights per week and they'd make various deals.

The thing about it was the level of camaraderie was much higher than it is now because these men -- there were very, very few women. There were none in the Senate at that point in time. [Senator] Rose Ann Vuich came in a little later. But one or none in the Senate and maybe two in the Assembly.

SENEY: [Assemblywoman] Pauline L. Davis.

GREENE: Pauline Davis and then [Assemblywoman] Yvonne [W.] Brathwaite came a little later, then [Assemblywoman] March Fong came in and so on. And the third house (lobbyists) were picking up a lot of bills. You could walk into a restaurant and order a meal and say, "Put it on John Smith's bill."  
He's a lobbyist.

Or they would tell you, "Well, if you want to take a friend for dinner be my guest. I've got an account at Frank Fats," an account here or there. So that they were picking up tabs and some of us were living in groups. That meant that the members were in an strange city, they didn't know anybody here other than the members of the Legislature and generally only the people of their own House, not the other House, because you had very limited contact with them, only when you had a bill before one of their committees. So what then happened would be that, well, members have dinner together, they'd go to movies together, they'd play blackjack or poker all night together, and you walked into the lounge here and there's about five or six guys sitting around the table playing cards -- Republican, Republican, Democrat, Republican, Democrat, Democrat, and so on -- socially.

SENEY: This camaraderie definitely crossed party lines.

GREENE: Yes. And an interesting thing happened a little later on when [Assemblywoman] Carol Hallett, a Republican, came along. [Assemblyman] Paul Priolo was the Republican Minority Floor Leader, in the Assembly, and Hallett was one of the conservatives. And Paul, he was relatively moderate. Now, Paul Priolo and Democrat Speaker Moretti -- [Assemblyman Bob] Bobby Moretti -- were very close. They were good personal friends. They played tennis together. They did things together. They liked each other, they were buddies.

Carol Hallett comes down after we've had an election and the Republican Party is changing: more conservative. And she is objecting to the fact of the relationship between the Republican leader and the Speaker of the Assembly was

wrong. As far as she was concerned, Republicans should be standing together, and you know, this is wrong.

Priolo sees what's happening. He resigns, because as he told me, "What the hell? I'm going to get fired, so I'd rather resign."

So Carol Hallett becomes Republican Floor Leader. Then there's "hell year." This was during the time that Leo McCarthy (Democrat) was Speaker. The year of hell was that one night I get a phone call that [Assemblyman] Howard Berman wants to know if he can come by and see me. "Sure."

Howard comes out to the house and he says, "Look, Leo McCarthy and I should really change roles, that Leo should be the Majority Floor Leader and I should be Speaker. And I think I can do a lot for the party, more than what he's doing," and so on and so forth.

"Geezus, Howard, this is..." you know. "I'll let you know tomorrow."  
"Okay."

I thought about it that night and I called Howard the next day, and I said, "Howard, sorry, my answer's no. I don't see sufficient reason in the middle of a term to do this to McCarthy."

"Well, okay. Thank you for calling me."

We're in warfare. We're split. A little more than half of the Democrats are with Berman. A little less than half are with McCarthy. Berman is from L.A., so the L.A. delegation and most of the southern democrats were for Berman. So he's got

this southern half of the state, Leo has the northern half of the state, but the population is 60 percent below the mountains there.

SENEY: Tehachapis.

GREENE: The Tehachapis, and the other 40 percent north. And that was a year of hell because not only do you have Republican versus Democrats, now you've got Democrats versus Democrats. And every day [Assemblyman Richard] Dick Robinson, a Bermanite, would get up and move that the chair be vacated. And the supporters of McCarthy would vote no and the supporters of Berman would vote yes, and the Republicans would sit there twiddling their fingers.

SENEY: They'd abstain and enjoy the show.

GREENE: They'd abstain. "Have fun, fellows, we'll hold your coats while you fight." Day after day we went through this routine. Because what they really hadn't thought out was that this was midterm when there's the beginning of a session, beginning of a term, there is an election for Speaker. Every new term there would be an election for Speaker. This time it's not that way. This is not the beginning of a two-year term. This is the middle of a two-year term. But now you have to move to vacate the chair to create a vacancy to vote on.

SENEY: And you need a majority to do that.

GREENE: And you need a majority, and the majority means 41 votes of the total membership.

SENEY: Right

GREENE: Now, there's two kinds of majority. There's a majority of the membership of the committee or the floor, and then there's a majority of those present and voting, provided there is a quorum. Well, if you have, let's say, a hundred people, the majority then is 51. But if 49 people are present, you don't have a quorum so you can't vote on anything. But if 51 people are present, you do have a quorum, and a majority of that quorum is 26, out of the hundred members. Now you have 26 people out of a hundred making the decision.

But under the rules of the Legislature -- and they use "Mason's Rules of Order" -- it takes a majority of the full elected membership. Whether they're dead or alive, it makes no difference. So they had to have 41 votes out of an Assembly membership of 80, and there were only like, say, 42 to 45, or something like that, Democrats. Say there were 48. So that would mean 24-24 would be a dead heat since the Republicans refused to vote, but you need 41. The Republicans won't budge. They're not going to give you anything. So the McCarthy people are meeting over at the Airport Hilton in San Francisco, and the Berman people are meeting somewhere down south. And we're "How do we do this? How do we do that?" trying to wheel and deal. "Has anybody talked to (so and so)? Can we get him to change?" And the other side is doing the same kind of thing and so on.

McCarthy finally said that he's bowing out, that this is not going to get us anywhere.

Willie Brown was the go-between for the McCarthy people. "Willie, you go tell them (this) or ask them (that)," and so on. So Willie goes to the Republicans and

tells them that McCarthy is bowing out and will not run again, but said Willie, I am. If you'll vote for me, here's what I'll do for you.

So he says to Carol Hallett -- I'm not present but I can gather what he says to Carol Hallett: I'll tell you what. There are so many committees and there will be a number of Republican chairmen. I believe he might have said, Carol, I will give you the power to tell me who you want to be the chairmen of those committees, and I will give you the power to decide which Republicans should be on which committee, if you can deliver me the 15 votes -- or whatever the number is -- that I need, because I can get all Democrats to support me.

He couldn't get all of the Democrats to support him. He was shy a few.

SENEY: Yeah, some of Berman's people wouldn't go along with it, would they?

GREENE: Well, it wasn't that particularly, it was the black members. [Assemblyman] Bill Greene wouldn't go with him and--

SENEY: [Assemblyman] John [J.] Miller?

GREENE: John Miller wouldn't go with him. John Miller was down in L.A. for something or other, I don't know what, and when he comes back up and we're in the middle of this turmoil and everything, [Assemblyman] Wadie [P.] Deddeh says to Miller, "John, is everything all right?"

Miller says, "Yeah, everything's all right."

And so Wadie says to me, "See, we've got him."

I said, "No, you haven't got him. He didn't say he was going to vote for Willie."

“Aw, c’mon, Greene, you heard him, he said everything’s all right.”

I said, “Wadie, you’re whistling in the dark.”

He did not vote for Willie; he voted against him.

In any case, Carol agreed to deliver.

What fascinated me about all this was she had objected to Paul Priolo’s relationship with the previous Speaker -- Moretti. Now she 's telling Republicans to vote for this black communist from San Francisco. Incredible. These conservative Republicans are going to give him the vote. C’mon, Carol, talk about playing politics. She sold out for a price. She got your price so that’ how Willie Brown got to be Speaker.

SENEY: My understanding is that the Berman people, the Democrats, got angry with Leo McCarthy because he was running for Governor and there was some feeling that he was beginning to neglect the speakership. Is that your sense of what was behind this?

GREENE: What’s behind it is what anybody cares to say is behind it. And baloney comes in very different delicious flavors but it’s all baloney. There is a general truth. It pops up when a speaker indicates an interest in some other office. The fear among the legislators of his party is that they can no longer count on him to raise campaign money for them. He may no longer share their goals and efforts. For example, [Assemblyman] Antonio Villaraigosa is the Speaker of the Assembly. If Antonio says, “I’m running for Mayor of L.A.”--

SENEY: Which he’s rumored to be doing.

GREENE: Well, I think he's rumored not to be doing.

SENEY: Oh, okay.

GREENE: If you are the Speaker of the Assembly -- and I'm one of the Assemblymen -- and I know that you're running for something other than to continue in the speakership, then buddy, all I know is you're not helping me in my election. You're not raising any money for me. I want a Speaker that's going to help me get elected. If you're running for Speaker, you've got to have a majority of this house. You have to maximize your effort to get people of your party elected to this house. And if you say you're running for something else, two things: You are no longer a money source and you no longer are interested in the membership of the house.

This is another problem with term limits. Now, look at the Assembly and term limits. Who are you going to elect for Speaker in terms of term limits? If you elect somebody who's in his third term, within one year he's in trouble, because the question is, Who's going to replace him?

You can't elect a freshman that's got six years, what does he know about running this place? So chances are then you're going to look at somebody who's in his second term or has some other experience.

Now, [Assemblyman William R.] Bill Leonard, for example, went from the Assembly to the Senate and back to the Assembly.

SENEY: Right, where he is now Minority Leader in the Assembly.

GREENE: Yeah. And the thing about that is if he were not the Minority Leader, he could have picked it up even in his first term in the Assembly because his background experience is a little bit different than anybody else. So you can't say he's a freshman and doesn't know anything about it.

So this is part of the waves and the tides and the winds that blow that make the thing go.

SENEY: Well, I think people on the outside don't understand what a complex institution the Legislature is, especially the lower house is more complex.

GREENE: But it's more than that. You said they don't understand. That's true. But are you presuming their interested?

SENEY: No. No, I'm not.

GREENE: What does this have to do with how "George Schmall" makes his bread? Maybe his wife works for such and such an outfit. She's a model on the runway. He's a chemist, or whatever, or a shoe salesman. What would interest Joe, Jane, Kimiko and Pedro regarding who's in the Assembly, the Senate, the Congress, and so on? Let me tell you one of my famous observations. Everybody, particularly in politics, thinks they're standing naked in the middle of the street and everybody's staring at them. But if that's the case, everybody's standing naked in the middle of the street and there ain't nobody left to stare at them. But that's what it's all about. That false image.

Speaking of image, though -- actually, in my opinion, there are many instances whereby the members of legislative bodies are overly conscious of their

constituency, which is a peculiar thing to say because very often everybody seems to think they know all worth knowing. Very many people are not interested in anything but themselves and in many instances they are absolutely on target. They will never find anything as interesting as they are. But others know very little and they're never going to know it. Well, I'm a guy, I've got a wife, I've got a kid, I need a car. I thought I was going to get a raise but I didn't, this is what my life's about, and thank God I've got a week's vacation coming up. We're going to do this and that. These are the things that make up my life and occupy my mind, my attention. What the hell do I care about who's on the city council?

SENEY: Yeah, exactly right. People are not very politically minded.

GREENE: It's no big deal if this guy's going to be chair or that guy's going to be chair.

What do I care? What's it got to do with me?

The target for so many of us is a limited target and it has to be a pretty direct interest to move us out of our rut. What effect does it have on me, or what's in it for me, are the motivating forces that do not exist in this more general level.

SENEY: I keep wanting to go back to talk about Jesse Unruh because he's important.

GREENE: He is.

SENEY: Did you think when his reforms -- again, the staffing, the higher salaries, which some people argued led to longer tenure in the Legislature, the annual sessions--

GREENE: No, I would say that there's no connection between higher salaries and tenure. Absolutely none. No, that's not what it's about.

SENEY: Let me turn this over, Senator.

``[End of Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

GREENE: Again, we had an unlimited number of two-year terms in the Assembly. It was simply you were elected or you weren't elected. But you were getting \$6,000 a year, but then come later in the 1960's -- I don't remember which year, '66-7-8, somewhere in there -- there was a constitutional amendment proposed. I think it was [Assemblyman] Frank Lanterman, Republican. Nice guy. He died many years ago. One of the things in the constitutional amendment was that you couldn't increase the legislators' salary by more than 5 percent per year and that the basic salary went from \$6,000 to \$16,000 a year. I don't remember other changes of any import, but basically it went to \$16,000; and it became a so-called full-time Legislature, which meant that we could call our own shots more and decrease the dependency on the Governor to call a Special Session. Because the problem with that was, that if the Governor is the only one that can call a Special Session, he also determines the subject matter. He calls it for whatever he wants and you can't get outside of that boundary line. Okay, so now we have the \$16,000, and when that happened, at that salary range, and now we're full time so the members brought their families to Sacramento, and the kids came up here and went to school here instead of down in L.A. or San Diego or Redding or wherever they were from. So they brought their families here, and that meant, though, that the old camaraderie disappeared.

I was the one that was out of step with everybody else, or almost everybody else, because I went home every night, as did Z'Berg, as did Powers, and a few others. And the interesting one was McCarthy, because McCarthy, who lived in San Francisco, went home every night. Can you imagine going through that, that ride back and forth every day? He did that. For years he did that.

Well, anyway, everybody became more like me in the sense of going home nights, so the level of camaraderie dropped closed to -- zero, which was a huge change.

SENEY: A negative change, do you think, Senator?

GREENE: Well, yes. Well, partly that. Again, it got you a little separated from some of the third house things. I think that's why the Assembly particularly is in bad shape today. You know, what I used to do -- one year I remember that after the election, I wrote a letter and told the incoming freshmen of both parties, both houses -- and it was sort of tongue in cheek -- I wrote a letter in which I said it wouldn't be necessary to bring your prejudices with you; your caucus will give you a fresh supply when you get here. And one of the surprising things that you will find is that all the good guys and all the bad guys are not divided up by party; that you'll find across the aisle there's some people that are surprisingly good in the other party, and you're surprised there's some people in your own party that you really don't think that much of. And I never said Democrat and I never said Republican, your party or the other party. So nobody can say I'm picking on one or the other. In any case, I did that a time or two.

But you were saying Jesse Unruh's effect on it. No, it wasn't anything he did, but when these things occurred, and we were made full time, so then he became interested as a leader, setting up -- what they had in mind was, back then, was why don't we do this: We set the committee staff, we develop expertise here, and the only thing that happens over time is reelections and elections will supply us the person we're going to put in charge of that committee.

But everything is there. Because we're going to take this suite of rooms here, and these are the offices of the Criminal Justice Committee, this is the office of the Water Committee, and so on, and these are the staff people, these are the roles, and now you're going to be chairman of that committee here. Here they are.

SENEY: And you'll inherit the consultants and the staff.

GREENE: Well, it didn't work. It didn't work. That was the notion. [Assemblyman] Jack [R.] Fenton was the Senate Democratic Floor Leader at this point in time and he decides he wants a bigger office, so he knocks down this wall. He immediately started changing things around. And if every chair has this kind of power, then you set up something that you can't guarantee. So it fell apart as soon as it was done.

Then later on the Senate -- we ran into some trouble. A couple of guys wound up in jail: [Senator] Frank Hill and [Senator Joseph B.] Joe Montoya, a couple of them.

SENEY: Did [Senator] Alan Robbins serve any time or did he bargain his way out of that? He was convicted certainly.

GREENE: Alan was convicted. I don't remember. Alan was a very tricky guy.

SENEY: You actually were one of the people who introduced that shrimp scam bill.

GREENE: No. Well, I can tell you about that.

SENEY: Okay.

GREENE: Remind me.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: But what happened was, because of all this stuff, that I came up with a proposal to have an Ethics Committee and the leadership went for that. And I said, "Okay, you need, let's say, three members from each party, and the party in power could have the chair but for two years. Then the following year it would have to be the opposite party," so the chairmanship would have to go back and forth. You have three and three balance there, and I think it said a two-year term, and you couldn't have more than two terms. And if you were reelected, and now you had four years, the next election's got to be the other party. It can't be you. So we did that.

I had put it together and I was appointed, the first chairman of the Senate Ethic's Committee, and in our rules and regulations we said that we would handle only matters that relate to a member of the Senate or the Senate staff, and that's it. That's the limit. And the complaint would have to be in writing and that we would not consider any complaint that predated the formation of the Ethics Committee. I don't remember anything beyond that as in our rules and regulations.

So what happened for the most part is, first, there were very few complaints. Second was that somebody would come to me with a complaint and I would say to that person, “Well, okay, but you understand that it has to be in writing and signed by somebody. It cannot be anonymous. If it’s anonymous we’re not going to touch it.”

Well, for the most part, those reports or claims disappeared at that point, because “Well, but (so and so) said...”

“Okay, if you put it in writing and you sign it, that you want an investigation for this or that reason, it’ll occur.”

“Yeah, but... I don’t know, they told me, you know.”

“Well, all right. If they want to make the complaint, then they can do so.” So a lot of it disappeared that way. There were few complaints, there weren’t many, but of the few there were, a lot of them had nothing to do with a legislator as a legislator.

