California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

WILLIAM B. ROSS

Political Consultant, 1948 - 1980

April 24, May 2 and 9, 1990
Los Angeles, California

By Enid Hart Douglass
Claremont Graduate School

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

WILLIAM B. ROSS
1955

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor

Enid Hart Douglass
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Interview Time and Place

April 24, 1990
Mr. Ross' office, Los Angeles, California
Morning Session of 1 1/2 hours

May 2, 1990
Mr. Ross' office, Los Angeles, California
Morning and Afternoon Sessions of 3 1/2 hours

May 9, 1990
Mr. Ross' office, Los Angeles, California
Morning Session of 2 hours

Editing

The interviewer/editor checked the verbatim manuscript of the interviews against the original tape recordings and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed.

On May 23, 1990, the edited transcript was forwarded to William B. Ross, who made only minor emendations and added some additional information in writing. He returned the approved manuscript June 1, 1990.

The interviewer/editor prepared the introductory materials.

Papers

The papers of William B. Ross will be deposited in the California State Archives.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the Oral History Program Office, Claremont Graduate School, along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are deposited in the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

William B. Ross was born on January 29, 1915 in Spokane, Washington. When he was thirteen the family moved to California on account of the poor health of his brother. His father, William G. Ross, was in the banking business and became city treasurer for Bell. His mother, Royala Loomis Ross, was a homemaker. William Ross attended Glendale High School and graduated in 1932.

Mr. Ross enrolled in University of Southern California in the fall of 1932 and majored in journalism. He supported himself during his college years by working on several newspapers, including the Daily Trojan, the Huntington Park Advertiser, and the Los Angeles Times. He also sold newspaper advertising. In 1936, he married Virginia K. Smith, and they had a family of nine children.

After graduating from college in 1937, he established his own public relations firm, W. B. Ross & Associates, in Los Angeles. Mr. Ross became involved in politics when he managed a 1946 school board campaign for three candidates running for the Los Angeles board of education. Shortly thereafter he met Herbert M. Baus, who had just started his own political consulting business.

In 1948, Mr. Ross and Herbert Baus established Baus and Ross Campaigns. Baus and Ross Campaigns, later to be known as Baus and Ross Company, was one of the first political consulting firms in California and pioneered the use of polling, direct-mailings, and widespread media coverage in political campaigns. The firm worked on various local and state issues, including public housing, expansion of the Los Angeles International Airport, and tax exemptions for nonprofit institutions. Baus and Ross also handled campaigns for elective offices at the local level, such as the Los Angeles City council and mayor races and Los Angeles County races for sheriff and assessor, and statewide campaigns for attorney general, lieutenant governor and governor. The firm managed presidential primaries in California for Richard Nixon and Barry Goldwater. Baus and Ross also directed the Nixon-Lodge general election campaign of 1960 in California.

After Herbert Baus left the company in 1969, Mr. Ross remained in the business of political consulting until 1980. In those years he managed several local campaigns and the successful election of Evelle Younger as state attorney general.

William Ross has been active in the community. He has served as President of the Los Angeles Catholic Press Club, vice president of Holy Family Adoption Foundation, and as a board member of several charitable and business organizations. He is now retired and lives in Los Angeles.

[Session 1, April 24, 1990]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

DOUGLASS: Mr. Ross, I noted you were born in Spokane in 1915. Why were your parents living in Spokane, Washington?

ROSS: My dad was a former city treasurer and a banker there. He was sent there originally by Dunn & Bradstreet. He came from Portland, Oregon. So did my mother. He went to work for Dunn & Bradstreet. They sent him to Spokane, and then he got into the banking business. Then he became city treasurer, and then he went back into the banking business and became president of a bank up there.

We reached a crisis in the family, the health of my brother, and came to California. At that time I was thirteen. I turned fourteen in California. So I have been here ever since, since 1928.

DOUGLASS: You were getting away from what kind of weather? Spokane is dry, isn't it?

ROSS: No. It is not dry. Spokane is about 4,000 feet elevation. It gets a lot of rain in the springtime and a lot of snow in the wintertime.

DOUGLASS: A hard climate.

ROSS: Temperature gets up in the nineties in the summertime. It is a kind of dry climate at that time of the year. It is an area of pine trees, rivers and streams and lakes all around.

DOUGLASS: Was your father educated in Washington?

ROSS: No. In Portland.

DOUGLASS: How about you? You went to elementary school in Spokane?

ROSS: Yes. I went to elementary school in Spokane. I just started at Lewis and Clark High School. In my first semester we cut it off and left in November 1928 for California. We hit the coast at Pismo Beach. It was in December and bright, bright beautiful weather. We had come down in rain and snow all the way, came down central California and then over to the coast. My mother loved the place. Dad didn't know what he wanted to do. He had an opportunity in San Francisco, he felt. He had two or three

interviews possibly in Los Angeles. So it was kind of a halfway point. We stopped, and I entered Arroyo Grande High School.

DOUGLASS: Oh, you stopped and rented a house or something?

ROSS: Yes. I was in Arroyo Grande High School for the remainder of the year. Then we came to Glendale. I spent three years at Glendale High [School] and graduated from there.

DOUGLASS: I'll bet there were people clamming out at Pismo Beach when you drove up.

ROSS: Gee whiz. In those days clams were everywhere. They had the signs out everywhere, "Clams for sale." They had pitchforks for everybody to use. They were relatively inexpensive. Every low tide you would see clams there, they were too small, that had been washed up by the surf. It's all different now.

DOUGLASS: What brought your father to Glendale?

ROSS: He took a job with California Bank, which became United California Bank, which became First Interstate [Bank]. He was the assistant manager of the Hollywood office. It was interesting. At that time Hollywood was Hollywood. His forte was mostly with motion picture actors and actresses. And Aimee Semple McPherson.

DOUGLASS: Oh, my. That is a story in itself.

ROSS: It is. It was a very interesting time to grow up. Then he went out to the town of Bell to close an office out there. He did so well with it. . . . They were just going to run out their lease and quit. It was the height of the depression. They took over a failed bank. That is, they took over the building; the bank had folded. He managed in that office up until the time he went into business for himself.

DOUGLASS: Your home was in Glendale?

ROSS: The home was in Glendale. Yes. I graduated from Glendale. He and my mother moved a year before I graduated. I just stayed in Glendale to finish school; I was tired of moving. [Laughter] I was doing well in school.

DOUGLASS: That was a good high school.

ROSS: It was a great high school. Just a wonderful education there.

DOUGLASS: So you stayed with another family?

ROSS: I stayed in a boarding house.

DOUGLASS: And where did they move to?

ROSS: They moved to Bell.

DOUGLASS: I see. To be near where he would be [working].

ROSS: Where he was working. He also became city treasurer of Bell.

DOUGLASS: He liked that, didn't he?

ROSS: He did. It was a great public relations thing for the bank and for him.

DOUGLASS: In those days, and still, some city treasurers are elected and some are appointed.

ROSS: He was elected.

DOUGLASS: So he had run for election up in Spokane?

ROSS: Up there he was appointed. I got to cast my first ballot for my dad for city treasurer. [Laughter] It came out that way. I turned twenty-one in January, and he was up for election in April. He was reelected year after year after year. He finally retired. He wanted to stay there until he paid off all the city debt. And he did.

DOUGLASS: Coming out of the depression.

ROSS: Coming out of the depression. Yes. At the end of the fifties he quit.

DOUGLASS: He was addicted, wasn't he?

ROSS: He loved the work, and he loved the people.

DOUGLASS: Do you think that got you intrigued with the political world a little bit?

ROSS: I am sure it did. As a kid, I went around passing out handbills in Spokane. As a kid, he and I used to get up in the morning--my mother would stay in bed--he would prepare breakfast, and we would read the paper and talk politics. I was kind of excited about it all my life.

DOUGLASS: That is most interesting. You decided to go to USC [University of Southern California].

ROSS: Yes. I stayed out a year. You can do this in the depression. I became the editor of the Bell-Maywood Industrial Post. [Laughter] It is a newspaper still in existence, I believe.

DOUGLASS: I noticed in '32 that you began doing this kind of work. This was the Bell paper. How did that happen?

ROSS: My dad knew the editor. That couldn't hurt. I had made up my mind that I wanted to be a newspaper man. That is one reason I stayed at Glendale. I ran across a wonderful man by the name of D. J. Edmondson. He was the journalism instructor at Glendale High School. I always loved to write. I was a pretty good writer. I learned to type. My first summer in Glendale I went to Glendale Business College and learned to type and do some fast calculations. I ran

across Edmondson, and I said, "This was for me!" I became editor of the school newspaper. Then I became editor of the yearbook. I knew I wanted to get into journalism.

At that time, USC was the only school that had a journalism department. The University of Washington had a little bit. The University of Wisconsin had a pretty good school.

DOUGLASS: Did Stanford [University] have journalism then?

ROSS: Not then. USC was all alone at that particular time. Journalism was taught at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] and at Stanford as a part of the English department but not a degree in journalism. That is where I went and got my A.B. [bachelor of arts] degree. I worked as an editor of a community newspaper all through that time I was in school until the last year, and I became a correspondent for the [Los Angeles] L.A. Times. I went into that.

DOUGLASS: Did you cover some particular facet of the news as a Times correspondent?

ROSS: Yes. Just USC news. I was down there every day with stories and pictures.

DOUGLASS: So it would be everything from sports to politics on campus?

ROSS: Not too much sports because their sports writers covered that, but everything else was wide open for me. The social business. We had all kinds of academic things we could talk about and write about.

DOUGLASS: You were paid by the inch?

ROSS: By the inch. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Do you remember how much?

ROSS: No. I don't remember how much. I know that my checks averaged around seventy dollars a week. That was big money in those days.

DOUGLASS: Yes. Very good money. You weren't doing that at the same time you were editing a community paper, were you?

ROSS: No.

DOUGLASS: You did one or the other.

ROSS: I did one or the other. Yes.

DOUGLASS: Was there another paper than the Bell paper?

ROSS: I did the Huntington Park Advertiser, which later became the Huntington Park Bulletin. I did that for two years.

DOUGLASS: Now you were the editor for these papers. That means you coordinated everything. Rewrote.

ROSS: I was the editor. I was the rewrite man. I was the reporter. I was the head writer. I was the

proofreader. [Laughter] In those days it was a one-man operation.

DOUGLASS: Were they weeklies?

ROSS: Semi-weekly. Both of them.

DOUGLASS: So you had two deadlines a week.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You were busy.

ROSS: Yes. I had a rough time making my eight o'clock class because oftentimes I didn't get out of there until two o'clock in the morning.

DOUGLASS: Did you get credit for this work towards your degree?

ROSS: No. It was just the way I was supporting myself. My parents didn't have that kind of money in those days. They paid for my first year. My mother took something she had for the first semester and my dad for the second semester. The next three years, it was up to me.

DOUGLASS: Did you live near the campus?

ROSS: No. I lived in Bell. In those days a commute was about twenty minutes. I went all on surface streets. The main street of Bell falls between Slauson [Avenue] and Florence [Avenue]. So I worked on to Slauson and would come over on the

side streets. USC was at Exposition [Boulevard] and Figueroa [Street] at that time. At the corner when the parking lots were there.

DOUGLASS: It sounds like you enjoyed college.

ROSS: Very much so. I just had a wonderful education. At least the experience was wonderful. I got into journalism school. I became what they called the "day editor" of the Daily Trojan. Then I got married at the end of my junior year.

DOUGLASS: Was your wife going to USC?

ROSS: She was going to USC. I got married at the end of my junior year. Money got to be very important to me. I got involved in advertising. To begin with, I was doing advertising as a minor along with a major in journalism.

DOUGLASS: Would that be in the school of business?

ROSS: I did advertising and marketing. That was in the College of Commerce. I had seen that side of it. I drifted into the advertising side, selling advertising for the Daily Trojan. I did quite well on that. Then I became business manager in the last year there, of the Daily Trojan.

DOUGLASS: You had an amazing amount of experience by the time you left college.

ROSS: By the time I left college I really had seen the whole side of the publishing business, the newspaper publishing business. Of course, in those days, it was very important. We didn't have TV [television]. I started an advertising agency while I was still in my last year at USC, called the Trojan Advertising, because I was operating out of the Daily Trojan office. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: But it was your business.

ROSS: It was my business. Yes.

DOUGLASS: Were there any particular professors or people you met at USC that affected your life?

ROSS: Yes. Roy [L.] French, who was the head of the department of journalism. Just a wonderful man. He made that whole university program tick. So he was very important. That is the one person I would think of.

DOUGLASS: Was he a supportive person? Did he have a lot of ideas? In what way did you think he was outstanding?

ROSS: To begin with, he had a great sense of humor, and was a great lecturer. He also kept his finger in all the publications, everything that was going on. The office door was always open.

No secretary. If he wasn't busy, he opened the door. He always had time to talk to you. He could talk about anything and everything in connection with your studies.

DOUGLASS: How big were your classes?

ROSS: They were wonderful classes. Fifteen, twenty, twenty-five.

DOUGLASS: So you really had the personal touch.

ROSS: Yes. You get to know everybody in the department and everybody on the staff of the newspaper. I started writing for it the first minute I got started there.

DOUGLASS: You never regretted that choice.

ROSS: I sure didn't. Then I went into advertising and public relations. The accent, to begin with, was mostly on publicity because I could bang out news stories real fast.

DOUGLASS: This is when you established W. B. Ross & Associates?

ROSS: After I got out of school, I started W. B. Ross.

DOUGLASS: After you had the Trojan Advertising.

ROSS: Yes. I had mostly publicity accounts. Advertising just came along later, really.

DOUGLASS: Because, as you say, of this ability to bang out the stories.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Where did you operate out of when you began that firm?

ROSS: I operated out of a little office on Estrella Street, just off of Washington Boulevard. At the tail end of my junior year I started doing publicity for Pierce Brothers Mortuaries. That is really where you are banging out obituaries. Zing, zing, zing, zing. It was my "foundation" account.

DOUGLASS: How did you happen to get that job?

ROSS: Through an advertising agency contact. I was doing this while at the same time I was going to school and at the same time I was in the newspaper business. I was putting out a monthly publication for the Central Manufacturing District.

DOUGLASS: What kind of a publication was that?

ROSS: It was more or less a house organ. Two things. I talked about the new companies coming in. I interviewed them and got the whole history of the company. The other part of it was just general news on business in southern California.

DOUGLASS: Was the Central Manufacturing District an organization of manufacturers?

ROSS: No. It actually was a district. All the streets were private. Leonis Boulevard was the main one. It was to the north of Slauson. Leonis Boulevard was the main entrance to it. It had a lot of very big businesses. U.S. Spring & Bumper [ ] was there. Gaffers & Sattler [Co.]. They were the biggest kitchen range makers at that particular time here.

DOUGLASS: So it was like a big industrial park.

ROSS: It was a big industrial park. They didn't call it a park in those days. But the main advantage of it, I am sure, was that they could lock off the whole park. If anybody wanted to picket, they had to picket the park gates. They couldn't picket one place. They couldn't go in there.

DOUGLASS: So you put out an in-house news organ.

ROSS: It was a magazine. A six-by-nine [inches] magazine. A little bulletin-type thing. It had thirty-two to forty-some-odd pages. It had some advertising in it. Not much.

The Central Manufacturing District was started by the Santa Fe Railroad to develop a shipping business for them. They had done it very successfully in Chicago, and they started

it here. They had what they called a "neutral shipping service," which was very important to shippers. They would pick up your stuff right on the site at your plant and take it to Union Pacific [Railroad] or Southern Pacific [Railroad] or to their own place and hook you on there. Santa Fe also, at that time, had the belt-line railroad from the harbor and had all the harbor business. Again, it was a neutral shipping service, but they got a lot of business out of it.

DOUGLASS: So that was a monthly?

ROSS: It was a monthly. Anyway, through them I was working for their advertising agency. I reported to that person, who couldn't write anything. But he was a good promoter and salesman. Somebody had come to him--I don't know who--and said, "It appears by this they are looking for a man." He sent me down to the Philip Meany Company, which was the advertising agency for Pierce Brothers. I talked to them and they sent me out, and Pierce Brothers hired me.

DOUGLASS: And was your job to pound out obituaries?

ROSS: Pound out obituaries.

DOUGLASS: For the newspapers?

ROSS: For the newspapers. In cases of important people they waked me up in the middle night. In those days, you had morning newspapers that kept an overnight person on the city desk. I would call in and tell them that Tom Mix had died or so-and-so died. Movie people were big in those days. They would catch it then in their first A.M. edition.

DOUGLASS: Were you paid an hourly salary or by the amount published?

ROSS: I was paid a hundred dollars a month, which was fantastic to me.

DOUGLASS: Was this right after you were out of college?

ROSS: No. I was still in college.

DOUGLASS: So you were bankrolling quite a bit by the time you were a senior?

ROSS: I was. It was kind of a funny thing. I was making a little over $400 a month. My dad was the manager of the California Bank. He was making $230 a month. I used to tell myself, "I can't afford to graduate," because my senior year I was business manager of the publications and on salary and commissions. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Did you ever sleep? It sounds like you were pretty busy?

ROSS: I was pretty busy. I didn't sleep too much. I was 6'4" and 140 pounds when I graduated.

DOUGLASS: You were a slim fellow. Tall and slim. To establish your own business, which you did in '37, did that require any capital for you to do that? Or did you pretty well have your typewriter and everything you needed, and rented an office?

ROSS: Yes. I rented an office.

DOUGLASS: On Estrella.

ROSS: The office was owned by Pierce Brothers. It wasn't too much of an office.

DOUGLASS: Did you have a secretary?

ROSS: No.

DOUGLASS: Just you.

ROSS: Just me, to begin with. I really didn't need a secretary because I was a very good typist. I had learned the touch system. I could bang out letters. Down at the bottom I would put "wbr/b". "William B. Ross/Bill." [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: So who is to know. [Laughter]

ROSS: Yes. I made them look really good.

DOUGLASS: So you are now being pulled, as you say, away from straight journalism, which had been sort of your love. How did you feel about that?

ROSS: I liked it. I don't think I ever was in love with it the way I was with the newspaper business. But I got to be good at it. I had Monarch Finer Foods, which was at that time a pretty big account in the food business. I got that out of the Central Manufacturing District.

DOUGLASS: So you began to get contracts or accounts.

ROSS: Yes. You just went from one thing to another. Pretty soon I was hiring a secretary, and I was hiring a writer to pound out obituaries.

DOUGLASS: So you still had Pierce Brothers.

ROSS: Yes. Then I got into the Pierce Insurance Company, which is an interesting story.

DOUGLASS: Was that an offshoot of Pierce Brothers?

ROSS: Yes. I was the guy who was able to give it the name Pierce Insurance. I was doing obituaries, and Mark Pierce used to give me other things every once in a while to do. He began to give me advertising to do on this insurance company, which was Imperial Mutual Life Insurance Company. Mutual is a bad sort of thing. Policyholders get assessed if they go broke. He

told me that he wanted to go to a private company and change the name to Pierce Insurance Company. I think the state insurance commission would not allow him to do it. He was very upset about that.

I said, "Why won't they allow you to do it?" He said, "They say that you can't name it after somebody who is alive. Because I am alive." He had two other Pierce family members in there, all alive. He said, "They won't let me do it." I said, "Why don't you name it after President [Franklin] Pierce." "Well," he asked, "who was President Pierce?" [Laughter] I went to an encyclopedia, brought it to him, and showed him who the guy was and his picture. I dummied up a policy for him. I got a standard frame and pasted in Franklin Pierce's picture and put the dates in. Eighteen-something to eighteen-something, fourteenth president of United States. And that passed. That went by the commission. Then he had the Pierce Insurance Company.

DOUGLASS: Your college education paid off.

ROSS: Mark thought so.

DOUGLASS: Tell me about the Pierce family. Was this the generation that established the business? It wasn't the father?

ROSS: It was Mark Pierce's father.

DOUGLASS: Was his father still alive at that point?

ROSS: No. He was not.

DOUGLASS: Couldn't he name the company after his father?

ROSS: I guess if he had changed it to the Fred Pierce Insurance Company, maybe he could have. I don't know. His father later took in a brother, Will Pierce. Then when his father died, the majority interest went to Fred Pierce's son, Mark, and his daughter. Those two had it, and Mark had the proxies of both of them. So he came in and really was the man who made Pierce Brothers. He was the one who took it in all the neighborhoods and so on and built it into a big organization. Will Pierce kept an office there. And as also did Dr. Clarence [J.] Pierce, who was an M.D. [medical doctor] retired, and he kept an office there.

DOUGLASS: Perhaps you could describe what public relations meant in those days, in the decade from about '37 to '47 or '48. Let's say your contract with Monarch Finer Foods. What would that involve?

ROSS: The public relations business?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

ROSS: At that particular time, public relations was a highfalutin name for press agent. Most of your work was with the press. Getting stories placed about your client. There would be some work involved in writing letters and writing speeches and that sort of thing. That's what qualified you to call yourself public relations, to do that kind of thing. You didn't have radio and television. You also get involved in direct mail, writing direct mail things. Of course, that tied into the advertising that I was doing.

Pierce Brothers really got me into the advertising side because of Pierce Insurance Company and getting out various folders and things for them. I began to learn layout and the rest of it. Then I got into the Monarch thing, which took me into magazines, primarily, and some outdoor. And also radio. A lot of radio.

DOUGLASS: Did you write dialogues for radio presentations?

ROSS: No. Basically, spot announcements is the stuff I did.

DOUGLASS: You would do it yourself?

ROSS: Yes. I did it all myself.

DOUGLASS: So you were their representative on the radio. You were the person who spoke.

ROSS: I would speak for them. I also would talk at their sales meetings and that sort of thing.

DOUGLASS: They would only have one PR contact.

ROSS: Yes. I would go to people they wanted to get a message across to. I did a lot of that for Monarch. I would call on Von's Grocery Company and Ralph's Grocery Company and others.

DOUGLASS: Well, Los Angeles was a smaller place then.

ROSS: It was a smaller place and had five newspapers which it doesn't have today.

DOUGLASS: Name the five.

ROSS: The first one was the Times. The next one was the [Los Angeles] Herald-Express. The next one was the [Los Angeles] Herald-Examiner. The next one was the [Los Angeles] Daily News. The fifth one was the [Los Angeles] Record.

DOUGLASS: Was the Manchester Boddy paper the Daily News?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Was that good? Did you sell more advertising or was that bad? Was it harder to cover and get press releases accepted at that time?

ROSS: No. I miss those days. I enjoyed it very much because each had different outlooks and different things they were interested in. You could write your stories to appeal to what it was they were trying to get across.

DOUGLASS: And you probably knew these people. You would go directly to them?

ROSS: Oh, yes. You'd go right to the city desk with your material. You'd call them up and tell them things. They got very friendly to you because you were giving them news tips and news stories.

Then I got involved in politics through Pierce Brothers, again. Dr. Clarence J. Pierce decided he wanted to run for the [Los Angeles] board of education. I got him nominated. They formed a ticket of [E. Vincent] Askey, [John] Dalton, and Clarence J. Pierce. That was my first real fairly big campaign. Askey was a doctor and practicing. Pierce was a doctor but not practicing. Dalton was head of the typographical union.

DOUGLASS: Why did Pierce want to be on the school board?

ROSS: I haven't the slightest idea.

DOUGLASS: It was just something that he wanted to do?

ROSS: Yes, I think so. Mark kind of encouraged him. Mark had been in the state assembly. Before he got really active in Pierce Brothers he had been assemblyman. The board of education got in the papers all the time, and he thought that would be good for Pierce Brothers.

DOUGLASS: Lawyers do it.

ROSS: That was about the way it went.

DOUGLASS: About when was that school board election? I don't have a date for it. I know it was mentioned, Pierce's interest in politics.

ROSS: [Referring to notes] It was 1945. I was alone at that particular time. I had not met [Herbert M.] Herb Baus yet.

DOUGLASS: How did you like the give-and-take of that? Of course, it is not a party campaign but it is politics.

ROSS: Oh, I loved it. I just thought it was absolutely great.

DOUGLASS: Shades of your father running for city treasurer?

ROSS: Yes, I guess so. Of course, I liked Dr. Pierce very much.

DOUGLASS: And you were successful.

ROSS: I was successful at it, and that was good. So I really enjoyed it.

DOUGLASS: Did you work for all three?

ROSS: I worked for the three as a ticket.

DOUGLASS: They were running with some kind of viewpoint to replace some people.

ROSS: I don't recall any real issues at that time. It was a dream ticket because you had Dalton to bring the labor vote. That took care of the Daily News. Dr. Askey was a very prominent surgeon at that particular time.

DOUGLASS: So you had a surgeon, a successful businessman, and a labor person.

ROSS: Yes. It was a dream ticket. I did a lot of elections after that for boards of education and all the school bond issues they won and tax overrides. I handled those campaigns. We won all those. It was a fun deal.

DOUGLASS: So you sustained that interest. You sort of did the schools?

ROSS: Yes. Then I really got into politics because of Herb Baus.

DOUGLASS: When did you first meet Herb Baus?

ROSS: I think I first met him in 1946. The establishment of a Fair Employment Practice

Commission, a campaign against that. Herb handled that campaign. The chairman of it was Frank [P.] Doherty. And Frank Doherty was the father of my brother-in-law. To put it another way, Frank Doherty was an attorney. He became president of the [Los Angeles] Chamber of Commerce. President of the state chamber of commerce. He was very active in civic affairs.

He was a very fine attorney and was also active in political affairs. As a young man, he was chairman of the Republican County Central Committee here. He was closely allied with [Governor] Hiram [W.] Johnson. This goes back in history. He was his campaign manager. He just got involved in Republican politics back and forth. He had a son who married my wife's sister.

He told me about Herb Baus. And Herb had opened an office on Venice Boulevard, roughly four or five blocks from my office. We began to meet for lunch and talk. He was kicked out of his office through somebody taking a bigger lease or something like that. I had extra space. I was expanding at that time. I had space where I could give him an office in my

ROSS: place. So he came in with Herbert Baus Public Relations. I was doing mostly advertising at that time. I was out of PR, except for doing the Pierce Brothers work. That was the only straight publicity work I was doing. In 1948, when I handled my first big campaign. That was that state public housing bill.

DOUGLASS: That is when you formed Baus and Ross Campaigns. Is that right?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You each kept your own firm.

ROSS: We each kept our own business.

DOUGLASS: You said yours was emphasizing advertising.

ROSS: Yes. Mine was W. B. Ross & Associates and mostly in advertising. I was getting very active. I had done the Douglas Oil [Co.] account at that time. Oh, a bunch of them. We weren't really in conflict. We could get along.

Herb took this railroad featherbedding campaign. Then he was offered a public housing campaign, which he couldn't take on his own. He diverted it to me. He told me the mechanics of how you organized a proposition campaign. That is how I got started.

DOUGLASS: So that was the 1948 Proposition 14. Public housing.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Did you do all of that?

ROSS: I did the whole thing myself.

DOUGLASS: I have that Earl [S.] Anderson, who was the chamber deputy manager--that is, Los Angeles City chamber--had contacted maybe Mr. Baus.

ROSS: He did. On the public housing business.

DOUGLASS: Perhaps you can talk about the issue and the nature of that campaign. This is your first one, right?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: And this was a statewide campaign?

ROSS: It was a statewide one.

DOUGLASS: Why was it such a hot one in Los Angeles?

ROSS: Los Angeles was starting out into the big subdivision era. Fritz [B.] Burns was just getting going. He was doing Westchester. He had done Windsor Heights, which is now Baldwin Hills. It has become mostly black. He was getting started to go into Panorama City. Spiros Ponty was very active out in the [San Fernando] Valley, building subdivisions out there. There was an organization called the

Home Builders Association. Subdividers were pulling out of the real estate association and getting into the Homebuilders Association. This is the postwar building boom. So it was a very hot subject down here.

This was an issue campaign that was started through the liberal fringes of the Democratic party. There was a Monsignor Thomas O'Dwyer who was very active in social issues in the chancery office. He was the instigator of this petition drive, and he was the campaign chairman of it. I have forgotten the details of what they were going to do, but, basically, they were going to take tax money from the state general fund, plus bonds, and build public housing and rent it at subsidized rates to low-income people.

The great fear of it was that public housing would create slum conditions, which it eventually did. Imperial Gardens and the rest of them around here, now viewed as slums and crime centers. We are all away from that kind of housing now, and we are subsidizing the individual. This place next door is all subsidized to the individual and so are various other places. They were very much afraid of a

ROSS: public housing agency as a political force and the rest of it. So you had all the conservative people against it, and all of the liberals [for it]. It broke on the Republican-Democratic side, too. The great fear of this one was that Monsignor O'Dwyer, heading up the campaign, was going to take a religious vote, also. This was to be a constitutional amendment which provided $100,000,000 in bonds and a housing commission to supervise the program, with Monsignor O'Dwyer named chairman in the act, a real mickey mouse.

I devised a slogan that they used nationally. "Don't pay somebody else's rent." At that time things were pretty tough. People could relate to paying somebody else's rent. They could hardly pay their own. There was a taxation feature in that bill, too, an annual general fund appropriation for fifty years.

DOUGLASS: The thing I have trouble looping with this issue is the descriptions are of local conditions here. Was it a statewide ballot bond issue?

ROSS: Yes. That's what it was.

DOUGLASS: Out of that, there would have been a quarter of billion [dollars] available here for a public housing project in Chavez Ravine. So if the

statewide bond issue passed, this would be available?

ROSS: It is a long time back. I am going to look this up for you.

DOUGLASS: For this particular campaign, I think Mr. Baus said there was a budget problem with it?

ROSS: There sure was.

DOUGLASS: Tell your version of that.

ROSS: Fritz Burns and Spiros Ponty and a couple of others were very active, very wealthy men. They were bankrolling the thing, actually, expecting other home builders and realtors to chip in. We were collecting money with one hand--and Herb and I were kind of green at that time--and spending it with the other hand. We came to the point where all of a sudden Burns and Ponty quit putting money in the pot. We were stuck with commitments. Big radio contracts. So the money had to go to pay our bills for staff and overhead and literature. We used an awful lot of literature in those days. We passed out pieces galore.