“Well, he got drunk, man. I’m telling you, he got drunk,” you know, whatever.

Well, yeah, I know, but we’re talking about a member of the Legislature and his legislative duties and obligations. What you’re talking about is maybe a breach in some law that you observed or was not picked up by the police, or whatever it was. “But we don’t touch those things. We can’t do that.”

Then came the problem of Frank Hill. The Senate -- I can't remember the details. I wish my memory was better. The Senate was stalling. Frank was a very nice guy.

SENEY: People liked him, didn't they?

GREENE: I liked him and, in my opinion, he didn't do a damn thing that was wrong. Nothing. But he was convicted of a felony in a court of law.

SENEY: Well, what you're alluding to is the fact that it took a good deal of time for the Senate to expel him, even after he was convicted.

GREENE: What I'm saying was that I forced the Senate to expel him. I guess [Senator] David [A.] Roberti was Pro Tem at the time, and in the end I said, "David, I'm sorry, but..."

He said, "No, you did the right thing. You forced us to do what we had to do."

Because I said that "Look, if you're not going to do anything, then I'm going to demand the AG [Attorney General] come in here. Unless Frank resigns, there's going to be an investigation. I want you to know that, because if there isn't, then I'll resign, then that'll create more hell than ever because the media will jump all over it. Why am I resigning? And my answer is because you won't follow the law."

SENEY: You mean resign the chairmanship of the Ethics Committee?

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Can I just say that my understanding from other members is there was, as you say, the feeling that he hadn't done anything wrong, even though he'd been convicted.

He was going to appeal that conviction. The argument was: Well, what if it was reversed? If we force him out, we can't reinstate him.

GREENE: Yes, I heard that, and as far as I was concerned, that was specious argument.

They just did not want to punish Frank.

SENEY: It wasn't persuasive to you.

GREENE: No, it was a specious argument. It wasn't going to be reversed. He was not going to seek a reversal. He did what they said he did, and I'm simply saying that what they said he did and what he did do was not illegal.

My position was this: Can you prove that he did anything that influenced the outcome on any bill? And the answer's no. But, he was paid money in order to help pass a given bill, and what hung him up was a careful reading -- my memory is not so good -- but a careful reading at that time of the law, and it read very peculiarly, in my opinion. What it seemed to read was that if you pay me to change the outcome of a given proposal and I promise you I would do it, and you pay me "X" thousand dollars and I did absolutely nothing, I'm guilty on the grounds that that's what you paid me for and that's what you anticipated would happen, and therefore I'm guilty. And I'm saying that that's bull. You didn't do anything. I was going to vote for the bill, and so did almost everybody else. It had not a damn thing to do with Frank Hill or anybody else on this planet.

SENEY: What did he say when you went and talked to him about it?

GREENE: I told him -- again, I've got to keep repeating myself that my memory is flawed and I admit it. I do not have a good memory. I don't remember the specifics here

but what it amounted to was that I told Frank that I felt compelled to take certain actions unless he resigned. This is going to have to be heard. It can't be swept under the table. That it'll have to be heard. Frank Hill, I consider a friend, he resigned within a couple of days.

SENEY: Were you surprised that Alan Robbins was prosecuted?

GREENE: No.

SENEY: Why not?

GREENE: Because observing him as a legislator over time, Alan's a pretty slick guy. No, he seemed to be somebody that would be a corner cutter. He would try to shape or use the law for purposes of benefit to himself.

SENEY: I'm trying to remember. He was chairman of the Insurance Committee, was he not, in the Senate? Is that the committee? Banking and Insurance in the Senate?

GREENE: I'm not a hundred percent sure. I think it was Insurance.

SENEY: That was not a committee you were ever a member of, was it? You were never on a committee he chaired.

GREENE: No. In the Assembly, I was on, I think it was called, F&I -- Finance and Insurance -- under [Assemblyman] Allister McAllister. He chaired that committee and I was a member of it for a couple of years.

SENEY: Of course, he was a Mormon and rather a devout one. I doubt if he was--

GREENE: Oh, he was a devout -- well, he was a straight arrow, as straight as an arrow could be. He was one of the people that would come to me on occasion and ask me about an educational matter.

SENEY: Is that right?

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Well, I remember he lobbied you heavily on a bill that you were rather skeptical on and I think opposed that allowed more time off for religious observances by students. It was in the early '70s.

GREENE: I don't really remember the bill but I would have opposed it. I would have opposed it on the grounds that -- you know, it's interesting, separation of church and state. Now, I'm sitting here and I'm praying. You got somebody that's stopping me from praying?

"You stop praying." That kind of thing. I'm saying, you've got a seven-day week and a 24-hour day, why does this have to relate itself to schools? There's lots of time around to do these things. You don't have to use school time for this.

SENEY: That was your complaint. You said there are evenings and weekends and they can see to their observances.

GREENE: Yeah. That much I can recall. It's a general position I would take. It's interesting because I've taken some positions of this kind. Some of them have been unpopular. I've taken some positions that almost nobody agrees with, and yet they would say I'm right. Let me see if I can think.

SENEY: I can think of one if you can't.

GREENE: Well, I opposed putting a student on the UC Board of Regents. I opposed putting a student on the state board for high school students, college students, whatever.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: My position was that the Regents or the state university or high schools, whatever, these boards are made up of generalists, of people who represented the people of the State of California. The student has a specific constituency, I object. There is no reason in the world for the students -- if they want to, they can form advisory committees on their own or through legal means and advise these boards of what their position is or appear before these boards. But why would I want a partisan to some subset to be a member of this board? No other special interest, and students are a special interest, are given seats on the same boards.

In short, I don't want teachers on boards of education. I don't want policemen on police review boards. I don't want firemen on fire review boards. No. I'm a licensed professional engineer. I'm a civil engineer. I've got a license. I don't want any engineers on the engineers board. I want the engineers board to be made up of citizens, and I want a technical advisory committee made up of people that are licensed by that board to advise the board on technical matters. I would propose such advisory committees to all licensing boards.

SENEY: Let me bring up one other thing. I think in all the press clippings of yours I read, this one took up almost a whole book of press clippings. You had surveyed your district and lo and behold -- you know what I'm thinking of, right?

GREENE: Prostitution?

SENEY: Prostitution, right. And lo and behold, 69 percent, was it, of your district wanted it approved, and you being the good Democrat you are, you put the bill<sup>1</sup> in, right?

GREENE: Well, what happened was that one day I read a headline in what was then the *Sacramento Union* -- of course, it's been out of print a lot of years now -- and the headline read, if I can recall it correctly, "Tarts Run Out of Sacramento." I was sort of bemused by that title, "Tarts Run Out of Sacramento," and I said, "I wonder how many of my constituency recognize that that's not a bakery product?" That a tart has more than one meaning.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: And if the tarts were run out of Sacramento yesterday, are they still out of town or do they come back tomorrow? So I was wondering about the question of prostitution then and I said that, well, I'll poll the district, because we had newsletters at that time, which we don't have now. I'll poll the district. And about one third of the questions on that poll had to do with the subject of prostitution. And I generally asked, "Do you think that we should legalize prostitution?" And of the respondents, 69 percent said they thought we should legalize prostitution. And that particular questionnaire had the highest response of any questionnaire I ever ran. About 25 percent of the questionnaires sent out came back.

SENEY: That's a big number.

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 2212, 1971 Reg. Sess. and A.B. 2213, 1971 Reg. Sess.

GREENE: That's overwhelming. Generally it's, 10 percent, 12 percent, something like that.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: But 25 percent returned them. So then I sent out a second questionnaire. The second questionnaire was more detailed and it went to district attorneys, judges, sheriffs, and police chiefs. Four different groups. And I asked them all the same things. I said, "Do you think the current law on prostitution is a benefit to prostitutes, is a benefit to the general public, is too harsh or not strong enough?" those kinds of questions.

A judge from Orange County wrote back and he said, "I don't know how to answer your questionnaire."

So this judge says, "Well, I can't answer your questionnaire because I've got some questions in mind."

I said, "Well, can we talk, what kind of questions prevent you from answering my questionnaire?"

He said, "Well, suppose that prostitution is legalized. Then would this mean that a prostitute could advertise in, say, a newspaper?"

My answer was, "Well, I hadn't thought that far ahead, but my answer would be yes, it would be a legal business. She could advertise."

And he said, "Well, all right. Now suppose that this is a divorce case and it involves a child, and there's a question of the mother's fitness because she's a prostitute."

And I said, "Well, Judge, my opinion would be that, again, she's in a legal business and I don't see any right to discriminate on this basis. I can see this as a business agreement between consenting adults wherein a service is rented for a fee."

And we went on with a couple other questions.

I don't know if I should name the town or not, but in the Bay Area there was a city where the police chief wrote back and said that "The legislator proposing this bill (prostitution) should be investigated for his ties to the Mafia."

I wrote a column for my local weekly newspaper and I made mention of that in the column, and I said that I would agree to such an investigation and beyond that, I would agree that this particular police chief should be in charge of that investigation, and there was only one requirement: that he can pass an IQ test and get a score above 70. Idiot. Hey, police chief, do you understand this? What you're saying is that somehow this has something to do with the undercover world, with the world of criminality. But do you understand that I'm talking about legalizing something? Would the criminal world want prostitution to be legal?

SENEY: I don't think so.

GREENE: Or would they prefer to be illegal? Whose side are you on, Mr. Chief, sir?

SENEY: Well, you got all kinds of grief over this. I mean, then Governor [Ronald] Reagan waded in--

GREENE: Governor Reagan -- okay, Governor Reagan. Governor Reagan complained to me that he had to get his wife after his daughter because she thought it was a good idea. I'm sorry. I thought it was so funny the Governor is telling me that he's having trouble; he hates my bill but one of his daughters thinks it's not a bad idea, so he had to get his wife to come talk to her. That was a funny one.

SENEY: Well, it eventually failed but it provoked all kinds of response in the press, and it's something, frankly, that's still being debated. But I thought, from my point of view, one of the things that struck me as interesting is that you said at the bottom of all your legislative reports, you know, "If you don't let me know what you think, then you're not taking a part."

GREENE: "If you're going to be properly represented, your views must be known."

SENEY: That's it. That's exactly right. And here they let you know what they were thinking and you ran with it. I thought that was very honest on your part.

GREENE: It's funny. Let me tell you a different thing that happened that ties with that. In fact, I can tell you two. You keep on reminding me of things.

SENEY: Why don't you tell me one and then we'll probably be finished, and you can save the other one for the next time.

GREENE: Well, this was kind of nasty of me, but I was out speaking at, oh, something. I don't remember which outfit it was but some men's group like Kiwanis. I don't know which but a men's moose or--

SENEY: Sure. Rotary or--

GREENE: Yeah, Rotary, something like that, those men's groups. And I'm up there on the platform and there's all these guys here, and one guy calls out to me. He says, "Hey, Greene, I know why you put in that prostitution bill. Because you're not gettin' enough at home!" And they laugh. They think it's the funniest thing in the world, okay?

I waited until the laughs subsided, and I said, "Well, I don't quite understand. Are you referring to my home or yours?" I thought that was an unkind thing to do, involving his wife, but you heckler, I'm putting you in your place.

SENEY: He started it.

GREENE: He started it and I finished it. The other one that came up was the year I put in one of these prostitution bills was the same year that I put in a constitutional amendment to legalize bingo, which did pass. And, of course, this is 25 years ago, or whatever.

SENEY: That was 1972 that was passed.

GREENE: Was it? I don't remember. '72, '82. All right, about 25 years ago. I was in my '50s at that time.

So somebody said to me, "Greene, look at you. You're a middle-age white guy, middle class. Look at you. What in the hell is somebody like you doing with putting in bills on prostitution and bingo?<sup>1</sup> You're crazy, man."

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 144, 1975 - 1976 Reg. Sess., ch. 869, Stats. of 1975.

I said, "Well, wait a minute now. What I had in mind was I thought we could play bingo during the day and give out prizes at night."

SENEY: That's good. Why don't we leave it there, Senator, because we're almost out of tape.

Thank you very much.

[End of Tape 4, Side B]

Session 3, July 26, 1999

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

SENEY: My name is Donald Seney. I'm with Senator Leroy Greene in his office in Sacramento, California. Today is July 26, 1999.

Again, I wanted to ask you if you'd start today by talking about how campaigning and electioneering has changed between your first election and your last one.

GREENE: Right. Now, just very briefly, if you recall that every ten years, of course, is a census.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: And 1950, '60, '70, '80 is the census year. So 1960 we had a census, and this county, Sacramento County, had grown faster than the average of the state. Since there are 80 Assembly districts, you take the total population, divide it by 80, and that's supposed to be the number of people in each Assembly District. We had grown faster in Sacramento County than the average of the state, and we had had two Assembly districts, so that meant we got three instead of two.

That's when I ran. And since it was an open seat -- there was no incumbent -- There were eight Democratic candidates (I was one of them) and four Republican candidates for this single seat.

Now, I had an advantage over all the other candidates, and the advantage was that I was Leroy F. Greene and Associates, Consulting Engineers. I was the sole proprietor of a firm, which meant that I didn't have to punch a clock or anything; I

could pick and choose more than that. So I would say to my crew that “Listen, if it’s a rainy day you’ll see me, and if any problem comes up I’ll come by. Other than that, I’m out walking.”

And I walked for ten months. I walked for five months prior to the primary, which took place in June, and I walked for five months between the June primary and the November general election. So there was ten months all together.

I had no money for campaigning and nobody knew who I was. So that left me with two things that I had to do. One would be that I had to increase my name recognition to the maximum. I’ve got to do something that increases the number of people who know my name; and two, that they must respond positively rather than negatively to my name.

Frankly, it’s no different than being a can of peas or a bottle of ketchup on the shelf in the store. The packaging and the location that the housewife going down the lines, sees is everything. I need an attractive label, it’s right at eye level, and so on, and frankly, that’s the equivalent to campaigning for public office.

Actually, the campaign itself is nothing about the job, no matter what the various candidates prattle about. It’s not about the job, it’s about electability. The job is different because actually, nobody ever seriously asked me anything that had to do with being an Assemblyman. How do you put together a bill? What do you do if you don’t like the bill? How do you amend these things? and so on, you know, what’s the process? People don’t talk about that. It might be that in a two-year session of the Legislature there may be 7,000 bills come in, but how many is

the individual man or woman interested in? Maybe five or six, maybe ten, but there are thousands in which they have no interest.

But let's see now, we're talking about the elective process, so how do I present myself and discuss these various matters with a constituent who says, "Who are you? I've never heard of you before"?

If we go back, if you can set your mind back in the early '60s, we're really talking about 1962. That's the time, 1962. And if you set your mind at what was the nature of society was, you're at a point in time where families were a husband, a wife, and a kid or two, single income. There was one income. The income comes from the male. The female ran the whole thing. She was the center of the universe and this guy brought in the money, but she took care of the house, did the shopping, took care of the kids, sorted the laundry. So that she really had a major job.

But virtually all females had the identical job, so that when I go out and I'm knocking on doors, I expect a woman to answer. I must convince her. I don't have a lot of money. I can't advertise.

SENEY: Do you remember how much you spent on that first campaign?

GREENE: I'm not sure but my recollection says to me something like \$30,000, but I can't remember whether that's a combination of the primary and the general or one of the two. And if it's one of the two it probably was the general. But I think it was somewhere around \$30,000. From there, by the way, more recent campaigns, were the million dollar variety. Tremendous difference over thirty-six years.

All right. So now I'm out walking, and the thing is, if I walk up to your house and ring the doorbell, I expect a woman to come to the door. I do not expect a man. And I expect that with few exceptions, the women will be home. Because of this growth in population, I'm part of a new territory. Well, new territory means recently built houses. It means little kids, some off to school, and so on, and she's at home. So I'd ring the doorbell and a lady would come to the door, and the first thing I have to do is make her understand that I'm not selling anything, because whatever you're selling she doesn't want it. So you have to get by that first. Now, one of the things I do is carry a clipboard, and on the clipboard I have the precinct sheet. The precinct sheet tells me, the streets in this precinct, each house where there are registered voters, whether they're registered as Republicans or Democrats, and whether they're males or females. So I know that much about the people that I'm facing.

SENEY: Do you remember what the proportion of Democratic over Republican voters there was in that district?

GREENE: Yes. At that point in time, when I started out, it was approximately a 57 percent Democratic district. At other points in time, when I shifted over to the Senate twenty years later, it went as high as 60 percent Democratic, and when I left the Senate, my Senate district was 49 percent Democratic.

SENEY: Yes. You left what was a swing district.

GREENE: Yes, a lot of movement, and when I first came on the scene in the early '60s, Sacramento County was a Democratic stronghold that meant the members of the

county board of supervisors as well as the local -- well, for example, Senator Al Rodda (Democrat) held the seat before me. I replaced him. There was Walter Powers a Democrat, who had been the mayor of North Sacramento, which is now part of Sacramento. There was Ed Z'Berg, a Democrat who was an environmentalist type, and then I came in as a new guy and a Democrat. So that was it at that time. It's changed a fair amount since.

But in 1962 I ring a doorbell and a woman comes to the door. Now, the night before I went out I would look at what precincts am I going to walk. Generally, I'm going to walk one precinct. That's going to take me the whole darn day. So what I would do -- I wrote my own brochures. I would write a brochure that I'm going to leave at each house. I'm going to leave them some material. I had a little folder that looked like a match folder. You know, you'd take out the match and strike it on a thing. But that's not what it was. It had my picture on it and it said, "Vote for the Candidate With Quick Relief for Your Headaches." You opened the flap and there were four aspirin in there in little cellophane wrappers. I gave those out. But I also had something else I gave out that the women liked best of all: a little emeryboard that says "Elect" or "Reelect Leroy Greene" on it. So that's something I could leave with people.

So I'm walking door to door and I discover there isn't any particular dinner hour or even lunch hour; that people eat whenever they eat, most of them within a certain time zone. But I do start walking, say around 9:30 in the morning, and I'm carrying this clipboard. Because when people notice you walking up and down

the street and I'm carrying a clipboard, then this is not somebody selling something. It's something else. It's maybe a government survey. Maybe it's the gas company or the electrical company or something, but it's not a salesman.

And incidentally, the clipboard was very handy because some dogs are kind of vicious, and if they're going to take a crack run at me, man, they're going to get a crack on the head. So it was a defensive weapon at the same time.

Now, when the lady came to the door, if she wanted to talk, I would talk as long as she wanted to talk. But if she's got a baby in her arms, I want to move out of there as quick as I can. Or if she's about to bathe the baby, or the telephone's ringing anything like that and I'm moving along. And it's interesting, the nature of people. I'd come to a door and here's a young girl, say about a ten-year-old. I come to the door and I ring the bell and she comes to the door and says, "Yeah, what do you want?" And I said,

"Would you get your mother for me, please?"

She gets her mother and her mother comes to the door and her mother says, "Yeah, what do you want?"

I ring the doorbell at another house and another little girl comes skipping down the hallway. Comes to the door with a big smile on her face. She'd say, "Come on in."

I said, "No, no, I'll wait here. Can you get your mother for me?"

She gets her mother and her mother says, "Hi, can I help you?"

There it is: attitudes and how they're passed on. So I'm primarily speaking to women. Now, I'm trying to maximize the number of people who can identify me, but they have to remember me and it's got to be positive. What am I going to do about that? And the tool I used was humor. If I could say something that would break out a smile or get a giggle or a laugh, then I will be remembered. I did all kinds of things to produce that.

For example, I came to a house, or many houses, where, say, the husband is a Republican and the wife is a Democrat, and it's the wife that came to the door. And I would say, "You know, Mrs. (so and so), I'll tell you what I find. I find that in a split house, you know like your case -- your husband's a Republican, you're a Democrat," I said, "You know something interesting? It's always the wife that's the more intelligent of the two." I'll get a grin or a laugh out of that. She's not going to forget me.

I go to another house, ring the doorbell, and we're chatting there and the lady says to me, "Have you been at a lot of houses?"

And I would hold up my index finger and I'd say, "Lady, that's my doorbell ringer finger. It used to be much longer than this one," and I'd hold up my middle finger. I'd get the laugh out of something like that. Or a man comes to the door, and he's about 6 feet 6 inches tall, and I look up at him and I'd say, "You know something? I used to be much taller than you are but that was before I started walking precincts."

At one house the guy replied, "Yeah, I'm a mailman." You know, things like this happened.

One time I'm out walking, it's summertime, it's nice and warm, and there's a man sitting on the lawn and he's picking up leaves or something like that, and we stop and chat. I tell him who I am, what I'm running for. This was the year that Richard Nixon ran against Gov. Edmund G. [Pat] Brown for the Governorship of California. I left he called after me.

SENEY: Right, '62.

GREENE: Right. And this guys calls after me and he says, "I wouldn't vote for that Nixon for dog catcher," and I turned back to him and I said, "Sir, that's where you and I differ; I would." There it is, the memorable thing.

So I kept on doing little things of that kind. It'd be something to talk about or something to mention when the husband came home. It was beginning to work. And then we used songs and things like that a little later on.

In any case, there it was. I started out walking in the hinterlands. Little communities that a lot of people never heard of: Wilton, Dillard, Clay Station, places nobody knew anything about these tiny places. This is where I began walking. Because no other candidate's going to do this -- the houses are a quarter a mile apart or more. But they'll remember me for that very reason, that it was such an unusual thing to do.

SENEY: And you never ran into other candidates doing the same thing?

GREENE: Never. Nobody ever did.

Now, the other thing was, I had the advantage over the other candidates in that since I ran my own business, I could walk seven days a week. The rest of them could walk on the weekend or maybe in the evening, to some extent. But I would start approximately 9:30 in the morning. They've got the husband off to work, kids to school, whatever it was, and I would walk through the day until they were going to bed. In the middle of the day I would stop at some grocery store and pick up a quarter of milk or something or other and drink it down and refuel, and then start in again. That's the way it went.

SENEY: You know, you had never been in public office before, as you said.

GREENE: No, I'd never been. No.

SENEY: What in the world motivated you to work so hard for this office?

GREENE: Well, when I thought about did I want it and how bad did I want it, and what would it take to get it -- now, after all, my training, my background, I'm an engineer and I was running an engineering firm. Engineers deal with things you can weigh and you can count and you can measure. In fact, my definition of an engineer is that an engineer's a person who can take a clock apart and put it back together again and make it run perfectly, but unless someone else tells him, he doesn't know what time it is.

And that's its own truth because engineers generally are not interested in politics, or it's a limited interest. And they, like everybody else, they say, "People don't appreciate what we do." To which my reply would be, "Okay, who does what that you appreciate?" Pointing out that, nobody appreciates anything anybody

does. Do you mean you think lawyers are really appreciated or whom?

Architects? Teachers? Bankers?

In any case, my major walking was in the first campaign and that's how it was run. Now, if I came to your door and I rang your doorbell and nobody came to the door, I would reach in my pocket and I'd leave one of these brochures I had put together the night before. What I did the night before, when I came home I wrote "Sorry I missed you" and signed my name on, say, a hundred brochures or so in my left-hand pocket. In my right-hand pocket I had another hundred that had nothing written on them. If I pressed the doorbell and you came to the door, I would hand you one of those brochures that had nothing written on it. If nobody came to the door, I would take the other that had "Sorry I missed you" on it and I would leave that and then move on.

That's the first campaign. But--

SENEY: Did you raise any money at all for this campaign? Or did it all come out of your pocket?

GREENE: Nickels and dimes. There was very little. There was a small amount of money after the primary. See, the Democratic Party didn't step in because there were eight Democratic candidates. The best thing they could do would be stay out of the way. Once I got past the primary, there was a little bit. There wasn't much of anything because actually it was working the other way around. It was the state party that was asking the candidates for money rather than offering them money.

SENEY: Yeah, you said last time that Jesse Unruh didn't really--

GREENE: Well, it wasn't there. Now, Jesse, he told Tom Bane, who was the chairman of Rules at the time, to get me some money, and Tom offered me some money. I don't remember how much -- a hundred, a thousand, I don't know. I don't remember. But I do remember that I turned him down because I was afraid that I'm a newcomer and I have no political history or anything and I don't want to be beholden to anybody. So I'd say I'm in great shape, maybe somebody has greater need than I did. And Tom reminded me of that several times over the years. But in any case, that's the way it went. But the next thing that happened was the creation of the FPPC,<sup>1</sup> the Fair Political Practices Commission. And that had negative effects that nobody ever noticed.

SENEY: That comes, what, as a result of the 1974 election?

GREENE: Frankly, I can't recall which election it was. But there was the nefarious or bad things were happening so you come up with this. Two or three guys got their hands in a cookie jar or something or other. Frank Hill was one. I don't know, there were two or three of them.

SENEY: Right. We talked about that last time.

GREENE: Robbins and so on, yeah.

SENEY: This Fair Political Practices Commission was Jerry Brown's vehicle in 1974 for his election for governor.

GREENE: It was not a good thing; they didn't do it well and I'll explain why.

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<sup>1</sup> Proposition 9, June, 1974.

SENEY: Okay.

GREENE: The problem with the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)-- now, when they were putting the FPPC together and putting together its rules and regulations, they invited outsiders to come and tell them what they thought. I came to tell them what I thought. And what I told them was, "The problem is that you're taking the amateurs out of politics and you're replacing them with professionals." Because over the earlier years, my wife, for example, was my campaign treasurer and an extremely valuable asset in the campaign and everything I did. She walked precincts for me and everything else.

I said, "But now FPPC regulations say \$10,000 fine and 10 years in jail if you louse up on the record keeping. Therefore, I can't have my wife do this because month after month you're turning out regulations and I don't intend to sit around and read all your regulations and try to keep on it, particularly if I'm in the Senate. If I'm only going to run every four years, what am I going to do? Spend all my time looking at your regulations? I'm not going to do that. But what you're doing is forcing the amateurs out because we can only afford to use people who make a livelihood of following everything you do." Well, this didn't impress them at all, because they went ahead anyway with what they were doing. And that meant more paperwork.

SENEY: And that's exactly what's happened.

GREENE: Oh, yes. Then it meant more paperwork, more reports, and more hearings, and more challenges. Because you see, whoever your opponent was would try to back

you into a corner, would try to get somebody to offer you something that would be illegal and even if you didn't accept anything your opponent would charge that you are under investigation by the FPPC. It was that kind of stuff you got into.

SENEY: Did that happen to you in your campaigns?

GREENE: It almost did. It bordered in one case.

SENEY: Was that the last campaign?

GREENE: No, no. It was much earlier than that. There was that shrimp scam.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: Do you remember the shrimp scam?

SENEY: Right, I do remember that.

GREENE: Well, the shrimp scam is that here the FBI puts something together, and they were, frankly, rank amateurs in what they were trying to do. Their understanding of the process was so very limited that they had to make much out of nothing at all because they simply didn't understand the whole situation. For example, one guy went to prison over it. Frank Hill, Senator Hill, they said that he took a bribe.

SENEY: Didn't you introduce the bill actually, the shrimp scam bill?

GREENE: Yes, in the first go-round on it. Well, no, no. I didn't understand. It was introduced by a member of the Assembly, Gwen Moore.

SENEY: [Assemblywoman] Gwen Moore.

GREENE: Gwen. She is little. Very nice. Very nice lady. And she had introduced that bill. When it came to the Senate, she asked me if I would carry the bill for her in the Senate, and I asked what was it about, and so on. I recall that they were going to

build some kind of a factory to process shrimp, and this would be low-level employees, and they would employ people that otherwise were unemployed or making below minimum wages. So hey, that's great, you know, take some of those people off the street and give them work.

SENEY: As I remember, the state had agreed to guarantee the bonds so that they'd get a lower interest rate.

GREENE: That I don't remember. I don't remember anything about bonds. I don't recall that bonds had anything to do with it in the first go-round. I just don't have any recollection. Anyway, I said yes, that I would carry it for her. What I remember is that on the floor of the Senate, one of my staff people brought these two men into the back of the chamber and had the sergeant get me off the floor to come back there, and she said, "Senator, I'd like you to meet Mr. (so and so)." I don't remember the names, these two guys. They were FBI, undercover, and I didn't know that, of course, and they're from Georgia and this shrimp business. As they left the chamber, one or both of these guys said to my staffer, "What's it going to cost me?" She was very indignant about it and called the guy that introduced them to us, saying what the hell's going on here? What do these Georgia crackers think they're doing? In any case, "Well, sorry," this and that. But they were fishing.

SENEY: And you didn't take the bait.

GREENE: No, we didn't know what was going on. When finally they break loose and charge a couple of Legislators. The FBI came to me, among others that could be

witnesses, and they said, "Well, somebody said that you (thus and so)."

Something negative. And I said, "Bullshit," I said, "I'll tell you what. I will take a polygraph test on this matter so long as the person accusing me does the same."

So I cut that off right then and there. They try to suck you into these things.

They'll lie, they'll cheat, they'll do anything. In order to catch a crook they do crooked things. It's very interesting. After all, what is plea bargaining on any charge when you change the charge downward in exchange for information?

You're the smaller fish, I want the bigger fish. I'll unhook you if you get me the bigger fish. That permeates the entire system, and I don't know any substitute for that. I have no idea what you could do in its place. But it stinks. It says you use corruption to fight corruption. It's no good. I don't have an answer for that, I don't know what it would be.

SENEY: Do you remember who it was who introduced these people to your staff?

GREENE: I can't recall his name. He was a black gentleman that worked for the city or the county or something or other. Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

There was a small business enterprise and they had taken some old school that had been abandoned -- I recall that now -- and were teaching -- let's say you wanted to become a shoe repairman or something or other. These people would tell you how to keep books, what you have to do for taxes, inventory, how you operate a small business. These people had some kind of a technical skill but didn't know their head from a hot rock about how to run a business. This small business enterprise unit would help out, they would do that kind of thing. And the guy that

was running the enterprise unit knew this lady that worked for me. So he came to her, she came to me after Gwen Moore said, she'd carry the bill.

SENEY: Why don't you mention the full name of your staff member? It sounds like she did the right thing.

GREENE: Well, it was Fran Burton, and she did absolutely the right thing. There's no question whatever about that. She was a very good, very capable person.

Anyway, that's how earlier campaigns went. Now, by the time we got to this shrimp scam thing, that's not an early campaign, that's sort of middle time.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: That's sort of halfway through my senate tenure.

But we talked about the first thing. We talked about campaigning, going door to door, writing my own brochures, talking to women.

Then we said a little later on, because of these kinds of things, came FPPC. When that happened, the Legislature reacted. The Senate came up with its Ethics Committee. And I was the first chair of it, yes. And I said that the Pro Tem of the Senate and the leader of the opposition party -- that was [Senator Kenneth L.] Ken Maddy and David Roberti at the time -- they would have to be ex-officio members. They didn't particularly want to be. And I said, "No, sir, if this is supposed to be an ethics committee for the Senate, then the Senate leadership has to show its support. And they can be ex-officio members -- I don't care if they show up to meetings or not -- but they've got to stand behind us."

And they agreed. I think it was a two-year term and you couldn't serve more than two terms and that the next chair would have to be from the opposite party. So I was the first chair, and in my second term I went to Roberti and requested that he do something for me. My vice chair was from San Diego. He died recently.

SENEY: Senator [William A.] Craven?

GREENE: Bill Craven. Bill Craven was a moderate Republican. There had been some changes in the Republican party makeup here -- the membership, Republican members -- and they'd gotten a lot more conservative. Ken Maddy was no longer the Minority Floor Leader and they bounced Craven off of the Rules Committee.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: So I went to Roberti and I said to Roberti, "Why don't you let me resign as chairman of Ethics. Make Craven the chairman of Ethics and I will be the vice chairman. They took a lot away from this good guy, let's try to give him back a little bit of something." So that was done.

SENEY: Why don't you -- let me turn this over.

[End of Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

SENEY: We were hoping to be able to interview Senator Craven for this project.

GREENE: You're not going to be able to do that.

SENEY: No, we're not. Unfortunately, he was ill for some time.

GREENE: A very long time. He was a wonderful guy.

SENEY: Talk about him a little. That's what I was going to ask you to do.

GREENE: Bill was a wonderful guy. Incidentally, he was a great caricaturist. He was great at making sketches of people and things. He had been around a long time and had an extensive background in the San Diego. His life's work had been in other areas than simply politics. And the thing about it is, so many members of the Legislature came up through the ranks. Like you worked at the Assembly or Senate floor or you were an aide to a member. Well, if you worked for a member, you observed the political process. As your member got elected or reelected, you observed how he raised money, you observed what campaigning was all about, so you were in the catbird seat to try to run for the Legislature.

A very high percentage of the members of the Legislature were previous staff members. And people like me that came from the outside had a previous life and business. I had run an engineering firm for 27 years -- part of that time while I was in the Legislature and long before that. I opened my engineering firm in 1951; I began serving in the Assembly '63, closed my engineering firm '78, some part in the Legislature, some part out.

It gives you perspective that's different than if all you've done has been a bureaucrat and you've never done anything else. It's too limited.

Craven had an extensive background. He had been in politics down in San Diego. I think he was on the city council. No, I don't think he was ever mayor but he was on the city council down there. And he had been in the private sector. I think he had something to do with the movie industry. I don't recall that too well. But

Bill was a great guy. I liked him a lot. And the thing about it is, politics being what it is, that he was on the wrong side of things in his own party. I mean, he was too moderate for the conservatives and the conservatives bounced him out, just as they bounced Ken Maddy out.