We just had to sit down and get real tough with them and say that we were going to have to cancel all the radio contracts and use that cash

to pay things off. It worked down to the point where Burns and Ponty finally folded on the thing and said that they would get the money. They had to get it by some time the next day to save these contracts. They got the money and we went ahead with the campaign. They did it.

DOUGLASS: Otherwise, it was out of your pocket personally?

ROSS: Yes. We were personally on the line for it. It didn't seem to bother them one bit. They would get it after the election and so on. That just didn't work, and I could be pretty cold-blooded about it.

DOUGLASS: Did this change your way of doing business in the future on contracts like that?

ROSS: It sure taught us a lesson. We were very careful from that time to always run on their money. But we still got caught a couple times.

DOUGLASS: How do you do that? By getting an advance or incremental fees?

ROSS: You start off with an advance. Then you bill. You can't get a big advance because the campaign doesn't have any money when you are starting out. You get somebody to put up $10,000, and you start in. What you do is, periodically, you take all of your commitments. We kept sheets on

the thing. So much spent. So much committed, which is as good as spent. "Work in progress" is what we called it. It showed where we were on the thing. We tried to keep the $10,000 of the commission as a cushion. Forget the $10,000.

We sent our bill to them for $9,000, you owe us $9,000. Forget the $10,000. You sent a bill for $20,000, forget the $10,000. Pay the $20,000. We wind up and even it off at the end of the campaign. Sometimes with a small refund. Usually, you are able to bring it out just about even at that point.

DOUGLASS: The $10,000 was a good rule of thumb.

ROSS: Yes. For particular things, $10,000 went so far in those days. You could run a statewide campaign for $150,000, $175,000. You can't run a local campaign for mayor today for that. Or even a city council campaign worth anything.

DOUGLASS: So you won that campaign.

ROSS: We won that campaign. That is what really got me started because I was the campaign manager on that. But Herb was the guy who knew all the players and told me that the first thing you do is to organize a committee. I had learned that

from the Askey-Dalton-Pierce days. Then we just went on from there.

[The public housing controversy really put us on the political scene here in southern California. It actually was four campaigns and one interim PR campaign to influence congress. The first one was the one we have been discussing: the initiative constitutional amendment Proposition 14. After its defeat some northern California real estate interests put an initiative measure on the ballot which would require that all public housing proposals in the state go to the people, the same as school bonds or sewer bonds or whatever. This was Proposition 10, which I also managed.

Then came the real brutal battle in Los Angeles, city Proposition B which Herb managed. As I recall the city had entered into a contract during the (Mayor Fletcher) Bowron years to build public housing in eleven locations. Then a later city council voted to put the question on the ballot, which was Proposition B. The public housing advocates said the "right to vote" (state Proposition 14) didn't apply because the eleven projects were being

ROSS: negotiated before the 1950 act. And in the middle of the campaign the state supreme court ruled in their favor. What a mess! We argued that it still was important to pass Prop. B because if it passed the city would be under mandate to request the federal government to cancel the deal. Prop. B passed, but Mayor Bowron refused to go along.

So the next campaign was (Congressman Norris) Poulson versus Bowron with public housing the big issue. Poulson won and negotiated the city out of the deal as our side advocated. And that led to the Dodgers moving into the Chavez Ravine public housing site and building a stadium for baseball.

The final housing battle was state Proposition 4 in 1962, which Herb again managed. It was a bond issue for $100,000,000 to finance statewide public housing, and it was defeated handily.]*

DOUGLASS: And he was preoccupied with the featherbedding proposition.

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*William B. Ross added the preceding bracketed material during his review of the draft transcript.

ROSS: Yes. With Whitaker & Baxter [Inc.]. This is where we began to blend our talents because Herb knew all the people in town through his chamber of commerce work. I didn't know those people. He knew the movers and shakers in town. I knew the advertising. Herb didn't know a half-tone from a line drawing. Perhaps I exaggerate. He was very good on the contacts and on the selling and a good writer. He was really the number one salesman at the start. He was the salesman, except for the school stuff. I did all the advertising and bookkeeping. The business side of it was mine. Public relations and the political wining and dining was Herb's.

DOUGLASS: That was a comfortable relationship.

ROSS: Yes. Particularly since I had a duodenal ulcer, I wasn't very good with sitting down with the pols and drinking and smoking cigars. That was Herb's job.

DOUGLASS: You managed to master that problem.

ROSS: Yes. And, of course, as time went on, Herb began to pick up things on the advertising side. He could write good copy for folders. I would keep an eye on the production. I supervised that.

DOUGLASS: So you could see business expanding for the type of things both of you could do?

ROSS: Yes. I got out of commercial advertising then. We couldn't do both.

DOUGLASS: So by '55 you decided to join the two firms into one called Baus and Ross.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Up until just before that time, had you been a little leery about being dependent on political campaigns as a way of earning a living? As a major source of your income, in other words.

ROSS: I wouldn't say I was leery. It was just that I never even considered it as something you do entirely until we began to get so busy on it that I felt I was neglecting my commercial accounts. I just wasn't able to stay on top of it. Opportunities would come along that I couldn't take. At that point, since the political money was coming in so that we could do it, devoting all of our time to the campaigns made sense.

DOUGLASS: Who were your counterparts in the Los Angeles area? Were there other firms?

ROSS: There were other firms.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

DOUGLASS: We were trying to figure who your competition was. Or trying to get some insight into the early consulting business, if not in California but really in the country. You started to name Hazel Junkins.

ROSS: Hazel Junkins. She handled local political campaigns. More or less a one-man office, as I recall it. Then there two others. One was three men together, Smalley, Levit & Smith. These people had as their account the Downtown Businessmen's Association and various downtown things. They had one man, Charles Levit, who was fairly good at publicity and press agentry. They handled campaigns. In other words, they were set up more or less the way we were, in advertising and publicity. They would take on political campaigns now and then.

DOUGLASS: Did you find yourself in competition for working on ballot issues and candidates?

ROSS: Yes. We were. The third, the Steve Wells Agency, got quite bitter about us. It didn't do them much good.

DOUGLASS: Why did they feel they were preemptive? Had they started sooner than you?

ROSS: By that time we were getting almost all the campaigns. We got up to the point where each of us would handle two campaigns an election. So we had four campaigns.

DOUGLASS: You were the fat cats then.

ROSS: We were beginning to be the fat cats. They were never really set up to do statewide work as we were. They had been picking up the city elections. Those odd off-year elections. That is, of course, what made it possible to go year-round. We not only had the even-numbered years with the national and state elections, but we began to pick up mayoralty campaigns and city council campaigns. Bond issues. Things of that kind. Which became quite active with the airport, schooling, and the sewer system being overtaxed.

DOUGLASS: I would have thought maybe that would be another reason why you could see this business as viable because this was such an expanding area.

ROSS: That's exactly right.

DOUGLASS: With new cities being incorporated.

ROSS: We had so much local stuff, as well as the state propositions.

DOUGLASS: In order to meet the challenge of riding through off-election years, did you go out of your way to pick up city elections and city issues? Or did they just come to you?

ROSS: I don't think we ever went out of our way. Everything just came to us. Because we were successful. We had two men who were always rooting for us. One was James L. Beebe. I am sure Herb told you about him. And the other was Frank Doherty. Every campaign we went to we made more friends because we were winning these campaigns for them.

DOUGLASS: What did you do about staff? Did you have an expanding and contracting staff?

ROSS: Yes, we did. Basically, we had a secretary for Herb and a secretary for me. One could double in production and one on bookkeeping. That is what we first started with. Eventually, we kept a full-time production manager and full-time bookkeeper. Then we would add on staff as we went through it.

DOUGLASS: According to a campaign?

ROSS: According to the campaign. We were getting to the point where we really needed the space. I built this in 1952. Then we began to fill staff

in here. We would take an apartment or two next door to us and connect the phones. One time we put a big trailer back there in the back of the place. Mostly we were able to get apartments here. We started early enough and we would get the apartments and put people in there.

DOUGLASS: Because of the nature of politics and issues and candidates running, how far ahead would you be hired on, so to speak? This always had to be a telescoped experience.

ROSS: Yes. It was. It was usually about five months ahead of time.

DOUGLASS: So you would know to anticipate that you needed to hire people?

ROSS: We knew we needed to hire people. I had a break there in that one of the things I had done before in the public relations business, but also in advertising, was the American Red Cross. I handled their fund-raising campaigns and also their year-round publicity. So we had a publicity department. Then we had to expand that greatly for the yearly fund campaigns. Through that I ran across a number of people who liked to work campaigns and then quit. Mostly women. So you would call them in.

DOUGLASS: So you had a pool of people.

ROSS: We had a pool of people who were with us campaign after campaign. They knew us; we knew them.

DOUGLASS: That is a perfect arrangement for everyone.

ROSS: Yes. It was a wonderful arrangement. That gave us the backbone for what we had. Later, as we got bigger and had more work, one of our secretaries became a production person. Then one secretary sort of served between the two of us. Then we would add on another one for me when we got into a campaign. And we had to bring in a full-time bookkeeper.

DOUGLASS: So you found your basic staff slightly expanding just to keep your business going, the in-house work. How many would that be? Six, seven people? Your basic staff.

ROSS: Our basic staff, counting Herb, was six of us.

DOUGLASS: Can you think about the extreme? What would be the most number of people you would have in the middle of a very active election year campaign?

ROSS: Ten in this office.

DOUGLASS: And they would be working full time?

ROSS: Yes. But then working out of here, under our direction, were other people who were out in the field doing things.

DOUGLASS: Did you pay them by the hour?

ROSS: No. We paid them a salary.

DOUGLASS: The people in the field?

ROSS: Everybody we had with us was paid a salary. Then we had a bonus for the end of the year.

DOUGLASS: On a particular campaign?

ROSS: No. We would just take the profits for the year and divide them up.

DOUGLASS: That was motivation.

ROSS: It was motivation. It kept things going very well.

DOUGLASS: I believe it was in the '48 housing campaign that you first began to use Dorothy [D.] Corey in polling. Is that right?

ROSS: Yes. I knew Dorothy Corey through advertising work. At that time, we were the first ones, as far as I know, to use a pollster. They were being used at that time fundamentally in research on product.

DOUGLASS: Marketing.

ROSS: Yes. They were a marketing tool. Dorothy got interested in political campaigns. I knew her

from a marketing standpoint, but she started going on political campaigns. Basically, what she was doing was interviewing people and finding out where a candidate stood and selling that to a campaign or to a group of campaigns.

DOUGLASS: Finding out their strengths and weaknesses in terms of the public view?

ROSS: Yes. That was what she was doing then. Then she got started on that thing with us and finding out the strengths and weaknesses. Apparently, Herb has taken you through that. What the switch argument would be.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But, originally, she was doing some research on her own in polling and then selling it.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: What would be the nature of that again?

ROSS: Showed which candidate was ahead.

DOUGLASS: Like what we read in the paper.

ROSS: Mervin Field does it to this day. She started doing work for the L.A. Times and the Orange County Register. She would write up articles on who is ahead and why they are ahead.

DOUGLASS: Mr. Ross, were you the person who knew her first or was it Herb Baus?

ROSS: I used her first.

DOUGLASS: You used her and knew her first because she was in marketing?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You met her in the course of that.

ROSS: Right. I used her first. It turned out very well. We used her in all our campaigns from that time on.

DOUGLASS: You named three firms who were in the business. You were the first to use this approach?

ROSS: Yes. We were the first ones.

DOUGLASS: And probably you used it for quite a while fairly consistently then. You incorporated that into your basic operations?

ROSS: Oh, yes. It got to be more and more [important]. Dorothy was finding different things and suggesting different things to work on. Dorothy Corey, originally--part of her work--you would give her a billboard sketch and have her take it out on the marketplace and flash it on someone and cover it. Then ask them, "What was the advertisement? What was the brand name?" Something like that. She would test advertising copy that way and find out what kind of impression it was making. She did a lot

of brand-name stuff where she went door-to-door. What kind of soap do you use? Why do you use it? What do you think of various soaps? She did the same for us in political campaigns.

DOUGLASS: I gather you and Mr. Baus became convinced that research was a great facet of this operation.

ROSS: A very important tool. Of course, we were alone in those days. Other people learned from us. We became quite a business.

DOUGLASS: We have you pretty well gotten to the point where you are established as a firm. Incidentally, you didn't do anything on the side that was your business after '55? Was it totally fused?

ROSS: Totally fused. Herb and I would each have accounts and so on, where we would be the front man on that particular account. The profit of the thing was always divided by us. Periodically, we just took out 50 percent each of what was available, leaving capital behind.

DOUGLASS: Let's say you were in a busy year. Each of you had to take two campaigns. Or there were two important campaigns. You were lead on one and he was he lead on another. You still must have cross-checked. How did you use each other?

Say, you are the lead man and he is sort of the back-up person and vice versa.

ROSS: Well, one thing we always had lunch together. We would go through all the stuff and the problems and where we were. We just talked back and forth. We would spend time at night. During the daytime we just went back and forth if we had a problem. But we always discussed our campaigns thoroughly with each other. Again, it was just a natural thing. We didn't ever sit down and say, "We are going to do this. We are going to do that. We are going to talk at such-and-such hour." We just plain old got together constantly. We checked ideas and theories and copy slants and approaches. It was just a very close relationship that we had.

DOUGLASS: It is kind of interesting that each of you as younger men had this interest in journalism and were pulled more and more away from that. Did you ever regret that?

ROSS: No. I never regretted it until toward the end when it got to be too much of a rat race. I was fed up with politics. It was our lives, to begin with. Herb got fed up first, and then I did. Then I would think, "If I had only stuck

to the newspaper business." That is the way it went. We certainly had a wonderful time. We made a lot of money. I can't complain about it. [Interruption]

DOUGLASS: To return to the polling question, you had another comment or two.

ROSS: On the polling thing, polling formerly was done more or less like the Reader's Digest did popularity contests: Which candidate is ahead? The idea of getting into the marketing side where you found out why people were buying or why people were voting on an issue--and we were doing mostly issues at that time--that was the Dorothy Corey connection we used that no one else was using.

DOUGLASS: It is a deeper level.

ROSS: Yes. The why business. What motivated people and what would change their mind. I am sure Herb told you that you wound up by saying, "Now, you have all the arguments for it, and you have all the arguments against it. Now how would you vote? You know more than anybody else." "Why did you change?" You find out what the switch argument was.

DOUGLASS: The key argument.

ROSS: Yes. That was done with Dorothy Corey, and nobody did it at that time. That was ours exclusively.

DOUGLASS: Do you know if people were doing that elsewhere in the country?

ROSS: No. I don't know. I know that Whitaker & Baxter were not. We were the only ones in California at that particular time, and that was about all we saw. As you know, we got involved in similar campaigns in peripheral states later on.

DOUGLASS: As to your experience in those early years, it was only Mr. Baus who worked with Whitaker & Baxter in the forties?

ROSS: He had that contact.

DOUGLASS: Did you know them at all?

ROSS: No. I didn't know them at all. I met them through Herb Baus, and we worked a couple of things with them. Then they began to fear us, and we went our separate ways. We always had to establish somebody else up north to keep an office up there going. We would always hire somebody who was established and hire them for the campaign.

DOUGLASS: You didn't tend to replicate your office up there. You did it on an ad hoc basis.

ROSS: We did it all on a contract basis. We did the same in San Diego. We used Harry Lerner in San Francisco a lot and then some others. Graham Kislingbury was another. We had a man by the name of [Frederick] Fred Whitney we used mostly in San Diego.

DOUGLASS: When did you feel the need to establish someone in San Diego?

ROSS: That was in 1952.

DOUGLASS: That early. Why was that? Did you feel there were local issues?

ROSS: At that particular time, we had this campaign to relieve taxation for nonprofit schools. That is one that really took us statewide for the first time. In that the funding was coming fundamentally from the Catholic Church. And the Catholic Church is like dealing with a general in different areas. There is a bishop of San Diego. There is a bishop of Los Angeles. There is a bishop of Fresno. There is a bishop of Sacramento. And there is the bishop of San Francisco.

DOUGLASS: So you felt with that compartmentalization you had to cover an area like San Diego?

ROSS: Yes. To begin with, it worked out this way. The northern California person was selected by the bishop's office, or the bishop's people, and funded by the bishop of San Francisco. The Central Valley, that was done through the people working with the bishop in Fresno. And San Diego the same way. Of course, the biggest at that time was Los Angeles. Cardinal [James F.] McIntyre, at that time he was Archbishop McIntyre, had a very good relationship with the bishop of San Diego, who asked us to take over.

Well, you had to have somebody down there holding their hand constantly. We did all the literature in these campaigns. We would do the printing and shoot it out to all these area offices. It didn't start out that way, but that is the way it wound up. They thought our materials were better.

We won the issue of relief for nonprofit schools in southern California and got beat everywhere else. Then it came back in '58, and we were given the whole state at that time. I think that is the first campaign where we had

real authority statewide. At that point, we hired Harry Lerner for the first time, to represent northern California. Fred Whitney for the San Diego/Imperial area.

DOUGLASS: As long you brought up these two campaigns, why don't we talk more specifically. The '52 issue was Proposition 3, which the legislature put on the ballot. It was for welfare exemption for nonprofit school property. Perhaps you could describe that specifically because the '58 one was a little different.

ROSS: The '52 one started in this way. The state legislature passed the exemption for nonprofit schools. A referendum petition put it on the ballot.

DOUGLASS: Meaning that they would not pay taxes on . . .

ROSS: They would not pay taxes on their real estate holding of the school. The churches were exempt to begin with. But if a church owned a house for the pastor, that was paid taxes. And the school paid taxes. Only the church, the sanctuary itself, was tax exempt. So the legislature came along and said that nonprofit schools like nonprofit hospitals would be exempt.

DOUGLASS: This would include higher education, would it not?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Private colleges were interested in this.

ROSS: No. They weren't because they had had their exemption before.

DOUGLASS: This was secondary. Pre-college.

ROSS: It was a pre-college thing. Basically, the Prop. 3 was an anti-Catholic, pro-public education approach to repeal the exemption voted by the legislature.

DOUGLASS: In other words, the pre-college nonprofits, which would be basically church and could have been private prep [preparatory] schools.

ROSS: Only nonprofit prep schools.

DOUGLASS: That pretty well does get it down to church schools.

ROSS: In the literature we always spelled it out because everybody thought it was a Catholic issue. Of course, we are fighting like crazy to get away from the Catholic issue. That is how we won the campaign down here because we did. Elsewhere they were tied into the bishops and the rest of it, and it became a Catholic issue. But we didn't allow it to happen down here.

DOUGLASS: Well, it could be a Jewish school or other religions.

ROSS: This is what we found out when we laid it on the line. The number of Catholic schools, the number of Jewish schools, the number of Baptist schools, the number of Seventh Day Adventist Schools, and the number of nonprofit schools. There were a number of nonprofit handicapped schools for people who had physical problems.

DOUGLASS: Was this mainly in southern California that you ascertained this was true.

ROSS: Yes, mainly. We went ahead and did our mathematics. We did our research on the thing for statewide. The other areas didn't have the research. But I did it to get the thing tied into as a statewide campaign. They began to use our literature statewide to put those things out. Research also showed voters were confused. We had to get a "yes" vote to uphold the legislature.

DOUGLASS: Who hired you? Were you hired to do it regionally, originally, or were you hired to do it statewide?

ROSS: Hired originally in 1952 to do it regionally.

DOUGLASS: But you turned out to be the source of information for the rest of them.

ROSS: It turned out that way. There was a meeting in San Francisco. I went there full of ideas. I had a mock-up of the literature emphasizing a "yes" vote to confirm the tax repeal. There was a man from the advertising agency from San Francisco and the one from Fresno. There was nobody from Sacramento. There also were several top lay leaders. I shouldn't call it lay leadership because in many instances they would get a Protestant to be campaign chairman.

DOUGLASS: A Protestant minister?

ROSS: Yes. They all liked my folder. I came up there with the folder. I was laying out the point that we had to leave the Catholic Church out as far as we could. I had this literature. They wanted it. They wanted to hold meetings. I said, "I can't. I am too busy." [J. E.] Jack O'Neil, who sort of became the state chairman of the thing, he was from Fresno, said, "Bill, you don't need us but we need you. We've got to have these meetings." I couldn't say no, and that is how we began to get this statewide influence on the campaign.

DOUGLASS: Did the contract get expanded? Did these people pay you? This was an additional burden you were taking on.

ROSS: It was an additional burden. But it paid off the next time around.

DOUGLASS: I think you said earlier, because with your strategy you carried southern California, that carried the day. Did that make the difference?

ROSS: Yes. It did. The big mistake they were making up north--and they also did it a bit in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties--was that they counted upon people in the parishes to go door-to-door with literature. I told them that this was absolutely wrong. They will tell you to your face, "Oh, yes. Yes. I am going to vote for that." They close the door, "Poor, Pat. The priest is sending him around door-to-door talking on this proposition." The Church shouldn't be involved in politics.

As an ex-Protestant, I think I understood that better than the other people did. And my father had been a very prominent Mason. [Laughter] Or better understanding than some of them did. I grew up in an era where the Catholic Church is the anti-Christ referred to

in the Bible. The horror in Revelations with whom all the nations committed fornication was said to be the Catholic Church.

DOUGLASS: So you knew exactly what these people would be responding to.

ROSS: I knew this is somewhat their feeling. We actually tilted that campaign. We won it by a surprise thing in the last month. Number one, we did not allow Catholics to go door-to-door. We did not allow priests to make statements. I was told how fortunate we were that the pope died and Archbishop McIntyre had to go to Rome. They said he was getting very tense because he was not allowed to make a campaign statement. He had agreed to it, but he was getting awfully tense about it.

DOUGLASS: Up north they weren't doing that?

ROSS: Up north they went door-to-door. Down south here I got out a folder which was not used elsewhere. It was a little small folder we used in the mailer and then little billboards. It was a picture of a handicapped child, "Please don't tax my school" kind of thing. We had the schools to back it up. We got calls from newspapers. We would give them the list. There

was a big one in Santa Barbara. There are a couple of big ones down here.

DOUGLASS: I have the statistics. It was close. It was 2,441,005 for passing it (upholding the tax repeal) and 2,363,528 against. You were within less than 100,000. Very tight.

ROSS: Yes. It was very close. The way it worked that night was the papers next morning were saying the campaign had been lost. I was telling my clients it was won. Because Los Angeles County still was, and it was worse in those days, slowly counting these ballots.

DOUGLASS: You felt you had won it as you went into election day?

ROSS: Not on election day but the day after. That night I knew we had the thing won if the trend held in Los Angeles County. Each hour you get a new bulletin on it. And each hour the trend was holding, and we were closing the gap. I knew how much was out and figured on that percentage that we were going to win it by a few thousand votes. We would win by a few thousand statewide because we were winning very large in Los Angeles County.

DOUGLASS: You had the data from northern California probably.

ROSS: Yes. It was all in. San Francisco in those days was on machines. They were way ahead of everybody else. So their returns came in that night. They knew what had happened. We didn't. We were still counting. Orange County was slowly counting. We won it in Orange County, too, I believe.

DOUGLASS: I suspect that did bring you a lot of favorable publicity in terms of your success rate.

ROSS: Oh, it sure did. That really turned us loose. I didn't tell you quite how this thing started. The legislature passed it. Then anti-groups circulated petitions, and it became a referendum. One of our problems was that we had to get a "yes" vote on a "no" thing. "Do you want the schools to be taxed?" People on our side said, "No." "Do you want nonprofit schools taxed?" "No." What you had to do was convince them they had to vote "yes" to keep our schools tax free. That was the way the thing worked.

We worked very closely with Corey on that. We had her out all the time showing things. What does that tell you? To find out that they

were on the right side of the issue. We worked out wordage very carefully with Corey.

DOUGLASS: The psychology to get people to understand what their vote meant.

ROSS: The psychology to get a "yes" vote instead of a "no" vote. Then, in '58, they came back again to repeal it. At that time, we voted for "no" on the repeal. So that was very easy. Taxes. "No. Don't tax my school. No taxes for school." The first time was very difficult because we had a "yes" vote to begin with. "Yes" to keep the exemption voted by the legislature.

DOUGLASS: So Proposition 16 in '58 was essentially to rescind the '52 proposition.

ROSS: To repeal it.

DOUGLASS: I have it as an initiative constitutional amendment. This must be something that went into the constitution.

ROSS: Yes. It did.

DOUGLASS: Who were the forces behind that initiative to put that on the ballot?

ROSS: In 1952?

DOUGLASS: In '58.

ROSS: In '58, the same forces as in '52. We were very careful not to say this during elections because

we didn't want to create a Catholic-Protestant fight in the thing. It was a nucleus in the Masonic orders.

DOUGLASS: The same group.

ROSS: The same group. At the same time, we could point to a lot of Shriners in particular who were very high up who were with us on this particular issue. Everywhere I went I would make talks to Catholic groups. "We do not blame this on Masonic forces. You cannot do it. We have so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so who are prominent Masons who are helping us in this campaign. It is not a Masonic issue."

If you want to look back in the petition, the part of going around and picking up names, it had more or less circulated as a rump movement in the Masonic places. I think by then it extended to some churches. I don't know. But I kind of doubt it because we began to pick up so much Protestant church support, ministers and lay people.

DOUGLASS: Did you run this on the same psychology you ran the other in terms of why these schools were important and removing it from being a Catholic issue.

ROSS: We had no Catholic leadership at all. We had a Catholic committee. We encouraged Seventh Day Adventists to get an Adventist committee and the Jewish group to get a Jewish committee. Baptist and Lutheran schools, also. And to put out literature going to their particular people.

DOUGLASS: Who hired you? Was this a statewide contract?

ROSS: A statewide campaign.

DOUGLASS: Who would have hired Baus and Ross?

ROSS: Actually, it was Jack O'Neil, who had become chairman of the other thing. He was Catholic. He was from Fresno.

DOUGLASS: Was he a lawyer? A farmer?

ROSS: He was a farmer and also a cotton processor. He had the Producers' Cotton Company. He owned KJOE, the ABC [American Broadcasting Company] network TV station. He was a big cattle raiser and cotton raiser. He had this Producers Cotton Company, which was a private company. Producers and Anderson and Clayton were the two big private cotton gin people. So as the committee was put together. . . .

DOUGLASS: It was the same group.

ROSS: It was the same group. Yes. Our campaign chairmen statewide, we saw to it that they were not Catholic.

DOUGLASS: And you had more control over what happened in northern California?

ROSS: Yes. The statewide campaign in '58 we had Chester [W.] Nimitz as our statewide chairman, which is a heck of a fine name. Before we never had a statewide chairman. Jack was sort of statewide chairman, but his name was never used.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel better about the ability to win this '58 campaign? Or were you nervous?

ROSS: I was not nervous at all. I was confident that it could be won. By that time the private-school movement, the church-school movement, was really taking hold. We had much better statistics to show at that time and many more people to call on for help in a campaign. And the fact that we were on the no side of the issue, which we used to say fundamentally gives you 20 percent advantage to begin with. The 20 percent are going to vote "no." Let's be vulgar about it. Twenty percent of the people would vote "no" to castrate all the males. If they

didn't understand it or care about it, they would vote "no". They didn't want it.

DOUGLASS: I was going to pursue that with you. The whole psychology of ballot issues. You would much rather be on a "no" vote, pushing the "no" side?

ROSS: Oh, yes. Much better. That is why bond issues are so difficult. You have to get two-thirds of the people plus one to vote "yes."

DOUGLASS: You have 20 percent against you to begin with. Just skepticism.

ROSS: Twenty percent are automatically going to vote "no."

DOUGLASS: Then you have this confusion to explain that "yes" may mean "no" in some issues because of the wording.

ROSS: Yes. That '52 campaign was very difficult because you find people in the Catholic Church saying, "Boy, I am sure going to vote against that." [Laughter] "No, you are not."

DOUGLASS: Were you ever, Mr. Ross, asked to help write a ballot issue? Certainly that is part of the art of writing a ballot issue, the wording. If you can have something worded in such a way that you can get a "no" vote.

ROSS: I thought that my main contribution to the thing was being able to write copy.

DOUGLASS: Did they come to you early enough to have you help write the ballot proposition?

ROSS: Yes. Later on they did. To give you an example. I learned this from Frank P. Doherty. This was before we got involved in politics. Frank Doherty told me this story, and I never forgot it. They were trying to raise the pay of the board of supervisors. They just couldn't do it. There were five men who covered the county on a part-time basis. It just didn't work. They had to do something to increase the pay of these people and get them out of private business.

DOUGLASS: So they would be full time.

ROSS: Yes. And also they would be less susceptible to pressure. If you are in the insurance business, your biggest client says, "Do this."

So Doherty wrote this proposition. He is going for a "yes" vote. It prohibits the board of supervisors from owning private businesses or receiving income from private business and so on. Sets their salary to that accorded to the superior court judges of the County of Los

Angeles. So it is put out as a great reform deal to keep them from taking money on the side. They got a "yes" vote on it. They all were in favor of prohibiting the supervisors from taking money from somebody else.

DOUGLASS: In that case the "no" vote handicap doesn't matter. It is such a spicy, punchy issue.

ROSS: It did matter. The other thing, of course, is it only had to get 50 percent plus one on that. You didn't have to get a two-thirds vote. So Doherty did that and won it.

I used it in two bond issues. One was in Anaheim, Orange County. We had the Register and its Anaheim newspapers against us. They already had a public utility in parts of Anaheim but wanted to cover the entire city of Anaheim with a public utility. An electric deal.

DOUGLASS: It would be a city-owned public utility?

ROSS: Yes. They already had the utility and wanted to expand into new subdivisions and industrial parks then served by Southern California Edison.

DOUGLASS: Like SMUD [Sacramento Municipal Utility District] in Sacramento.