SENEY: I'm told Mr. Craven was a very influential member. What makes an influential senator, do you think?

GREENE: I would suggest that's not accurate.

SENEY: No?

GREENE: No. As far as I'm concerned he would have been influential with me on anything that I would discuss with him. But, if you recall now, I told you that his own party stripped him of an important post because one of the very important posts is to be on the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee has only five members on it and since the Democrats controlled, there were three Democrats and two Republicans. And he and [Senator Robert C.] Bob Beverly, I believe were the two Republicans. And the thing about it is that the Rules Committee determines where all bills go, to what committees and so on, determine what staff all members have, determine what offices all members have, and determine what cars, equipment, people, district offices, so that members of Rules were in a strong position.

SENEY: I'm not thinking about him being -- about the time he was being removed.

GREENE: What I'm saying, though, is that when you take somebody like that, that's been in that position for quite some time, and you remove him, that does not suggest that he's a very powerful person.

SENEY: I'm thinking, though, back to when he's put on that committee and for the period of time that precedes the election of Senator [Rob] Hurtt as Minority Leader of the Senate.

GREENE: Yeah. Well, because in the older time -- again, if you go back -- see, there was a time when Maddy was the Minority Leader and there was a time before that when [Senator William] Bill Campbell was the Minority Leader, and those guys were more moderate.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: And under the more moderate leadership, Bill Craven fit that pattern. He was one of the more moderate types. He wasn't out there with gun and knife, trying to carve up opposition, so on and so forth, as others were.

We started out, though, talking about the changing campaigning, and what I described to you is the earliest years and how that was. People were home and those people that were home were women.

Then here came FPPC and rules and regulations and so on, but there's another change going on at the same time and that is the percentage of women in the workforce was moving up. And what was interesting is through the '40s and '50s and so on, that the only professional positions for women were extremely limited. You could become a nurse, you could become a teacher, and that's pretty much it.

But as time went on, you would find that if you looked at our law schools, for example, and the entering classes over the last several years, that half or more are female.

About five years back -- I can't remember exactly when -- but somewhere around five years ago I was a commencement speaker at Sac State University [California State University, Sacramento] to their School of Engineering and Computer Technology. I'm the commencement speaker and I'm looking over the graduates. The engineering students I'm counting and I'm seeing something like one-third of these graduates are female. Now, you look over here at computer technology, one-half of that graduating class is female. Now, they've already been at the college level for four years, do you know what I mean?

SENEY: Yes.

GREENE: So this started some time back. They're giving out prizes for scholarship. The women are creaming the men. They are overwhelmingly picking up all the prizes for academic excellence. But the women were more determined, they were more interested in being successful.

Now, as time went on, the community that I represented was growing a little older. It was built out to the extent that there was still some building going on but a smaller percentage of the total. When I came in to the Assembly, for example, I would have represented somewhere around 300,000 people. Well, then the Senate district is equal to two Assembly districts, but because of shenanigans at the Legislature, the court took over in more recent times and the court handled the

reapportionment rather than having the Legislature do it. The court divided the state into 80 Assembly districts of relatively equal population, then paired them and said, "This is a Senate district." Assembly District 1 and 2 is Senate District 1; 3 and 4 is Senate District 2, and so on. So that's the way they did the deed.

The Legislature, in doing reapportionment, would never have done it that way. The party in power would simply have tried to get as many people of their own party into a given district. The opposite side would cooperate with that because if the Democrats control, they want all the Democrats in a Democratic district. Well, fine, then that leaves all the Republicans for the Republican districts. It was a natural deal in that case.

And one of those deals was an interesting one that involved me. [U.S. Representative] John Doolittle, now in Congress, was a Republican conservative member of the Senate. Al Rodda, a Democrat, had been the Senator representing the seat that Doolittle captured and later took over. Rodda represented Sacramento in the Senate for 22 years. He was defeated in a reelection bid by John Doolittle. Then came a reapportionment and two years later I ran against Doolittle, who was the incumbent, and defeated him. But he was elected to a four-year term when he was elected, but I took over the territory two years later. So in a sense he's a senator without a portfolio. We're overlapping here.

Okay, so now I'm the Senator from this district. Then an opportunity comes along within two years to run for the congressional seat because [U.S.

Representative] John Moss bowed out. He was the Democratic Congressman and Doolittle took over the congressional seat there.

SENEY: Let me ask you about that.

GREENE: Wait. Let me tell you this about it. The Democratic leadership came to me and said that there's a straight line, just a straight horizontal line, between my district and what had been the district of [Senator] Ray Johnson, a Republican from the Chico area. A straight line between us. He was Republican and I'm a Democrat.

My party leadership said if we just make a little jog here, just around that one census track, it will not be in your district any longer -- it'll be in Johnson's district -- so instead of a straight line, there's a little tiny bump downward and then it goes back in a straight line again. And that's where Doolittle lived. Doolittle was then removed from my senatorial district and put in Johnson's. We called this the Doolittle dip.

I said, "You know, I'm not concerned about having John in my district. It doesn't phase me any. Why don't you just leave it alone?" My leadership said, "Well, yeah, but the Republicans have told us that if we'd be willing to make that change, they will not contest the boundary lines of this reapportionment. They will not go to court, and criticize it."

My answer was, "Well, it makes no difference to me. I am not requesting this change. If you want to, for whatever reason you think, and if the Democratic Party wants this to happen, it's okay with me. But I'm telling you, I'm not asking for this."

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: I didn't like that, and they did it because Ray Johnson was a nice guy and again a moderate, but the Republicans had gone conservative so they backed Doolittle against one of their own. Doolittle was the outsider and they backed him against their own incumbent and beat their own incumbent with this more conservative guy, which, of course, was more acceptable to their leadership which was going ultraconservative.

So that's one of the little things that came up during my tenure in the Senate.

SENEY: Senator Rodda was a very popular member of the Senate.

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: And it was a big surprise when he was defeated by Doolittle, wasn't it?

GREENE: No.

SENEY: No?

GREENE: No. It was a surprise to a lot of people but it wasn't that much of a surprise to me.

SENEY: But you weren't surprised.

GREENE: No.

SENEY: One of the things that--

GREENE: Let me give you a reason for that.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: You know we do polling to try to find out what's going on. So we're polling and polling -- what's his name in Congress? Senator -- an elderly man that ran track a lot and so on.

SENEY: [U.S. Senator ] Alan Cranston.

GREENE: Alan Cranston. So here is a line on my chart of his level of popularity and you could just about superimpose on top of that line another line that would represent Congressman John Moss. So Alan Cranston was a Democrat in the U.S. Senate. Moss was a Democrat in the House of Representatives. Then there was me and a couple of the other Assembly Democrats from Sacramento County, and way down below on my chart is Al Rodda. Now, why?

Because in all the years that we were allowed to do three or four district-wide newsletters, he only sent out one in all those years. And in that one he got in trouble because he was supporting some issue and the Republicans got after him, saying that's not fair because he's using public money to support an issue and the other side has no such public money. So he got his hand slapped over that one. But I'm telling you, that he and his crew had never been in a serious election. He never had any serious opposition, the district was pretty comfortably Democratic all along, and so on, and he never had a severe challenge.

He was a very good Senator. He was a very good legislator in terms of what liberal Democrats would see as the right way to go. Al would be the man, a very honest man, and well respected. But was I particularly surprised? No. Did the Republicans think they could win that seat? I doubt it.

[Senator H.L.] Bill Richardson had a business called "Computer Caging," which is a political business, and you know who one of his employees were running that little office?

SENEY: John Doolittle.

GREENE: John Doolittle. And I think John Doolittle was thrown onto the fire as another log on the fire, because what it would do is when he won the Republican primary, that would give Bill Richardson more support on the State Central Committee.

SENEY: Ahh.

GREENE: But they put themselves together a program and they kicked the hell out of Al. Because Rodda was not well known in his district. He was very well known in the City of Sacramento in the political environment downtown. He was well known because of education and his role as a community college instructor. Yes, he was well known, but nobody in Citrus Heights ever heard of him, or Orangevale, or Elk Grove and other areas out in the sticks, because he didn't communicate with them. If there isn't communication, how do you do it? He was defeated. Doolittle had beaten him. I never would have run against Rodda. He's a Democrat, I'm a Democrat. As long as he'd been there I'd have been in the Assembly. But he got knocked off. That gave me the opportunity, two years later, to take on Doolittle, and Doolittle was the incumbent, not me.

SENEY: Let me ask you about one factor in the Rodda race, which Mr. Rodda's friends alluded to, and that is, Alan Robbins, who later gets in trouble and actually goes to jail and rats on a lot of other people, had problems before that. Do you remember when the young lady came to his office and there was a sexual tryst involving Robbins in his office?

GREENE: I'm very vague about it, but yes, I remember there was a sexual thing.

- SENEY: She came and she was kind of willing in a way but it got out and it didn't make him look very good. It made him look kind of stupid actually. And there were people who said, well, there was a confusion in the voters' minds somehow.
- GREENE: Between Robbins and Rodda?
- SENEY: Yeah.
- GREENE: There could have been. I don't know. That's a possibility.
- SENEY: Right. Well, you, yourself -- after you won in '62, did you have any real opposition in '64?
- GREENE: My recollection would suggest no, but I really don't remember. My recollection says no. Did I tell you the story in '64, the Republican running against me, I think he was somebody in the real estate business. I think he was the guy who put up the lawn sign "Vote for (so and so), your Republican candidate." But it also said "Your sales agent on this property." Then he can write off as a business expense.
- SENEY: Ohh.
- GREENE: He made his pitch with the sign. It was something like that. It was kind of funny. And he's the one -- again, I'm not sure we didn't cover this a week ago, where I told you that in the early days Aerojet General had around 19,000-plus employees.
- SENEY: That's right. You went out and spoke.
- GREENE: Yeah. And he, at that time, said, "How can you expect economy in government when your legislator rides around in the most expensive car made in America?"
- SENEY: Yeah, that's right. That's right. And you had to point out you paid the difference.

GREENE: But anyway, to get back to the theme that we started some time ago, is what's the difference between running for office in the 1960's as opposed to running for office in the 1990's?

Well, again, in the early '60s, I spent maybe thirty-something thousand dollars on an Assembly campaign. But when Sandy Smoley ran against me for the Senate in the middle 1980's --

SENEY: It was '86, wasn't it?

GREENE: You are right. Both sides a million dollars. We each spent approximately the same, but it was a little above a million dollars.

SENEY: Well, she was on the county board of supervisors.

GREENE: She was. At one time she was the chair. Of course, they rotated the chair. Pete Wilson later -- I defeated her -- and later Pete Wilson offered her the head of one of his agencies.

SENEY: Consumer Services.

GREENE: Consumer Services. The Democrats came to me and said they knew she had run against me, what was my take on Senate confirmation? I said, "It's all right with me."

SENEY: All these appointments goes to the Senate Rules Committee and you could have nixed her.

GREENE: Well, it's not just Rules. It's confirmation by the Senate.

SENEY: Well, the first hurdle was Rules, right? Isn't it usually taken care of there if they want to ding someone?

GREENE: I don't recall. I think that Rules makes a recommendation to the floor, but I don't know whether Rules could kill it. It says "confirmed by the Senate," but I don't know that it's talking about any committees within the Senate.

SENEY: I'm thinking back to Mr. Michael Franchetti's problems with his confirmation as Finance director in Mr. Deukmejian's first term, and my recollection is that that was killed off by the Senate Rules Committee rather than the Senate.

GREENE: I don't remember, so I can't answer that.

SENEY: Well, he got cross-wise with [Senator] Mr. Mervyn Dymally, who by this time was in the Congress but had been a member of the Senate.

GREENE: Dymally was elected to the Assembly the same time I was. He was part of our class. But let me get to what it was like to campaign in the 1990s as opposed to the 1960s. Now, in the meantime the registration is changing. The district and the state as a whole is becoming more conservative, and the statewide registration of Democrats is going down and the Republican rate is going up at about half the rate of Democratic loss. If we lost a thousand, they would have maybe picked up 500. The rest went to "decline to state," Greenpeace, and other minor parties. A lot of miscellaneous stuff started to happen. These would be the kind of people that would say, "None of the above." The percentage that would turn out for election in my opinion was going down.

But this was interesting, and I don't know that anybody else ever looked at it this way. It's my opinion that there was a core of voters who were Caucasians and they would go out and vote in the elections. Well, with the passage of time

the Caucasians became a smaller percentage of the total. The maximum increase is coming from Hispanics. So if total registration is moving up and the Caucasian side is not changing, they are a diminishing portion of the total. So I'm saying that that core voting block stood patently still but with the passage of time became a little less powerful because of numbers. So we're into the '90s now and what we're finding is that it takes more money because when I started out, maybe there were 300,000 people -- whether all voters or not -- 300,000 people in my Assembly district. Currently in senatorial districts there's over 800,000. Because for one thing, a Senate district equals two Assembly districts so you start out there.

But then there's growth. Right now, there may be, say, 33 million people in the State of California. I don't know the exact number. But it results in Senate Districts of a little over 800,000 people by the year 2000. As those things happened the rules changed. When I started out in the Assembly we had equal numbers of people in the 80 Assembly districts. But in the Senate, a district covered one to three counties. You couldn't have two-and-a-half counties. You couldn't break a county line. And in the Assembly you didn't fool around with cities. You held those boundaries sacrosanct. All that went down the tube when the court says "one man, one vote." The courts said we don't care about anything beyond one man, one vote. So then came changes, and here was a guy, [Senator] Richard Richards, representing L.A. County with maybe three or four million people at that time, and here's somebody representing three small counties

totaling maybe fifty or a hundred thousand people. So that caused major changes, the North lost many Senate Districts to the population heavier South.

Anyway, that change said Senators represent people, not trees or anything else. But in the 90s if you were to walk precincts nobody's home. The women are working as well as the men. So how are you going to communicate with people? It takes money.

SENEY: These are the town meetings we talked about last time.

GREENE: Well, that was one effort tried at one time, but the problem with that effort was, I ran about 32, I think it was, town hall meetings in various churches or schools and so on, but I realized I was not contacting more than about, maybe possibly two percent of the voters. Well, that's not too much.

SENEY: Although, these are likely to be voters if they show enough interest to come to the meetings.

GREENE: They are likely to be voters and some portion of them are going to be Republicans, some portion are going to be Democrats. You don't know what they're going to be, but yeah, they're likely to be voters but it's a very small portion.

Money became more critical because walking was to be the best thing to direct contact, but if you have 800,000 constituents you can't do it walking. It won't happen. It took me ten months in a much smaller Assembly District, and I didn't walk every single precinct. And between then and now, the Assembly districts

have at least doubled in the number of people. And here comes the Senate district made up of two Assembly districts. It's much bigger.

Now I've got 800,000 people out there. I can't walk it, and walking it becomes less valuable, because I tried it one time a couple of elections back. I'm walking down the street and there's nobody home on either side of the street in this whole block. I'm wasting time. I can't do it. So I have to have other means of communication. Now, this is what I did about it.

When I was in the Assembly I was figuring on other means of communication -- I have these little bitty communities that I mentioned, like Dillard and Wilton, Clay Station, but there was a country and western radio station KRAK. And I figured that might be the kind of station that the people in rural areas would be interested in. I got five minutes out of them on Wednesday nights, around eight p.m., and I did a five minute program.

At that time I also started writing weekly columns.

SENEY: Would this be sort of like a legislative report?

GREENE: Yeah. Yeah. I was writing a weekly column for my weekly newspapers. Over 36 years I wrote over 1,800 newspaper columns. One a week. Nobody ever noticed it but I would take a column and use it on the air for the same thing, of whatever I was talking about. Or I might bring in some member of the Assembly or the Senate and chat with them on the air. In fact, I remember bringing in Willie Brown on one of those things years ago. That was one of my means of

communicating with people, and I started there in what I thought would be a station for these people in the middle of nowhere.

Then I had a TV program on Channel 10 before they moved to their current location -- they were on 10<sup>th</sup> Street at one time -- and it took place about ten or 10:30 at night, it's a half hour show. It was the equivalent of firing line before there was a firing line. In other words, I would bring in a class of young people from [University of California at] Davis or from Sac State and I would bring in somebody from the Legislature who I would chat with for about ten minutes or so and then let them ask their questions. This was the format that was used.

Then later on I became a talk show host and I had a radio talk show. People would call in and I'd chat with them. It was on a weekend. And I had done it at three different stations. I did KFBK. It was around 1982, something like that, and so on. Then this 650 on the dial, whatever the call letters is, was the last one I did. As a means of communicating, as a means of replacing money in advertising. But all these represent small segments of an audience.

Now, when you make a mailing--

SENEY: And you do that regularly. You had regular legislative reports.

GREENE: Yeah. I had regular legislative reports and I had a mailing list of a few thousand. But later the FPPC said no, that's an unfair advantage that an incumbent has over somebody else so you can't send out more than 200 messages.

[End of Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

SENEY: Senator, where it cut off was the bit about the 200 messages.

GREENE: FPPC said we couldn't send out more than 200 identical messages. To do more than that is considered that you're taking advantage that a non-incumbent doesn't have. And that's true. However, there's another truth and that is that I am the representative of these people and I'm being told I can't communicate with the people I represent. Don't they have the right to know what I'm doing? I was going to say whatever was fair but there's nothing fair. There is no equity. You can't get there. Anyway, I did these various things as means of communication with my constituency.

SENEY: Now, this is something you're doing on a regular basis, not tied necessarily to an election--

GREENE: Right.

SENEY: --that's very cheap to do.

GREENE: Yes, just went on. Every week I'd write my 500 word column and I would send it out to all the papers within the county. That might have been, give or take, eight, ten, twelve papers. It would have been the *Carmichael Courier*, and the *Elk Grove Citizens* and the *Galt Herald* and the *Folsom Times*, and whatever they had in Citrus Heights and other places. At the same time in the Capitol, the press, statewide press, would have their cubbyholes where you'd leave material, and actually, we would leave the material for the media, the press. So from time to time I would spot an article I had written in a San Diego newspaper, or San

Francisco or Santa Clara or San Jose. So I was scattering shots around.

Sometimes distant newspapers would be interested and other times they wouldn't in what I had to say no matter how bizarre it might be or how off the short and narrow path. So this was among the means of communicating.

If you wanted to make a mailing, because the FPPC said you can't use this general mailing, where we used to be allowed three such mailings a year, and what I used to do with those mailings would send out, say, a questionnaire. Now, one year I sent out a questionnaire and it's on prostitution. Now, prostitution was about one-third of the questionnaire, other things were on it.

SENEY: Right. Well, we talked about this last time when you put the legislation in, what a furor it caused.

GREENE: Yeah. So that was an interesting thing, but now I'm not talking about that so much but as a means of communication, of saying okay, this is something I have in mind, what do you think? And that was the nature of the use of this particular mechanism. But as you communicate with people, some of the public have a very strange notion. Somebody calls me and demands to know my stand on such and such an issue -- maybe it's abortion or gun control, one of those things -- and I tell him. He says, "Well, how come I've never seen that in the press anywhere?"

"Well, I don't control the press."

"Yes, but if you told them they would have printed it."

"You mean if I said that I believe that a woman has a right to abort if she chooses to, that if I make that statement they'll print it in the paper?"

“Sure.” This caller has a strange notion regarding my ability to deal with the press.

In any case, when you’re campaigning, and walking isn’t going to do it any longer. Often, in past campaigns, Republicans would be more likely to use money. Democrats would use people. Republicans would use money, because the Republicans are where the business community and wealth is, and the business community and wealth are willing to put money into campaigns. The blue collar and the white collar workers are Democrats. They’re not likely to put money in a campaign. Of if they do, it’s like a dollar or five dollars.

Now, the thing about it is that the Republican would find it easier to get a thousand dollars from one person than the Democrats would find it possible to get a hundred dollars from ten people to collect the same thousand. Take a look at the candidates in 1999 that are seeking the presidency and what they will account for right now is how much money they raise. George [W.] Bush<sup>1</sup> is miles above any Democrat running. Why? How come? Well, that’s the way it works, it always has worked. So on the Democratic side you have people, on the Republican side you have money, and to what degree that’s a standoff, I don’t know.

SENEY: You know, once you were elected in ’62, you didn’t really have strong opposition when you were in the Assembly. Did you always run like you did?

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<sup>1</sup> Is a candidate for the Republican nomination for president for the 2000 election.

GREENE: Well, I had strong opposition from within my own party on one occasion. If you recall something we haven't spent much time on, as I recall, I remember, was the Berman-McCarthy war.

SENEY: A little bit on that, but go ahead and say some more.

GREENE: Well, you see, there was this time when McCarthy was the Speaker of the Assembly and Howard Berman wanted to be Speaker, and Howard Berman indicated that he thought that he and McCarthy should change roles. He was the Majority Floor Leader. He thought that McCarthy should be the Majority Floor Leader and he should be the Speaker.

SENEY: Right. You did mention this.

GREENE: The Republicans wouldn't vote.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: So you had a bloody mayhem during that period of time and made operations extremely difficult. In any case, to get back on some of these other things--

SENEY: You said the party got after you on that one. I'm aware that the Berman forces and the McCarthy forces were active in the 1980 Democratic primary, trying to get their advocates in office.

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Did the Berman people run someone against you in the 1980 primary?

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: Talk about that a little bit, how did that work.

GREENE: It was a woman -- Joan Reiss. She ran against me. I think she was a nurse and her husband was a physician, and she was involved in a lot of the liberal causes in the health field and knew everybody in that area. She would come to my office and want me to co-author such and such a bill because it's good for kids or good for this or good for that. My particular stance, which was somewhat nontypical, was I don't co-author bills because a co-author has no control over a bill. How do I know you don't take an amendment that changes what this bill does and now I'm against it and you can use that against me in my next campaign because I'm shown as a co-author? So I don't co-author bills.

And when I'm the author of a bill, there's only two reasons for seeking a co-author. One would be is if I figure this bill would suggest that I'm doing something Republicans won't like, then I'm looking for some Republican co-authors, or if I had reason to think that some other member of the house -- I don't care what party -- would benefit from co-authoring it, I'll ask him if he's interested. Other than that I'm not interested in seeking co-authors. There's no point to it as far as I can see.

So Joan Reiss became extremely upset with me because I refused to co-author her wonderful bills. My position was lady, you don't get it, it doesn't make any difference. It's not going to change the number of votes you're going to get by one. I'll probably vote for these bills but I'm not going to co-author them. That infuriated her so she ran against me and lost. Then comes the McCarthy-Berman war and Berman, looking around, finds her again. Berman finds her again and in

being assured that he would have her vote, all of a sudden here comes campaign money from L.A., from physicians from L.A., supporting her candidacy against me. Her husband was a physician, so this was the inroad. And he raised a lot of money from L.A. for her campaign against me. That was one of the campaigns that was more difficult for that reason.

And this was a very difficult time because now we're in a caucus. This is the Democratic Caucus. And I'm saying, "Howard, this is a little difficult for me because you're my floor leader. I'm among the people that voted for you being the Majority Floor Leader and my floor leader is attempting to remove me from this house. That's a little bit tough to accept."

I told you that, everyday we got on the floor, then Dick Robinson would get up and move to vacate the chair and Republicans enjoyed the show, this went on for quite a time.

SENEY: It did make the Democrats look a little silly.

GREENE: Well, of course. Of course. But as I said, when we got up into the '90s, money became all the more vital to campaigns because the FPPC, which is looking for true-blue, red-blooded American honesty, is interfering and making things worse. They are the cause of a lot of the problems. When they block off everything else, we go back to the First Amendment -- freedom of the press and freedom of speech -- and we say, "All right, you can't block that off, so we've got to go for money." Because if James Schmalowitz is willing to give me a million dollars and you can't say no to him because then you're cutting off his freedom of speech, so the

only thing you could do legally would be to say, "If you will accept these financial limitations, if you will promise not to offer more than \$100,000," let's say, "from outside sources, if you'll do that, then the state will make \$100,000 tax payers money available to you." Some variation on that, because that's a notion of one form of campaign funding.

SENEY: I'm told there was a brief window in the 1970s when that might have been possible in the wake of Watergate. That is, some public financing of elections. Do you remember that?

GREENE: No, I remember conversations about it. I never thought it would be possible. How could you prevent anybody from breaking that line? You couldn't. The only thing that made it feasible would be that if I'm running against you and I've agreed to a financial limitation and you have not, I can use that against you in the campaign. This guy wants to buy the campaign. You in turn would say, "You want me to use the public's money instead of my own? What makes you think you have the right to make the people pay for your campaign? I'm paying for mine, why don't you pay for yours?"

SENEY: Yeah.

GREENE: So here's the back and forth.

SENEY: You've given me an opportunity to ask you about something I wanted to ask you about and that's fundraising and ask you to talk about fundraising and how you handled that.

GREENE: I'm not very good at it. I mean, I never was much of a fundraiser. It wasn't a forte of mine. The thing about it was that by and large I did not want to know where the money came from. I didn't want to think that it was influencing judgment.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: I never was much of a fundraiser. I mean, there's guys that are very good at it. In fact, one time I said to [Assemblyman] Herschel Rosenthal that I'd like to make a deal with him: I'd like to rent his district for some fundraising affairs.

SENEY: He was a good fundraiser, I take it.

GREENE: He could send out a letter, and get fifty thousand bucks.

SENEY: Is that right?

GREENE: Yes.

SENEY: You must have had a treasurer then, a campaign treasurer that you gave this task to?

GREENE: Toni Roberts, a young woman, handled my more recent campaigns as well as the campaigns of several others and Toni raised the money. She would say, "All right, but you have to come in the office and you have to be willing to spend a few hours here making phone calls. We'll dial the phone, we'll tell you who you're calling, and you've got to do it." I hated it.

SENEY: What would you say to someone? Let's say I'm one of those people who's just been--

GREENE: Well, first of all, you're telephoning lobbyists.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: That's the source of money. To begin with, when you'd make the call, the odds were that you wouldn't find them in, he wouldn't be there, and you're talking to a staff person, or maybe he was there. And what you know, though, is that this guy is going to get a hundred calls from a hundred campaigns, and you know that and he knows that, and this is the way it goes. But I was considered one of the very best telephoners because of the way I would do it. I would call up and the boss isn't there. So the woman answers answering the phone, we're chatting, and I said, "Well, you know, we're having a funding on (such and such a date) and it's \$500," or a thousand dollars, whatever. "And I was just hoping your boss might be willing to come." And I said, "As to the money, if he doesn't think he wants to spend that much, that's okay because he can take it out of your salary instead." She'd laugh or "Oh, no."

Or, you know, lobbyist comes to the phone and I'd say, "Hey, somebody told me you're putting on a lot of weight: You seem to be carrying too much money on you, I want some of it."

SENEY: Yeah.

GREENE: But I never was one of the top ten or twenty or whatever among fundraisers. Governor Gray Davis and a few others were excellent fundraisers and spend their whole lifetime doing it. Some of them have even enjoyed fundraising. Davis has put in a lot of time, a lot of effort to raise a hell of a lot of money. And the thing there was that [Senator] Bill Lockyer made a heavy push on this. Roberti found

that it was difficult for him to raise money. And there's other guys on the Republican side particularly that are good fundraisers. [Jim] Brulte's power within his party is his money raising ability. He is a good fundraiser and that plays a role, a big role.

SENEY: Right. And that was part of Mr.[Senator Rob] Hurtt's influence, wasn't it? The fact he not only had personal money but--

GREENE: It was not a part of it, it was all of it.

SENEY: All of it?

GREENE: Yeah. First of all, Rob Hurt was a very conservative guy, and that would appeal, of course, to the conservative members. But there was about a group of them, three or four different people -- [Howard] Ahmanson [Jr.] Hurtt, and a couple of others like that -- that could put out a few million between the three or four of them. But the problem was that Hurtt never -- seemed to have any interest in politics. He had interest in conservative causes, power and control.

SENEY: He's particularly opposed to abortion, wasn't he?

GREENE: Yeah. But frankly, I'm not too sure he wasn't a bigot. I wouldn't particularly make that accusation but it occurred to me that his positions would suggest to me that there might be some bigotry involved.

SENEY: Right, right.

Why don't we talk a little bit about the Senate leadership and the house leadership -- the Assembly, I should say, leadership.

GREENE: Well, what's interesting about the leadership of the two houses is that with some exception, generally speaking the leadership has been either to the left, on the Democratic side, of the center of that party or to the right on the Republican side of the center of that party. It didn't seem to me that leadership was in the middle of either party. David Roberti would be left of center of the Democratic Party in the Senate. Antonio Villaraigosa would be to the left of center of the Democratic Party in the Assembly.

SENEY: Was that true of Willie Brown as well when he was Speaker, do you think?

GREENE: Well, Willie would have been a liberal as is Burton.

SENEY: [Senator] John Burton, the current Senate leader.

GREENE: Right. They both would be to the left of center of their own party. The only leader in recent years that I thought was on target was Ken Maddy. I thought Ken Maddy represented the middle of his own party; that he wasn't that conservative, he wasn't that liberal. He was the average of the mix.

SENEY: You know, he's next on my list to interview. In fact, I've spoken to him and he's willing to be interviewed.

What should I know about him as I go into this interview with him?

GREENE: Well, I don't know to what degree the degradation of his health is affecting him. But he's got serious health problems.

SENEY: He sounds pretty good on the phone. I've spoken to him. He's taking chemotherapy and he said to me it's going pretty well. So that's all I know.

GREENE: Ken is very interested in horses and in legislation that relates to racetracks, and was considered the expert in that field. In fact, I would go up to Ken whenever there was any horse bill around and say, "Ken, is this all right for Cal Expo?" Because that was in my territory and horses raced there.

SENEY: Which has horseracing and that sort of thing.

GREENE: Yes. I would take his word for it, whatever he said. And I would vote accordingly. There were people that would come to me on educational matters and vote accordingly. Not a lot of people but people that think, well, I don't know much about this and it seems like this guy does. But Maddy is a very likable man. I'll tell you something interesting about Maddy that neither he nor I knew. When I was running my engineering firm from '51 to '78, I had an office in Fresno because down in Fresno some of the governmental types wanted local engineers and local architects and so on. So I sprinkled some holy water and made myself local by opening up an office there. It was on the corner of Merced and Fulton, I think. Downstairs was a men's clothing store, a haberdashery. Ken Maddy was a salesman selling men's clothes in that store. I'm on the floor above him. We never met, didn't know each other. But that was a little interesting story of paths that crossed unknowingly.

But Ken and Campbell, Bill Campbell, they went around together. I think they roommated together when they were both here, and at one time Campbell was the Republican floor leader another time Ken was. I served with him on a committee or two. Business and Professions was one, Education was another. Business and

Professions was a good committee. I enjoyed that committee because of the wide range -- oh, the other one I was on with him was G.O. (Governmental Organization) and he chaired that some of the time the last couple of years because [Senator] Ralph Dills was the chair and Ralph started feeling poorly, having problems toward the end, and Ken would run the committee then. And G.O. was where the horse bills would come. And B&P, I believe he sat on that with me as well.

But he's a very nice gentleman. I can't remember, he was married a couple of times.

SENEY: Right. He's now divorced from his second wife.

GREENE: Yeah. Well, that was Foster Farms--

SENEY: Right, exactly.

GREENE: And that's too bad but it seems to be something that happens. Ken likes to play golf. And he runs a horse or two at various tracks. So this would be where his interests lie. But you might want to talk to Ken about the changes in the Republican party over time and the management style for the minority in the Assembly versus the Senate and the interplay between the leaderships.

SENEY: What's your observation of those very points?

GREENE: Well, as I've indicated, the group of Republicans in the Senate, the average has become more conservative with the passage of time, and that the only reason for them picking their past leader was money. He wasn't of any consequence as a legislator.

SENEY: You're talking about Mr. Hurtt again.

GREENE: Hurtt. Rob Hurtt, he didn't seem to have any interest in legislating beyond conservatism. He had interests in certain conservative programs. He would like to put the church back into school, issues of that kind interested him. What's interesting there is -- I think it was member of Congress -- I was reading about him. A Catholic priest or bishop were after him because they wanted Christian ethics and morals, higher standards, more respect, and they wanted this and they wanted that. And the Congressman said, "You know, I don't get it. You've been trying to accomplish these things for years and you've not gotten anywhere. What makes you think we will?" In other words this is your bread and butter. You want us to sell the bread and butter you can't sell.

SENEY: When you first came into the Senate, [Senator James R.] Jim Mills was the Senate leader.

GREENE: When I was first in the Assembly Hugh [M.] Burns was the leader.

SENEY: Well, Burns was--

GREENE: Hugh.

SENEY: There were a couple between Hugh Burns that briefly -- I'm sorry, I'm wrong. Roberti was the leader when you came into the Senate, wasn't he, and Mills had been replaced by Senator--

GREENE: Mills had been replaced by Roberti and before Mills was -- I think his name began with a "W." [Senator Howard. W. Way]<sup>1</sup> It was just one term. Nice guy.

SENEY: There was [Senator] Jack Schrade,<sup>2</sup> briefly.

GREENE: Yeah, but then after Schrade.

SENEY: After Schrade there was -- I'm trying to think and I can't remember.

GREENE: Well, there's one guy that was in there for just two years. I believe we're thinking of Howard Way. He was a very nice gentleman. Schrade was a very conservative type from San Diego.