ROSS: That's right. That is what it was. I got that issue worded. They thought they couldn't do it,

but when they looked at it, both the city attorney and outside counsel agreed to it. They changed the words to make it a little bit better. This one read, "provided that no tax money shall be used, shall the city of Anaheim...."

DOUGLASS: You put that up front.

ROSS: Yes. Up front was that no city tax money be used. Maybe it wasn't even the city. Provided that no tax money shall be used.

DOUGLASS: People bought into that?

ROSS: It was a revenue bond issue, you see. They bought into that. We did the same thing for the Burbank Airport. Lockheed [Corporation] owned the airport, and they wanted to sell or close the thing down. The vote was being held in Burbank on the airport facility. On that one we did the same thing. "Provided that no tax monies are used."

DOUGLASS: And that worked.

ROSS: And that worked.

DOUGLASS: Do you have any idea when these happened? Was this after Mr. Baus left the firm?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: In the seventies?

ROSS: Anaheim in 1975 and Burbank in 1976.

DOUGLASS: Do you think these are examples that they began to learn that it was worth starting early enough to get you involved?

ROSS: That was it. Where I was in early enough to do it. The Anaheim thing was of great importance to Disneyland and to a bunch of manufacturing plants down there. They were feeling broke paying the [Southern California] Edison Company as compared to what they could pay the City of Anaheim for electricity. They wanted to switch to Anaheim.

DOUGLASS: That would have been a pretty juicy campaign. Were they served by Southern Cal Edison at the time?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I would think that Edison would have really poured a lot of money into fighting that.

ROSS: They did but very foolishly. I don't think they did it very well. They were not politically adept at all.

DOUGLASS: Did Edison hire a consulting firm?

ROSS: They hired a man, but they would swear to this day they didn't. In those days you could cover

things like that up. They did it in the Anaheim one.

On the airport, one of the big motivators on that was the Walt Disney Studios. That airport was very important to them. Another was NBC [National Broadcasting Company] studios. And, of course, all industry out in that area. It didn't matter much to the people. There were not enough people using that airport.

DOUGLASS: As an alternate to LAX [Los Angeles International Airport].

ROSS: In both cases, the thing that sold it was the fact that there would not be a tax. That was the big argument they tried to use. We said, "No. It is a revenue bond issue." You can explain that in debates and so on, but when you are sending out literature or they start looking at the ballot proposition, they were traditional. "Shall the city of Anaheim incur a bonded indebtedness of $150 million to finance this and that." "Hell, no. A hundred million bucks!" [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: They see the amount.

ROSS: You fold in the disclaimers first.

DOUGLASS: This is such a professional kind of thing now, to run ballot issues, do you think they get people on board early enough to help write the proposition? They bring a lot more expertise to the wording of ballot issues today?

ROSS: I don't know what is being done because I have been out of it since 1980. I just don't know whether that is being used. We helped on getting the title for the LAX airport bond issue, which had gone to defeat three or four times. On that '52 school campaign, I was able to put some input into that one.

DOUGLASS: You mean the Los Angeles Airport bond issue?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I want to get into that later.

ROSS: It was an interesting campaign.

DOUGLASS: I did want to ask you, going back to the nonprofit schools: Who was your competition? Who was being hired on the other side of the '52 and '58 campaigns? Do you recall?

ROSS: No. I don't. They had a very poor campaign. They had no statewide organization. They hired people. No agency. In Los Angeles they hired a guy who used to work for us. He worked for us in the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower campaign in 1952.

That campaign, incidentally, was just to get the nomination for him. In '52, we were told you take the Catholic one or you take the Eisenhower campaign.

DOUGLASS: You were?

ROSS: We chose the school one.

DOUGLASS: So sometimes you have those kinds of decisions to make.

ROSS: Oh, yes. You get into problems like that.

DOUGLASS: Why were you told that you had to choose one or the other? Was this a matter of getting the work done that you had to choose?

ROSS: No. I think the feeling was that they didn't want to get involved with a church issue in a political campaign.

DOUGLASS: It is either/or.

ROSS: You can do one or the other, but you can't do both. That was the feeling on that one.

DOUGLASS: Certain things don't go together in their minds. It could be a candidate and an issue. Which is a whole interesting story that I would like to talk to you about. This whole business of what ballot issues do to candidates and vice versa. We are getting a perfect example of it in this gubernatorial primary we have coming up.

Whether to be out front on a ballot issue. Even to the extent of writing one, such as [Attorney General John] Van De Kamp is doing. Being an initiator. Or, just coincidentally, having ballot issues. That is a good topic.

Do you have any windup comments about what we have been talking about?

ROSS: No. I don't think so. I want to go back and take a look at the campaigns we did after 1970. I think I can probably find something around here on it. I want to look into these public housing campaigns as to how the state and local campaign. . . . The local campaign came afterward. Of course, that led into the Poulson campaign, which I am sure Herb told you.

DOUGLASS: Yes. That I want to go into in detail. Next time we will begin with candidates or issues. I am sure they will begin to interweave.

ROSS: Did Herb tell you about the debating we did on television on these campaigns?

DOUGLASS: No. I don't think much about television.

ROSS: No one has ever done that before. Herb and I thought we were very successful at that.

DOUGLASS: When did you start doing that?

ROSS: Right at the very beginning of TV, in the old KTLA studio. In the early days. We were trying to put on forums. Herb and I would represent our clients. Whether it was Herb's campaign or my campaign, the two of us did the debating on our side.

DOUGLASS: Who would be on the other side?

ROSS: People who were picked by the other side.

[End Session 1]

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Session 2, May 2, 1990]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

DOUGLASS: Mr. Ross, you were fairly newly established as a joint effort with Mr. Baus in 1950 when [Samuel W.] Sam Yorty ran for congress. I was interested in your participation in that and what the situation was. He was a prominent attorney in Los Angeles.

ROSS: I guess I handled all the Yorty stuff. I handled his campaign for state assemblyman. After the war, he came back. He had been assemblyman before the war and decided he wanted to run again. I handled that campaign and during that campaign met Eleanor Chambers.

DOUGLASS: If I could go back a minute, I would like to talk about that campaign because that was a special election when [Assemblyman] John C. Lyons died. It was April of '49. How did that come together?

ROSS: I have forgotten who referred us to Sam Yorty, but I believe it was [Samuel B.] Sam Mosher of Signal Oil Company who asked us to go in and see Sam Yorty. He had a small law office and was a very engaging man. We learned something about him. What he had done before and what he did in the war years. He had a very interesting wartime assignment. He was a captain with [General] Douglas MacArthur in setting up the government in the Philippines. So he had a lot of experience over there. And he wanted to go back to the assembly. For some reason, the oil people wanted him in the assembly. So they were going to back his campaign. This wasn't all told to me. But this is the way it turned out, I could tell, as things went along.

DOUGLASS: He had been involved as a lawyer for the oil industry in the tidelands oil situation.

ROSS: Yes. That is what led to that. So we ran his special campaign. He was a Democrat. He had a Republican opponent whose name was [James T.] Byrne. I can't remember anything else about him. It was kind of interesting there because Byrne turned out to be a good friend of Frank Doherty, who is somewhat in the family, as I

told you before. [Laughter] Anyway, we had a very good campaign. We won it. It wasn't too difficult. In those days he was called Samuel William Yorty. He was very insistent that it be Samuel William Yorty.

DOUGLASS: Not Sam as he liked to use later.

ROSS: He didn't want the Sam business. He always wanted it stressed that he was of Dutch-Irish descent. I am afraid there is not so deeply a hidden reason for this, that he wanted to make sure voters knew he was Dutch-Irish and he was not Sam, but he was Samuel William.

It was a very interesting campaign. I was very much impressed with Eleanor Chambers, who came along in that campaign. Of course, eventually, she became Sam's deputy mayor.

DOUGLASS: Had she been working in his law office? Why was she involved in the campaign? He had not been in politics as a candidate since '40.

ROSS: Eleanor was a Democrat and very active in Democratic politics. She had good labor union ties. At that particular time I didn't.

DOUGLASS: So he brought her aboard, it sounds like.

ROSS: He brought her aboard. Yes. We were introduced, talked, and went ahead with the campaign. He brought her aboard. Yes.

DOUGLASS: What were your impressions of Eleanor Chambers?

ROSS: Very, very good. Very fine. I am going to stick strictly to politics and not go to her work in the city hall. She was a very good organizer. She was indefatigable. She was there all the time. She had a wonderful personality and a beautiful way of getting along with people. We hit it off right off the bat. She was very intelligent. We won the campaign. It really was a piece of cake. It was not difficult at all.

DOUGLASS: This was a pretty short-term thing. With a special election, you don't have much lead time. Lyons died and a special election was called. Do you think you partly had the advantage that nobody else had their act together? Or was Yorty an obviously qualified person to win it?

ROSS: I think we had two things going for us in that campaign. Number one, we used a heavy direct mail campaign. They weren't being used at that time. I was used to direct-mail campaigns from my advertising days. We just bought the

precinct lists and did a lot of direct mail. The other thing is at that time the community newspapers were very strong. We were able to line those up very quickly. I just went out and called on them all. There was the Deal Publications, very strong in that area. And one or two others.

DOUGLASS: What were the Deal Publications?

ROSS: [Gerald] Jerry Deal was the publisher of a number of in-city, semi-weekly newspapers and very successful at it. Today it is Meredith Newspapers.

DOUGLASS: Was it kind of neighborhoods that he did?

ROSS: Yes. Neighborhood publications. He had the Wilshire Press. He had a Hollywood newspaper. I have forgotten what that was called. He had the Sunset area, Echo Park area. He called that one the Parkside Press. He just had a number of these papers that he circulated through that area. He was a very good operator. He did very well. He eventually sold out to one of the big corporations at a time when the big Eastern people were trying to pick up newspapers out here. He sold his papers.

DOUGLASS: Would you put political ads in those papers or try to get publicity?

ROSS: In those days you could get a lot of publicity in the local newspapers. Fortunately, I knew them because I think I told you that I worked on the Bell Industrial-Post and the Huntington Park Advertiser. I used to go to the meetings. These publishers had meetings. First, I was asked to tell them how to get political advertising. I told them what their problems were in getting political advertising. So I had a good rapport with these people.

DOUGLASS: So if Mr. Yorty was going to give a talk or do something, you could get a story in.

ROSS: Yes. We had a story in every week in the weekly newspapers, and his picture. We were able to do a lot.

DOUGLASS: What was his competition doing? Byrne?

ROSS: Byrne did some radio, and I think he did one mailer. But by that time we had done three mailers.

DOUGLASS: How did Yorty raise money for this?

ROSS: I don't know.

DOUGLASS: You were doing this on a flat contract?

ROSS: Yes. In those days you didn't have the reporting laws and the things you have now. So I never got involved.

DOUGLASS: You didn't know the source of the money.

ROSS: I know there was a campaign treasurer, and I submitted my bills to him. He was a CPA [certified public accountant]. I don't remember who he was or much about it. The bills were always paid. We started out with our advance, which we talked about. I was told that most of his money came from the oil group. I think particularly the independent oil companies. Signal. And there was another independent oil man who was big at that time. Those two were very active in the thing. The independents had their own retail outlets. Signal had a big retail chain at that time. This other man did have.

DOUGLASS: Were the independents the ones who were supporting Yorty?

ROSS: Yes. As far as I knew, it was not the Standard Oil [Co.] and Shell [Oil Co.]. It could have been Richfield [Oil Co.] at that time because they were a smaller outfit. And Union [Oil Co.] was a small outfit at that time.

DOUGLASS: At least I do know that Yorty was active as a lawyer with oil people. That could account for some backing he would get.

ROSS: Yes. He did. Yorty had a very good tie-in with the Herald-Express. So we got a lot of publicity out of that paper. We got nothing out of the Los Angeles Times.

DOUGLASS: They opposed him?

ROSS: Yes. They opposed him. But they didn't really get into it. They marked the ballot for the other man. There was not going to be any publicity for Yorty in the thing. We were in mostly a local campaign. That did it for us.

DOUGLASS: Speaking of doing local campaigns, you had done a lot of work for the American Red Cross, particularly during the war. There was some experience carryover to your political work later. Could you talk about that?

ROSS: We did these fund-raising campaigns--and "we" I mean my advertising firm, W. B. Ross & Associates we operated as--for the American Red Cross.

DOUGLASS: Were you paid to do that?

ROSS: Yes. It was a contract situation. To do the campaigns, we were doing the advertising, the

publicity, the materials, the signs, the banners, the posters, that sort of thing on the campaign. I was very interested to see how that campaign on the operational side was broken down into various areas. Classifications and then into areas. There was downtown business. And there were other business organizations. Then you got into neighborhoods, which is the most effective of all. There was a chairman in every community you could think of that had a name. They had a chairman and a committee.

I was able to use that. At the time it wasn't being used too directly in political campaigns. The party structure in California was very weak. There was a vacuum there. You could go in and sell a man or you could sell a proposition. Find out where your areas of strength were and get yourself a chairman to hold little meetings around. All of which got into local newspapers. So we did a lot of work on localized campaigns. The head person for that was a girl by the name of Katharine Ferguson. Kay Ferguson was an absolute genius at that sort of thing.

DOUGLASS: You mean at the Red Cross.

ROSS: At the Red Cross. But I hired her and brought her into my firm for political campaigns. We sat down and organized campaigns. We had huge leadership files. We had the leaders of various communities and the campaigns they had worked in. It was the most amazing file system. This was before we had IBM [International Business Machines] cards and all the rest of it. You just hired somebody to keep these cards.

DOUGLASS: Little three-by-five cards.

ROSS: Three-by-five cards. They are still sitting up there in the files. We wound up with a file that was just priceless. We would circulate and find out where our strengths were. We would go to those people and get them going in campaigns.

DOUGLASS: I believe also you mentioned something that certainly is true, and that is this was before television. Before the kind of media situation that developed later, so this was a way to develop a network of communication.

ROSS: Yes. As I said, the broadbrush of TV was not there then. So if you were able to get in there with these local campaigns, it was very, very important. We were the only ones who were doing that.

DOUGLASS: By local you mean the City of Los Angeles. You don't mean some little town.

ROSS: What I do mean is that you would have a Los Angeles chairman, but you also would have a Westwood chairman. And you would have a San Pedro chairman. You would have a Van Nuys chairman. And a North Hollywood chairman. In those days, those were separate communities.

DOUGLASS: But what I meant was that basic issue or candidate was an all-city election, but you approached it by neighborhoods.

ROSS: Yes. Neighborhoods, going right in where you could do the local job. It was very helpful with candidates.

DOUGLASS: That approach is still used in small community elections. People-to-people approach.

ROSS: It is. But we did a much more thorough job. In statewide campaigns we had a lot of success in those things in getting local city communities on fire for something.

DOUGLASS: You were the first firm to do that? At least in southern California.

ROSS: I think so. As you say, it had been done in little local campaigns. We put those into

citywide campaigns, countywide campaigns, and southern California.

DOUGLASS: I meant that still exists in small town campaigns. The remnants of that are still what is used. I didn't mean it was then.

I wanted to ask you a little more about Eleanor Chambers because she is a person whose name comes up periodically. Why don't you comment about Eleanor Chambers as you knew her later when Mr. Yorty became mayor of Los Angeles. She went with him to the assembly, I assume.

ROSS: Yes. She went then with him in the assembly.

DOUGLASS: Did she run his district office, or did she go up to Sacramento?

ROSS: His district office. Then when he ran for congress, she was in the congressional campaign. We won that one quite handily.

DOUGLASS: Did she go to [Washington] D.C.?

ROSS: She stayed out here and ran his district office here. Then he ran for the United States Senate, you may remember, and he lost. He threw his support to [U.S. Senator William F.] Knowland, and Eleanor went to work for Knowland. It was, I believe, Knowland's first campaign. He did

win. He was appointed by [Governor Earl] Warren when he came back from the war [on the death of Hiram Johnson]. Eleanor worked in his campaign to elect him when Sam lost the Democratic nomination. She worked for the Knowland campaign.

DOUGLASS: I jumped over the Yorty campaign for congress. We got so engrossed with the campaign for the assembly. He didn't serve very long until he decided to run for congress. Let's talk about that campaign. That was in 1950. You were involved in that. We digressed into the assembly campaign. What about that congressional campaign? You worked with Eleanor Chambers on that.

ROSS: Eleanor was in our office at that time. We began to use Eleanor in several campaigns where she could do that as well as doing Sam's work on the side.

DOUGLASS: She actually worked for you?

ROSS: Yes. She was on the payroll?

DOUGLASS: Beginning when, Mr. Ross? Was it before this congressional campaign?

ROSS: Yes. It was before the congressional.

DOUGLASS: And it was before that special election for the assembly.

ROSS: I don't think she worked for us after the congressional campaign. It was while he was in the assembly that she worked for us. She worked out of our office on the congressional campaign.

DOUGLASS: She hooked up with him postwar, right?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: The man he defeated for congress was Jack W. Hardy. But he won by 10,000 votes. Was that a hard-fought campaign?

ROSS: I don't think it particularly was. Jack Hardy was the husband of Georgiana Hardy, who later came onto the board of education. Jack Hardy was a big, strapping man. He made an impression whenever you saw. But he really had no roots in that district at all. He was not known. The way things were at that particular time that was part of Sam's assembly district. So he had some name recognition. Jack Hardy didn't have any recognition at all. The district was very heavily Democratic. There was a good-sized black vote. The registration was all against him. He didn't have an organized campaign.

It was a textbook campaign. We worked particularly in his old district. We worked on the unions. We got strong union support. The unions were fairly strong in those days. They were very active and very good. And we worked in the black community. We had a very good woman, whose name has escaped me again, and she later on went into Yorty's administration in city hall. So I've got to remember her name eventually.

DOUGLASS: What did Eleanor Chambers do for you? You say she worked for Yorty as his district person. But she also was doing some work for you. What kinds of things was she doing?

ROSS: Working on issue campaigns, not candidates.

DOUGLASS: So if you had a ballot proposition that was coming in . . .

ROSS: I can't remember what they were now.

DOUGLASS: It had to be issue specific.

ROSS: Yes. Not other candidates. Just issues.

DOUGLASS: Not just general background work. You were pinpointing a particular issue.

Anything more? You probably knew her during the time she was deputy mayor.

ROSS: I knew her very well. We kept in touch right straight on through. We had a break during the Poulson campaign. She was horrified and very upset, but we were able to mend that fence. The things she was horrified about emanated from the Los Angeles Times and not from us. We had nothing to do with it. We read it in the Times the same time she did.

DOUGLASS: Your firm was working for Poulson, and Yorty was the person who finally defeated him in '61.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: She must have been an unusual person from the remarks I have heard about her.

ROSS: Yes. She was.

DOUGLASS: Was she gregarious? Did she deal with people well?

ROSS: Yes. She dealt with people very well. I don't know why she was made deputy mayor because she had no managerial ability whatsoever. It was not her talent. She got horribly frustrated and upset and nervous and everything else in that position down there. I think she was relatively ineffective. That is my feeling. As a political campaigner, she was just superb. A wonderful person. She always wanted you to go

up and use her home in Cambria Pines. Anything she could do for you she would. That is not the way just for me and for her. That is the way she was with people.

DOUGLASS: She was rather a stunning-looking woman, wasn't she?

ROSS: Not stunning from the standpoint as sexy. She was a good-sized woman. She was a big woman.

DOUGLASS: Meaning tall, or heavy?

ROSS: She was tall. She was full-figured. She had reddish hair. She had this wonderful personality. Sort of an Irish outgoing way about her. I don't know if she was Irish or not.

DOUGLASS: Maybe that's why she and Sam Yorty got along.

ROSS: It very well could have been. She loved Sam Yorty like a mother to a son. She thought the sun rose and set on him.

DOUGLASS: He kept her as deputy mayor the whole time.

ROSS: Yes. He also put [Joseph] Joe Quinn as a deputy mayor. Eleanor never really got involved in the city.

DOUGLASS: She was more the external-relations person?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So she just worked for you in that brief period from the time he won the assembly seat in '49 up into the congressional campaign.

ROSS: I think she did some work for us while he was in the congressional seat. I am not sure.

DOUGLASS: He was reelected to congress and went out of congress in '55. It was '51 to '55 that he served in the Congress.

Let's go into the Norris Poulson campaigns. I believe the first time he ran was in '53. You people were involved in the primary. He beat Bowron in '53.

ROSS: Right.

DOUGLASS: You were involved both in the primary and the final campaign in May. It was April and May. How did that first election go? Can you remember that?

ROSS: I have little recollection of that. That was Herb's campaign. I know something about the background and getting the campaign.

DOUGLASS: All right. What do you know about that?

ROSS: I had just come off the nonprofit school campaign in 1952, which really gave us a big boost. It was a fantastic win. It had never won before. It had been on the ballot several

times. It had been defeated two-to-one, three-to-one. That sort of thing. We won it down here. They lost it up north. I told you about that.

The man who had originally taken the nonprofit school campaign and carried the bill in Sacramento was [Assemblyman] Laughlin [E.] Waters. Laughlin Waters had a brother who was Frank Waters. Frank Waters was a lobbyist. One of his clients was Hughes Aircraft [Co.]. He was very close to Poulson. Out of that, we got the campaign. I have forgotten the way the things worked out. I was not the person who handled that campaign. Herb was.

DOUGLASS: What was Poulson doing before he ran?

ROSS: He was a congressman.

DOUGLASS: So he went from congressional to city politics.

ROSS: If it is of interest to you. Fletcher Bowron had been there year after year after year. Public housing campaigns, I am sure Herb filled you in on that, created strong opposition to Fletcher Bowron. They wanted to run somebody against Bowron, but they couldn't find anybody against him. By "they," the people who were doing most of the looking were Asa Call and

Frank Doherty. I guess there were others, but those were the two that I knew they were approaching.

They were getting turned down right and left. Somebody came up with the name of Norris Poulson, who was the congressman from the Highland Park, Eagle Rock [area]. From over on the eastside of town. Poulson had been supported by the Times in the past. He had a long Republican history and so on. The big problem with Poulson was that nobody knew him outside of his district. Poulson at heart was a certified public accountant. It led to a lot of his nervous difficulties. He had to project himself. He was actually a very shy, introverted person. A quiet digger into the situation. Our big problem was to get him out. Herb handled that campaign.

DOUGLASS: Poulson agreed to do this, though?

ROSS: Yes He agreed to do it. I met him at that time. Herb took the campaign. I am sure Herb told you about that campaign. It was a rough, rough, tough one.

DOUGLASS: We didn't talk much about that. We talked about the housing campaign. Bowron was an entrenched incumbent.

ROSS: He was a long-term incumbent. In the old days he had the support of the Times and the Daily News right straight through. He had the Democratic labor [paper] and the Republican Times. He went straight on through. He was a straight arrow. There was never any scandal about him. You could never attack him on that kind of basis. The public housing thing came along. That was his Achilles' heel. This thing tore him apart. I am sure Herb told you about how they planned to put a housing project in each of the fifteen councilmanic districts.

DOUGLASS: No. I didn't hear that part. Go ahead.

ROSS: I am wandering all over the place. The master plan was made by Howard Holtzendorf, and it was all laid out. They planned to put a housing project in each of the fifteen councilmanic districts. Through that they would be able to control votes because when the landlord comes around and says, "This is what we have to do if you want us to keep on subsidizing your rent."

Not subsidized rent. It was giving it to them the way the program was set up there.

DOUGLASS: This was coming out of Bowron's administration.

ROSS: That was in Bowron's administration. The housing agency was founded by Bowron and operated by Holtzendorf, another Republican but you never would guess it in some of the actions as things came along.

DOUGLASS: So when that plan was revealed, the council was up in arms? Was that it? Or was the public upset?

ROSS: Every place where they were going to put public housing in, where the first one was to go, they, of course, were very much up in arms. It was supposed to run down property values, and it was going to bring crime into the district. It was going to create a poor people's ghetto within each district. In those places where it had opened up, they were very much opposed to it. The other opposition group was the Home Builders Association and those people.

Anyway, here were these people then who were interested in housing, the people who were interested in getting rid of public housing. You had the conservative Republican people who

felt that Bowron had gone far astream from his original Republican roots. So they could get behind Norris Poulson. These various people didn't know each other. It was hard to pull that campaign together into one cohesive unit.

The campaign chairman was [Councilman] George Cronk, who was the city councilman for a very heavily Republican Wilshire district. [Councilman] Harold Henry and George Cronk split up the whole Wilshire strip, including Hancock Park and all those things. So Cronk was the head of that. I don't think his contacts went much beyond that particular area.

What I am trying to say is that there were so many disparate elements in that thing. All of them didn't see eye to eye. There was the trouble in fund raising. It was full of complications, to the point that we had people who came in and said, in the home builders groups, that they wanted to buy the billboards or the radio. But they would not give the campaign the money, and they would not give it to us. They wanted us to produce the ads for the radio contracts and the billboards and the rest of it. And they would pay the radio

ROSS: stations or the billboard companies. It was a mess.

DOUGLASS: That sounds very difficult.

ROSS: It was very difficult. Herb and I were young at that point. We grew old fast in that campaign. I told you the big showdown where we had to cancel all this radio [time] if we were to get out. Finally, the home builders ponied up on it and were able to get out of it. I am now confusing the public housing campaigns.

DOUGLASS: That's all right. Why don't we fold that in here. In '52, you are talking about the city public housing referendum of that year which was such a bitter fight. It takes us right into the 1952 election. I assume this was the thing you talked about which caused such a rift in the city.

ROSS: It went just like this. In 1948, through the intercession of Herb Baus I became the campaign manager of the "no"-on-public housing statewide initiative, which had been led by Monsignor Dwyer. That opposition was financed by the home builders and the rest in 1948. Then we began to get into local campaigns. Herb did that Proposition B, as I recall. It was a city

referendum. We won that campaign. We said, "Don't do it."

And the attitude of Bowron and Holtzendorf was, "This election is ridiculous. It doesn't mean a thing. The contract has been signed with the federal government. And there it is." The response from our people was, "You mean to say that if the mayor of this town and the city council tells the federal government that the people don't want the money that they are going to shove it down our throats?" And Bowron said that is the way it had to be. That became the campaign against Bowron.

DOUGLASS: This is a city election. I have it as an April primary and a follow-up campaign.

ROSS: At that time I handled that state nonprofit schools thing.

DOUGLASS: Oh yes. Baus then handled the housing issue. That is what I was getting at. When you go to 1953, this was nominations for mayor. Then the campaign to elect Poulson for mayor.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You first had to get Poulson nominated. That was the first hurdle?

ROSS: The way it worked in those days. The city campaigns were very close together in the spring of the year. A lot of them got settled in April. Then if it didn't, it went off to the May run off. So it really was just like one campaign. You had no time in between. You didn't get your billboards down. They were ready to go.

DOUGLASS: Poulson did very well in April.

ROSS: Yes. He topped Bowron. I have forgotten who else was in the race. There were several in the campaign. Once Poulson got into it, others jumped in too.

DOUGLASS: So the others went by the boards. Did they help Poulson?

ROSS: I don't recall them doing that. No.

DOUGLASS: This happened to be the last Tuesday in May. So it was really a hot campaign, and it was just warming up.

ROSS: It really was warming up. It was a very hot campaign.

DOUGLASS: What did the Times do?

ROSS: The Times was strongly for Poulson. The story was that Norman Chandler had told the people downtown that he was sick and tired of

supporting Bowron. And they had to have somebody else because they weren't going to support Bowron for this fifth term that he was coming up for. Bowron was in there sixteen years. So that was what led up to it. The Times was very strong pro-Poulson right straight through and anti-Bowron. In those days they took very strong positions on everything.

DOUGLASS: Your operation must have been revved up considerably.

ROSS: It was.

DOUGLASS: Was Herb Baus basically doing that? Or were you doing that 1953 campaign?

ROSS: It was Baus' campaign. It logically followed the city public housing fight of 1952.

DOUGLASS: Fifty-three was an off year, wasn't it?

ROSS: Yes. I had school bonds and that civic auditorium bond issue. Herb had the Poulson [campaign].

DOUGLASS: That was on the same ballot, Mr. Ross?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You mean the old civic auditorium? The big one? It needed to be rehabilitated?

ROSS: No. Before [Dorothy Buffum] Buff Chandler got involved in the music center project, the plan

was to build a civic auditorium downtown, one building.

DOUGLASS: Not the old building.

ROSS: No. When it failed, then Buff Chandler got people together and said, "Let's do the whole thing on a private basis. We can do it with the cooperation of the county." The Times really controlled those five supervisors. They got the supervisors to give the land, and they raised money privately for the Ahmanson [Theater] and the Mark Taper [Forum] and the Dorothy Chandler auditorium.

DOUGLASS: Did they have the land lined up then? Would it have been on that property?

ROSS: The land was not lined up at that particular time, on the civic auditorium.

DOUGLASS: Was the idea simply to get bonding and then they would work out the land site?

ROSS: I think they had the land site picked out, but they had to get the land site.

DOUGLASS: Do you have any recollection where it would have been?

ROSS: Yes. In that same area.

DOUGLASS: The Bunker Hill area.

ROSS: It was part of a bond issue, as I recall, to buy the thing.

DOUGLASS: So that was the first kind of aborted attempt. That is pretty interesting.

ROSS: It was a very interesting campaign.

DOUGLASS: I didn't know that was the first attempt to float bonds.

ROSS: Yes. It was. Actually, what they had in mind at the time was a combination of the Sports Arena and a music hall theater. There was a lot of conflict. Was this going to be a place for boxing matches and then you were going to have symphonies? That was ridiculous. Those things hadn't really been defined. The big push behind it was by the cultural interests. Yet it was thrown open as a thing the sporting people could use.

Because of the sporting thing, it was opposed by Aileen Eaton and her big boxing emporium, the Olympic Auditorium. She opposed it, and the people who put on shows. There was a big sports show at that time, where they had fish and tackle and campers and that sort of thing. There were several of those things, which now have become big business at the

convention center. They were looking for that kind of thing.