[End of Tape 6, Side A]

[Begin Tape 6, Side B]

GREENE: Unruh was speaker and then I think Bobby Moretti was next.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: Then after Moretti came McCarthy, and after McCarthy was Willie Brown.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: And then the Republicans took over and had about four almost a day at a time. Who did he have then? Oh, the one lady--

SENEY: [Assemblywoman] Doris Allen?

GREENE: Doris Allen was there a short time. [Assemblyman Brian] Sentencich was there a very short time. Who else?

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<sup>1</sup> President Pro Tempore California State Senate, 1969 - 1970.

<sup>2</sup> President Pro Tempore California State Senate, 1970.

SENEY: Now we're up into the '90s, after the '94 election.

GREENE: Yes. Well, that was a two-year stint when the Republicans took over, and even after they took over, it took them a long while until they could get Willie out of the way.

SENEY: That's right, because they couldn't get the 41 votes.

GREENE: They couldn't produce 41 votes.

SENEY: Yeah, to vacate.

GREENE: And Doris Allen I can remember so clearly, that she was very dependent upon Willie to keep her going. She couldn't do it without help, and she was getting help from the Democrats because the Republicans wouldn't do a damn thing to help her.

SENEY: They eventually recalled her.

GREENE: Yeah. Which is one of the dumb things that happens. This recalling is a matter of pique on the part of the recallers, that "you didn't get me what I wanted so out you go."

Well if you want to take a break.

SENEY: Sure. Let's do that.

[End of Tape 6, Side B]

Session 4, July 26, 1999

[Begin Tape 7, Side A]

SENEY: My name is Donald Seney. I'm with Senator Leroy Greene in his office in Sacramento, California. This is our fourth session.  
Good afternoon, Senator.

GREENE: Good afternoon.

SENEY: I want to start by asking you about your long career on the Education Committee, both in the Assembly and the Senate.  
What made you choose Education? Did you request that committee when you were first elected?

GREENE: Yes, I did. I thought we had covered some of that.

SENEY: A little bit of it, right.

GREENE: The Speaker of the Assembly at the time was Jesse Unruh, when I was elected in '62. He and his staff would work out all the committee assignments. Now, I was in a big class. By "big" I mean there are 80 members in the Assembly and my class of 1962 had 34 members. I believe we've mentioned this extensively.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: Thirty-three new ones and one had to come back again, second go-round. And when it came to committee assignments -- we did cover this -- I indicated to the Speaker -- Unruh -- that I would like to be on the Education Committee, indicating that of all the members of the Legislature, I was the only one that had

ever been involved in the construction of a school. I had participated in the design of a few hundred of them.

In fact, since the last time we met, I tried to make a check on just how many schools, because I've been thinking that there was around 200. Well, I think it might have been a lot closer to 400, from looking over my own records. But in any case, I said that I wanted to be on that committee and Unruh did put me on the committee.

SENEY: Who was chairing it then, do you remember?

GREENE: Yes. [Assemblyman Charles P.] Gus Garrigus. Gus Garrigus was from the Bakersfield area. He had been a -- I believe he was a community college teacher, and I think it was in English or poetry, or both. Later, after Gus left the Legislature he became the California Poet Laureate, and I believe he still is. So Gus was the chairman at that time. In my second two-year term, I was given the chairmanship of a subcommittee of the Education Committee on special education which, of course, relates to the education of handicapped youngsters. And I was out in Rancho Cordova, which was part of my Assembly district at that time, and I was discussing, with parents of handicapped youngsters, some of the programs that would affect their kids and they showed me a story -- I think it was in either *Look* or *Life* magazine; I think it was *Life* -- that told about a test that was going on in Massachusetts of newborns for something called phenylketonuria, known as PKU -- phenylketonuria. This refers to a baby who is just born, just comes from its mother's body, and it's a normal child in all respects except that in all protein

matter, there's an enzyme that can't be handled by that little body, and because it can't handle that enzyme, even drinking breast milk from its own mother, leaves this problem. And what it means is that the child will become severely mentally retarded but will have a normal life span.

Back in the '30s, somewhere in Norway, Sweden, they had isolated this enzyme, but it took some time before they found that they could make a substitute food, that did not have this enzyme in it. That protected the brain during the growth pattern of this youngster. And they were reading about this test, supported by the federal government, in Massachusetts and they asked me, "Well, what could we do if we wanted to do that in California?"

I told them, they have done what they could do. Let me see what I can do now. So we started with my staff calling around to several states to try to find out, of the fifty states, which had any such program. My memory may be wrong but I think there were about five or six. And one of them was north of us here, either Oregon or Washington. We called up there and asked them about it, -- and I think Texas was one of the states. Again, I'm not sure about that. But I was told that no, they didn't have any trouble carrying that kind of legislation but that I would. And I wondered, "Well, how come? If you did it and it's not hard, why would I have a problem?"

They said, "Because the difference is, in California, the medical societies are very strong and they're not in our state and the doctors aren't to like it." That turned out to be true.

SENEY: That seems odd to me, Senator.

GREENE: I'll tell you why. I'll give you a fact but also give you an opinion. And the fact is that the physicians said, "We don't need any politician telling us how to practice medicine." That's the fact. My opinion is that the majority of physicians are Republicans, and this was not a physician talking, it was a Republican talking. That is, the attitude was "we can handle these things, we don't need you to tell us how to practice our profession; you don't know anything about our profession." It was attitudinally. In any case, I put the bill<sup>1</sup> in and wanted all newborn babies to be tested for PKU. When they're born, within hours of birth a drop of blood is taken from the heel of the newborn and the blood is tested for phenylketonuria. If we find a positive result, well that runs a flag up on the pole and says "Danger! Danger!" and you make additional checks to confirm it. Here's a phenylketonuric baby.

But the incidence was somewhere about -- at that time I was told that the incidence was about one in every 16,000 births. Very small number. The doctors didn't like it. I was supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics and opposed by everybody else in the medical field.

So then the question is "Well, how are you going to proceed? What are you going to do?" And since they now had this test and so on, that I put in the bill that said that all children shall be tested at birth, and so on and so forth, and all you

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 42, 1967 Reg. Sess., ch. 22, Stats of 1967.

had at that time -- I don't know what it would cost you today -- but just a few bucks. Ten, twelve bucks, or less, or whatever, would pay to simply have this drop of blood looked at and checked out.

Well, the thing about it is that if you were a physician and all you did was handle births of babies, the question is: How many would you handle in your lifetime, say, of thirty, forty years? And I figured that if you did it, and then your child did it, and then your grandchild did the same thing, three generations of you before you had covered 16,000 births. So the odds on doing that were so small that a lot of doctors weren't bothering.

The medical profession sent three physicians to my office to talk to me, to try to persuade me to drop this bill. And one of these was a physician by the name of Dr. Ben Sebenthal, who died quite some time ago, who handled the birth of my daughter. And what these physicians are telling me is that they really didn't need this.

I asked Sebenthal, I said, "Ben, do you check your new births for PKU -- phenylketonuria?"

He says, "Yes," he did.

I said, "Well, the information I have from the Department of Health says that approximately 11 percent of the births in California are checked for PKU and the other 89 percent are not. Why shouldn't the rest be checked?" And I said, "I'll tell you what, you want me to drop the bill. Apparently you're telling me it isn't necessary for you to check those babies. Why don't you stop checking them?"

No, he felt that they should be checked. I said, "Ben, if you're not prepared to stop checking these kids, I'm not prepared to drop the bill, because you're telling me that you think everybody should be doing what you're doing, and yet you're telling me not to see to it that everybody's doing what you're doing." No deal.

SENEY: What was his response? Do you remember?

GREENE: Well, no I don't. I don't remember. But, you know, that was it for me. Now, at that time [Senator Steven P.] Steve Teale was a member of the Senate, and Teale was a physician. I got the bill through the Assembly, I was in the Assembly at the time. It came to the Senate and it went to the Senate Government Efficiency Committee.

SENEY: That used to be the graveyard for bills, didn't it?

GREENE: Yes. Yes. And the chairman of that committee had been a newspaper publisher in the Bay Area. I can't think of his name right now. [Senator] Luther [E.] Gibson was the chair of that committee. That committee used to meet privately the night before the public committee meeting and decide what they were going to do. It was all cut and dried at their committee meetings, which, incidentally, is illegal, immoral, unconscionable, but they did it.

SENEY: And they were notorious for that, weren't they?

GREENE: Yes, yes. And Steve Teale told them he wanted the bill defeated. Now, I'm not present so I can't guarantee accuracy of what I'm going to tell you. But Steve indicated that he didn't want them to pass the bill. And they pointed out that no doctor had indicated that he was going to testify against that bill, so c'mon.

Anyway, the bill came up--

SENEY: So they let it out.

GREENE: Well, because I pulled something.

SENEY: Okay.

GREENE: I contacted the various television stations and I explained to Channel 6, which was a public TV station, what this was about in detail, so they in turn televised the whole thing.

Now, that committee, with television on them, wasn't about to vote against the bill. But what Steve Teale did to me was he added an amendment to the bill, what they allowed him to do, that it would be a two-year bill. I don't mean the bill would exist for two years and I'd either have to renew it or it would lapse at the end of two years. Two years later I did it again and he put another two year limitation on it. After that, he was gone and I got the two year limitation out of the bill. It's been part of the law for many years.

There was a doctor by the name of Koch<sup>1</sup> from Children's Hospital, L.A., and he helped me with the bill. In fact, he came up here and testified for it. After it became law about a year or so later, he sent me a magazine-sized pamphlet about fifty different PKU cases, and it showed the babies and symptoms. Dr. Koch had written on the cover of it "These are your children," which was wonderful.

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<sup>1</sup> Unable to verify.

SENEY: Did you find out that the rate was higher than one in 16,000 once you started doing it?

GREENE: No, I did not. I did not find out. To this day I'm not certain. I think that's in the ballpark. I've heard other numbers. If you can subtract this little enzyme, everything's okay.

About two years ago, or a year ago, when I was still in my last term in the Senate, I was contacted by Dr. Koch again after thirty-some years, and he told me that now there were maybe a dozen different things that they could check in addition to phenylketonuria, PKU, from this same drop of blood, and he wanted me to amend the law to cover this list of tests.<sup>1</sup> So now it's PKU, among others.

SENEY: Ahh. So you were successful.

GREENE: Yes. And so we made that change somewhere around 1997, plus or minus a year, and I was very happy to be able to do that because you get the feeling, these babies would have been severely mentally retarded.

Now, one of the things I remember reading about years ago -- in fact, I've seen cans of soft drinks, like soda pop, that has on it a PKU warning. I don't remember which kind it was. Something that says that phenylketonurics should not drink it. I did see soft drink containers that did have a warning on it for phenylketonurics. So anyway, the very fact that I could do something like this, and this all happened in my second two-year term in the Assembly, my feeling

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<sup>1</sup> S.B. 537, 1997 - 1998 Reg. Sess., ch. 1011, Stats. of 1998.

about it was that the very fact that I got that one bill passed, that one bill, says that it was worthwhile for me to come by this way, becoming a member of the Legislature. If I never did another one, there's some lives saved here.

SENEY: You know, when you left the Senate, Pro Tem John Burton said about you that a lot of people passed all kinds of legislation, some did it with highways and schools, and this and that, but not very many people actually make a difference in the lives of individuals, and he said he thought you'd done that with that PKU bill.

GREENE: Well, I had done that with a few bills. Some that Burton wouldn't know about because they had been in periods of time when he wasn't around. Johnny was in the Assembly way back then, Then Phil [U.S. Representative Phillip Burton], his brother, did a little reapportionment deal. Some of the other bills that I did that are extremely important as that was really have nothing to do with education.

I carried a bill<sup>1</sup> one time -- very interesting -- you got the so-called cow counties that are thinly populated to this day, and here is a woman that's pregnant and the birth is taking place this day, but there's something wrong with the child. Something's wrong.

I passed legislation so that then you make one phone call. In the north that phone call is to Stanford Hospital. In the south it goes to Crippled Children's Hospital in L.A. Because if something's wrong and you're out in the middle of nowhere, the

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 4439, 1973 - 1974 Reg. Sess., ch. 1173, Stats. of 1974.

boondocks, the physician tells his nurse, "Start calling. I need some help. I don't know what to do," and so on. So with this one call you're getting to a central area where we have a list of the doctor specialists that we can get you in contact with. You raise your questions, you get your answers. But also, there's a short wave radio here. I was at Stanford Hospital observing this thing. I think it was Children's Hospital. I don't remember. I'm listening to this guy talking on this short wave radio and he is saying that by ambulance you'll have a pickup of a newborn baby from your hospital, taken to such and such an airport, it'll be this runway on the east end of the airport, and the baby will be flown to Oakland and you'll land at such and such an airport where an ambulance will be waiting to take it to such and such hospital.

Now, what I had worked out here was that twice a day by computer -- this is coming into the computer age -- you will check all the hospitals in the area that handle newborns or preemies -- you know, born before the nine months -- and you will find out what services do they render and what bed space is available. You'll check that every day. So you know that this baby has a certain problem and that hospital has a space, so we're delivering there.

I said to the doctor who was taking me around and showing me the sites and telling me these things, I said, "But what if you're overcrowded and there's no place for the baby?"

He said, "In that case, I'd get a big basket and I'd put the baby in the basket and I'd take it home with me." Which was a good answer.

SENEY: What was the reason behind this legislation? How did that come up? Do you remember?

GREENE: I don't remember why I did that. Maybe some article in the paper, something or other, that somebody out in the sticks couldn't get after numerous frantic calls. The realization that here's a doctor someplace, anyplace, and something goes wrong in the birthing process, what does he do? Suppose there's a negative reaction with the mother, or the baby?

They showed me how they transport the baby. Here's a tray. In fact, two decks -- a lower deck and then a waist-level deck -- and a plastic hemisphere there that's about the length and the width of this thing covering the top shelf. On the bottom shelf there's a motor and some batteries. You have temperature control, you have moisture control and so on, you have atmospheric controls, and you put the baby in this plastic bubble in the process of transporting it to wherever you're going to take the newborn.

That was another thing that I had done that I thought was extremely valuable.

SENEY: What year was that? Do you remember the bill number?

GREENE: I'm sorry, I can't remember. You know, somewhere or other I have that information. I don't know where.

SENEY: Okay, I'll find it.

GREENE: It's either in my attic or somewhere in my offices here I have a book or two that's filled with all my bills from the very first one, and it shows year by year all the

bills I carried. Maybe there's a thousand different bills, I don't know, and what I have is a copy of every bill. I don't know if I kept every single bill or only the ones that were passed. I don't remember about that. A lot of that stuff I gave to Archives.

SENEY: Right. I have some of it. I'll look for the rest of it.

GREENE: It may be in Archives, I don't know. But what year was it? Well, I'm just dead on it, I can't tell you.

SENEY: That's okay, I'll find it.

GREENE: It's too bad I've been around so many years. But anyway, that was another one that I felt that qualified as being worthwhile. So those two stand out in my mind. Maybe if I reviewed everything that I ever did, there might be two or three or four more. But the number is going to be quite small, of bills that I think are that important, that it has something to do with somebody's life.

The other thousand bills or whatever I carried successfully over the years, they do various kinds of things, particularly in the field of education.

One of the things I did several years ago -- it wasn't even a bill; it was a resolution of some kind or other -- asking a group known as the Volunteers of Vacaville -- now, Vacaville, we're talking about the mental hospital over at Vacaville -- to request of them that they transcribe books into Braille for the blind school kids, and that they make very large print books for those who have limited eyesight but could see real big print. So we did that as well.

Then I remember a bill, again one time -- oh, yes. I think I told you something about this last week, but I don't remember for sure, where I'm at a grocery store and it says "fresh fish," "fresh meat," whatever it was, and I thought, yeah, but this damn stuff has been frozen. How can you call it fresh if it's been frozen?

Another time I'm at a little restaurant and I see a sign on the counter that says, "Twenty-five cents has been deducted from the minimum wage because this person gets tips." I read that sign and I said no way, and I came back here and wrote legislation.<sup>1</sup> These are two different things.

SENEY: I remember reading about that tipping legislation, right.

GREENE: Yes. And the tipping legislation, I said, "You know, that's a gift from a person who came to the restaurant to the person that waited on them. I don't see why the owner should be allowed to deduct that from the minimum wage." I got through that war which meant I would never get any money in a campaign from restaurateurs. Things like that occur.

What was the other one I was talking about?

SENEY: The fish, the fresh fish.

GREENE: Yes. Well, so here was this thing that says "frozen," and what I discovered after that one was that even in a bakery, where they're baking cake and you're buying those fresh cakes -- no. Thanksgiving you're buying a turkey -- no.

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 232, 1975 - 1976 Reg. Sess., ch. 324, Stats. of 1975.