Then the Hollywood Citizen News was very, very big at that particular time in circulation and influence. The judge, Harlan Palmer, who ran the thing was very well known, and he was quoted everywhere. He was the man who had originally been behind Fletcher Bowron. He got him started and helped him in that campaign. His newspaper came out with an editorial: "It was a shameful situation." It hit the Hollywood area. It hurt over there. It hurt even more when Eric Cord, who owned the Pan Pacific Auditorium, saw this as a threat to his ice shows and the rest of it. That was something that might fit into what they were trying to do at that time at the convention center. He bought newspaper space to reproduce that editorial. He had it in the Times, he had it in the Herald-Examiner. He had it all in the community newspapers, the reprinted Hollywood News editorial.

That thing killed the civic auditorium. We missed that thing by 5,000 votes. Plus the fact that none of us were smart enough to realize

ROSS: that that election day was a Jewish holiday. It was Passover, I believe. Jews did not vote. And our Jewish population is very much cultural minded to opera and that sort of thing.

DOUGLASS: Was this the April election or was this on in the city primary?

ROSS: It was May 26.

DOUGLASS: The Times must have supported it.

ROSS: Yes. They supported it down the line.

DOUGLASS: So you just came a tad short of the two-thirds you needed.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: How did you happen to be asked to do that, Mr. Ross?

ROSS: I was asked by Harry [J.] Volk. Harry Volk at that time was the regional vice president for Prudential Life Insurance Company. He later became the president of Union Bank. At this particular time, he also was on the board of the Times Mirror Corporation.

DOUGLASS: So he was the person who got you involved.

ROSS: Yes. I have forgotten how I met him. Anyway, he was the guy who hired me on the thing.

DOUGLASS: This is where your energies were going. Mr. Baus was working on the mayoralty campaign. You won the campaign and Bowron was unseated.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

ROSS: The first campaign was in 1951. And we handled the campaign against the bonds for the civic center. The opposition centered around the downtown chamber of commerce and the Property Owner [Taxpayers] Association of California, which was headed by a man by the name of [William] Bill Pixley, who was quite a gadfly in those days in fighting various things that would raise taxes.

DOUGLASS: What was their reason for opposing this?

ROSS: For the taxpayers' association, it was strictly a matter of money. The campaign against it was very little. It consisted of. . . . I guess the campaign for it wasn't much either. I am just looking at this material here now. There were three bonds: Proposition A, Proposition B, and Proposition C.

DOUGLASS: That is what's clumped here on your listing. You had three bond issues. That is what that is.

ROSS: That's what it is.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember what the others were? It sounds like you were involved in all three. You were involved in a campaign against three city bond

issues. So you probably were working for the taxpayers' association, were you?

ROSS: No. Actually, no, for Fritz Burns, a home builder. Proposition A was a civic auditorium. Proposition B was for the opera house. And Proposition C, an apartment complex, was to wipe out part of then run-down Bunker Hill. This came out of what I had done for them in 1948. Burns was a part of this Property Owner Taxpayers Association in California. He supported it. He got very involved in this thing. He thought it was a horrible steal of public money. I don't know what all involved him, but it was his money that paid for this folder I showed you. And for a billboard campaign. At that stage we called them the six sheets or seven sheets. Kennedy Outdoor Advertising. This was the billboard that we put up. "No to ABC. Don't be misled. More bonds mean more taxes."

DOUGLASS: This folds like a hand brochure.

ROSS: Yes. Also, again, the community newspapers were very influential in this. These bond issues were supported by a group of downtown businessmen, but they really didn't put up any money or a big campaign.

DOUGLASS: So the ABCs were Prop. A, Prop. B, Prop. C.

ROSS: Right. This was the tenor of the whole campaign. This was to the editor and to the publishers. "This is a plea to editors and publishers of the community press to tell their newspaper readers that bond issues always cost them money. An attempt is being made by the downtown interests to pass bond Propositions A, B, and C, under the guise that these projects will be entirely self-supporting and will liquidate $40 million of bonded indebtedness." We were fighting like crazy over $40 million. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Were those related? Propositions A, B, and C?

ROSS: I will have to check. It goes on to say, "You have the opportunity to inform your local people." We really sold that. The downtown interests were defeated by the people outside. The man who really wanted it at that particular time was [Edward W.] Ed Carter.

DOUGLASS: Who was for the bond issue.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I bet this brochure tells what A, B, and C are. I just wonder if they were related.

ROSS: "Proposition A is to build an extravagant civic auditorium at a cost of $25 million. Proposition B ostensibly will build a luxury opera house at a cost of $10 million. It should receive a 'no' vote. Proposition C would dispossess residents of Bunker Hill and move them into public housing to make possible a towering apartment house project in downtown Los Angeles." That, of course, would abut the Broadway Department Store. That is why Carter was very much involved in the thing.

DOUGLASS: Of Broadway-Hale [Stores, Inc.].

ROSS: Yes. This would upgrade that end of town, which was seriously deteriorating.

DOUGLASS: Right. Which is where the Los Angeles Music Center ended up.

ROSS: This was in 1951.

DOUGLASS: And the other one was '53.

ROSS: We got started on this because we wanted to know the date of the election on the other one. Let's see if it says what the election date on this one was. Were we smart enough in those days to tell you things like that? [Laughter] Oh, I love this. "Vote no on bonds. Know your ABCs." Here is a Pasadena car going by a

Beverly Hills limousine and both of them waving to each other saying, "How nice of Los Angeles taxpayers to build us an opera house and an auditorium and build a swanky Bunker Hill."

DOUGLASS: This was your work. [Laughter]

ROSS: Yes. That was my work. [Laughter] Shame, shame on me.

DOUGLASS: How did you happen to switch to the other side in the '53 election?

ROSS: The chamber of commerce switched.

DOUGLASS: The chamber was against this to begin with? In the '51 campaign, the chamber opposed this?

ROSS: Yes. And I am trying to remember why. Here is another letter that went out with this paragraph in it: "Despite this advice from the chamber on A and B, and the Los Angeles Realty Board's condemnation of C, the backers placed a bond issue on the ballot and launched a well-financed campaign to sell them to the voters." So it was opposed by the chamber, and it was opposed by the Los Angeles Realty Board.

DOUGLASS: But the key movers were the Property Owner Taxpayers Association. This was Pixley, right?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Why did the chamber change?

ROSS: After the defeat of A, B, and C in 1951, a new package was developed: a civic auditorium, a sports arena, and a convention center. The convention center concept appealed to all business interests in L.A.

DOUGLASS: But you found yourself on the other side of that. I suppose that happens in your business. Is it a funny feeling to be working the other side of something?

ROSS: No. It would be funny if the same thing came back and you were on the opposite side. That wouldn't work.

DOUGLASS: It was a little different?

ROSS: I am quite sure the thing was a little bit different. So that was '51, and that one was defeated with very little money.

DOUGLASS: So in '53 you gave it a try on the other side. Some of the same concepts.

ROSS: On the general election of May 26, that was the election date. May 26.

DOUGLASS: I was right. I had it that it was the last Tuesday in May. That must have been when it was.

ROSS: The property apparently was dropped at that time. I am looking at our billboard on it.

"It's for you. Proposition B. Vote Yes. Convention Hall, Sports Arena, Civic Auditorium." This is where the sports interests began to oppose it because they were afraid it was going to wind up as a music center and not as a sports arena.

DOUGLASS: This is May 26, 1953.

ROSS: Yes. [Looking at materials in folder] I am just picking up one of our letters we produced. "The civic auditorium will provide the nation's largest conventions and the sporting world's leading attractions. It would ensure us popular and classical musical extravaganzas, symphony concerts, and appearances of topflight artists in all fields. Like our fine Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, revenues from rentals and concessions will retire the bonds necessary to build the structures. The freeway cloverleaf will make the site just twenty minutes away from 90 percent of us." So the site had been picked out. Here is the booklet which will tell me why it changed.

DOUGLASS: How did the issue change?

ROSS: "Opera house" was out and a convention center was put in along with a civic auditorium for

symphonies, theatrical productions, etc. Also, the downtown Philharmonic Auditorium was to be razed. Citywide business interests wanted the convention center. As you know, ultimately a sports arena was built in Exposition Park, a convention center nearby, and a privately financed music center on Bunker Hill on county property.

DOUGLASS: To conclude this story, after that failed was the decision made to let it lay for a while and go private?

ROSS: It was just dropped. Then Buff Chandler picked it up. She did that fantastic job of private financing for it. The supervisors and the state and the city went together to dedicate land in Exposition Park for the Sports Arena. It was paid for by a revenue bond that was backed by the Coliseum revenues. So that took care of the Sports Arena.

DOUGLASS: How was the Bunker Hill site itself finally paid for?

ROSS: That was paid for by the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles. They condemned the property. I am trying to think where they got the funds.

DOUGLASS: The Redevelopment Agency would have the money to do it.

ROSS: They generated the whole thing. We never had a bond issue on that.

DOUGLASS: She spearheaded the raising of the money to build the facilities?

ROSS: Yes. All the sports things went out to the Sports Arena. The music center went private. I suspect through the gift of the county land.

DOUGLASS: I think you said that earlier. That would be a combination of condemning and getting a gift of land, I suspect.

Let's bring it back to the '57 Poulson campaign. He has been in office for one term. As I understand it, you handled that. What do you recall about that? Were there still hard feelings out there? Who was the opposition?

ROSS: Poulson was a very good man at quieting things down. He was a very good operator. If you look at what he did with the little help he had. He didn't have any deputy mayors. That was introduced by Sam Yorty. He had [ ] Steve Garvin as his assistant to the mayor. He brought in a man who had been manager of May Company, [Samuel] Sam Leask. Maybe Leask got in

there with Bowron. I don't recall that precisely. But city hall, the administrative side, was run by Sam Leask and Norris Poulson assisted by Steve Garvin. Those three. That was the crux of the thing before we got all this big bureaucracy that you have in there now.

He got along very well with Rosalyn Wyman, who was a councilwoman married to the attorney, [Eugene] Wyman. He quieted a lot of liberals down with that deal. He got along very well with John [S.] Gibson, who was the powerhouse in the San Pedro area and the whole harbor setup. He was just very good at finding out what people wanted and getting it for them. There were no political deals at all. He had no hold on these people. They just began to support him. They were for him. Poulson would have gotten through the whole thing, but he reached the point where he said, "I am not going to run again. I've had it." He had one of his famous blowups.

DOUGLASS: He could do this.

ROSS: He could do this. So he blew up and left. And he left with both John Gibson and an advertising man who had been president of the [Los Angeles] Airport Commission, both feeling they had been

anointed by Poulson as his successor. Don Belding was the man. He headed the advertising agency. It was Lord and Thomas to begin with. Then it became Foote, Cone and Belding. Belding got very active during the Poulson regime in politics. And both of them wanted to run for mayor. Gibson's fundamental support would come from the harbor area and from organized labor. Don Belding was automatically picking up the opposition, who were old Poulson people of the Republican conservative stripe. Belding asked me to be his campaign manager.

DOUGLASS: What year are we talking about now? Are we talking about '61 or '57?

ROSS: We are talking about '57.

DOUGLASS: Poulson had blown up that soon.

ROSS: He had blown up that soon. He was not going to run for a second term.

DOUGLASS: Fascinating.

ROSS: Yes. It was fascinating.

DOUGLASS: So Belding asked you to assist him.

ROSS: This was before he got down to circulating nominating petitions. This was the feeling around the state. These were two guys who were announcing and making the most waves at that

time. Each was surprised that the other was in the field claiming himself Poulson's man. Poulson is off in the Orient somewhere.

The Belding campaign just wouldn't work. Don Belding was a great administrator. He had a great feeling for advertising and public relations and that sort of thing. But he had a very poor personality and a very poor speaking ability. It just didn't work. Meanwhile, the downtown group--Asa Call, Frank Doherty, this group--they met with Poulson in Hawaii on his way back. They convinced him that there was a grass roots demand for Norris Poulson. He is not to worry about money and he is not to worry about support. It is just all set. So Poulson announced he was going to be a candidate for mayor.

Poor Don Belding, the man cried. He was quite upset, and he had spent I forget how much of his own money on the campaign. I became his great friend because I got the Poulson campaign to pay him all the money he had put out in the campaign. That took care of him. I don't know what happened to John Gibson, whether he was

ROSS: helped or not. Gibson at that time was president of the city council.

DOUGLASS: They obviously felt they had been misled and spent money.

ROSS: Anyway, that whole thing was patched up. There was a prominent automotive dealer, and he ran against Poulson.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember his name?

ROSS: No. But he was a big operator at that time. Everybody knew his name because he was on the radio constantly. This was before television, but he was on the radio constantly. He was one of the kind who would get up there and give his one pitches, "Now you come down to my place and I will give you the best deal." Slap his knee. That sort of thing.

DOUGLASS: Because Baus and Ross had handled the first campaign was it obvious that your firm would do the second one?

ROSS: I think that is what it was. Yes. I don't know why I handled that campaign instead of Herb, but maybe it was a flow through from the Belding situation. I don't know. But we both knew Poulson at that time. Poulson lived fairly close to me. Herb and I were down there at city

hall all the time. He saw us as a team. We got along well together. Ben Griffith was our campaign chairman. I had known him for a long time. I had known his wife from the days of the Red Cross. It was a natural thing. I don't know what else we had that year.

DOUGLASS: Again, it is an off year.

ROSS: Yes. The odd years were the off years.

DOUGLASS: Let's see, 1957. City rubbish collection. School tax increase. There were some other things there.

ROSS: It was a big year, '57.

DOUGLASS: Local issues.

ROSS: Poulson for mayor, that was mine. City rubbish collection was Herb's. That was also a Poulson initiative. That was one of the things he was doing. The school tax increase. That was my campaign. You know, we did a lot of other things that weren't ballot issues which he was involved in. So, anyway, that is how I got into the campaign. It was not an overly difficult campaign.

Getting back to Poulson blowing up, we had rented a space downtown. I think it was the L.A. [Los Angeles] Athletic Club but it could

have been the Biltmore [Hotel]. Nevertheless, we had a big campaign rally election night. Everybody is there. Poulson had blown up several times during the campaign. He would call me up at the oddest hours, "Turn to such-and-such station! Listen to that! How would you like to have them saying this about you?" This guy (the automobile dealer) would get on the radio and deliver fifteen-minute diatribes against Poulson. Poulson would turn on the radio, he would listen, and it would drive him furious. He would call me up and make sure I was listening to the whole thing.

DOUGLASS: He was pretty on edge.

ROSS: He was very much on edge. On the night of the election, Ben Griffith and I were there. Poulson finally came down for his acceptance speech. We are off in the corner. He started berating the two of us. He was just really on edge. He had just gone over. He was berating the two of us on how terrible things were. And the things that were said; the things that were done. Besides we had never paid back his filing fee, which he had to pay. He stalked off and Ben Griffith looked at me, and I never will

forget it, he said, "Would you feel any worse if we had lost?" [Laughter]

A few minutes later, Norrie is up there congratulating everybody. And we are going on to a bigger and better Los Angeles. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: It sounds like his little outlet.

ROSS: Yes. It was his outlet. He was not a drinking man. He was very nervous, and he was an introvert. That campaign got very personal, and it obviously just tore him apart. He liked to be liked by people. He liked to work out problems. He was a damned good administrator. That was that campaign.

DOUGLASS: To wind up the Poulson situation. In '61 he was very averse to running again. Right?

ROSS: Yes. He was resistant to running. There were a lot of people in the race. I have a hunch that what got him to run really was the people that ran against him. My God, he was not going to let them kick him out. Before, you remember, there was no real opposition to him.

But this time he had a man by the name of [Assemblyman Patrick D.] McGee, who was a very popular assemblyman from the San Fernando Valley who had become a city councilman. He was

rallying the Valley against Poulson and the downtown interests again. And he had Sam Yorty.

DOUGLASS: Why had Yorty jumped in at that moment? Do you think he saw his opportunity and the time was ripe?

ROSS: I don't know. It was a big surprise. It had not been anticipated.

DOUGLASS: He had been out of politics again for a while. He left the Congress in '55.

ROSS: Yes. He was backed by Joe Quinn, who had been a business partner of Fletcher Bowron and who ran a wire service called City News Service, which fundamentally was providing downtown, city, county, state political news. What the board of supervisors were doing and so on. They wired that stuff out to radio stations together with general news. He and Eleanor Chambers teamed up behind Sam Yorty.

In the primary it was obvious that Poulson was in trouble. I think he got 43 percent of the vote; the rest of it was split. McGee and Yorty took big chunks of the vote, but McGee was out in the primary. McGee then turned around in support of Poulson, sort of. But none of his support came. . . . Sam Yorty swept the San

Fernando Valley. He was a very good campaigner. Sam was so popular for so long. The Times finally turned the city against him, I think. But he was very, very popular. He used his contacts from the days of the Knowland campaign to work in the Republican area. He had that Republican Valley. It was almost as Republican as Orange County was in those days. The Valley was just a solid Republican area. He got those Republican clubs and the rest of them all behind his campaign.

DOUGLASS: Wasn't it in the '61 campaign that Poulson lost his voice?

ROSS: Yes. He lost his voice; he could only whisper hoarsely. All the rumors went around that he had cancer. That he was not going to last. Gosh, people were calling about this rumor or that rumor. He could not answer it on radio. TV was starting. We did some TV stuff with Poulson to stop this business because he looked well. We had physical examinations done and his doctor's reports printed in the newspaper as to what his problem was. But he was unable to get out and talk and campaign.

DOUGLASS: What do you think his problem was? Was it psychological?

ROSS: That is what these medical people said, that it was part of this nervous frustration he had. He kept in touch for a number of years after. He lost the election and moved to San Diego. He would get on the telephone. He always had the difficulty in talking. He could talk on the phone. He had a wispy way of talking. He couldn't project. He couldn't make a speech, but on the telephone he could work. We would work the microphones with him so he could be on radio or could be on television. He would have this hoarse whisper sort of voice. As far as I know, he never recovered from that. They said there was no growth on his throat. There was no cancer. There was no nothing. It was a little strain originally and it would come back. But it never did.

DOUGLASS: That is pretty hard to win a campaign when you have a voiceless candidate.

ROSS: It was very difficult. We almost won that one. Eleanor Chambers and this lady who I told you about in the congressional campaign, who organized the black district for him, she worked

for him. If you look back in the history of the thing, there was a riot over Memorial Day in Griffith Park. A black riot. Because of Memorial Day the election got postponed into June. There was that riot, and the election came right after it. The black district went solid against Poulson.

I'll have to tell you how we originally got the black vote for Poulson. I haven't got into that. We lost the San Fernando Valley. We lost the San Fernando Valley and the black district and we carried the rest of the city, and we lost.

DOUGLASS: In the past you had gotten the black vote for Poulson. Is that what you are saying?

ROSS: Yes. In the first and second elections we got the black vote for Poulson. I told you he had this great ability to get people who are ideologically opposed to him to think he is the greatest guy in the world. [Congressman Augustus F.] Gus Hawkins was a congressman also from the black district. He knew Poulson. He went out of his way. He came out here.

He got his brother involved. I have forgotten his name. The brother became an

appointee of Poulson's for the Board of Public Works. If you want to talk about quid pro quo, I suppose that was that. But I am sure it was not promised ahead of time. Poulson didn't play politics that way. This guy got in and worked. Gus Hawkins was out there making talks for him.

DOUGLASS: He really pulled the black community.

ROSS: He really pulled it in there.

DOUGLASS: So this riot was a real downer?

ROSS: [William H.] Parker was the police chief at that time. Very unpopular in the black community. I guess all police chiefs become unpopular in the black community. But this was a pretty rough riot. A lot of batons were swung and people wound up with broken heads and this, that, and the other thing. As I recall, that riot happened on a Friday or Saturday, and the election came up the Tuesday following that. It was in June. The rumors were that black people had been killed. People had been hospitalized. It was made much worse than it was. That support we had counted on.

Our last Dorothy Corey poll had showed we were winning it. But, boy, we lost it. We knew we were going to lose the Valley. But we

thought we had it between the westside, which Wyman was working for us, and the eastside, where Poulson came from. John Gibson helped him by endorsing him in the harbor area. We had everything, except we didn't have the black community and we didn't have the Valley.

DOUGLASS: But did you think you had the black community until this riot?

ROSS: We didn't have it 100 percent like we did before because his gal had done a great campaign job down there for him. And Yorty had a very good pro-civil rights record. If you look back to his congressional time, as far as they were concerned, he was a friend.

DOUGLASS: They were more torn in this situation.

ROSS: Yes. I wouldn't say we had it that big. But we lost it like 10-20 percent to 80-90 percent.

DOUGLASS: Do you recall what started that riot?

ROSS: No. I don't. It happened in the merry-go-round area. There was a big gathering there of some kind or the other. I think it was something like this. That people were drinking and having a great time. The kids began to throw rocks and mess things up. The police went in there without the diplomacy and the effect they have

now. They didn't have the black policeman they have now. It just wound up as a police brutality situation.

DOUGLASS: You said that you and Eleanor Chambers temporarily had bad feelings in there because of something about the campaign.

ROSS: I didn't have bad feelings about her, but she did about us. She was very upset with Herb and with me. The reason was that the Los Angeles Times--and this could have been something that hurt us--they ran story after story after story trying to link Sam Yorty to organized crime. And Poulson made the mistake of going to some place in public between the primary and the final. In the primary, Poulson got 43 percent, Yorty had 30 percent, let's say, and McGee had less than that.

In between the time, Poulson gave a written statement to somebody that this was going to be a much tougher campaign and that he was going to show that Sam Yorty was a tool of the underworld or something like that. Which wound up then with Yorty suing the mayor and suing Baus and Ross. It stretched on all through the campaign and then after the campaign. It kept the thing

alive. The stories that the Times had run had not gone that far. But Poulson said he was a member of the underworld or some damn thing like that. It was a libelous statement. It was very strong. And Yorty kept pushing on the thing and kept the thing in the courts. He had an attorney working along with him who was very active in that first administration.

DOUGLASS: What finally happened to that lawsuit?

ROSS: What finally happened to the thing was I made a denial in a deposition or somewhere. I also wrote a letter to Yorty, and to Eleanor, in which I pointed out that I was out of town and told where I was. And Herb Baus was out of town and where he was. Of course, we couldn't do this during the campaign, but after it was over we could dissociate ourselves by saying, "We had absolutely nothing to do with the press release. We weren't in town."

Yorty dropped the suit. He instituted a weekly press conference. At his press conference he said he was dropping it because Baus and Ross said that they were not in town. He was going to drop it against Poulson because the campaign was over. I don't think he dropped

Poulson at that particular time. But he dropped us first and then Poulson.

DOUGLASS: That is fairly standard procedure.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So Eleanor Chambers was convinced after the deposition?

ROSS: Yes. Then I came back and ran a Yorty campaign.

DOUGLASS: You did? I didn't pick that up.

ROSS: This sheet stops at '64.

DOUGLASS: You once again worked for his campaign?

ROSS: Yes. I worked for him in the mayoral campaign that [Councilman Thomas] Bradley lost.

DOUGLASS: The first time Bradley ran.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Because Bradley won the next time, didn't he?

ROSS: Yes. He did.

DOUGLASS: Yorty was mayor for a long time. Aren't we coming up to twenty years on Bradley?

ROSS: Yes. I think Yorty served four terms.

DOUGLASS: If Yorty went in in '61 and served twelve years as mayor, he was defeated in 1973. You did the next to last election for Yorty.

ROSS: Yes. I did the 1969 [or the 1965] campaign.

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about that. How did you happen to do that after this other bad blood?

ROSS: During this time, Yorty was being attacked right and left by the Los Angeles Times every time he left town. It is interesting because Bradley is gone as much or more. But every time he left town, there was a big story about he was out of town.

DOUGLASS: They were on his case?

ROSS: They were on his case. They really were. It carried over from the Poulson years. They just never got over that loss. They fought him right and left. Yorty, meanwhile, his support was coming from the Republican side and downtown business. And, you know, later he changed his registration to Republican.

DOUGLASS: Why was that happening during that first term?

ROSS: I don't know. Sam changed from being pretty much of a liberal. He got more conservative as time went on. And the Times got more liberal! You would have to say he was a staunch Republican if you looked at his record and the things he talked about.

DOUGLASS: This was a genuine change? Not for political reasons.

ROSS: Yes, I think it was a genuine change. I don't think it was political at all. Henry Salvatori,

a big Republican and a holdover from the tidewater oil days, became his finance chairman in that final one that he won. Along with a man named [John] Kilroy, who was doing a lot of development around the airport. There is a big Kilroy center down there. They are both Republicans. I knew Henry Salvatori. He was very, very active with the 1960 and 1968 [Vice President Richard M.] Nixon-for-President campaigns. Joe Quinn and I had always gotten along. Eleanor and I were getting along. It just happened that way.

DOUGLASS: So they asked you to handle it.

ROSS: Yes. They asked me to handle the campaign.

DOUGLASS: Was it clear there was going to be opposition and that Bradley was that opposition early on?

ROSS: It was clear right from the start that Bradley was going to be. Bradley was picking up that westside support that he still has. The finance support and the rest of it. Bradley was backed by the Los Angeles Times. They did endorse him. They lost and they endorsed him again the next time, and he won. They don't endorse now but they were leaning toward Bradley.

DOUGLASS: Bradley had been on the Los Angeles City Council?

ROSS: He was on the city council for quite some time [1963-1973].

DOUGLASS: But he was the one who decided to take on Yorty.

ROSS: To take on Yorty. He had the liberal support. He had the westside Democratic organization, which automatically brought a lot of Jewish money.

DOUGLASS: But his councilmanic district, would it have been somewhat like [Councilman] Robert [C.] Farrell's is?

ROSS: Yes. He lived in Leimert Park. His district was the southwest area of Los Angeles. Farrell's district, I don't know how it is now, was a little closer in. Farrell's centered around USC and down that way. Bradley's district had a lot of white area in it. It had Leimert Park, which wasn't as black as it is now. He had that area down that way. It was a big black district.

DOUGLASS: But it had a lot of mix?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: And he picked up the liberal westside.

ROSS: Yes. He had the same temperament and personality he has now. There is no black-white dividing line on Bradley.

DOUGLASS: Was it a pretty tough campaign?

ROSS: It was a tough campaign. Bradley forced us into a run off. Yorty was ahead of him, as I recall, but barely ahead. The thing that blew it for Bradley was not our campaign or anything we had to do with. I think I mentioned earlier that Yorty had strong support from the Herald-Express. I didn't know about it until I read it in the papers, the Herald-Express covered a meeting, in all places, the Larchmont district, which is right in the heart of Hancock Park. There is a Larchmont Hall. It was used a lot of times for political meetings. Incidentally, it was a liberal crowd that did the renting of it. And the liberal crowd came from Hollywood and the Valley.

Nonetheless, there was a meeting there. It was a Bradley campaign rally. They had a speaker who was like Harry Bridges was. He was a known "I am a Communist." There was no kidding about it. You never accused him of being a Communist. He was a Communist. He was

out of the closet. He had the armband of a Communist and so on. He addressed this deal in Bradley's presence and endorsed him. Bradley thanked him and so on and so forth. I don't know who tipped off the Herald-Express. It was their scoop. The Times sure picked it up. The story was under the byline of [ ] Jud Baker. I remember that very well. He always took credit. "I am the guy who elected Sam Yorty mayor." He was very proud of that story. It was just a banner story that "a Communist endorsed Bradley." It just hit the whole thing.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

DOUGLASS: This did considerable damage to Bradley.

ROSS: It did an awful lot of damage. That knocked him out, and Yorty went back in.

DOUGLASS: How was Bradley on speaking on the campaign trail?

ROSS: Bradley was sort of a blah speaker really. You have seen in his campaigns for governor. He hasn't changed a bit as time went on. A very nice personality. A very nice appearance. Very, very good as he would walk around and talk one-on-one. His public speech was kind of monotonous. He has a sort of tiresome cadence that after a while you begin to think "We are going to do this. I am going to see that this is done." I wouldn't call him a good speaker at all.

DOUGLASS: Were they together on many occasions? Did they appear as speakers at the same time?

ROSS: No. There were no debates in that kind of a space.

DOUGLASS: Yorty being the incumbent just went on his own way.

ROSS: Yes. He wasn't going to take him on at all.

DOUGLASS: Were there any particular approaches you used in that campaign in terms of how to defeat Bradley? He did well in the primary.

ROSS: He did well in the primary. That campaign was not a good campaign at all. You never could tell who was running the campaign. Whether Baus and Ross was running it. I think it was pretty apparent we weren't running it. Or Eleanor Chambers. Or Joe Quinn. As far as Baus and Ross were concerned, we were starved for money. We had nothing to do with the collection of the money. That was all being held by Eleanor Chambers, and she just couldn't handle it. The money was being spent by her in a lot of crazy, different ways to all the political hacks and hangers-on at city hall. "Well, so-and-so is going to get the eastside vote. So-and-so is going to get that. We have to set him up. And we have to do this, that, and the other thing." It never went through our books at all.

We had the campaign headquarters over on Wilshire Boulevard. We did all the literature. We did the radio and the TV and the rest of it. As far as getting into the grass roots organization and so on, we were kept out of it.

DOUGLASS: So there were several campaigns going on.

ROSS: There were several campaigns going on. Yes. All of them were horribly underfinanced. The result was that we got pushed into that runoff. At that time, at my insistence Henry Salvatori . . . . I wrote a letter to Yorty that he has to get somebody strong who can get control of the people in his own office as well as Baus and Ross and take this thing over. Because they are not about to take direction at city hall from me. We don't have the control of it. The money is not going through us. Henry Salvatori was going to raise the money. So he and Kilroy then took over the campaign. I was really more of a consultant than anything else. We were on fee. We got a percentage of some of the advertising. But Henry took all the money and saw that it was spent. He spent it through various sources but all legitimate advertising setups.

I don't think they would have pulled it off, or we would have pulled it off because I was part of it, if it had not been for that Herald article. Bradley had good people. They had it in for Sam Yorty, and the Times was constantly tearing him down. Bradley was

carrying the westside. He was the idol of the Democratic community over there.