What was fascinating about turkeys and Thanksgiving was that they would have the turkeys in the freezer, and if you wanted a fresh turkey, it simply meant the day before they took it out of the freezer and let it thaw out, so the thawed out turkey was sold as fresh and the other one was a frozen turkey.

Well, so then I didn't like that notion and I put together a bill<sup>1</sup> that said nothing shall be sold as fresh that had ever been frozen. Then I found out I had to be an exemption because there was something or other that the fishermen were getting out by the ocean that had to immediately be put on ice, and so on and so forth, right before they'd even get it ashore. So you made your exemptions of this and that.

Then I found out on the tipping bill I had a problem there too, because here in this big hotel there's a so-called hat check girl. Well, it's really coats and hats. And if you're saying that you can't do this tip thing but the guy that has that concession bought it from the hotel, this is not the hotel's hat and coat check stand, I pay the hotel "X" dollars for this spot. Now, the only money I get is whatever tip is left, so you can't tell me that I can't deduct this from her wages. You know what I mean.

SENEY: Yeah.

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 1325, 1975 - 1976 Reg. Sess., ch. 998, Stats. of 1976.

GREENE: So therefore you have to let me pay her minimum wage, or whatever the hell it is, but whatever comes in is mine. Precedents come up about taxi cabs and other kinds of things. It took a little difficulty to do that.

But then I come up and I say you can't sell anything as being fresh that's been frozen, and the next thing I see is a sign in the window that says, "fresh frozen."

Yes, it was fresh when it was frozen. You got me.

Then I'm looking at eggs, okay? And they're selling fresh eggs. The sign says "fresh eggs." So I wrote a bill.<sup>1</sup> I was a freshman at the time. This is my first term. I wrote a bill that said that from the time the egg was laid until it was purchased, that it had to be kept below "X" degrees Fahrenheit, say 50 degrees. I don't know what, I don't remember now, but some number. It had to be kept below that number of degrees Fahrenheit. And I'd come with that bill and I thought about that a while and I gave up. I gave up on that bill. I said, "Well, you see, the problem with that bill is that if I'm saying from the time it was laid until somebody purchases it in the store it had to be under that temperature restriction, that means that the chicken would have to lay the egg inside of a refrigerator and you're not going to get an egg from a frigid chicken."

SENEY: Really.

GREENE: So I gave up on that one.

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 1507, 1963 Reg. Sess.

SENEY: How long had you been on the Education Committee when you were named chairman?

GREENE: Oh, I was in the Assembly for twenty years and I was on the Education Committee for twenty years. In my third two-year term, after I'd been there four years, I became chairman of the Education Committee. I chaired Assembly Ed. for 14 years.

SENEY: This would have been Jesse Unruh's call, right?

GREENE: Oh, yeah.

SENEY: Did you go to him and say, "I want to be chairman"? Or did he say--

GREENE: No, I told him. He knew that. He said to me, "Look, cool it." "Just don't get too tight on this thing."

I said, "Jesse, you're going to do whatever you're going to do, but I'm going to tell you something: I'm preparing myself to being chairman of that committee." Now, do you remember a fellow by the name of [Assemblyman] Leo [J.]Ryan?

SENEY: Sure I do.

GREENE: Killed at Jonestown?

SENEY: Right. He was a congressman then.

GREENE: Yes. Leo Ryan and I were in the same class in the Assembly and Leo wanted the chairmanship of Education as well. Jesse had me and had Ryan and we both wanted it. So Jesse put Ryan on the Rules Committee, and at that time the rules were that you couldn't be a member of Rules and be a committee chairman.

SENEY: So he finessed that.

GREENE: That's how he finessed it, by shoving Ryan over to Rules and then gave me the Ed Committee which Ryan didn't like a lot. But the thing about it was that I would say that he did it because Ryan was more dictatorial, I thought, than I was. He was a demanding, commanding type of person and Jesse didn't think that would go real well with the body politic of the educational establishment. Anyway, I became chairman in my third term and I was chairman until the Republicans took the majority. I don't remember what year that was.

SENEY: It was '68.

GREENE: '68?

SENEY: Right. To '70.

GREENE: And they had it for two years, and in that time Jesse became the Minority Floor Leader, and his deal with [Assemblyman] Bob Monagan was that I would stay on Education and I would become the vice chairman, and V.V.V. -- [Assemblyman] Victor V. Veysey -- would become the chairman. Vic was the chairman of the Assembly Education Committee for two years, then I took it back again, then Vic went to Congress.

SENEY: Right. I wanted to ask you about what you alluded to, the educational establishment and how that was to work with them. I guess here we're talking about the teachers and the administrators. Would we separate the school board associations from the administrators, or would they be one--?

GREENE: No, they're separate.

SENEY: Talk about those groups.

GREENE: Well, the thing here is that the largest group was the California Teachers Association in terms of members going into one group. And they were large enough so that they could, from their dues, put money into campaigns. I don't know how many people are in it but if there's like, say, 100,000, one dollar is a hundred thousand bucks, ten dollars is a million. They would put money behind various people.

[End of Tape 7, Side A]

[Begin Tape 7, Side B]

GREENE: The educators in the California Teacher's Association (CTA) cost me the chairmanship of the Education Committee when I came to the Senate. Because Chuck Imbrecht, a Republican, ran against [Senator] Gary Hart, who's a Democrat, for the Senate seat, and the CTA backed Imbrecht against Hart. But Hart won. And David Roberti, the Senate Leader, was saying "up yours" to the teachers' union by then giving Hart the chairmanship of the Education Committee.

SENEY: Was that in '82, the same year you were elected?

GREENE: Yeah. It was '82. So that's how that came about.

The teacher organizations -- the money interest, as I said, was the California Teachers Association. The other groups consisted of the American Federation of Teachers and UTLA, the United Teachers of Los Angeles. There might have been some other offshoots but this was where it was. Then you had the School Administrators Association and you had the School Boards Association. Then

other than that, were equivalent groups in postsecondary education, meaning community colleges, state universities, and UC. The interesting thing about it was that UC -- University of California -- was in a unique position compared to all the other branches of education, because everything else in education was created by the State Legislature. The University of California was not created by the Legislature. They are in the Constitution. The Constitution says there shall be a Board of Regents of so many members, and at that time Regents had a 16-year term, now it's 12, and the Board of Regents run it. And the only tie with the Legislature was a fiscal one. Money.

The Legislature to this day doesn't seem to quite understand that, because they're always attempting to force the University of California to do this or that. The University, to the extent that they're able or reasonably attuned in, will do that because they're afraid of the Legislature, the friction from it. There's a lot of things that the Legislature wants to interfere with they have no business with. Go tell New York what you want them to do. It's just not in the cards.

But in any case, the relative strength of the education lobby groups was not a factor with me. As far as I am concerned as an individual the content of their proposals was important. They come to me with a bill and you tell me why yes and why no, you're no different than anybody else. Either I like it or I don't.

SENEY: Well, you have that reputation for not following necessarily what they were after and they would be on your tail from time to time.

GREENE: Oh yeah, sure. But so what? In all the years that I chaired Education in both houses, I never looked to see, "Gee, this bill, what's it going to do to my district?" I mean, a kid is a kid and I don't care where he is. If he's within the boundaries of the State of California we owe him a better education than he's getting.

Now, other legislators didn't see it that way: "I have a constituency and I've got to do this for my people." That was a typical response. If you feel that way and everybody else feels that way, then everybody's fighting over this piece of candy or cake, for personal advantage. Why? What makes you think that your kids are more important than somebody else's?

This goes back to a feeling I don't remember whether we did or not discuss before, and that is that I make reference to these various caucuses that we had--

SENEY: Yes, you did.

GREENE: Like the Blacks and the Hispanics caucuses among many others. We're so much alike physically why bother with all the sub-sets of interests? Why don't we just say hey, somebody's being mistreated, let's straighten that out?

Well, as soon as you talk about some sub-group, you're talking about "what's in it for me?" And I don't like it. I don't want to play that kind of a game with those kinds of rules.

And here we have a Governor who says, "I beat my opponent by twenty points; therefore, the Legislature should do whatever I say."

SENEY: I thought legislators would like that.

GREENE: What a crock!

SENEY: Implement my vision.

GREENE: Yeah, implement his vision.

SENEY: There were several things in reading your papers that stuck out in terms of education, where you seemed to have really strong feelings. One of them goes back to the '60s and that is the political disturbances and the violence on the university campuses. You had very strong feelings then and I suppose still do about that sort of thing?

GREENE: Oh yeah, but what can you do? Young people are volatile. Not necessarily violent but they sure as hell are volatile. Actually, by and large there's always exceptions. By and large many of our students are very narrow-minded. Even if they're talking about clean air and clean water, they're still narrow-minded, because their view of the world is the only view that exists and everything else is wrong. They don't see other points of view.

I'm an engineer and here's the Seismic Safety Commission made up, say, of a bunch of engineers and some other people. Or here comes somebody with a bill that says because we found some methane gas coming up from under the ground on the Belmont School site in L.A., all school districts in the State of California, all school property should be investigated for this problem.

"How many billions of dollars do you add on to that little sentence you just said?" And people don't see it that way. And because this school district has this problem in this area, this is an area, a basin, where there is oil and gas under the ground. I've got news for you: In 90 percent of the state, there is no gas and oil

under the ground, so what is your point? If this gas is a hazard, why limit our interest to school sites? And furthermore, you want an investigation of this site, but that pool of oil or gas that's under the ground may cover square miles far beyond a school's location.

Down in L.A., the engineers figured out that the clothes industry, making women's clothes uses a bunch of old brick buildings that are way below code, so they wanted all these buildings brought up to code. Impossible. All you could do was simply close them because it would cost more than the value of the building to attempt to bring it up to today's code. I said if you want to do anything at all, put a sign on the building that says, "This building does not meet proper safety codes," and then you say to the owner, "Do you want that sign taken off? Fix the building. And if you don't want to fix it, the sign stays." That's about as far as you can go.

SENEY: Another issue that came up when you were on the Education Committee, from the earliest times you've seen all the way through and even today, is testing pupils for competency levels.

GREENE: And the other thing is that right now, all of a sudden, somebody woke up to the fact that what they're calling -- what do you call it? -- social promotion.

SENEY: Social promotion.

GREENE: Social promotion. There's another idiocy. Now we're saying, "Wait a minute, you shouldn't promote this kid unless he meets a certain minimum level of competency." And there's so little understanding of what baloney

that is, because a child is more than a unit to be educated in a school. That child exists intellectually, that child exists emotionally, and this is a physical body that has a growth pattern.

Now, here's a group of, say, 10 year olds, 12 year olds, 6 year olds, it doesn't matter, but here's a group of 6 year olds and within a certain range this is where their brains are. This is where their abilities are. Now, here's some academic subject matter and this one is learning fast and this one is learning slow.

So we say to this kid, "Look, you are reading okay but your math is no good; therefore, we're going to hold you back a year."

"But you said I was reading okay. So why do I have to do that again?"

"I have to read again because my math is no good?"

"But socially when I play with my peers, when we deal with each other, when we learn about the world we're in, you're saying I'm flunking out as a human being? Or I'm flunking out because I can't read or I can't write?" Because of the student's lack of academic growth, we deprive him of social growth!

That's a crock, dammit! And we refuse to acknowledge the relative importance of things. I would not take this kid out of his peer group unless there's something unusually wrong. By unusually wrong I mean that there is a physical or mental aberration that exists in this human being, and there's nothing about the learning process that's going to change it. It's not changeable. I would further say, if you insist on doing away with social promotion, then I would demand that that kid get a different teacher next year, not the same teacher.

Because if this teacher has a certain attitude toward this child, and whether her teaching methodology was the best in the world, it didn't work with this kid. Let's give somebody else a try. Let's not say, "We banged your head on the wall once last year, so we're going to bang it on the same wall again this year." Get some other person to bang it on some other wall, or whatever they want to do. So I am anti-terminating social promotion for those reasons, because, ask this question, "What is the relationship between academic success in school and success in life?" tell me what the relationship is?

"Well, what is success in school?"

"Is it grades on a report."

"Okay, what's success in life?"

"Whatever you want. I don't care."

You want to talk about how many times somebody's been married and divorced? Or how many times and for how long you've been put in jail? Or what your neighbors think of you?

"I don't care. It doesn't make any difference."

But can you relate success in life to success in school? The answer is no, you can't. You can't. Because success in life might represent somebody who is the garbage man, who drives a truck, who's a nuclear physicist, or an archeologist, or whatever. And there's no relationship here between these two factors performance in life vs. performance as a student.

So when we talk about social promotion look at all we're ignoring! There's an overwhelming number of things being ignored just because this kid can't read or write or do arithmetic at the same rate as some other kids. What I would say is, continue with social promotion, and the instant you discover that this student cannot keep up with the group, you bring in additional reinforcement.

You don't wait for bonehead English at the University of California Berkeley campus because this kid isn't any good at English. How did he get here? If we found out in the second grade that he's having trouble, why did we wait until he's in college to say he has to take bonehead English? No, get to his problem at the second grade. And what we do is add reinforcement. And if you need it for a second year or a third year you do it. You try to pull out and see if you've got it to a case where that mind is tuned in so it can move on its own, and if it can't then it can't. Recognize it, okay?

Let us say that a hundred kids graduated from high school today. How many of that hundred are going on anywhere in higher education as opposed to those who are going to look for a job? They're through with schooling. Is it 60/40, 90/10, 50/50?

Let's guess it's 50/50, and half of the kids go on to postsecondary education and half of the kids are not. Well, if you look at those who are going to go to universities, weren't their courses set up to match the entrance requirements of our universities? The high school didn't determine their graduation standards. The

entrance requirements of our universities determine the graduation standards of high schools.

Well, but isn't that ignoring that half of the group that's not going to go to college? Why are we insisting that they go through everything that would give them entry to the university when they're not going to go to the university?

The university, for example, the entrance requirement there for the high school graduation requirements, may be, say, two years of a foreign language. Why? What's the benefit of two years of foreign language?

Now, 95 percent or more of the people are going to disagree with me right here. They're going to say, "No, you've got to study a foreign language." And yes. We're going to get all kinds of blathering answers: "We're in an advanced society and in order to get along with the rest of the world we should be bilingual."

I said, "Okay, then let's teach all the kids Japanese so we'll get along better with the Russians."

And I'll tell you something else. I speak 50 languages and I'll name them for you if you'd like: New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island. We have a continental language. If you want to take up the amount of physical space that is the United States of America and superimpose that on a map of Europe, we may cover all of Europe? If the French and the Germans and the Czechs and the Hungarians and others speak different languages so be it. But I speak the language of a whole continent, including most of Canada. There's even places in Oklahoma where I can be understood.

- SENEY: Did the teachers of the other groups ever try to get you removed as committee chair, do you know, because you didn't agree with them?
- GREENE: I don't know. Probably. Maybe they did, maybe they didn't. I don't know.
- SENEY: No one, Leo McCarthy or Bob Moretti, ever said, "Geez, Leroy, I've got to keep these people away with a stick?"
- GREENE: No, I never heard any whisper from any leadership to tone it down or do this instead of that.
- SENEY: They never came to you and said, "This is what we're interested in"?
- GREENE: No.
- SENEY: Nothing like that.
- GREENE: No, never. Never, ever.
- SENEY: At what point did you become Senate Education chair? When was that?
- GREENE: When we came over to the Senate, [Assemblyman Charles R.] Imbrecht had run against Gary Hart and the CTA backed Imbrecht, Roberti gave Gary the position of chair of Education. Then I said to Roberti that in that case I will not be on the Education Committee, and he wanted me to be. And I said, "No, because if you've given it to Gary, then he must run that committee and he must run it his way, and I'm no pussycat and I'll be in his way. No, you gave him the committee, let him run the committee, and I'll do something else."

What they did then, they offered me the Housing Committee. My own feeling was I should have rejected it. I didn't, I accepted it, but I never was very satisfied with myself for having accepted it because I had no interest in the subject. I'm

being told, yeah, but you're cutting off your nose to spite your face type thing because as a committee chair you'd have staff, you could do this, you could do that.

No, I should have--

SENEY: That was a tough choice, though.

GREENE: No.

SENEY: No?

GREENE: It was a choice but I let myself be talked into something that I think was a mistake. I shouldn't have done it.

SENEY: How long did you remain as Housing chair?

GREENE: I was Housing chairman for two years, then I was Rev & Tax chairman for two years, something like that. Why did Gary leave? He didn't get term limited. I don't remember why Gary left. Did he get defeated or did he quit? I don't remember.

SENEY: I think he quit.

GREENE: Whenever he quit, then I took it. Either he had it for four years or eight years. I don't remember which. Maybe you know.

SENEY: Well, I'll look it up.<sup>1</sup> I can't remember now.

GREENE: Well, it doesn't matter really but that would tell me whether I had it for -- I thought I had it for eight years out of sixteen. He may have had it eight, I may

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<sup>1</sup> Senator Hart served in the Senate from 1982 - 1994.

have had it eight. It might that. Either that or he had it for four and I had it for twelve. I just don't remember.

But I do remember that I put together a superb staff. I had very good, strong people working for me, particularly with this damn term limits business. The Assembly just lost it all. They didn't have enough history and people behind them. Actually, I had all the power in education in my staff. It was not in the Governor's office or in the Assembly, it was in my office.

SENEY: Is that right? Because you had the memory and the--

GREENE: Well, no, not me personally. I'm talking about the staff I had. Plus myself. Because after all--

SENEY: I guess that's what I meant more generally. You had the memory--

GREENE: Well here, look at this. I had chaired Assembly Education for fourteen years, and Senate Ed for, say, eight years, but I was on the Allocation Board for 35 years. I had the Jt. Committee on School Facilities for decades. So I had a tremendous background. And not only that, I ran an engineering firm for 27 years, part of it duplicated years, but we worked on hundreds of school projects. I knew an awful lot about, the school design and construction about the Field Act, about earthquakes, seismic design, fireproofing, all the things to create a school, so that I had a unique background by just chance.

SENEY: Right. I'm trying to think of the national group you served on for such a long time.

GREENE: I was on the Education Commission of the States, E.C.S.

SENEY: That's right. And that must have been helpful, too, I would think.

GREENE: Well yeah. What happened there was that when Jesse was Speaker, California did not belong to the Education Commission of the States early on, and they picked up states as they went. When they were talking to California, Unruh made conditions on California's joining. I think there were -- my memory, I caution -- but I think there were 32 people on the steering committee, and 16 of them were educators. Eight of them, I think, were governors, and I don't remember about the other eight. But Jesse said the condition for California to join was that the number of legislators should equal the number of governors on the steering committee. So you wound up with governors plus legislators equals 16, and 16 educator types, 32. What it is today I don't know, but that was it at that time.

California was considered pretty big pickings at the time, so that when California came on to the Education Commission of the States, Jesse appointed me to be California representative from the Assembly. There was one from the Senate and one from the Assembly. Then, in turn, I was put on the steering committee, and then I was put on the executive committee, running the whole shebang.

At that point in time, the ECS, the Education Commission of States, was running NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress. So we had a national test that was given in several states, and in this particular test, what they would do is put together say a hundred, math problems for 13 year olds, another 100 for 9 year olds, another 100 for young adults, but we're only going to use say

a small portion of them. Next year we can use a different group, so that nobody could cheat the test by studying last years. And we would do that with various subjects.

In grading the test, we would simply indicate the percentage of this age group that took this test got the answer right and what percentage got it wrong. Some of that proved to be very interesting.

I was working with some of the most wonderful people I've ever come across in running through the National Assessment of Educational Progress. There was a gentleman from Princeton [University]. He could write mathematical equations and talk to you at the same time. Or he could talk to you about one subject and be writing on a different subject at the same time. I was fascinated by that. I can't say my own name and write at the same time. He was fascinating.

Then there was George Brain who was the head of Washington State [University]. Very good man.

Then there was another man well, I'm sure he's dead

-- who was an expert on mass testing, going back to World War I, of testing masses of people. What I would found of interest was matters like this. Here's the kind of question they were asking: "Is it all right to say that Russia is a better country than the United States? That it's not necessary to believe in God? And the answers came back, "No, it's not all right to say that Russia is better than the United States; no, it's not all right to say it's not necessary to believe in God."

Schools are supposedly teaching the Voltaire principle of disagreeing with what you say but defending your right to say it. That's what you're teaching but that's not what they're learning. If you study Voltaire you'll get one answer. But if you ask certain practical questions you find you haven't penetrated it at all.

Mathematics. The NAEP ask this math question. If you took a pail of water at 50 degrees and dumped it into a huge bucket and you took another pail of water at 70 degrees and dumped that into this bucket, what would be temperature of that water? Would it be 50 degrees, 60 degrees, 70 degrees, or 120 degrees? Kids say 120 because you added these together. So they had not reached that level of logic at that point in time.

Now, if you asked them how would they dress if it was a cold day or a hot day, I'm sure we would have gotten the right answer. But the way you put the question, you got the wrong answer. Why? Well, because of the nature of the development of the brain.

So this became very fascinating to me, the nature of the question and the nature of the answer.

SENEY: Did you bring some of that back to California?

GREENE: Well--

SENEY: Let me ask you about testing, about competency testing for teachers. What's been your view of that? Have you been a supporter or opponent of that?

GREENE: Well, you're getting into such long answered things. Now, let's come back to your question but let me roll a little bit.

You can go to a four-year college or university and get a bachelor's degree in a hundred different subjects, from A-Z. You can get a degree in agronomy, agriculture at one end of the line or zoology on the other end of the line, a bachelor's degree.

Now, let us assume that you took 15 units of credit each semester, so that would be 30 units in a year. After four years it would be 120 units. So let's assume that's our norm. Maybe it's some other number but it doesn't matter. Let's say it's 120 units.

Now, my degree is in engineering. That suggests math and science. So I need trigonometry, I need spherical trig, I need solid geometry, I need differential and integral calculus. I have this long, tall slender column of mathematics, and that's devouring some of my 120 units.

I have another column and in that column I have some chemistry, I have some physics, I have some electricity and so on. I look around, and what do you know? I've used up my 120 units. No room for anything else.

Well, wait. Another student is in the school of the humanities, or his major is geography. But that means that we can give him some philosophy, some psychology, some sociology, some botany, some economics. This student has fewer required courses and more electives.

What this means is when you graduate with a degree in Liberal Arts and I graduate with a degree in Civil Engineering, I know everything there is to know

about almost nothing at all, and you know almost nothing at all about everything there is to know.

SENEY: Let me change this, Senator.

[End of Tape 7, Side B]

[Begin Tape 8, Side A]

SENEY: Go ahead, Senator.

GREENE: If you'll remember, what we came up with was that if you're in the humanities, you can have a broad variety of courses, but if you're in some technical subject field, you'll have a narrow variety but in greater depth.

SENEY: Right.

GREENE: Now, if I had my druthers, let's go back down to the high schools and elementary schools. We talked a little earlier about the fact that high school graduation standards are not set by K-12. They're set by the entrance standards of the university.

Now, suppose we were to list all the subjects in K-12, from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. If we could list all the subjects, anything you can think of, list it.

Now, let's have a showing of hands. Reading. How many of you feel that you benefited from knowing how to read? Hundred percent of your audience puts their hands up. Writing? Hundred percent. Arithmetic? Add, subject, multiply, divide. Hundred percent. Foreign language? It's not a hundred percent, my friend. I don't know what percent it is -- maybe it's 30, maybe it's 40, maybe it's 80 and maybe it's 10. And then we go down through these other subjects and we

find a smaller and smaller percentage say that it was of some benefit in their lives to have studied each subject.

Well, I suggest that what I would do, if I were running the school system. I would say, I will require no foreign language of you but I will offer you up to four years of any language we can handle, if that's what you want. I will not require of you but I will offer to you four years of math if you want it. You must take reading, writing, arithmetic, no question about it. You must know the English language, how to speak it, read it and write it. I want to remove some of the things we're currently requiring because I want everybody to have some knowledge of economics, philosophy, sociology, psychology. I want those subjects as being more valuable to a greater number of people than many other things we're teaching.

Music and art are two subjects that cannot be escaped whether they're taught to you or not.

One time I asked a friend, an architect friend, how is it that certain color combinations seem appropriate when other combinations are thought to be awful? How did your mind make that decision? He said it was an easy answer, and it was. He says, "What you find in nature is appropriate. What you don't find in nature clashes." It's as simple as that. There's the whole thing in a nutshell. But as far as subject matter, I've given you some notion, without going into greater detail, of what I would do.

Now, there's another thing I would do though. I would establish an academy like West Point, Annapolis, or the Air Force Academy. Not that I'm going to put people in uniform and tell them to go march around a circle or fire a gun. But when you go to Annapolis, you don't pay them, they pay you, and you get room and board and an education, and you have actually contracted to serve the military. I would like to set up an educational academy and I want the best and brightest students who will be teachers of the future.

The best and brightest is an awkward phrase because I might measure the brightest in terms of grades on reports of various subject matter. But best, I don't know how I'm going to measure that. What I would describe as best is those people that can be most empathetic with other than their own kind, that have those social attributes that deal with understanding of and sympathy for others recognizing difficulties and means of encouragement. In my academy I would be training the teachers of the future.

Now I have my Academy trained graduate teachers. What am I going to do with them? This teacher doesn't have one classroom with 30 kids. He or she has four classrooms that he/she is responsible for, maybe a hundred kids that the teacher is responsible for. But we're going to go to the graduate school of Stanford, UC, Yale, Princeton, and we're going to offer two-year contracts for people that are seeking doctoral degrees in astronomy, music, art, physics, economics. In mathematics, in writing. We will give them credit toward their advanced degree for that two years and we will pay them a modest stipend, and in

two years we're going to get another batch and they're going to go on with whatever their career mode was.

I'm also going to go to the community college, and in the community college we're going to train teacher assistants and the teacher's assistant will be grounded in the subject matter that's taught, say, in the elementary school -- the reading and writing and arithmetic -- to the degree that you are not a full fledged teacher but everything you have here is transferable for credit if you decide to become a teacher later on. But this is to be a professionally trained teacher assistant.

The bell rings. It's the first day for classes. We have our Academy trained teacher. He/she has an assistant that came from the community college and he/she has one or more associates from the graduate schools of our universities. This is your teaching team. The academy trained teacher assigns her crew. All right, we have four classes here. Classroom number 1, during the first hour, we're doing arithmetic. Classroom number 2 will be doing history. Classroom number 3, this; classroom number four, that. In the second hour there will be a reversal, and third and fourth through the day we'll move through this agenda.

Our Academy trained teacher will be cruising all day every day. We will have two-way communication with all these classrooms. Our leader can talk to and can hear from them. We've discussed the lesson plan -- tomorrow morning our leader will talk via intercom to all four classrooms and explain to them what's going on today, do they.

So now the day begins. Our leader spends time all day in all classes and each staffer is doing their thing. After school there's a staff meeting to discuss tomorrow and review today. Our lead teacher calls on one of her staff; the Hispanic boy was having so much trouble last year trying to figure out long division, now the kid's got it. He's doing great. How did you do it? Our lead teacher checks with another of her staff. The little girl, Adrey, she was doing so much better last year than she's doing now. What's wrong? Can you tell me? Do you know? Well, let's get together after school tomorrow and we'll have a conference.

See if her parents will be available because something's wrong. Maybe it's at home. We need somebody who can speak the parent's home language to help us. But what did you do with the little Garcia youngster? He's really come alive? If you can tell us what that magic is, maybe we can reproduce it. That's the scheme of things.

In short, I have a teaching team working together. Using that teaching team I brought in outsiders and many other interests. The magic is here. Conventionally, if you're teaching fourth grade and I'm teaching fifth grade, somebody else is at each grade. One teacher has nine year olds, I have the tens, you have the elevens, and so on. I know what we're trying to do for them. We're trying to get them through our subject field, trying to do better for them than was done for us at that level, but what are they doing to us in the meantime?

Teachers are in very unusual circumstances for adults. Our adult life is around kids, endlessly. We don't traffic with other adults, mainly. We're endlessly, day after day, with kids. How do that reflect on our mindsets? Their needs never let go of us. They get something from us but we're getting something from them. Whether we want it or not, they're affecting us as we're affecting them. But the Academy notion, where we brought in somebody from the community college and we got somebody from the graduate schools that's high trained, a high powered specialist, we have created a different environment in which we live our lives. Couldn't that be better than just being the teacher of the nine year olds? And next year I'm a year older but they're still nine, and ten years from now I'm ten years older, they're still nine. What are they doing to me? So I have broadly outlined to you education as I would have it if I had the opportunity to do so.

SENEY: Let me change the focus, if I could, a little bit. You mentioned Governor Wilson. What would your reflections be on the various governors that your terms have coincided with? Pat Brown and Reagan and [Governor Edmund G.] Jerry Brown[Jr.]and [Governor George] Deukmejian, Wilson.

GREENE: I can only offer an opinion.

SENEY: Sure.

GREENE: I can't tell you how accurate it is, I wouldn't know. Let every person decide for themselves. It's like when people ask me, "Are you a Republican or Democrat?"  
 "I'm a Democrat."

“Are you a liberal or are you a conservative?”

I believe I've covered this subject earlier.

SENEY: The governors. I was asking about the governors you've served with.

GREENE: Yes, the governors. One of the more or less facetious remarks that I made was that governors have no staying power: I've been through five of them. Pat Brown starting there and then Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown, George Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson.

Now, George Deukmejian, is up there in one of the photographs on my wall. He was a classmate of mine when we came to the Assembly. Pete Wilson and I were in the Assembly for about, I think about six years so there's some familiarity here.

From my point of view, the best Governor was Pat Brown. I think far more was accomplished during his eight years than any other governor within my frame of reference. This is the time we built the educational system -- postsecondary, the community college, and the state colleges. This is the time when we built the state water plan and the Donahue Act on Higher Ed. This is when we built that tremendous highway system. And there was growth: rapid growth, large increases in population, and the will to do the things, to raise the money and do the things that needed to be done.

That spirit doesn't seem to exist to any such extent today nor has it under the other governors other than Pat Brown.

Jerry Brown, in my opinion, really never was the Governor. That during Jerry Brown's eight years, Gray Davis was the Governor. But the difference was that Jerry Brown -- opinion, not a fact -- didn't have any interest in governing. He had philosophical interests, broad interests, where it was very difficult to get his feet to touch the ground. And so Gray Davis, you made your day-to-day deals with him and that was it.

Deukmejian was very conservative. He'd want to know about every nickel, dime and penny. In his era you never knew what would be acceptable and what would not be acceptable unless you could find some way to hear him say it. If his staff said, "I don't see any reason why the Governor wouldn't approve of this," that turned out to have not much meaning unless you heard it from the Governor. His word is good, no question about it, but if you haven't heard it from his mouth you haven't heard it.

Pete Wilson was a presidential candidate and conducted himself accordingly. He wanted to be President. He had had a good career behind him -- San Diego, U.S. Senate, and so on, and Governor. Good steps. But he had an eye on a target and the target was the presidency. That would affect what he would do and that would affect the liberal-conservative match-up, because you go too far with those liberals seeking their votes, you're going to dry up all the money that comes from the conservatives. That's where much of it comes from, on the Republican side. It doesn't come from moderates. Basically.

And so among those Governors -- five of them -- I would say--

SENEY: You missed Reagan. Did you mean to do that?

GREENE: I'm sorry, I did miss Reagan. I did miss Reagan. I didn't mean to but I did.  
Maybe that is an expression of how effective I thought he was.

SENEY: Yeah, maybe so. Maybe that says it all, huh?

GREENE: Reagan was a very affable man. He was good company. Could tell very fascinating stories about Hollywood, and he had convictions but didn't strike you as particularly being an intellectual.

In fact, a funny thing with him was -- can't remember which daughter it was, but he complained to me at one time. You know, I carried this bill to legalize prostitution and he told me that -- I don't remember which daughter it is -- but he told me that his daughter thought it was a good idea and he had to call in her mother to straighten her out.

But he was a very nice person but I didn't think he was much of a Governor and not much of a President either, although my knowledge of him as President would be very remote. He was a nice guy. He had a nice personality and so on.

But as far as accomplishments? Pat Brown. And Jerry is out in outer space, someplace or other, with great designs.

SENEY: Well, Senator, that's all the questions I have for you. I appreciate your taking part in the project.

GREENE: Looks like we've covered the field pretty well.

SENEY: Okay. Well, thank you.

GREENE: But I think the most important thing that I've described to you in terms of the operation of the political environment is what I have to say about the school system, the difference between what it is, in my opinion, my personal opinion, as what it ought to be. And unfortunately, I'll never get the chance to get it there.

SENEY: I hope someone accepts your vision, Senator.

GREENE: Well, there was a time when I suggested, Pete Wilson that he appoint me as Superintendent of Public Instruction, which, of course, he would not do. Heavens, forget it. A Democrat? But the way he and others have acted and reacted to Delaine [Easton]. She's a very strong-willed woman. I don't find myself that much in agreement with her but it's a terrible setup. To think that you have a state constitutionally elected Superintendent of Public Instruction and here is a board of education appointed by one person, the Governor, and to say that that appointed board is superior in position to the Superintendent, a permanent and full-time position? That's an absurdity. And if it is that way, if other courts would agree to that, it should be changed. It won't be but should be.

SENEY: All right, well, thank you, Senator.

GREENE: You've very welcome.

## NAMES LIST

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Interviewee Leroy F. Greene

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Cooperating Institution Oral History Program, Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento

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