DOUGLASS: Who was running his campaign? Do you remember?

ROSS: Yes. I don't remember his name. He is the man who later became Bradley's deputy. Then he was picked up in a homosexual raid in one of the Hollywood theaters. That got rid of him. But he was a very good campaigner. He had been with Bradley when he was a city councilman. He was running the campaign.

DOUGLASS: Did he run the campaign the next time when Bradley won?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You weren't involved in the last Yorty campaign?

ROSS: No.

DOUGLASS: Anything more about Yorty?

ROSS: I think that does that.

DOUGLASS: That is most interesting. What I want to do now is go to other local elections. Local meaning county, city, whatever. In '53, you, again, worked for a slate for the Los Angeles City Board of Education. I have the names down only as [Edith H.] Stafford, [Hugh C.] Willett and [Ruth] Cole. They won in the primaries. That

was held at the same time as the city primary, I assume.

ROSS: Yes. There were together. They covered some territory that the city did not cover. As you know, the school district covers Huntington Park and Bell and Southgate and Gardena. Well, Stafford, Willett, and Cole were fiscally conservative. Willett was a retired professor at USC. He was a liberal conservative. I would place him there. He very much had the viewpoint of the teachers. In that respect, he would be liberal. He would want more money for the teachers.

Cole and Stafford were two ladies from the San Fernando Valley. The Valley was coming into its own at that particular time. They were active in PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] work. Cole was very, very conservative. Her husband, Clement, had been mixed up in the public housing campaigns and that sort of thing. I have forgotten who the opposition was. We put together that slate. We didn't put it together. It was put together, and they came to us.

DOUGLASS: These were not incumbents?

ROSS: They were not incumbents.

DOUGLASS: And there were three openings, as you recall, on the school board?

ROSS: I'll have to look that up.

DOUGLASS: What they had in common was that they were fiscally conservative. Was that why they ran as a slate?

ROSS: What they had in common was they were fiscally conservative. What I had going for me was that the school bond and the tax limitation increase campaigns. . . . How the devil did I get into those?

DOUGLASS: Is there any carryover from that early experience you had running Pierce for school board? Is there a fallout from that?

ROSS: I guess there was to a point on that. You get into school board campaigns, and you have to realize that very few people really get interested in the thing. The schoolteachers are very much so, and it all gets down to the pocketbook issue with them. Then you have some of the taxpayer associations and ideologically conservative people. The rest of them just don't seem to pay much attention. Financing is very difficult for those school board campaigns. In the school bond campaigns that money always

came from the teacher groups. They would put up the money for those campaigns. I can't tell you exactly the Stafford, Willett, and Cole situation.

DOUGLASS: In the '52 campaign you had handled two school bond issues and two school tax limitation increases. Campaigns in favor you won "despite school board scandals." Does that ring a bell?

ROSS: Yes. Thank you. There was a scandal. At that particular time, there was an organization called Landier Transit. Landier Transit did all the school bus contracts. The city was evolving and spreading out and school bussing got to be a big thing. Landier had those contracts. There are some funny angles on that, too, but I don't know how far to get into them. Nonetheless, Landier had those contracts. Then it turned out that Landier had been wining and dining board members. Scandals were all wining-and-dining situations. And gifts. Very expensive gifts. At least they seemed expensive at that time. And that was the scandal. Dr. Askey was very much involved in the thing. I think he resigned or did not run. I have forgotten who the other two were who also did not run.

DOUGLASS: This was the slate you had managed.

ROSS: Yes. This slate was not running against incumbents. They quit. This was a slate that came in. The problem was that all the people that had supported Askey and the group were looking for a new slate they could get elected. They were afraid of the so-called overly liberal element and the people the schoolteachers would like. So we were running that slate as a more fiscally conservative slate.

DOUGLASS: So they might have been replacements for those first three.

ROSS: Yes. At this time, money was much more of an issue in the schools than it is now. The system was rapidly expanding. We were passing all these bond issues. We were adding on to the debt. They were twenty-year bond issues in those days, too. The cost of schools was going up and up and up. They had hired a superintendent of schools who was an anathema to the taxpayers' association. Pixley's Property Owner Taxpayers Association and also the L.A. Realty board and the rest of them. He was a big spender. And he was an outsider. He had come from Chicago, I believe. Dr. [Alexander J.] Stoddard was his

name. This slate was really running against Stoddard. It didn't get into that.

DOUGLASS: Let's see whatever you might remember of those '52 bond issues. There were two school bond issues and two school tax limitation increases. And you worked in the campaign in favor of these. Do you remember those particularly?

ROSS: Yes. I remember it. That was an unusual situation. I was sitting here at my desk. A man called who wanted to see me. His name was Dr. Herschel Griffin. It meant nothing to me. We were in the midst of other campaigns.

DOUGLASS: Fifty-two was a busy year. You had the city public housing referendum, which we discussed. And your nonprofit school taxation campaign.

ROSS: I don't know how the city election got into the statewide election, but it did.

DOUGLASS: Which city election, Mr. Ross? The school bonds?

ROSS: Yes. It is a June election. It should have come in an off year. It should not be an even-numbered year. Ordinarily, it would not have. However, Dr. Herschel Griffin came into the office and he said he was the number-one paid man on what they called ATOLA [Affiliated

Teachers of Los Angeles]. It was the predecessor of the teachers' union we have now.

DOUGLASS: AFT [American Federation of Teachers].

ROSS: Yes. It was not tied into AFT or anything like that. It was strictly a local employee group. ATOLA wanted these things to pass; they had to pass. And how much would it cost to do a campaign? We just talked it out. It was down to the point where he says, "OK, let's get started. How much do you need? How much do you need as a binder?" [Laughter] That was in June of that year. My big campaign with the nonprofit school taxation was coming up in November. We had the time to do it, I guess. I know I was handling another campaign at the same time. I just got thrown into it.

The key to that campaign was to get the business community not to oppose it. They had been opposing the tax limitation increases. The tax limitation increase was very necessary now.

DOUGLASS: You had to lift the cap on the tax limitation.

ROSS: Yes. On the tax limitation. So that they could pay for all the teachers then needed.

DOUGLASS: I follow you. It was two school bond issues. And then two issues of lifting the cap.

ROSS: The reason it was two issues was because at that time the elementary school district was one tax rate and one setup. The secondary schools were another. It was the same board of education over them, but they were administering two budgets, two tax rates, two different entities on the bond issue.

DOUGLASS: So it was the tax limitation increase that was of concern.

ROSS: Yes. Not that bonds. Well, the bonds were, too, because you had to get a two-thirds vote. They had not been winning those campaigns. So, anyway, we won overwhelmingly all the way down on that. The thing to do was to get the chamber of commerce to go for the tax limitation increases. The chamber of commerce had great faith in Harry Howell. He was the business manager of the school district. They had no faith at all in Stoddard. But they did have in this man. He later on became superintendent of schools.

Anyway, I got him to go to the chamber of commerce. There was some negotiating. Things went back and forth. They finally got a measure that they could go for. This is where it got

down to the ballot measure in talking beforehand.

DOUGLASS: Talking about wording.

ROSS: Wording and what was included and what was not included. We got that approved by James L. Beebe and the state and local government committee of the chamber of commerce. This was a contact that the school people had never had. They always considered the chamber of commerce the enemy. Well, the chamber and the L.A. Times got 100 percent behind this thing, and it just went over like gangbusters. It was not even close.

DOUGLASS: Everybody saw a reason for this?

ROSS: Yes. That you had to have a bond issue, but you couldn't have the schools without more teachers in there. We made a package out of the whole thing.

DOUGLASS: And the bond issues also passed.

ROSS: Yes. It passed as a package. We used the PTAs and the neighborhood groups. It was a typical Red Cross type of thing. We worked through the schools. We had literature drop-off points all geared into schools. We had the PTAs geared into it. It was really well organized on a

house-to-house basis. Kay Ferguson worked on that, and it really went across because we had no real opposition.

DOUGLASS: There is lethargy and then the negative. As you say, the 20 percent.

ROSS: Yes. Twenty percent will vote "no" anyway. Routine.

DOUGLASS: A tax limitation increase is a bit chancy.

ROSS: It doesn't read very well.

DOUGLASS: Particularly covering this big school district. All right. I think we have explained why you worked on the board of education slate.

The next one I want to ask you about--I am just going chronologically, Mr. Ross--is you worked on [Sheriff Eugene] Biscailuz' reelection for sheriff. That is, Herb Baus worked on that campaign.

ROSS: That is Herb's campaign.

DOUGLASS: Was this the first time that your firm had been involved in a sheriff's election?

ROSS: Yes. It was.

DOUGLASS: Do you know how that happened? What the contact was?

ROSS: No. I don't.

DOUGLASS: Mr. Baus might have covered it.

ROSS: He might have covered it. He would know. I did not know Biscailuz.

DOUGLASS: I think he probably did. Your firm did several of those campaigns. Baus in '58 did the [Peter J.] Pitchess for sheriff.

ROSS: Pitchess at that time was the undersheriff, and he succeeded the office.

DOUGLASS: Right. There were two others, '62 and '66 Pitchess elections, which Baus did.

He also did the [Councilman] Ernest [E.] Debs' campaign for supervisor. Was this your first venture into supervisorial politics?

ROSS: Yes. It was.

DOUGLASS: Were you at all involved in that?

ROSS: Well, I got involved in that all these campaigns that Herb handled had advertising. I did the advertising. I would do the advertising copy. Herb became a very good folder writer. I edited some of the stuff. But Herb could write. But he did not know the radio, television, and billboard stuff. Or the production of the materials. I did that part, and I would get involved in it with presentations on advertising to the committees and the candidates and that sort of thing. So I would get to know them.

That was strictly Herb's contact. I don't know how that came about.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember anything particular about that supervisorial election?

ROSS: Yes. It was a very tough election among three councilmen.

DOUGLASS: This was Debs first go at it.

ROSS: It was his first go at it. And also Harold Henry, who had been an old friend of ours; he was in the public housing fights. I mentioned that he was one of the Wilshire district councilmen. At the same time, he was the paid employee of the Wilshire chamber of commerce. In those days you did not have a full-time job in the city hall. That was later on.

We had run across Debs in various campaigns. The other man running was Councilman Edward [R.] Roybal, later to be Congressman Roybal. So it was a very active campaign. It was quite a feather in Herb's cap to elect Debs, who was strictly unknown outside of his councilmanic district, and if he were known in the Wilshire district, it was anathema. And over on the eastside Roybal with the strong Spanish electorate and the influence over there.

Then there was Debs. Debs had a good central city reputation. He had good Democratic support.

DOUGLASS: What was Debs' background for running?

ROSS: Debs had been in the state assembly. Debs was a city councilman for a number of years.

DOUGLASS: He did that after the assembly, didn't he?

ROSS: Yes. In those days, the assembly was not considered much of an office. A lot of men first ran for the assembly and then ran for the city council.

DOUGLASS: It wasn't a full-time position. And being on the L.A. city council was more desirable?

ROSS: Right. You get more exposure. A better chance to go into other things. The supervisorial office was vacant, and I have forgotten why the office was vacant.

DOUGLASS: So he was running as a city councilman.

ROSS: Yes. And Roybal was running as a city councilman. And Harold Henry was running as a city councilman. I think there were others in there, too. There were others in there, too, but there were those three.

DOUGLASS: That is a pretty tough matchup.

ROSS: Yes. We talked to people on this basis. "Look at that district. It is not Harold Henry's district. It is heavily Democratic. It is heavily working man. It is not Hancock Park, Wilshire, Miracle Mile material." The town got pretty well split up. Just as we were surprised that perhaps we were not with Harold Henry. You had a lot of Republican groups in the Wilshire area, in particular, who were for Harold Henry. Whatever Republicans there were over on the eastside, they were for Henry too. Debs had most of the Democratic organization. He had been very active in Democratic politics, and he had that. Roybal had the Hispanic situation.

Out of it came a Debs-Roybal runoff. That became easier. Then you had the eastside versus the westside. It is a cockeyed district, as you know. It was even more cockeyed in those days. Roybal was outvoted by the westside. It didn't have as much eastside as it has today. [Supervisor Edward] Ed Edelman's district today. That is the district we are talking about. The big thing was to get Debs into that final against Roybal. You can say that the bases broke out: Henry had the west end of it; the

middle of it went to Debs; the eastside went to Roybal. That is just about the way it went.

DOUGLASS: So one of the three had to drop out.

ROSS: Yes. We were sure that Harold Henry was going to drop out. Or he was going to be left out. But he ran and he lost. He came around. We were very good friends afterward and worked on a lot of things together.

The greatest job in this county is supervisor of L.A. County. You have been in city politics so you know.

DOUGLASS: It is very powerful.

ROSS: Very, very powerful. Very, very good salary. And very good perks.

DOUGLASS: Let's jump to the other really local election. That is, how you happened to manage [Arthur H.] Cox for mayor of the City of Pomona in '59. [Interruption]

DOUGLASS: Let's pick up with the mayoralty race of Mr. Cox.

ROSS: I would just say parenthetically that as time went on we began to have a lot of people come in and talk to us about campaigns in various surrounding cities. Our advice to them always was: You don't dare have Baus and Ross coming

in and running your campaign because then it looks like outsiders are trying to take over. What goes on here? Who is hiring those high-price guys? What we would do for them was try to lay out a theme for their campaign as they told us their various problems.

In Cox's case, I remember in particular I wrote a lot of literature for him and did some rough layouts for him. I said, "We can't print them. You take these to your printer in Pomona. You handle this whole thing through. If you want to add some artwork to it, get a Pomona guy to do it." I would give him a layout on the thing. I saw this stuff as it was printed. They sent stuff to me. I don't have any in the file because all I did was write the copy on the thing. I gave him a theme. I can't recall exactly what it was except that it seemed to be very effective.

The situation was that he had been on the city council and he was running for mayor. His opponent was a man who had been one of those typical gadflies that you find at various places. There is a gadfly at the board of supervisors. He was a guy who always attended

ROSS: the meetings and was always getting up and making speeches. He opposed a lot of things. Fundamentally he was an "no" guy. Pomona was growing. A lot of people didn't recall his twenty, twenty-five year history of being a constant gadfly. Cox didn't know who or how come or why, but this man was suddenly running against him, and he had money. It was just a big mystery. He looked into it. The man was retired.

All I remember was that I gave them a slogan that had to do with the trite expression when we say experience against knowing nothing. The slogan of some kind of "Put your bet on experience." I don't remember exactly what it was. But that was the general idea. I remember the copy that I wrote for him, which he got a big kick out of and apparently sold, was: "The opposition has no record in public office except to be an agitator. Nobody knows where the money is coming from." We didn't have detailed financial reports in those days. "The opponent says he is not putting up the money. Here are some of the stands he had taken before city council which are a matter of record. Opposed

this, opposed this, opposed and so on and so forth." Went down that list. It wound up sort of that you looked at those things and the question would be, "Who does he plan to put in as police chief?" Or more important, "Who do the people behind him want to put in as police chief? Who do they plan to put in on the planning commission?"

DOUGLASS: It got very specific.

ROSS: Yes. Right down the line. Who would he put in this office, this office, this office? So you began to see what the guy had to fill in. What his powers were as mayor.

I drove out to Pomona that night. I just couldn't resist. I wanted to know what was going on. I got quite interested and kept hearing about this rather erratic character and the things he had done. I walked into city hall. Pomona is not like Los Angeles. They counted their ballots quick and on time. When I got there, the ballots had all been counted and Cox had won. I said, "Why do you think Cox won?" "Well, fundamentally this got down to a campaign. . . ." And he repeated my speech.

They got really sold on a known quantity versus an unknown quantity, which is what it really got down to. Who is going to call the shots? Who is going to be the police chief? Who is going to be the fire chief? Who is going to be in the planning department? Who is going to be in building and safety? Right down the line. That was the way it was. I just got a fee on the thing, and I don't think it was very much because Cox didn't have much.

DOUGLASS: Basically, as there were more cities and things became more sophisticated, you did get more requests.

ROSS: Our reputation began to go around. Whether they came from some friend we knew, I don't recall who sent Cox in. Whether it was the realty board or who it was.

DOUGLASS: But your advice was not to bring you in as the heavies.

ROSS: Yes. I didn't want to go into Pomona at all. I gave him the copy, and he could change it or edit it or do with it what he wished. But he used it. I am sure I told a few other basics as to how to list his occupation and one darn thing

or another. I think he was an accountant. We did handle a lot of campaigns like that.

DOUGLASS: So there were other localities for which you did sort of not really straight contract work but some kind of consulting?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we move to a pretty significant campaign, and that was Philip [E.] Watson's first campaign for county assessor. You were the lead man on that.

ROSS: I will never forget that one.

DOUGLASS: He was taking on the establishment.

ROSS: He was taking on the establishment. Philip Watson was a very unusual man. He had never run for political office. He was intensely ambitious, and he was a brilliant man. He was a bombardier pilot in the war. He was very active in American Legion affairs. I did not know him. I was not a member of the American Legion because my military [service] was mostly with the Red Cross as a paid employee. I was in the Pacific area division. Watson went to UCLA, and he got his degree in three years rather than four years. He was married. He went to work in the assessor's office, to begin with.

Out of that he became a private consultant to development builders to tell them how to set up their deal to get the best tax advantage. Beyond that he was called in as an expert witness when it got down to a deal of "what is the value of this piece of property?" You know all the approaches. The income approach, depreciation, and all those things. He was a real expert on those things. That is the way he made his living.

DOUGLASS: How long did he work in the assessor's office? Very long?

ROSS: No. I think it was only three or four years. He was not a guy to be a civil servant. He put some money into stock in a savings and loan in the Culver City area. The savings and loan was bought out. And he had been active in that savings and loan, also. When it was bought out, he had a sizable chunk of money. Enough that he could say, "I am going to quit work and run for assessor." His friends, as I say, were all in the American Legion. The Legion was active in politics in those days. I knew several people in the American Legion. One of them was Louis R. Baker. He was an attorney here in town. He

became involved in a lot of suits against the assessor's office. Those were quite common things in those days. There was no appeals board that you went to. You went to court. He used Watson as an expert witness two or three times.

Watson came in. We never solicited him. He came in. He was working with somebody else at the time and was not getting anywhere. He came in one night. Gibson was running.

DOUGLASS: How had he gotten your name? Do you know? Why did he come to you?

ROSS: We were pretty well known by that time. I think Baker had something do with it. Baker served in his kitchen cabinet. Baker knew me, and I knew him quite well. I never did ask him.

DOUGLASS: He had someone he was working with and he wasn't happy?

ROSS: He was working with a guy and a gal. They had recently opened an agency. She had worked for us. A brilliant woman. A very fine woman. She left the new agency to go into a political campaign. He was left with this man. This man knew nothing. Watson could see that. He had enough money to get us started, and we went into

it. Watson had a slogan, "Stop unfair taxation." Of course, everybody is in favor of that. He had done a smart thing. I wish I could take credit for it, although I can't. He listed himself for the ballot as "tax economist." Taxes are going up, bond issues are going up. The people are screaming about all these things that have to happen. They all go on the tax assessments roll.

They were playing a game down at the board of supervisors at that time where two guys come up for office and the other three guys are in free for another two years. They would raise the taxes in the three [districts] where the guys are not running. They would hold the taxes even where the incumbents are running.

DOUGLASS: On reassessment.

ROSS: Yes. So the next time around there would be three other districts to reassess and the other two would not be reassessed. You were not getting fair taxation. That was the business of the unfair taxation. The same house in the Fifth Supervisorial District would be half of what the same house was in the Third

Supervisorial District. Or something like that. I am picking those numbers out of thin air.

DOUGLASS: Yes. Now Gibson, the councilman who was running against him, had the backing of the outgoing assessor, [John R.] Quinn, I believe.

ROSS: Gibson. Yes. He did. But not really the all-out backing. Quinn sort of endorsed him, but he respected Watson. John Quinn was a very friendly guy. Quinn had also come up through American Legion politics as national commander and into the assessor office, which he was appointed to. I don't think he wanted to take on Watson. He did give his endorsement to John Gibson.

The strength that Watson had was that we had organized all the realtors. Coming out of the housing campaigns, all the realtors knew us. A lot of the realtors knew him because they had used him in these assessment reduction cases. So I began to move him around. The man talked morning, noon, and night. He had a good, short speech. In the questions and answers, people would throw facts at him, and you could tell he was an expert witness. He would say why this

happened and what should have been done. He was very impressive.

DOUGLASS: I suspect that Gibson was not in the position to have that kind of information or ability.

ROSS: Gibson knew absolutely nothing about it.

DOUGLASS: Why had Gibson chosen to run?

ROSS: He had a free ride because he didn't have to quit the council to do it. It is a wonderful job if you had it. You have a Cadillac limousine and all the perks that went with that job. And the job was open. It wound up that about six people ran for the job. Only three of them got very far. Gibson, Watson, and one other. Gibson made the mistake, I felt, of listing himself as President, Los Angeles City Council. Well that didn't play in Pomona or Claremont or Glendale or any of these places. And Phil was going out to the realty boards. I found over the years, and in those times in particular when word of mouth meant so much, that realtors are very potent political troops in the field. They talk to everybody. They were very aware of taxes and what it was doing to their ability to sell real estate. The tax

was so high and the income was so low. You know all the problems there.

The past president of the California Real Estate Board, [James M.] Jimmy Udall, was chairman of his campaign. And Jimmy was very much loved. He would call these board presidents up and say, "I want you to talk to Phil Watson." That is all he really did was to get on the phone. He never came to any of our meetings or strategy sessions or anything. But he would do that. He got Phil out. We would write stories on every one of those and plant them in the local newspapers. I had a man following him around and hand planting them with the local newspaper.

The general idea was that the guy who is running against him is part of the in-crowd. There is not going to be any change. He doesn't know anything about it. The bureaucracy is going to run it. You had better get somebody who knows what it is all about.

That is the way the thing worked out. In the primary, Gibson came in first with a very heavy Los Angeles vote. Watson came in a good strong second. This other guy picked up a

ROSS: pretty good vote. He was a CPA and he had that on his setup and so on. Gibson's campaign was run by Lloyd Menvig, who was a San Pedro politician, and I don't think he knew anybody outside of that area. I don't think John Gibson went around in the county. He went around Los Angeles City. He had been thwarted from becoming mayor because Poulson ran again. This would be a step up for him. He was a nice, likable guy but knew absolutely nothing about the techniques. He couldn't answer any question as to who or what division would handle what.

Watson had his plans to set up a citizens' review panel where you would come in and plead your case there, rather than going to court. He had these review boards that you could appeal to. He eliminated the piecemeal assessment. We are going to do it all once. If we can't do it all at once, we are going to spread it out all at once. So it was no one district taking the whole beating all of a sudden when it comes.

When elected he was a popular assessor at the start. Extremely popular.

DOUGLASS: That was an against-all-odds thing because Gibson would have had name recognition?

ROSS: Yes. And we got a lot of favorable comment at that time, which was wonderful. It came at what I felt was a very important time. I handled the southern California Nixon campaign in 1960. Although we won southern California, we lost statewide. We took the heat. "Well, they lost Nixon." Then we handled Poulson in '61. "Well, they lost Poulson when they got some serious opposition." I was pretty desperate for a winning campaign.

Just talking to this guy, I thought he could make it simply because of the way Gibson was starting out. At the end of it, it was the only time I ever did it and it is a foolish thing to do but I talked to Herb, I threw our campaign fee into the thing to buy advertising at the last minute. But I could see we were winning it. We needed to get radio time. We just said, "We will have a deficit. I don't know how you are going to pay off the deficit when you accept a nonincumbent." Gibson can pay off a deficit. He still is president of the city council. But we needed a win. And we went all out on that one. I certainly did. When we were going through the primary, I knew we had a

candidate. When it got down to a two-man deal, then when we threw in our fee, some other guys went to the bank and borrowed some money. I told you how that is done. They wanted personal notes.

DOUGLASS: That is not on tape. Why don't you explain about getting loans for political campaigns.

ROSS: Running a political campaign, banks do not loan money. Unlike the savings and loan scandal where money went out to politicians, banks don't. You would get money from a bank simply on the credit of some backers who would go in and borrow and co-sign. Five guys would go in and borrow $50,000 and each take on a $10,000 liability. That was done by several people. Jim Udall was one. Charles Stillwell, who at that time ran the big Catalina steamship and for some reason was very upset with John Gibson and Lloyd Menvig.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

DOUGLASS: I want to ask you if this is a fairly typical situation for a candidate. Let's take the example of Watson. He comes to you and you are the lead person in your office dealing with him. What do you do? Do you sit down with him and go over a strategy plan? Do you listen to him and then come up with a strategy plan? What would be the way you would do this?

ROSS: In most cases you know the man. If you don't, you have to find out to know them so you begin to know what he stands for and what he wants to do. Then you look at the times and what is going on. Incidentally, the Times supported John Gibson and opposed Watson from that time on. They have never forgotten.

DOUGLASS: Oh, really?

ROSS: They didn't oppose him. They just had no recommendation for his next two elections.

DOUGLASS: How interesting.

ROSS: Yes. It was interesting.

DOUGLASS: You were concerned about the political climate.

ROSS: At that time, there was this awful explosion going in taxation to keep up with all this development going on. People were being taxed

out of their homes. They were having an awful time about it. Most weren't being taxed out of their homes, but they acted like they were. It was just killing them to have the tax rate going up from two dollars to three dollars to four dollars to seven dollars to eight dollars a hundred. It was pretty bad.

DOUGLASS: You would get to know the candidate and then you would figure out what is going on.

ROSS: With Watson you didn't have to sit down and have to plot out a big strategy. There are other candidates I can talk about.

DOUGLASS: I think it is an interesting exercise. I want to move into the national arena and state, but maybe you could just run through, typically, say, in the sixties, how you would deal with running a candidate's campaign. How would you do it? What would be the first steps?

ROSS: Number one, before you take on a candidate, you have to know what he stands for. You will notice we did not handle a lot of partisan candidates. Mayors and supervisors and sheriffs and assessors and that sort of thing are nonpartisan. But you know what the man stands for. The next thing you are looking for is:

Can we elect this guy? There is no use trying to take somebody just to take his money. If you can't elect him, forget it and look for another campaign. You can handle only so many campaigns.

DOUGLASS: Have you ever dropped people after that assessment?

ROSS: Yes. We have. [Thomas] Coakley. You mentioned him the other day. We were with him about three weeks and said, "No charge. Go your own way."

DOUGLASS: So you conclude there is a fit with this person and you are going to go on?

ROSS: Yes. You have to find a fit and that you can work along with him. Then you look to find out: Do we have the ammunition? Can we raise money? Can that candidate raise money? Will he be supported by the proper party apparatus or by somebody? Because if you are going into these big elections, and in those first days you had to buy radio, and then it got to be radio and TV, and you also had to have a newspaper campaign. Of course, we were always looking at direct mail.

Our newspaper campaigns, very frankly in those days, aside from the big dailies, with the

weekly publications you are working on a community level and getting publicity in that local newspaper. You told the newspaper that they were sure to get some advertising and would appreciate having them run this story about so-and-so. That kind of thing. But you didn't get your advertising dollar's worth from the community newspapers. It is a very expensive way to go. Yet, if you had a community organization, it was very, very helpful. Anyway, [Assemblyman Jesse M.] Unruh said, "Money is the mother's milk of politics." We never got down to that close analysis, but those are the things you have to have in a candidate.

DOUGLASS: Was it the assumption that it was up to the candidate to raise the money and not up to you to raise the money? Or were you concerned that you might get in the position where it might take both?

ROSS: In those days in candidate situations we never had anything to do with raising the money. It depended on various things in the fund-raising campaigns for the propositions. Then, again, you did everything possible to keep away from the fund-raising deal.

DOUGLASS: But you would assess the potential ability of a candidate to have a fund-raising base.

ROSS: Yes. In those days, you weren't looking so much to the candidates the way it is now or candidates later on. Candidates now get on the phone and call people. They didn't in those days. We had a policy to go on. Money was not to go to the candidate; it was to go the campaign committee. We ran what we considered to be a very ethical operation. We thought that was one of our strengths.

I had been accustomed in running commercial advertising that you kept books. You had the books audited. You took in so much and put it out, and what was left over was profit. With all your invoices you backed them up with the bills of the suppliers. We were very careful and very clean. We always had a CPA to be the treasurer. The finance committee would go out and raise the money, and they would take it to the treasurer.

Any money that came in direct to us, we would, as I explained in that Poulson deal, by letter notify the campaign treasurer that we spent so much money from United Airlines or from

Hughes or whoever which came in through so-and-so so that they had a record of it. We never filed a campaign report or signed our name to a campaign report as to how much was raised or who it was raised from.

Later, as things got tougher we would sign a deal that this is where the money went. Our fee was so much, our radio was so much, our TV was so much. That sort of thing. The money thing was very important, but we tried to keep the candidate isolated from it. We tried to keep ourselves out of it as much as we could. We would make such remarks as, "Look. Your job is to raise money. Our job is to spend it. We are not going to tell you how to raise money. We don't want to know who you are getting the money from. We don't want to be involved in any of this where we can be influenced one way or the other or the candidate can be influenced one way or another. We will decide how much goes into radio, how much goes into TV, and how much goes into direct mail." It worked. We had no trouble in those days.

DOUGLASS: Once you got these basic things settled, would you run into the situation where the candidate

would already have his sidekick or a couple of henchman, people who were his key people and going to work on the campaign, and, yet, here you were being contracted with to run his campaign? Was that typical?

ROSS: Very typical. Again, it is another thing you look at it when you are going into a campaign. Can you get along with Eleanor Chambers? Can you get along with Joe Quinn? Can you get along with Tom Coakley's old drinking buddy? We couldn't in the Coakley campaign.

DOUGLASS: So you know there is going to be a counterpart over there associated with the candidate. One way or another you are probably going to deal with that, for better or worse.

ROSS: You have to look at the candidate's wife and family. You have to look at his friends. Frank Doherty used to have an expression that I loved which you would never say to a candidate. "Find out who is the candidate's master." Who is calling the shots for him. Then you can make up your mind as to whether you wanted to support that man. If his master is somebody you don't want anything to do with or can't get along with, then walk away from it.

DOUGLASS: I suppose candidates had varying degrees of sophistication or experience in terms of strategy in what they may have already thought out. Or what you thought was either good or poor strategy that they were committed to.

ROSS: You take the Nixon and [Senator Barry M.] Goldwater campaigns. There is nothing you were going to do about the strategy. You were strictly a mechanic. That has all been thought out. The guy's position is solid. You were never going to see his kitchen cabinet or the people who were calling the shots in that campaign. You were just there to design the advertising, design the campaign, to run it, get out the publicity, to service the candidate, to organize the rallies and the parades. It is just a big, big operation. You are never involved with the money, and you are never involved with the main strategy.

DOUGLASS: Can you give an example of the opposite end of the spectrum where a candidate really had you running the show or something close to that?

ROSS: With Phil Watson it certainly was. He didn't have a strategy or anything else except he thought that the present taxation was unfair.

He kept talking about piecemeal assessment. We have to stop piecemeal assessment. From that we could take the whole campaign and did. He didn't know people.

DOUGLASS: Did you do things like sit down and say, "OK. You have to make these public appearances. You have got to be exposed this way." In terms of a checklist of things to do. You would sit down with him and talk it out.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I will ask a question that I suspect I know the answer to before we do the national and state offices you were involved with. Did you somewhere in conducting the business here in the sixties decide that you would do fewer candidates and more issues? Did you decide that you would rather put your efforts into the ballot propositions?

ROSS: I don't think it was in the sixties. I think that was probably in the early fifties. If you asked that question of Baus, I am sure he told you that the issue, we thought, was much easier to handle because the issue was there; it was not going to change on you.

In an issue campaign the candidate is suddenly not going to be found doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing or getting himself in some kind of a mess or jam, as Poulson did with his quote on the underworld. Issues are always much easier. Issues don't have wives who are calling you up at all hours in the night saying this has got to be done and that has got to be done, this picture is terrible. Wives get very, very troublesome in a campaign. And others you never hear from them at all.

Then, of course, there is the guy they lean on, their close confidants, or somebody who is really calling the shots. There is a lot of backbiting in personal politics. There are so many people who want to get credit for this. They want the guy to go in, and they want to get a job. Maybe it is not a job, but it is just recognition. "I was the guy who did this, that, and the other thing." They want to be able to pick up the phone and say, "Joe," anytime. They will cut you down. They will second-guess you. They will tell the candidate that this is wrong, that is wrong, and this is wrong. "Remember I

ROSS: told you that." "Gee, I told you ten weeks ago you should not do this." You get all that. You don't get that backbiting in an issue campaign. A ballot issue is much easier.

DOUGLASS: A pretty clear answer. Let's go to the national and state campaigns. First of all, national. You did work on the Eisenhower presidential primary in '52. I believe in November you did not continue on with that because of having to choose between Prop. 3 nonprofit school property taxation issue. How did you happen to work on the Eisenhower primary?

ROSS: This started way back early in the field. There was a group of people. The most active people in it were [Robert] Bob and George Rowan at the very start. They were the Rowan Realty Company. They had a lot of properties on Spring Street. R. A. Rowan and Company. Mr. [Robert A.] Rowan had twin sons. One was named Robert and one was George. They were in the real estate business. Another son went off into I don't know what except that he became famous as a horse owner and breeder. Won a lot of big Santa Anita [Race Track] stakes and so on. That was Louis Rowan.

[President Harry S.] Truman was on his way out. He was not going to run. They were talking about MacArthur and they were talking about Eisenhower. They were talking about [Governor Nelson A.] Rockefeller. And in this state we had a favorite son in Earl Warren. The big opposition, the big candidate, not out here precisely but throughout the country, was Taft. Senator [Robert A.] Taft of Ohio.

[Interruption]

ROSS: So the Rowans early on, I don't know what their tie-ins were but they began to organize volunteers for Eisenhower. It was strictly a volunteer organization. It had no tie-in to the party, although Robert and George had had a lot of party experience. There was a man by the name of Dana Smith in San Marino with law offices in Pasadena. He joined in with the Rowans. The Rowans lived in the San Marino-Pasadena area. They later got involved in that museum which later on became the Norton Simon Museum. They built that thing and got it going.

Anyway, the Rowans came to me and wanted me to become part of the thing and give them some advice. I said, "Sure." I told you politics

was in my blood. I thought that Eisenhower was the greatest guy in the world for the Republican party. Here is a guy who could sweep it. I didn't think Taft could. I didn't think Earl Warren could, although I was a great admirer of Earl Warren. So I went into the Eisenhower volunteers. All of a sudden they decided they needed a vice president. They made me the vice president. I produced a lot of materials for them as they were going along. Folders, buttons, and things.

DOUGLASS: This was done as a volunteer.

ROSS: Yes. This was before the campaign or anything else. Eisenhower hadn't said he would go or was a candidate or anything like that. But this thing was popping up all over the country. It was a draft Eisenhower situation.

DOUGLASS: In fact, he hadn't come out and said whether he was a Republican or Democrat.

ROSS: No. He had held off. Again, our job is research. I got an awful lot of quotes that he made at various times. Where does Eisenhower stand? Then you quote the thing. I must admit some of them were pretty damned ambiguous. You couldn't use the whole speech, but you could

pick out three sentences and make it very acceptable to the Republicans. That is what we did. Then we adopted a strategy. I felt that you could not win here and take on Earl Warren head on with a general from New York or from wherever the hell he was. I think he was at Columbia University.

DOUGLASS: Yes. He was president of Columbia.

ROSS: We had nothing bad to say about anybody except electability. Very friendly to all of the Earl Warren people. We just went out of our way not to antagonize them. So the Warren slate was elected. We didn't put a slate on.

DOUGLASS: In the primary?

ROSS: No. We did not put a slate on. We directed all of our efforts then to mail campaigns and personal contact and the rest of it on the Warren delegates after you get through the favorite-son deal and then go for Eisenhower. Taft, you can't win with. MacArthur is too rigid, too right, too military. You can't do that. The whole effort was geared that way.

DOUGLASS: This was all volunteer or were you somewhere in here paid?

ROSS: Never paid. This was all volunteer.

DOUGLASS: You would have had the possibility as a firm of doing the November election.

ROSS: It came down to that. They said I could not handle the nonprofit tax issue. Not just me. That our firm could not handle it. So that is the way it went. Of course, we had no enemies in a situation like that. We got along very well with the Nixon people through [Robert H.] Bob Finch.

DOUGLASS: That is where we are going to go now. The '60 Nixon primary. Was Finch the person who was your contact there?

ROSS: Bob Finch was the contact and, primarily, he was Herb's contact?

DOUGLASS: How had Herb Baus known him?

ROSS: Well, Finch had been very active for years in Republican politics. I don't know exactly. You have to ask Herb that. But Herb and Bob used to talk. Every time Finch was out here, the two of them would get together. Finch would ask him things about politics. He sort of used Herb as one of his listening posts in California when he was back in Washington. Herb and I went back on business back there. It was my account, but Herb knew Finch, and he knew the secretary of

commerce, and it tied in. I went to Nixon's office with Herb and the secretary of commerce's office with Herb. I just don't really know or recall what that tie-in was, except that it was Bob Finch. That was our tie-in to the Nixon campaign.

Of course, we knew all of the people we were dealing with. Most of them were in the Republican party. Basically, our start and our support was from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, from which we got almost all of our leadership. Our support from the Los Angeles Times was very good. Not with Norman Chandler but with the guys who worked on the newspaper. We were always handling candidates and issues supported by the Times.

Anyway, it revolved around the fact that Nixon then hired Whitaker & Baxter in northern California, or Bob Finch hired them. We never talked to Nixon, and Finch hired us for down here. We ran the Nixon slate primary campaign.

I went back to the convention--I don't know how this landed in my lap instead of Herb's--and met all of Nixon's staff. The minute he got the nomination we had a big meeting there at the

ROSS: Stevens Hotel. That is where I first met [Robert H.] Bob Haldeman and the whole Nixon operation from back there. I was sent out immediately before everyone else to come out here and organize the big rally and welcome home to Nixon when he landed out here at the airport. I had done something similar to that for Eisenhower during the Eisenhower years, when he first began to get into the thing and announced he was to be a candidate. We put on a big airport rally when he came out to meet the local people.

It was awfully good for business. I was always on TV walking alongside Eisenhower. [Laughter] Rowan wouldn't. Another introvert. Rowan was the chairman of this thing and I was the vice chairman, but I was the guy out in front. If there were going to be any cameras or anybody asking questions, I got caught with it. So I got to know an awful lot of Republicans. So we had the campaign and got the thing started.

DOUGLASS: In that case, how was it working with Nixon's group? You are on a national campaign? Were there problems with that?

ROSS: Well, in every campaign you get into problems. It was a good campaign. It was a campaign I liked. It was a campaign that we should have won. I think if we look back into it--I have to look back into this thing--but I think that we actually won the state. We lost badly up north, but I think we actually won the state by a squeaky [margin].

DOUGLASS: You did. In the final you won . . .

ROSS: We won California but we lost the election.

DOUGLASS: You won in all but one southern county, which was enough to overcome a northern loss. So you did win. You won the primary.

ROSS: I will never forget after winning the primary they turned to me to name the delegation. This is crazy. I just couldn't realize it. I can tell you the people who really counted politically in this, that, and the other county. You had to pick your delegates from every county. Here in the south I could name those.

DOUGLASS: So Whitaker & Baxter did not do well in northern California?

ROSS: No. They didn't do well at all. Shortly thereafter they got out of candidates altogether.

DOUGLASS: Was this partly because if you take the Bay Area, it is considered more liberal. And southern California had become increasingly conservative?

ROSS: In those days, the San Joaquin Valley was solidly Democrat except they were rebels on national offices. They would go for Knowland. They went for [U.S. Senator Thomas H.] Kuchel. They should have been able to win some of those counties for Nixon and didn't. They had no chance in San Francisco. They should have won San Mateo and Palo Alto. They had no chance in Alameda. But they could have won Marin County. But San Francisco was impossible around the Bay Area, except down the peninsula. You could do something there.

DOUGLASS: Did you have much contact with Nixon during either the primary or the final?

ROSS: A few very memorable ones. I can tell you a lot of good things about the campaign. It was a funny thing with Nixon. Of course, this is home territory. I think he put his nose in where he wasn't anyplace else. I was surprised.

We were having his first rally in Los Angeles where he was coming back. We were doing

well. All of our polls showed that Nixon was ahead. We were running it as the Volunteers for Nixon-[Henry Cabot] Lodge. Just picked it up. During the primary we were completely separated from the Republican headquarters downtown. We talked to them but we raised our own money through [Edward R.] Ed Valentine of the [J. W.] Robinson family. He raised money like crazy. We had all the money we ever wanted. More than enough. We didn't spend it all. We did later on in the final. Why am I going back into that?

DOUGLASS: You were saying that you didn't think he would put his nose in except this was his home territory. He came out here. You were saying that during the primary you didn't have anything to do with the Republican headquarters.

ROSS: Yes. That's right. Completely separated. All right. Then Nixon became the party candidate. He put his friend [Congressman Patrick J.] Pat Hillings in as chairman of the L.A. County GOP [Grand Old Party] committee down here. He didn't get along with Bill Roberts, or his organization didn't. Pat Hillings didn't.

DOUGLASS: [Stuart] Spencer-Roberts [and Associates]?

ROSS: Spencer-Roberts. Yes, before they became a firm. They kicked out Bill Roberts, who was a good operator. Stu Spencer stayed, but Roberts was bounced out. When Hillings came in (he was the congressman who followed Nixon in the same district), they began to divert various rallies and things to Pat Hillings. This is typical of Nixon, that he would tell them and tell us to do the same thing. We would constantly run across that. Hillings is doing that. Hillings was doing something and we were doing that. It was his way of double-checking. Constantly that would go on.

During this time I had this rally. The first one here where he was going to come flying in and do a parade around the loop downtown and make an address in the civic center. We discussed various streets. I did not want him to go down Spring Street because he was already being pegged as the candidate of Spring Street, which was the financial district in those days. Montgomery Street in San Francisco was being used, and Wall Street. I wanted to run the thing down Broadway [Street] and then back up Hill Street. Spring, Broadway, and Hill were

the major things in those days. Nixon called up, and he says, "God damn it. What the hell is your idea?" I had never heard this language from Nixon. He just bawled me out with every profane word there was. "What the hell is this business of going down Broadway? I thought we were going down Spring Street." I said, "Well, because it is the financial district." He said, "Damn it. Don't you realize there are more tall buildings on Spring Street than there are on Broadway?" I started to say, "Yes. But there are more people on Broadway. It is a big traffic center." He said, "The whole important thing on TV is the paper drop. I want to go down Spring Street where I can see paper pouring out of the top of every one of those buildings." "OK, Mr. Nixon, that's where we will go."

And Mr. Hillings was put in charge of the paper drop. And a credit to Pat Hillings, I don't know where he got all the paper, but on top of every building he had paid workers out there with bales and bales of paper, tossing it over. Ahead of time they had gone around with bales to all the offices, "Do you want some to throw down?" "Oh, sure." People who hated

ROSS: Nixon wanted to throw spitballs. Everybody wanted to throw something. [Laughter] So the paper drop on Spring Street was a great success. That is number one.

The other was that we had won the primary, and there was a sort of family reception of all of the Nixon-Lodge volunteers at the Ambassador Hotel. He had all the people involved in the thing. [Bernard] Bernie Brennan, who was another character and came into the picture late. All of a sudden Bernie Brennan was told to organize the Republican party. Brennan called me one day and said, "I have been asked by Nixon. He said that you were doing great work in the campaign, but I can do a little work with the party. We are going to have weekly meetings down at the Biltmore Bowl. I will be in charge of it."

Which probably made sense to have someone working in the Republican party to bolster it up because I don't think Pat Hillings was doing the job he should have done. However, that was their problem. I was working the other. The Republicans had their money and the Nixon

volunteers had theirs, and we reported to different committees.

All right. Here we have the thing. Here were Brennan and me and Ed Valentine and I don't know who all up there where we could be seen as his gang. A lot of the people we had here at the office. And Nixon was wearing a smoking jacket. Very calmly, pacing back and forth and making his speech. One time he got back, and I don't know what it was all about, but he was standing there with hands like this [behind his back]. And I was right behind him. He reaches back and gives my hand a shake like that. I was never so mad in all my life. [Laughter] Judas priest. If he wants to shake my hand, he doesn't have to do it behind his back and not letting anybody see. He was giving me a pat on the back in that way. Those two things irritate me.

The people in the Nixon campaign were absolutely great. It was a wonderful campaign. Ed Valentine. Nixon had a great and good friend. [ ] Jack Drown. His wife, Helene, had gone to school with Pat. Those two were close. After that he got involved in Nixon's

ROSS: campaign. Nixon would use him in all of his campaigns. Sort of the guardian at the door. The guy who knew who could come in and who could come out. He knew all of the political people. Nixon would use him for things of that kind. He and a man out in San Bernardino who had been in his congressional district. They were sort of the keepers of the gate for Nixon's campaign. They would sit in chairs outside of his hotel suite. They could carry messages to Nixon that nobody else could. They could decide whether they wanted to carry it or not. Anyway, he was a wonderful guy and his wife was a wonderful person. I made a lot of friends in that campaign.

DOUGLASS: What about Haldeman? Was he active out here in that campaign?

ROSS: Not really. I was only aware of him in the fact that he was sent out from Washington or New York and he needed money. Bob Finch asked me to send a check to him. I sent him a check. That is about all I really knew about him. When I met him, I knew him because he was tied into a Hadger-Haldeman; they were a big auto dealership here. Then in the campaign his mother, Mrs.

Haldeman, who had been quite an active Republican, and she was a right-hand person to [Valerie] Valley Knudsen of Knudsen Dairies. She was known inside Los Angeles Beautiful, and she was a big Republican.

DOUGLASS: How do you spell her first name?

ROSS: Just like valley. It is very peculiar. Her husband was always called Tom Knudsen, but actually his name was Tho. I don't know what it was. It was a Danish name. They were Danish. But he always introduced himself as "Tom Knudsen," but when he signed his name, it was always "Tho."

Well, she was a right-hand person to Valley Knudsen and Valley was at the office every day. And she was too. I got to know them. I have great admiration for Valley Knudsen. I like Mrs. Haldeman.

DOUGLASS: How about [John] Ehrlichman? Was he particularly involved?

ROSS: Ehrlichman was. Yes. I think I knew his father at that time, maybe I met him in Seattle later. I never ran across him in the campaign. I met Haldeman and had this one contact. "Send Bob $10,000." I called Ed Valentine, and we sent

$10,000 to Bob Haldeman. What he needed it for, I don't know.

The problems in the Nixon campaign, as far as I was concerned, was that all of a sudden it became a Republican [operation] rather than a volunteer thing which we built up. We tracked this thing. This, again, gets back to the Red Cross technique. We had all of the precinct lists which we were using for campaign mailings. Of course, the precinct lists show Republicans and Democrats. We had people working down in precincts.

We would actually track progress in campaigns as of this moment. . . . We didn't say who we were. We would just say we are the election poll something. We would have a name for it. We would use our volunteers of which you have so many. You don't know what to do with volunteers? Put them on the telephone. Have them call and say, "As of this moment, are you in favor of Nixon or are you in favor [Senator John F.] Kennedy?" They would mark it down. We would pick up that way the friendly Democrats. Those who were going for us. Then toward the end we would repeat the thing and

ROSS: call back. We would get a different person to call. "We are conducting another poll on the thing. Who do you favor?" We would have it right in front of us who you did favor.

DOUGLASS: You wanted to see if anything changed?

ROSS: We found switching. We had a switch. From the minute Hillings began to appear in the front page of the Times and Bernie Brennan was in the front page of the Times, they became the spokesmen for the campaign and not Ed Valentine. And not John Kreible, who later became the Los Angeles County GOP chairman. They just got lost.

DOUGLASS: It became a party takeover. That is your point. Not a local [organization].

ROSS: My point is that it became a party thing. And we were losing strength where we had been really cleaning up here. We began to lose it right and left.

DOUGLASS: Was this apparent in August? September? October?

ROSS: This is in October. We were in great shape in September. We began to lose it. From about the tenth or the fifteenth of October on, in the public eye--we were handling all the media, we

had the campaign organization--but everything that came out in public all of a sudden came from Republican headquarters. With Pat Hillings saying this and Congressman Pat Hillings saying that. And Bernard Brennan saying this and Bernard Brennan saying that. And Bernard Brennan had a very close contact with the L.A. Times. He was a bosom buddy of Kyle Palmer, the political editor of the paper. I can tell you a lot of things along there. Kyle had absolute control over who was quoted and who wasn't. And who would have publicity then. He would absolutely cut somebody out; he would never once mention the name of a certain candidate.

DOUGLASS: Did you have a good relationship with Palmer?

ROSS: Yes. It got better after this campaign. Much better. Bernie had this long Republican relationship before we got into the business. You asked me earlier about competitors. I can go into that. Bernard Brennan was one of the chief ones. He was an attorney-at-law, but he didn't have much practice. He got involved in the campaign business.

DOUGLASS: So he had a track record in Republican politics.

ROSS: He had a Republican track record. He was constantly being identified as that. It began to be a party thing. They were just taking over in the Los Angeles Times. That is where our strength began to get lost. We had some Democrats that we used to quote all the time. "Joe Blow, a Democrat volunteer for Nixon," and go on from there.

DOUGLASS: You felt that it was to the advantage of the campaign to keep a low party profile?

ROSS: Keep a low party profile because the Democrats were so much stronger than we were here. That basically was it. I had been through so many campaigns where I knew that this territory down here is Democratic territory if you have anybody decent at all running. Having been through those campaigns of '52 and '58, where I got to know the Catholic organization pretty doggone well and here is Kennedy, a Catholic and Democrat. The only thing to do is to keep away from that. We have to be an across-the-board candidate.

DOUGLASS: So you saw slippage.

ROSS: I sure saw slippage.

DOUGLASS: But even so you held. You won enough here to carry the state.

ROSS: We held, but we sure didn't have the majority we had before. We lost L.A. County. We should have won it. We made it up in Orange County and Ventura and Santa Barbara. We did very well in San Diego. I think we did very well in Imperial. I think we lost San Bernardino. Riverside, I don't remember. But we had the thing solid to begin with, except we knew we were going to lose L.A. City. We could have carried L.A. County, I thought, the way the figures were going. So that was my principal gripe about that campaign as far as difficulty was concerned. But otherwise we had a great organization. There wasn't the backbiting and the big problems.

We had some problem with the John Birch Society. All of a sudden, people talked about the John Birchers against him [Nixon]. So who were the John Birchers? Nobody knew.

DOUGLASS: That is when they emerged into the limelight at that time.

ROSS: Yes. Nobody could find out who a John Bircher was. Then all of a sudden they discovered

[Robert] Welch, the founder. It was sort of like a secret fraternity. You didn't talk about who was in and who was out and who was behind the whole thing.

DOUGLASS: Do you think they saw an opportunity with a presidential campaign coming along to get out in front?

ROSS: I don't know. All I know is that we did not know. They were sniping at Nixon as being a backslider. "He no longer was the strong anti-Communist he had been," they said. So we had a lot of that kind of trouble. I remember that very well. You asked about problems so I am giving you problems.

DOUGLASS: Who was speaking out at that time on behalf of the Birch Society here?

ROSS: It was just people talking about the John Birch Society. We couldn't find out. Let's call up John Birch. Let's find out what their gripe is. Well, you couldn't. They were not in the phone book. There was nothing you could get a hold of on the thing. I think they gradually emerged as Welch was the guy and so on. But you still couldn't pin down anybody here.

DOUGLASS: They weren't organized as they were later.

ROSS: I found out that I had a brother-in-law who was a charter member of the John Birch Society. I never knew it. He talked the Birch stuff. They were the ones that figured that Eisenhower was a Commie [Communist], that he had sold out to the Commies. "Nixon was apt to do the same thing," they said. We were getting this flak, and it was giving us a lot of trouble.

DOUGLASS: All very vague?

ROSS: But the basic problem was that all of a sudden it became a Republican [organization], rather than volunteers for Nixon, following the great volunteers for Eisenhower organization and pattern. Where Eisenhower could appeal to Republicans and Democrats. We were getting away with that with Nixon until all of a sudden. It was a natural thing for it to follow.

DOUGLASS: All right. I thought I would move on to the Goldwater primary.

ROSS: There is another thing I want to tell you about the primary with Nixon. Rockefeller was trying to come into that thing and also, to a point, Goldwater. But Goldwater really didn't get started as he did later when the Birchers really emerged and he moved in. But Rockefeller was

seen as a great threat to us. And yet he was a Republican. You can't say ill about a Republican and his friends. What to do?

DOUGLASS: Why was he seen as a threat? You thought he was a threat to the Nixon campaign.

ROSS: Yes. I think the way the thing was shaping up was that--this is a little bit hazy--Rockefeller didn't have a campaign organization. But he was appearing everywhere. I think the feeling was that if you get into a standoff where Nixon can't make it and Goldwater was also in there at that particular time in that primary area, I have forgotten who else, that Rockefeller was trying to get himself into position where they would turn to him as the candidate after it gets deadlocked between a Goldwater and Nixon situation.

DOUGLASS: Deadlock in the convention.

ROSS: Yes. Anyway, he is coming out here and they are throwing a big party for him at the Biltmore [Hotel]. Then a private party at the airport. How come I got invited to that private party at the airport, I will never know. It was very interesting.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

ROSS: So Bob Finch arranged at this big open reception that there should be picture of Eisenhower and a picture of Nixon. After all, they were the president and the vice president. This is a Republican rally. There was an American flag, red, white, and blue. Knowland's picture. And all these pictures. [Laughter] And they stationed Rockefeller right in front of the Nixon picture. All the news pictures had Nixon looking over his shoulder. That we thought was very brilliant.

We didn't have big pins at that time. We were being very subtle about it. They were donated. They had a little letter "N." A nice silver "N." A little lapel pin. So everybody, as they went down the line, meeting Rockefeller (not everybody but about 70 percent of them) were wearing Nixon pins as they said, "Mr. Rockefeller, how nice it is to meet you." [Laughter]

Then we had this meeting up at the airport. It was the old airport in those days. There was a bunch of people in there identified as Rockefeller supporters. Then there were some

others who were party functionaries. Why I got invited, I don't know. But I was there. It was just interesting. You had more of a chance to see Rockefeller in action. What a charming man he was. How engaging he was. How he could talk to a crowd and so on. He was very good. It was interesting from that standpoint.

DOUGLASS: Let's go to the Goldwater primary, which was in '64. Were both you and Mr. Baus involved in this equally. Was this sort of a joint effort?

ROSS: No. It was Herb's effort. I did all of the advertising on it. It was a pretty big advertising campaign. I got around to see all the people, but the day-to-day stuff I did not go to the Goldwater headquarters out on Wilshire Boulevard. Herb did. Herb was taking the daily beating, dealing with all these committees. That sort of thing. My job was strictly to come up with the material, get out the bumper stickers and other supplies. This, that, and the other thing.

DOUGLASS: Would that include brochures? Paid ads in the papers?

ROSS: Yes. All the materials. Billboards. Radio. TV.

DOUGLASS: How did that account come to Baus and Ross?

ROSS: Very early on, a Goldwater man was Sheriff Pete Pitchess. Pete Pitchess and Herb had a very good connection. This is one reason it came. I am trying to think who the second man was. There were two men who really were the key Goldwater people. Pitchess and somebody else. Herb could tell you.

DOUGLASS: I think I have that in his interview.

ROSS: Anyway, it was logical. They probably called Herb. They didn't call the two of us. They probably called Herb and said, "Come down to a meeting." And all that preliminary stuff. That was Herb's campaign. He brought it into the shop and ran it. And he took an awful beating on it, as I am sure he told you.

DOUGLASS: He became disillusioned with the people running Goldwater's campaign.

ROSS: Very disillusioned. Again, it was the Birch Society people who raised Cain with him. They were not too sure that he could be trusted. There was a lot of doing things behind his back. Backbiting and one thing or another. It was very difficult.

DOUGLASS: So that is why the notion of doing anything beyond the primary was dropped on your side?

ROSS: Yes. Herb wanted nothing more to do with it. He said he couldn't do it. It was nothing for me to step into. I had other things to do. The week after the primary we resigned the account. We had that campaign statewide, and we beat out Rockefeller, who had hired Spencer-Roberts.

DOUGLASS: There was a lot of work involved in that.

ROSS: There was a whale of a lot of work. An awful lot of production work on it because everything that was produced was produced here in Los Angeles and shipped out to fifty-eight counties and wherever they were needed.

DOUGLASS: How much lead time would you have had on that primary? Were you in it for a couple of months?

ROSS: It was a long time. They start building those things so far ahead of time. I can look in the books and actually find a date for you on it. There was at least six months lead time, I think.

DOUGLASS: With a presidential primary you know far enough ahead.

ROSS: Yes. You know who the faces are going to be and the way it is shaping up.

DOUGLASS: That would be a fairly major kind of an account to carry. And you would be guaranteed being paid, I assume.

ROSS: You can get caught, but you are pretty sure not to if you are careful. An awful lot of campaigns, I think, go broke because they didn't have the control system that we had in accounts. At any point, I could stop everything and say, "Where are we? How much have we spent? How much are we committed for?"

DOUGLASS: So you had your books up-to-date.

ROSS: Yes. I used to keep a schedule right here in my desk on every campaign, Herb's and mine, which showed what the original budget was for staff, for outdoor, and everything. It was all broken down. How much had been spent in all those categories with a total down at the bottom. And how much we were committed for, meaning things we had ordered but did not have bills for that we could turn in. We had a good system here in the production office where we could put those together. We would estimate what our costs were. We were ordering so much printing and so fast you never took bids. "Can you get it here, an impossible date, the day after tomorrow? If

you can't, say so now. We don't ask price, but we want it." If we thought we were stung, we would negotiate afterward.

So we would know exactly what our commitments were and what we had spent. We knew how much was in the campaign treasury. We could tell at any time exactly where we are. We are committed for $100,000, and we only have $25,000. We have to catch up there before we do something else. We always knew where we were.

DOUGLASS: You made a point of letting the people who contracted with you know?

ROSS: We knew, too. "I am sorry. We can't commit for this until we get paid for this." Particularly on printing you did because you couldn't call up and cancel your printing. [Laughter] When it was printed you had a bill.

DOUGLASS: Unless you have anything more to comment on the Goldwater experience I would like to move on to the 1966 campaign for [Governor Edmund S.] Pat Brown [Sr.] against Ronald Reagan. Were you both working on that or was Herb Baus working on that? Or you?

ROSS: We were both working on that. I think I was working on it more than Herb. Herb was out of

town when we made the deal, but then we both worked on it. I made the deal for Herb and for me. We knew it was pending. Herb said, "If you can work out a deal with them, fine. If you want to turn it down, fine. I will go with you." Then he left town. That was done in June. Then we had it going into the November election.

The background of that was we were called in late in the George Christopher campaign. I had a very good friend of the name of [Thomas P.] Tom Pike. There are a lot of active Pikes, incidentally. Tom Pike was very active in the Nixon campaign. He was active in the nonprofit school campaign. We had a long relationship.

DOUGLASS: A southern Californian?

ROSS: Yes. The campaign was being managed by a man by the name of Sanford Weiner, who was pretty active in Republican politics at that time. He was running it in southern California. It wasn't taking hold. There was deep trouble on the thing. Tom wanted me to take it over.

DOUGLASS: Statewide?

ROSS: No. Just southern California. It was at the end when things were in pretty doggoned bad

shape. This is in the primary campaign. We were able to turn it around and do pretty good. In fact, it was looking doggoned desperate for Reagan in this territory. They had Spencer-Roberts, and they were running a good campaign. The Christopher campaign, as I say, didn't take fire at all. We were able to change it around. I can tell you some of the things we did.

DOUGLASS: In the Christopher campaign?

ROSS: The Christopher campaign. But, anyway, Christopher lost and Reagan won. Christopher lost because of information leaked to Drew Pearson. It was a very nasty column that appeared in papers up and down the state. That became the issue. Christopher had been arrested and mugged--they had the mug shot and all the rest of it--for watering milk during the war years. Boy, the column was a nasty, nasty column. And you could not answer it because to a point it was true and to a point it wasn't.

He had been elected mayor of San Francisco, and he had been elected the GOP nominee for lieutenant governor, and the alleged "watering" was not an issue. [Baus and Ross handled Christopher's losing campaign for lieutenant

governor in 1962.] And he had been active in all sorts of things after that. Everybody in San Francisco knew what it was all about. The Christopher Dairy and the Christopher people were highly regarded. He was considered a wonderful man. So we lost the thing to Reagan. Reagan was the actor.

I should tell you the way it turned out was they found out that material had been planted by a Pat Brown operative who was scared silly that Christopher was going to make it. And they thought they could lick Ronald Reagan because he was a movie actor. So they got this very damaging thing out against Christopher. Nobody knew where it came from. Drew Pearson was under a Washington byline. But that is what it eventually turned out to be. I don't know how long it took to find out that. It was pretty nasty.

So Reagan became the candidate. The Brown people got pretty shook up by the strength he showed in that campaign. He won by a helluva lot more than they had anticipated. He immediately got a lot of money and support. His bandwagon was moving. The Berkeley riots were

ROSS: going on. The fact that Brown had brought the water from north down here. It had not quite arrived yet, but he got that through. The fact that the whole freeway system had been started. People lost sight of that. They wanted us to do a job. Who were "they"? They were Gene Wyman, and the guy who at that time was head of Fox West Coast Theaters. And then he became owner of the San Diego Chargers. [Eugene S.] Gene Klein. Gene Wyman and Gene Klein. And Gene Klein we worked for in the pay TV campaign.

They wanted us to go in and organize a Republicans-for-Brown campaign. Which could have been done. They offered us a very fancy fee for it. We had some prominent Republicans who were in the Christopher group who said, "Go ahead and take it. We can never get anywhere with Ronald Reagan." We did and we did absolutely nothing. It really was a crime to take their money because everything we came up with was sidetracked by the Brown campaign organization. At the same time, they had called in [Frederick] Fred Dutton, who came out from Washington D.C. because he was close to the Kennedys and was close to Jesse Unruh. And

Yorty had run a very bruising campaign against Brown for the nomination and lost. Reagan beat out Christopher.

Now we have Reagan versus Brown. And the Reagan people are making no conciliatory gestures at all to the Christopher people. And the Brown people are doing everything they can to the Unruh people to try to get them in and bringing the Kennedys out here, which would only happen if Jesse Unruh asked them to come out. We wanted things done on the Republican side. We had a campaign outlined as to what we wanted to do.

We had a piece of literature that we thought we could use very well. A good Republican piece of literature on the Brown record versus, again, the unknown. Reagan had never run for mayor or assemblyman or anything else. He was considered to be a lightweight. And based upon his performance in that primary, he was a lightweight. He didn't do much. He really didn't know anything except his General Electric [Company program] speech. That is all he knew. He did not know anything about

ROSS: California issues. So, anyway, "Fine, fine. We will look at it."

They never gave us the money to print it. I said absolutely nothing, but we did everything we could. But we did not put out a billboard. We did not put out a folder. We did not buy a radio or TV commercial. We did not do a newspaper ad. As far as the public could see, we did nothing. But we were in many of their so-called meetings and so on and listening to their blues as to what was happening. But we just were ignored. The last three weeks of that campaign, I don't think we even heard from them. They agreed to a theme never acted on and sent the checks through. That was it. We didn't bill them. That was the way it was.

DOUGLASS: Who was your principal contact with the Brown campaign?

ROSS: Gene Wyman. He came out after it and said, "Oh, did we misuse you." He was very apologetic about what had gone on. But the campaign was taken over by Fred Dutton. And then also by a man by the name of Hale Champion, who was a finance director and a very close Brown man. They were called the troika. I have forgotten

the third guy's name. But they were all busy on Democratic politics. And every dime went into this sort of thing. We were not allowed to produce anything or do anything. They listened to us. You called to say, "We want to come over and talk to you about such-and-such." "Fine." You go over and talk to them. Out.

DOUGLASS: So your responsibility was to catalyze what support you could get in the Republican sector. But you weren't given any freedom to do anything?

ROSS: We did nothing. Except those who were close to the Christopher campaign, nobody knew it. If we didn't put it in a folder here, it wouldn't be known.

DOUGLASS: Was there any negative baggage for your firm working for Brown because you had been pretty well associated with Republican candidates up to then?

ROSS: Yes. There was negative baggage to it. Reagan became governor and Nancy Reagan never forgets. It was negative from that standpoint. We could never do anything through Reagan. Bob Finch was lieutenant governor. We could do things through

him and the others. Except for the Reagan coterie, that gang, we had no problems.

DOUGLASS: The inner circle were the only ones.

ROSS: Yes. And Reagan himself. We had the campaign of [Evelle J.] Younger for attorney general. We were invited out to the Reagan house. I got a dirty look from Nancy. I had lunch with Reagan at the Los Angeles Club at his invitation. We had a very pleasant chat and talked about getting Younger elected attorney general. Anyway, that is the way it went.

DOUGLASS: It wasn't a high participation level for you in that campaign. An ironic set of circumstances.

ROSS: An ironic set of circumstances. I had a very pleasant summer with a very unpleasant fall because we lost. It hurt to lose.

DOUGLASS: I gather that the Brown camp had calculated that Christopher would be harder to beat than Reagan.

ROSS: Harry Lerner is the guy who finally told me the whole story. We hired Lerner in the 1958 campaign on nonprofit schools to handle the San Francisco section, and so I knew him well. He told me that he had all this material and that he gave it, not to Drew Pearson, but at that time it got down to Jack Anderson or somebody

working for him. Anyway, he funneled all that stuff back. Timed it just right, it broke, and there was no way to answer it.

DOUGLASS: Was it Harry Lerner who did it?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: On behalf of Brown, theoretically?

ROSS: Theoretically. Yes. Brown said he never knew about it.

DOUGLASS: Thinking it would facilitate the Brown campaign.

ROSS: The troika knew it and Harry Lerner knew it. But that is where it came from.

DOUGLASS: You got it straight from him.

ROSS: I got it straight from Harry Lerner. In fact, he showed me the pictures.

DOUGLASS: He was the person you used in San Francisco. Had he gone back into the files and dug up something during the war?

ROSS: He was a veteran reporter of the San Francisco Examiner. He remembered the story, and they had the pictures in the files. He was able to go into the San Francisco Examiner files and get them. Here is Christopher with the number across him and so on. Watering milk, he was guilty. He did water milk. So did Arden [Dairies]. So did everybody. The way milk is

processed, you get it down to some glob and then you pour the water into it up to a specified level. This is how you got a standardized bottle that didn't change from day to day. The cow doesn't give the same amount of butterfat every day.

I got Christopher's story from it. He took me to the dairy and showed me. They had great big fire hoses. I don't know how they do it now, but this is back at that time in 1966. They had these big fire hoses that would shoot water into these huge vats. They didn't have the controls on it that they do now. Some batches went out with not enough water and some went out with too much water, plus or minus a little bit. At that time, he was running for mayor and a political enemy got that thing. But it happened early enough that Christopher could explain and ride the whole thing out and got elected.

The case was dropped and never prosecuted. Everybody in San Francisco knew it. It was dropped because everybody was legally watering milk. But you try to tell that in the last two weeks of the campaign. It was just a horrible

ROSS: situation. All you could say is that this whole thing was investigated. The charges were dropped. Christopher was never charged in court. Christopher, beyond that booking session where they served him with a complaint, that was his sole connection with law and order in the thing. The prosecuting attorney dropped it. "Well, what did you pay the prosecutor to drop it?" [Laughter] It's a no-win situation. [Interruption]

DOUGLASS: I want to start with the state campaigns. You handled the [Controller Robert C.] Kirkwood for controller campaign. That was in '54. How did you happen to get that account?

ROSS: It came in through the front door. I got the account because we had done the campaign in '52 on the schools. Kirkwood had been a state assemblyman from San Mateo. He was appointed by Earl Warren.[1] There was a man by the name of [William] Bill Burke who was a lobbyist. He was a lobbyist for the Catholic Church. He represented the bishops in Sacramento on any legislation that affected the church. He had

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[1]Kirkwood was appointed Controller January 1953 when State Controller Thomas Kuchel became U.S. Senator.

talked to Kirkwood and to others about the Laughlin Waters bill that went through which gave the exemption to the nonprofit schools. Which went onto the ballot on a referendum basis. So Kirkwood knew him, and he decided that he wanted to run for state controller. He asked Bill Burke, who was the guy who ran that campaign that got all those votes. He was not known down here, and he knew he had to win it down here or he was dead.

DOUGLASS: He was known in northern California.

ROSS: So Bill Burke brought him in.

DOUGLASS: Who was he running against? Do you recall?

ROSS: No. All that I recall was the guy who eventually beat him was Alan Cranston and he went out of office.

DOUGLASS: He was only in for one term.

ROSS: Yes. One term.

DOUGLASS: So he had served as the appointed controller since early 1953, and you managed the '54 campaign.

ROSS: There were several guys who ran for controller. We got Kirkwood nominated and then we got into a runoff. And we won it.

DOUGLASS: I have it here. He beat [Assemblyman] George D. Collins, Jr. in '54.

ROSS: Collins was in the assembly. He was another northern man.

DOUGLASS: You had two legislators running against each other.

ROSS: Neither one of them was known.

DOUGLASS: Was Kirkwood a good person to run a campaign for? Did he have talents in terms of the election?

ROSS: He was a wonderful man to run a campaign for. Kirkwood was a great campaigner. He was full of energy. He went to all the meetings everywhere. Everybody liked him. He had a very good education. He was a Stanford graduate. He had done very well in the business community. He was not a political hack. He had money that he had made himself. He was young and his ambition was to become a United States senator.

DOUGLASS: You don't remember any particular issue he was running on? Any particular platform?

ROSS: There was no real platform or anything else. The thing to do was just talk about what a great guy he was and how necessary it was for him to

be in this office because dispersing the state's money is what the controller did.

DOUGLASS: Did you use Harry Lerner as your northern California extension in that one? How did you handle the north?

ROSS: Lerner was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat. We used him only in bond issues and propositions and things of that kind.

DOUGLASS: Not in candidate [races]?

ROSS: No. In 1958, for example, Lerner and his agency handled northern California for our nonprofit school tax.

DOUGLASS: But you didn't use him for candidates?

ROSS: No. On that campaign our responsibility was solely to run the campaign in southern California at the start. There was an agency and man named [A. Rurick] Rick Todd. Todd had an agency in San Jose, and he and Kirkwood had known each other in the San Mateo county elections. Rick Todd was handling the campaign up north. He had done it before. Rick got very much involved with following Kirkwood around as his personal liaison. So Rick couldn't handle the thing, and he began to use us. He was an amazing character. He would come in here, and

he began to order all of our literature. He ordered all of our bill sheets. Everything that went up to northern California we wound up producing. That was great for us. We were making a commission on the thing.

DOUGLASS: So you got compensated.

ROSS: We got compensated for it.

DOUGLASS: In a sense, you were doing it, but he was technically in charge up there.

ROSS: Yes. He became the deputy controller. He closed the agency and became the deputy controller.

DOUGLASS: Kirkwood was a Republican. As you say, you just on principle didn't go with candidates with Lerner.

Why don't we end there and next time we can pick up on the Cranston-Kirkwood campaign. Thanks very much.

[End Session 2]

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Session 3, May 9, 1990]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

DOUGLASS: Mr. Ross, much earlier we had started to discuss who your chief competitors were in political consulting in southern California, and, in fact, maybe in California. I wonder if you could get more specific about who those others were?

ROSS: In those days, Whitaker & Baxter was the big political campaign agency and, as far as I know, the only one that had a full-time staff and a full-time operation. They were in San Francisco. I guess they laid things off to people down south.

We didn't have much down here in the way of firms. Most of the work was being done by attorneys. It is kind of interesting that we had some real problems there. For a while, the attorneys didn't like the fact that we were getting into the business. But we were better

qualified because not only did we have the public relations side of it and the political side, but we had the advertising ability.

DOUGLASS: Why was that? Was it because, through the attorney-client relationship, they seemed to be the only people available to handle campaigns?

ROSS: It was something like that. They would be there in business. They would have an office and a secretary. They may not be busy taking on cases. Mainly, the attorneys were [James] Jim Sheppard of Sheppard, Mullen, and Balthus. And Oscar Trippet who was from a very well known pioneer family around here. He was a past president of the chamber of commerce. Jim Sheppard had been around for years and years. He was a Democratic politician. Trippet was a Republican.

DOUGLASS: In fact, didn't Sheppard later move some work in the direction of Baus and Ross?

ROSS: Yes. He did. He moved the Manchester Boddy account to us. The biggest competitor we had in Republican politics was Bernard Brennan. Bernard Brennan was a great and good friend of Kyle Palmer, who was a political editor of the Los Angeles Times. And Brennan handled all of

the leading Republican candidates. All the presidential candidates, for example. All United States senator campaigns. So for Republicans, he was the guy. We took away the Nixon and Goldwater campaigns from him. He got involved in both of them later on. I think I mentioned him before in the Nixon campaign. All of a sudden he was in the picture. But it was really attorneys who were our principal competition.

There was an outfit called Smalley, Levit, and Smith, and they did a lot of the city things we took over. Jack Smalley was an advertising man. Charlie Levit was a PR man, an ex-newsman. [Raymond W.] Ray Smith was the manager of the Downtown Businessmen's Association, so he was in position to feed. He was sort of a silent partner in the firm, but his name was on the door.

DOUGLASS: About when did they form a business? Do you recall that?

ROSS: I don't know when they formed it. They were in business when we started. They just didn't come along; they were here. I am talking about the people who were here. Hazel Junkins was another

one who was here. She did various political work.

Smalley, Levit, and Smith got involved in propositions. City bond issues and city ballot issues of one kind or another.

DOUGLASS: So these were in place when you really got going?

ROSS: They were in place when we got here. Herb and I started in 1948 in those years.

DOUGLASS: So this was a transformation period.

ROSS: Yes. It was. I am not too sure the attorneys really wanted it. You mentioned Sheppard moved things to us. I told you that attorney Frank Doherty was a great booster of ours. Herb had his first political campaign working for Frank Doherty. Frank Doherty was chairman of a statewide campaign, and Herb worked for him here in the south. The attorneys would have to pick up publicity men because that was not their field at all. They had to get somebody else to do the advertising. So we made the package.

DOUGLASS: You went to the lead of that pack for reasons you have made clear. You were more professional; you were focused; and you used research more. Would that be a way to put it?

ROSS: I think that is a good way to put it. Yes. There is another man, Stephen O'Donnell. He was the managing editor of the Los Angeles Record. Before that he was the editor of the Huntington Park Signal. After that he did a few campaigns.

DOUGLASS: As an individual, he would take on campaigns.

ROSS: Strictly as an individual. He would take them on and build up a crew.

DOUGLASS: So the only firm was Smalley, Levit, and Smith.

ROSS: They were the only firm.

DOUGLASS: Those were changing times. So you were in on the ground floor.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: All right. Anything more about that?

ROSS: No. I think that covers that.

DOUGLASS: Let's pick up where we left off last time. We had covered the 1954 Kirkwood-for-Controller campaign, which he won. Kirkwood had been appointed by Governor Warren and then was in [office] a year and defeated George D. Collins, Jr. The appointment was made because [Controller] Kuchel went to the United States Senate.

In '58, he was up for election again. Did he just come back to you to run the campaign?

ROSS: Yes. He came back. We had a very successful campaign. As I recall, it was a Democratic year, but he came in with a very big vote.

DOUGLASS: But he lost to Alan Cranston.

ROSS: He lost to Alan Cranston four years after that.

DOUGLASS: No. This is in '58 when he lost to Cranston, because Cranston became controller in '59.

ROSS: Yes. I remember now.

DOUGLASS: He took the most votes on the GOP ticket. Others were losing by a million votes but he only lost by 20,000. This was the Democratic sweep year.

ROSS: What happened there was kind of a sad thing, I always felt. Kirkwood was a man who wanted to run for United States senator. That was his big ambition. He wanted to follow Kuchel. The example of Kuchel was that he went from the controller to the Senate. I handled the campaign in the primary. In the fall campaign, I had the nonprofit school issue again and something else. I could not handle it personally. And Herb sort of kept an eye on it.

I think he hired a man by the name of [ ] Fred Harvey to run the campaign. We didn't run it out of here. They opened up an office on Wilshire Boulevard somewhere. I remember I sat down with Fred, as we would do, to see how things were going and check things out as to what was being done and what should be done.

Then the last three weeks of the campaign Kirkwood was spending all of his time up north, just ignoring the area down here. He came from the north. It was very hard for him, I had found out in the previous campaign, to get him down here and go to work. His political life had been up there. His whole family was an old, old family in northern California. The south was sort of an annex in his mind.

I called his in-house campaign manager, the guy who was his deputy controller. Rick Todd. He said, "Bob wanted to do this." And he had a hunting trip or something tied in there, too. He was taking it for granted. He lost it in the San Fernando Valley. He did not get the votes in the San Fernando Valley he should have.

DOUGLASS: Well, 20,000 votes is not a very big loss statewide.

ROSS: No. If he had been down here and campaigned, I think he would have made it. But he didn't. I was pretty upset about it and I am sure he was, too.

DOUGLASS: What do you recall about the kind of campaign Alan Cranston conducted?

ROSS: I don't really remember too much about it, except that Cranston was down here constantly. He had moved down here from his base up north. And he seemed to do all of his campaigning down here. He was a very likable guy, if you ever met him. He hit that San Fernando Valley. That is the thing that sticks in mind. My gosh, what he did to us in the Valley just never should have happened. That was exactly the area I was trying to get Kirkwood to come down and go into. That was the problem there.

DOUGLASS: I suppose that can be quite typically a problem with candidates--they are usually from northern California or southern California--to get them to go away from their base territory?

ROSS: Yes. It is. I think the Kirkwood thing sort of served as a lesson. From that time on, Pat Brown had a residence down here every campaign year. He lived over here on Muirfield [Road],

between Sixth [Street] and Wilshire on Muirfield. Cranston established a residence down here. They all began to pay some attention to down here, which they have to do.

DOUGLASS: The movement of the population to the south of the state was beginning then.

ROSS: Yes. Particularly at that time. Remember we didn't have the dominance of TV, which could cut a wide swath for you. You just had to go to the Valley and talk to the Valley Daily News, now called The Daily News. You had to talk to the Long Beach Press-Telegram and do a Long Beach campaign. And so forth.

DOUGLASS: You had to have an actual presence in the area.

ROSS: Yes. If you overlooked it why you just missed it. Up in San Francisco if you could get going in the Chronicle and Herb Caen that took care of that pretty well. That and the Oakland Tribune. But down here you had to talk to the Santa Monica Outlook and the Santa Monica people. You know this area as well as I do. You had to move around.

DOUGLASS: You have mentioned a couple of times now opening offices on Wilshire for campaigns. In what

circumstances did you do that? Did you have a particular site on Wilshire you always used?

ROSS: No. We didn't. There was one we used quite often. But, basically, if you had a candidate campaign, you had to be visible with big signs of Nixon or Goldwater or whomever. Those were always Wilshire Boulevard locations that we took. Propositions, we always ran out of this office. We seldom ran a proposition elsewhere. We had an office on Wilshire for Kirkwood, but previously we ran them right of here.

DOUGLASS: So statewide offices, you would typically open a visible office out on Wilshire somewhere. Whereabouts on Wilshire would you go in those days?

ROSS: Right through the mid-Wilshire district where it was easiest for us. And, also, it was the central location.

DOUGLASS: So we are talking about near Bullocks Wilshire [Store] and that area.

ROSS: Yes. There was a house there for a long time available right near Vermont and Wilshire. We used that several times. The Goldwater campaign was farther out. In the Hancock Park area,

there is an old house right on the corner of Wilshire and June Street.

DOUGLASS: So this was prominent visibility.

ROSS: Yes. Where you could put up a big sign. It was a central location for volunteers to come to. You had to pick one that had parking.

DOUGLASS: But you never did that in the case of a ballot issue.

ROSS: No. Not ballot issues. Evelle Younger was in one of the Tishman buildings. Kirkwood was over on Wilshire, just straight over from here.

DOUGLASS: So this was easy from your standpoint because you could get there so quickly.

ROSS: Yes. So we could get in and do a job.

DOUGLASS: I know you have mentioned a couple of times that you dropped Thomas Coakley. But you have on your listing a '62 campaign for Coakley as Republican candidate for attorney general with a win. And Mr. Baus ran it. What is the story on Thomas Coakley?

ROSS: I am sure that Baus handled the primary because I don't remember that. I inherited the thing for the fall campaign. He kept an apartment on Wilshire Boulevard. He had a very close buddy who was with him all the time. I have forgotten

his name. He saw himself as the power to the throne. I have forgotten just what the issues were, but Coakley just couldn't be pinned down. He could not follow a program that we thought he ought to follow. That was the main trouble with him.

Again, he was a candidate who couldn't see going out and making talks here. He wanted to be in the old smoke-filled room. He was a martini and bourbon--except I think it was Scotch--have a cigar, smoke, and sit down and talk.

DOUGLASS: Had he been a district attorney in one of the counties?

ROSS: I think he had been from up north [Alameda County]. The thing I remember about him was that he was an ex-bandleader. And he never should have left it. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Who was he running against?

ROSS: I don't remember. He was an ex-bandleader, and this was one of his pals from those days. The funny thing was that he just didn't want to get out and campaign.

DOUGLASS: Did you opt out at that time?

ROSS: Yes. What happened was I was telling him what to do. He was griping about it and didn't like various things. I remembered the way it worked out. I said, "Look, Tom. You are not stuck with me. You can get out any time you want." In effect, we determined to dissolve, and we did. Not much has been heard from him since.

DOUGLASS: Did some other firm pick it up?

ROSS: No other firm picked it up.

DOUGLASS: I gather he must have lost.

ROSS: Yes. He took some stand and was rather assailed by the Los Angeles Times for some statements, some position he took on the issue that was just absolutely wrong.

DOUGLASS: How significant was getting the Times' endorsement in an election?

ROSS: It was very, very important. That marked ballot of theirs was read everywhere.

DOUGLASS: Whether it was a statewide issue or a candidate or a local.

ROSS: Yes. In those days, it was very, very important. I think I have told you that Kyle Palmer would help pull together the statewide tickets.

DOUGLASS: You told me that if he took an aversion to a candidate, that was it and the name never appeared. Is there more to that story?

ROSS: Yes. This is a story from Kyle's standpoint, which I have checked out various times, and it all seemed to be true. But Kyle told me about this.

Norman Chandler was not particularly interested in politics except to be the kingmaker. The details he didn't want. He put those all off on to Kyle. So Kyle was a very potent person. He had control given to him by Norman Chandler. Anything political or about a political figure had to go to his desk before it was printed.

DOUGLASS: He had a carte blanche.

ROSS: Yes. He had a carte blanche on the thing. He was in the position of a publisher. He could call it as he saw it. That was the way it was.

In Oakland the Oakland Tribune was very, very powerful in Alameda [County]. You had the San Francisco Chronicle and, to a lesser extent, the [San Francisco] Examiner. You had the Copley [Newspapers] papers in San Diego. Well, the Oakland Tribune, the San Francisco

Chronicle, and the L.A. Times and the Copley papers were all Republican newspapers. And the Copleys had other papers besides the San Diego paper. They were in the communities around here. Glendale.

They would get together. Kyle would get together on the telephone as to who they were going to support. He had a deal with the Chronicle and with the Oakland Tribune that if the governor was to be a southern California man, the lieutenant governor would a be northern California man. Or vice versa. And they worked the same thing on senate seats. If one of the seats was held by, say, Knowland, then they would support Nixon and not another northerner. They had that deal going back and forth.

DOUGLASS: That all of them would do this?

ROSS: Yes. All of them would do this. They had decided amongst themselves and once they decided, that was it. It was flat.

DOUGLASS: Now this was within the Republican enclave.

ROSS: Yes. Within the Republican party and the Republican candidates. It is not to do with propositions but candidates.

DOUGLASS: And Republicans.

ROSS: And then Kyle was very proud of his treatment of a publisher here of weekly newspapers in southern California. His name escapes me now. He ran against Knowland and his name never appeared in the Los Angeles Times. It was just Knowland, Knowland, Knowland. Like he did not exist. That was Kyle's doing, and he was very proud of that. This guy just got lost. No one ever knew anything about him.

DOUGLASS: This agreement among the political editors, or Palmer's equivalents, was that among Republican candidates there were would be balance between north and south?

ROSS: There would be balance between north and south.

DOUGLASS: It would go from office to office. If the governorship was a northerner, then the lieutenant governorship . . .

ROSS: If you had Earl Warren, then it had to be [Lieutenant Governor Goodwin J.] Goodie Knight from the south.

DOUGLASS: I wonder how long that continued?

ROSS: It continued up to the time that the Times began to waffle on their conservative policies. It continued through the time of Kyle Palmer and his assistant [Chester B.] Chick Hansen. And,

to a lesser extent, involved in that was Carlton Williams, who more or less covered county and political stuff. Chick Hansen covered the Sacramento stuff for the Times. And Kyle was the boss of the two of them.

I really ran a gaff in our sails in the Manchester Boddy Democratic primary campaign. We could not get anything in the Times about Manchester Boddy, no matter what he did. If Kyle Palmer was training him to throw coconuts at everybody at Seventh and Broadway, nothing would have been printed. [Laughter] Unless you had a story where Manchester Boddy was attacking Helen Gahagan Douglas. That got printed. [Laughter] Not a big space, but it would always appear in one of their byline columns. Both Kyle and Chick Hansen had byline columns on political stuff where they ran daily stuff on candidates.

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about that Manchester Boddy campaign. As I recall, he jumped into the Democratic primary to contest Helen Gahagan Douglas' second run at it and that is the time Nixon beat her. How did you happen to work for Boddy in the

primary? Because you were usually working for Republican candidates.

[Interruption]

ROSS: Manchester Boddy was a publisher of a newspaper. The Daily News was kind of important to Baus and Ross. His paper was aligned with the Democratic party and labor unions.

DOUGLASS: This was the Daily News.

ROSS: Yes. Under previous management, it was the Illustrated Daily News. It became the Daily News after he bought it. Manchester Boddy was also quite close to the business community. A lot closer than a lot of people knew. One example is that his great and good friend, Frank Doherty, who was also our great and good friend (he was the attorney for the Edison Company), when Boddy fell on hard times, Frank Doherty worked the deal which sold Descanso Gardens to the county and it became that big park up there. And Boddy lived on it for a while. That was part of the agreement that he could live there for five years or something like that. Then he vacated.

Manchester Boddy was a philosophical liberal but he was very business oriented. He

could get along with the chamber of commerce crowd. Helen Gahagan Douglas was anathema to those people. And, also, at that particular time, Nixon wasn't the figure that he became later on. He was a congressman who was running for this particular thing.

A lot of people in the business community very much disliked Nixon. That isn't really known out here. Particularly the law profession. They felt he was unethical. I remember Frank Doherty telling me, "That man is not worthy to be president of the United States." He was very much upset.

DOUGLASS: He didn't practice law for very long, so it was his ethics in his political conduct?

ROSS: No. It was in his legal office. At least it started there, and it could have gone beyond that. I don't know.

DOUGLASS: They were concerned professionally about his ethics.

ROSS: According to Doherty, he almost got disbarred.

DOUGLASS: Nixon had a law office functioning out of Whittier.

ROSS: Yes. They were very upset about that. So, anyway, we were offered the Boddy campaign. And

the man who more or less passed it on to us was Jim Sheppard. Why Jim Sheppard did it, I don't know. But he did.

DOUGLASS: The assumption would be that Boddy could knock off Douglas and run against Nixon?

ROSS: I'm not sure. I am not too sure that Nixon didn't have opposition in the primary. But he was the favored candidate. Anyway, the idea was to knock off Helen Gahagan Douglas. From the standpoint of Baus and Ross, next to the Los Angeles Times, the Daily News was most important in propositions. If you could get a proposition endorsed by the two newspapers, you were really in clover.

It was something we wanted to do, from that standpoint. This was not the final campaign. We were just looking for a Democrat nominee that was very acceptable to the people we were ordinarily supported by and for whom we worked.

DOUGLASS: Didn't Boddy enter a bit late into the race?

ROSS: Yes. And he also refused to campaign. He liked to write columns, which he would print in his newspaper. Then we were supposed to take them and reprint them. We hired a lot of Democrats in the field, of course. Our main function was

to keep it organized and keep the books properly and do the advertising and the publicity work on it.

All the field work was done by a man named [David] Dave Fautz, and field people worked underneath him. Dave Fautz had worked for us in campaigns. He was a very strong Democrat. He worked for some proposition campaigns. So that is what we put together. But Fautz couldn't get him to go out and address a meeting or appear in a debate or do anything. He stayed away from the newspaper. He spent all of his time at Descanso Gardens in his study up there writing. You could get him to appear at small functions, where it was friends, a fund raiser, or something like that. But he just would not get out and campaign. So the result was a very poor campaign.

DOUGLASS: So did the regular party people line up behind Helen Gahagan Douglas?

ROSS: Yes. The thing that Boddy could never understand was that labor unions endorsed Helen Gahagan Douglas. Of course, he had been the big supporter of the labor union movement. He had counted on that, but he didn't get it. When

labor flipped from neutral to Helen Gahagan Douglas, he was through.

DOUGLASS: Do you think he was viewed within the party as sort of a spoiler at that point?

ROSS: I don't know that he was. He continued to stick to the Democratic union line.

DOUGLASS: I meant there was a congresswoman in place who had been elected. If you went through the party hierarchy, maybe the labor unions felt it was logical to go with her.

ROSS: Well, Helen Gahagan Douglas was not a particularly popular person in the Democratic party. She was very liberal. She had been part of the Hollywood movement, which got labeled Communist. If you remember, [Melvyn] Douglas was very active with those who would not speak before the House [of Representatives] Un-American Activities [Committee].

DOUGLASS: Melvyn Douglas.

ROSS: Also, women didn't have the image then that women have today. If anybody looks back in history, a woman started with two strikes on her. Nowadays, people feel, "Well, my God, this gal is ethical." That is the gut feeling people

have. "Number one, I know damn well she is honest." Then they go on from there.

DOUGLASS: Things have changed.

ROSS: Things have changed. I think the reason why labor flipped on this thing from neutral to supporting her was because they knew Boddy was not going to win. They just made it unanimous by flipping over to her.

DOUGLASS: That's strange. I suppose you kept trying to convince him that he needed to do this.

ROSS: Yes, we did. You know how labor has always been in San Francisco. And in San Francisco even the Republican politics side is on the liberal side. And you couldn't get him to go up there except for fund raising or a meeting with various people. But as far as getting out and campaigning, going to grass-roots organizations, which the Democrats were very heavy on in those days. They had good, active Democratic clubs; Republicans didn't. He just didn't go for it. And she did. Of course, she is a glamorous person and a wonderful speaker.

DOUGLASS: That's fascinating. So that was a disappointing experience.

ROSS: It was a disappointing experience. As far as our business was concerned, it was a very good experience. We got to know the people in the Daily News very well. They didn't look at us with suspicion. If they were opposed us, they would say, "Gee, these are good guys." [Laughter] "We have been in the trenches together." And they did know we were honest and were very straightforward. That helped a lot.

DOUGLASS: Tell me, did you very frequently switch from a primary to a fall election--you mentioned this with Coakley and I think I heard you say it in other cases--where Mr. Baus might have done one and you might do the other because of the pressure of something else taken on? You said that with Coakley, Baus did the primary and you started to do the fall election.

ROSS: That happened a couple of times.

DOUGLASS: That wasn't too difficult because you kept track of what was going on.

ROSS: Yes. On that final Poulson campaign, Herb handled the primary and I handled the final or we were both in the final.

DOUGLASS: All right. Let's go to the George Christopher-for-Lieutenant Governor campaign, which I think

Mr. Baus was the lead person on. That was in 1962. Again, it is little bit like the Kirkwood situation in '58. Christopher lost but he gained the most votes of any Republican candidate for statewide office except the Secretary of State, Frank M. Jordan, who had a sinecure.

ROSS: It even stuck with the whole family. Jordan was always secretary of state. It started in the cross-filing days and kept right on going.

DOUGLASS: How did you happen to handle that campaign? I realize that Mr. Baus was the lead person on that campaign.

ROSS: Baus could tell you more about this than I can. Christopher was a Greek. Pitchess was a Greek. You have seen this happen with [Governor George C.] Deukmejian and the Armenian community. All of a sudden you had [Robert H.] Philabosian as the district of attorney and you had Armenians appearing in various places.

I don't know too much about Armenians, but I do know amongst the Greek people that to them politics is a very high, honorable profession. It is a great honor. And they are honored amongst their people. Greeks are not too

cynical about them as we are. I don't know how they are in Greece, but this is the way it is here. And all of the Pitchess people were Christopher people. The same names would pop up raising funds. I just feel right off the bat, that was the connection on the thing.

DOUGLASS: We covered the business about Christopher in the primary for the governorship and this happened earlier. Actually, he did quite well.

ROSS: Yes, he did quite well. I can tell you a story about that. It may be interesting. I think I told you that I came in late on the 1966 Christopher campaign for governor against Reagan. They were unhappy with Sandy Weiner and I came in. There was a falling out in 1962 between Herb and George Christopher. That 1962 Christopher campaign for lieutenant governor, we had done very well, as you say. But he didn't make it. It was a good, hard campaign. I think Christopher wound up owing us $4,000. Of course, $4,000 then was a lot more than $4,000 is today.

Anyway, Herb let it get out of hand in the closing weeks because Christopher was a very wealthy man. If we got caught with a little bit

of a deficit, we thought Christopher would take care of it. When the campaign was over, Christopher came around and thanked everybody and went up north. Nothing happened on the campaign bill. Christopher just finally told Herb, "That is not my debt. That is the campaign's debt." Herb was furious about that. This rankled.

Then, in '62, there was a campaign where [Assemblyman Joseph C.] Joe Shell was running [in the Republican primary against Nixon] for governor. He did not make it. And he had a big campaign debt. Shell was paying it off piecemeal. It got into the newspaper somehow that Joe Shell is paying off this debt. Herb wrote a letter. He said, "Joe Shell is paying off his campaign debts. What about George Christopher?" That is just all there was to it. Two sentences. Christopher was furious. Just furious.

When Tom Pike took me up to meet Christopher in 1966 to take over the campaign, Christopher said, "You know, your partner was not very nice to me. We will forget about that,

ROSS: as long you are handling the campaign and he isn't."

DOUGLASS: So Baus handled the primary and you handled the general election. Is that what you are saying? Is that where this difference of opinion occurred? It was '62 that he ran for lieutenant governor. Then it was in '66 that he must have run for the nomination for governor because that is the year that Reagan beat Brown.

ROSS: Yes. The lieutenant governor campaign is the one that wound up with a fight between Herb and Christopher. And then the campaign for governor that I got involved in . . .

DOUGLASS: That is probably where he made the comments. That is why you did that campaign. We discussed that one in quite a bit of detail. You are talking about a carryover of a problem from the '62 campaign, which makes sense. That is where Joe Shell, Nixon, and everyone were involved.

ROSS: Yes. That is what it was. Joe Shell was paying off the debt. And Christopher had not paid off the $4,000 from his 1962 campaign. Then in 1966 . . .

DOUGLASS: That is when he said, "Your partner wasn't very nice to me." [Laughter] That is a great story.

ROSS: Yes. We came into that campaign. I really felt I had turned it around. The Brown people and the Reagan people were getting these polls from various sources. They had to know that Christopher was moving up fast. And they cut it off with that milk story, which I told you all about.

DOUGLASS: To wind up the period of the sixties, did the '66 campaign, in which you ended up working for Republicans-for-Brown, have some bad baggage that hit you people in terms of the Republicans getting you to handle campaigns after that?

ROSS: I don't think so. For one thing, we were shooting more for propositions than for candidates all along. I just don't recall anything that gave us a problem. The thing that gave us a problem was the Internal Revenue Service [IRS]. Did Herb talk to about that at all?

DOUGLASS: I don't think so. What was that?

ROSS: I can't put years on this except to say that one of the best things that ever happened to us was that the police chief, Tom Reddin . . .

DOUGLASS: Who succeeded Parker as police chief? Did Reddin?

ROSS: Reddin succeeded him. Then [Edward] Davis succeeded Reddin.

About that time we were hurt by the Department of the Treasury.

DOUGLASS: Did they make a ruling that affected you?

ROSS: There was an investigation on Philip Watson, and we handled Watson's campaign for assessor. I have forgotten what triggered the investigation, but charges were made that Watson was giving special favors to people in exchange for campaign contributions. It was a state situation. Somebody from the state attorney general's office came in. She was asking questions.

I first talked to Philip Watson and said, "I don't know why we shouldn't show her everything. There is nothing here that isn't filed in our campaign reports. Our records are clean. She is going to find that there is nothing different here from what she is going to find if she goes down to the county recorder and pulls this stuff out. She doesn't know that, but that is what she is going to find out." So he agreed that she could come in. She came in,

and we gave her carte blanche to look through everything.

She discovered in going through our billing--she really went into it--that we had invoices to various corporations.

[End Tape 4, Side B]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

ROSS: She had found out that we had taken company money and put it illegally into various campaigns. If she looked further, she would find--I didn't think she did this--in the correspondence file that every one of those was notified to the campaign treasurer so that he would have it on his list. But she immediately concluded that we were in a conspiracy.

I must admit that I heard of this having been done. I first heard about it in the Boddy campaign. A public relations agency would bill an individual or firm for advertising. And that person, in turn, would charge it off as a business expense.

She was trying to make us a coconspirator with these corporations whereby they would pay money to us, we would bill them for advertising. They would escape paying the tax, because, as you know, a [political] contribution is not tax deductible. She called me into the bookkeeper's office, where she was. I didn't catch what the dickens she was talking about. She was showing me these various invoices made out to such-and-such and what are they for? I said, "This is

for this campaign. And that is for this campaign. And that was for that campaign. They paid us direct rather than going through the campaign treasurer." That was all I had to say about the thing. I was blithely taking for granted that everything was fine.

Apparently, there was a tip-off between her office and the attorney general's office and the treasury department. Two treasury agents came in here one day and said that they wanted to talk to me and to Herb. Herb came in, and we sat around this desk. They said that they were investigating us. It was a criminal investigation. They told us what the investigation was all about. I said, "That is ridiculous. Everything is on the record." Because we kept very clean books. One of our stocks in trade was that we were clean. It is all in our books. They said, "We will be seeing you" or some such thing.

I called Frank [W.] Doherty (son of Frank P. Doherty), and told him what it was all about. They didn't use the word "criminal." They said it is such-and-such an investigation. He said, "Oh, my gosh. That is a criminal

ROSS: investigation." This Frank Doherty was Frank Doherty's son. My brother-in-law. I called my brother-in-law, Frank W. Doherty. Not the Frank P. Doherty. This is Frank W. Doherty. He said, "My gosh. That's a criminal investigation. I had better talk to my dad."

So he talked to his dad. His dad at that time was fading out of the picture. He lost his memory, eventually. It was one of those pitiful sort of Alzheimer's [disease] situations. He said, "Bill, this is a tough thing. You can't tell where it is going to go. Dad says to go see another firm." They specialized in IRS and treasury department matters.

It just killed us. We paid a $2,500 retainer for this guy, and he was to advise us. The advice was that we do not turn over our records to the treasury department unless they dropped criminal [charges]. If they want to come in and audit our books, that was fine. If they are going to charge us on a criminal thing, we shouldn't cooperate. I think that was a big mistake.

The treasury department went over to my dad's and my bank, the Golden State Bank. They

subpoenaed all records there for I don't know how many years. They were all on microfiche. They found every check that every came to us. United Airlines is one. Some of the big flour companies. From the cotton people: Anderson-Clayton Cotton, producers of cotton whom we had done with business with; Producers Cotton. Pacific Theaters, Fox West Coast Theaters, Dillingham Land Corporation (Hawaii). All of our checks that came in from corporate accounts.

If there was a corporate check, they followed up on it. It must have cost them a fortune. They said, "We are not investigating you. You have immunity. We are investigating Baus and Ross."

DOUGLASS: They said that to the corporations or to the bank?

ROSS: To the corporations.

DOUGLASS: They did?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So this flipped from what you originally thought it was. Which was an investigation of businesses writing off deductions.

ROSS: I think the whole thing was that somebody didn't like Baus and Ross. For one thing, we were on

the conservative side and maybe somebody didn't like that in this department. Their whole basis was that we allegedly had talked to these corporations. "Look. Here is a way you can give us more money because you can escape the tax on it." That was their theme in the investigation.

So what had all these things done? All these corporations called us up and said, "Hey, you are being investigated by the treasury department. They were in here on such-and-such." Our answer was, "Yes. We know about it. We are not particularly worried about it. It is on our books, too. The attorney says not to show them the books until they drop the criminal proceeding." That just went all over town. That really hurt us. The Times was being very bad to us.

DOUGLASS: They ran some news articles about it?

ROSS: Yes. The one that hurt was in the middle of the Philip Watson trial. The state Board of Equalization handled this thing against Watson. They were taking an investigator-witness down the line, "What did you do then on day such-and-such?" "Well, on that day I was investigating

Baus and Ross. Oops, I should not have said that." That was the quote to end quote in the Los Angeles Times. Things like that kept dropping and hurting us no end.

Finally, I had lunch with Kenneth Reich, who is still down at the Times but pretty much retired. I said, "The attorneys won't let us do anything about it, but I want you to know what this thing is all about. There are several reasons why corporations don't want to make a contribution to a political campaign if they can hide it. Number one, they have stockholders who would raise Cain if they knew they were giving money to Pitchess if they wanted Jones or somebody. They would rather have a bill that comes in that says 'advertising.' Then we reported the contributors and what it brought to the campaign treasurer. We are absolutely clean on this thing."

Sometimes the client would want to say, "Those billboards are mine." That happened in the Poulson campaign. They wanted to say to Poulson, "These billboards are mine. That's us." We had people doing radio. We had people who wanted to say, "This is what I did for you."

ROSS: Taking credit that way. Then you had corporations where you had labor on one side and management on the other. And they didn't want labor to use a contribution against them in negotiating sessions. We didn't want them to know that we opposed you in your railroad featherbedding routine, for example. I said, "Those are legitimate reasons." I suppose there are some--I heard about it--that they are going to take our bill and charge it off to advertising.

We had United Airlines and these flour companies. These big ones turned out to be clean. They did not charge it off to advertising. But the invoices they had going around where people could see and gossip about them didn't show money coming to Poulson. It was the candidate situation that got you in trouble. There were a couple of those things on Watson.

DOUGLASS: So what finally happened?

ROSS: What finally happened is that they went through that whole thing. They came in and said, "We are going to drop it, but we are going to do a

civil audit." "OK. Fine." You can't take out an ad and say, "Hey, we have been cleared."

But this police bond issue came along. Tom Reddin gave us that campaign to run. That was a signal to everybody that "Hey, they are clear. They are clean. They've got no problems."

DOUGLASS: That is 1968. Was that a fortuitous happening or did Reddin do that purposefully?

ROSS: No. It was a fortuitous happening. I just know that Reddin had to have gone through the thing and found out that we were clear before he let us do the campaign.

DOUGLASS: When that became known, that cleared the air for you?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Whatever happened on the civil part of the situation?

ROSS: That is my $400 gripe. The civil guy came around, and I put him in Baus' office. I said, "Look. You know more about my business than I know. I can't remember all of these things. If you have any questions to ask, you ask the bookkeeper or an accountant. The books are available to you. Look at anything you want."

Well, he was here for four or five days, and he was really digging in.

When he got through, he said that we owed $800 tax. "What do we owe $800 on?" "Well, you made a contribution to the Christopher campaign." I said, "Made a contribution? The hell we did. He wound up owing us money." "Well, you made a $4,000 contribution to him. Money you say he owed you. That sort of thing is done all the time. The printer will say that he is making a deduction, but he is actually making a contribution. He can't get away with that." I said, "This is absolutely arm's length. We had a fight over the $4,000." An $800 tax and late payment fine, $400 from Herb and $400 from me.

I told you, the company, Herb and I each reported separately. Each of us wrote out a check for $400. And through this attorney, whom we paid $2,500 to, we had him send in a protest on each one of them. Well, Baus comes ahead of Ross. "Bs" come before "Rs." Baus got his $400 back. It came down to "R," and I did not. They ruled against me. Mine was ruled a contribution and Herb's was not.

DOUGLASS: How utterly bizarre.

ROSS: It is bizarre. It doesn't matter. This is the way it is. It would cost thousands to appeal it. I said, "To hell with it."

DOUGLASS: That is a negative learning experience.

ROSS: Yes, it is funny how those things work out. That is the way the whole thing wound up.

DOUGLASS: That is quite a saga. I remember Mr. Baus mentioning the police bonds. You won this one. It was for a police training academy and for some new stations. A heliport and that sort of thing.

ROSS: The one thing I remember about that campaign was, number one, I've told you, because Tom Reddin gave it to us. It told everybody that we were good, honest, decent people and had never been anything else. The second thing was that the problems in the black community were just beginning to surface in these days. The Watts riots. The police department had had a lot of trouble in the black area. Tom Reddin was one of the first people who really made a drive to get to know the black community leadership and knowing what it was about. Getting them to see

him so they could talk things out. Reddin was very good in that particular thing.

But he and his supporters were very worried about this bond issue, whether it would pass or not, because it required a two-thirds vote plus one. And the black community had grown to the point where they were very, very important. If they went 90 percent against it, we were really on very, very thin ice. The little polling I had done on this thing through Dorothy Corey showed that the people in the black area were very much for this proposition because it was going to have a new 77th Street police station. I think it would also create a new division down there.

DOUGLASS: Two new divisions would be created. The Devonshire division in the west end of the Valley. And south-central Los Angeles.

ROSS: That south-central Los Angeles division was very important to all the leaders down there in the community. So I told Reddin I didn't think there were any problems on that, from the way the polling went. It turned out that way. We just went all over town in a very big way. In the Valley because they wanted Devonshire and

down there because they wanted it. I think we got our highest votes in those areas.

DOUGLASS: This is Prop. A in the June election of '68. To go on to the candidates that you handled by yourself after Mr. Baus left the firm. I believe you said you were in business until '75.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You handled Evelle Younger's campaign for attorney general in 1970. He won that. I wondered if you could talk about how you happened to get the campaign.

ROSS: I had gone to high school with Mildred Younger. She was a little bit younger than I am. We both were debaters at Glendale High School. So she knew me. Evelle ran for judge long before district attorney. He was a good friend of Frank W. Doherty. They were FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agents together. When he ran for judge, Frank sent him in here for help in writing his radio commercials and that sort of thing. There was no charge because I did it for Frank. So I helped him on that. He had run for district attorney and I helped a little.

DOUGLASS: Was this district attorney of the city or the county?

ROSS: The County of Los Angeles. After his judgeship, he decided to get in on that side of it. He did not use us on that campaign. I was very upset about that. But he went with a Democratic firm, Snyder and Smith. [Elizabeth C.] Liz Snyder had been a Democratic national committeewoman. She was very active and a very good gal, incidentally, as a campaigner. Then when he ran for attorney general, I guess he felt that Liz Snyder was not the person for him because he had to get the Republican nomination.

DOUGLASS: Yes. He was a Republican.

ROSS: Yes. He had to get the Republican nomination. So we got that. We got him elected to the attorney general [office]. The thing I remember about that campaign was that television was really becoming quite something by that time. We did some very good TV spots with Art Linkletter, endorsing him and saying he was the man.

DOUGLASS: Who was [Charles] O'Brien, the person Younger defeated? I don't place him.

ROSS: Charlie O'Brien was the chief state deputy attorney general. The attorney general of the state retired. Charles O'Brien was the heir

apparent. He was a very good campaigner. He was a better campaigner than [Evelle] Ev. Not from the standpoint of energy, but he had that Irish wit. Ev was a boring speaker unless he had something specific to talk about which would rivet your attention. Charlie O'Brien was a raconteur. So he put on a very good campaign.

DOUGLASS: I have it as a 49.3 to a 49.7 percent differential. So it was pretty tight.

ROSS: It was a real tough one. A real tight one.

DOUGLASS: That is the year that Reagan defeated Unruh for the governorship. There could have been a little coattail effect.

ROSS: It could have been. Charlie O'Brien had all the money. Ev Younger spent his money in the primary. He had a tough primary race against a state senator from Glendale [John L. Harmer].

DOUGLASS: You handled the primary, too?

ROSS: Yes. I handled the primary too. And in that primary there was this state senator, who was a well financed, he was a very active Mormon and his money was mostly Mormon money and there was a lot of money for him. And there was another man, a Republican from northern California. So it was a three-way primary race.

Ev was really hurt at the last minute. This state senator came out with a scandal tabloid which accused Younger of every sort of thing. I don't know if I have a copy of it or not. His radio announcements did the same in song. This did a lot of damage at the end of the primary. We really had to go to town on the money we spent. We spent our wad on that primary, and we had no money for the final. Charlie O'Brien got money and came in with a very strong campaign. He outspent us on media right and left. It was tough.

DOUGLASS: Did Mildred Younger work actively in that campaign?

ROSS: She worked actively in every one of his campaigns.

DOUGLASS: I have heard that she was quite a person. Very effective.

ROSS: She was quite a person. She was extremely effective when she had her voice. She lost her voice at that particular time. I had Poulson and Milly Younger.

DOUGLASS: Was it a similar kind of voice problem?

ROSS: It sounded like a similar kind of thing. She could only whisper. She had a mechanical

problem. She had to clear her throat and work at it constantly. She lost volume. For a long while she tried to keep a microphone and speaker that she carried around with her to talk with people. It was a sad thing. She had radio and TV programs before her voice gave out. I told you that she was a debater.

DOUGLASS: Was that a permanent problem for her or did she regain her voice?

ROSS: She regained it. It was like a miracle. This was after Ev had been attorney general. Ev ran across a doctor at Berkeley who asked to see Mildred and thought he could take care of it. He did it with an operation.

DOUGLASS: There was something physical about it?

ROSS: And they never talked to anybody about it. Mildred would tell the story about when she would call people up and start talking to them. "Well, who are you?" "Susie, this is Millie." Then they would have a crying session. She was on the phone constantly. It came back full force.

DOUGLASS: In '74, you also ran the Younger campaign for attorney general. Was that just an obvious follow-through?

ROSS: Yes. We had no particular problem.

DOUGLASS: I think that does the candidate campaigns that you did in the seventies.

ROSS: That is it. Younger was the last one.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we turn our attention to the ballot issues, some of which we have covered. So we will judiciously go through these. There was one in 1950, which was Proposition 1, an initiative constitutional amendment prohibiting state and political subdivisions from imposing personal property taxes. I don't believe we ever talked about that one. I was intrigued by that one. I think that shows on your sheet.

ROSS: Yes. Property tax repeal.

DOUGLASS: This is personal property, possessions in the house. Do you remember anything about that?

ROSS: I don't. I just don't remember anything about that one.

DOUGLASS: Let's push past the public housing issues. In '52, we have covered the nonprofit elections.

In 1952, there was a Proposition 7 and also Proposition 13 dealing with the whole business of cross-filing. They were on the same ballot. Proposition 7 indicated that you at least had to put your party designation if you cross-filed.

You would have to put an "R", for Republican, if you were on the Democratic primary ballot. At the same time, there was Proposition 13 that totally prohibited cross-filing.

I was curious as to the degree of interest in those two because this was a cause celebre in the Democratic party. I would have thought it would have been something the Republicans would want to stand fast on. Do you have any particular recollections about these two issue campaigns?

ROSS: My recollection is kind of vague except for this. The Republican business people, I don't know about the Republican party people, but the business people in town, the California state chamber of commerce, the L.A. and San Francisco chambers of commerce. They, of course, go through all these issues. They felt it was absolutely unwinnable to keep cross-filing with no designation as to party and that this putting the "R" on the ballot was a compromise situation. Instead of prohibiting cross-filing, allow it but put the "R" after the name. That was the way that one went.

DOUGLASS: The strategy was work for Prop. 7 and don't have Prop. 13?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: In fact, Prop. 7 passed with a big majority and Prop. 13 did fail. So that was sort of a strategic decision?

ROSS: Yes. The idea was freedom of choice. A guy in a primary ought to be able to run on the other side and save the taxpayers money in a runoff.

DOUGLASS: Who specifically hired you? The business people in town?

ROSS: I don't remember.

DOUGLASS: I wonder who worked in opposition to that?

ROSS: I know ours was not the Republican party. It was a citizens' campaign. I am sure it came out of the L.A. Chamber of Commerce.

DOUGLASS: You were involved in the Prop. 13 campaign, to oppose it. That is the one that prohibited cross-filing. So you were working on that. Same group sponsoring you, probably?

ROSS: I don't want to go to in-depth [discussion] unless I go to the files and take a look at it.

DOUGLASS: In November of 1952 and of '54, there were the [George H.] McLain ballot propositions. The 1952 initiative, Proposition 11, increased

monthly payments, as did the 1954 Prop. 4, aid to the needy and aged, an initiative constitutional amendment. You were successful in fighting to oppose them. Do you have any interesting anecdotes?

ROSS: Yes. The basic thing was that McLain had come in with his proposition. I think it was more or less ignored by everybody. Who is this guy McLain? He was a rabble-rouser and wasn't too well known.

DOUGLASS: He was not taken seriously?

ROSS: He was not taken seriously, and it was a big surprise to everybody when all of a sudden the McLain proposition[1] had passed and his sidekick and aide became the head of a newly created department [Department of Social Welfare]. A pension department. So the thing had been passed. The way McLain did it was fundamentally stressing the blind. He used the blind in billboards. He used those same seven sheets that I showed on the Kennedy boards that we did. He put those together and plastered the town with those and used a blind person. It was very

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[1]Proposition 4 (1948), initiative constitutional amendment.

effective. The whole business reaction was: "My gosh. We have to repeal this thing because it has created a whole new department and it is going to absolutely bankrupt the state." What to do about it?

We were involved in '54, the repeal measure. The key to that thing was to leave the pensions as they were but to repeal the whole structure. There was a woman named [Myrtle] Williams, and she was put in charge. He had to write her name on the ballot issue to put her in. There were two people involved in this. One was a guy named [George] Evans and the gal, Williams. They were the two sidekicks of McLain. Evans kept with McLain in his organization.

Anyway, the key was to leave the pensions the way they were. In other words, when the McLain thing went in, it provided for a pension increase. Then Williams could have kept on raising those things on and on and on. So get rid of Williams and get rid of that thing and get it back into ordinary government was the whole idea. Just take your beating on the pensions. You have taken it. Forget it.

ROSS: Repealing pensions is not a popular thing. The genius of that thinking was Frank P. Doherty. We helped him to sell it to the community, but Doherty was the guy who came up with it. He was a brilliant political strategist.

DOUGLASS: This is Doherty the elder?

ROSS: Doherty the elder.

DOUGLASS: He packaged this. It was business people and the chamber.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: That meant that McLain's operation had been in place for some years. So you were fighting an established bureaucracy.

ROSS: Right.

DOUGLASS: I wanted to ask you about the Los Angeles airport bonds, which were on the ballot in 1956. You were the key person on that campaign. Could you talk about why there was a need for a bond issue and how you became involved?

ROSS: That had been put on the ballot three or four times, an airport bond issue, and it had failed each of the three times. The last campaign before us was done by Steve Wells, our one competitor who was in business here, the Steve Wells Agency. He had gone from straight

Democratic political stuff into trying to get into ballot bond issues.

That campaign, I felt, was lost because they felt that airplanes were not that popular. The whole campaign by Wells was built on a transportation bond issue rather than the airport bond issue. We turned around and reversed it completely. This is for a global airport. Los Angeles is a global city. There are going to be a few global airports around the world. New York is going to be one of them. On this coast, Los Angeles or San Francisco will be the other. The whole concept was on the global airport in our publicity on it.

The other thing that we had to overcome was the unpopularity of bond issues at that time and what they did to taxes. And the poor history of these issues to pay for themselves. They would say they would pay for themselves, but they wouldn't. They wanted to pass it as a general obligation [GO] bond. A GO bond has a much lower coupon than the revenue bond has because you have the whole broad tax base on it rather than just the revenue. At that particular time revenue bonds were not passing.

[Interruption]

DOUGLASS: You were going to explain how you packaged this bond issue.

ROSS: The basic problem was that the campaigns lost in the past, I think, because they were not clearly designated as an airport thing. And number two, because people did not want to get caught with more bonds. Bonds were becoming unpopular at this particular time. The general obligation bond would you give you a lower coupon. It would cost the taxpayers less or the city less. So it went as a general obligation bond, but that required a two-thirds vote.

The problem was to get people to believe our argument that the airport is a revenue-producing thing. It would be like the harbor. It will bring revenue in and won't cost the taxpayers anything. But you couldn't get people to believe that and particularly Mr. Pixley's group and the Property Owner Taxpayers Association. And also the California Taxpayers Association, the local people were upset about this.

So James L. Beebe came up with the idea. He was an O'Melveny and Myers attorney and a

bond attorney for them. He came up with the idea that we could amend the city charter that requires that all those revenues go to pay off bonds. The revenues would not be used for anything else until the bonds were paid off.

So we had two propositions. Proposition A, which was a bond issue. And Proposition B, which is an amendment to the city charter, which required that those bonds had to be retired by the airport revenues and not just depending on the general obligation of property taxpayers.

DOUGLASS: Doesn't that become an interesting challenge? To be able to get the point across of two propositions which you are packaging.

ROSS: It was. It was a fascinating thing. It had not been done before. I enjoyed that tremendously. I did a lot of talking and debating on the thing. A lot of the old opponents came out of the woodwork and were still fighting this thing. We had TV debates and radio debates.

DOUGLASS: What were their arguments?

ROSS: Their arguments, basically, were that it wasn't going to pay off. "The revenues wouldn't be sufficient. And the property owner was going to get socked again. After all these school bonds,

after all these sewer bonds, now we are taking on this airport. We didn't need this. If the airlines want a better airport, they ought to pay for it." Of course, they do, as we know.

DOUGLASS: Was it during this period that you and Mr. Baus did some radio programs on issues? You mentioned that in the fifties you had done that.

ROSS: Yes. Radio and television. Television suddenly became very interested in these things. Herb and I would be on one side and two other people on the other side. We had a lot of fun debating those issues. They had quite an effect. We would get a lot of mail on it. A lot of interest. It sort of helped us in getting new campaigns. People would say, "They really believe in what they are doing. They go all out. They go out at nighttime to television studios." Basically, the problem was that they wanted somebody to debate and there was nobody to debate it on our side. So they would say, "Would you do it?"

DOUGLASS: So they would have you do it.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Did you just always pitch both of these elements equally? Is that how you approached this?

ROSS: Yes. Absolutely. Not let them get separated. There was A and B on everything. It was on our billboards. It was on our windshield stickers. It was on our literature. It was on everything. "A and B. Vote 'Yes.' Airport expansion."

DOUGLASS: How did you come out on the vote?

ROSS: There was a very big vote for it.

DOUGLASS: Did you get well over the two-thirds?

ROSS: Yes. I think we got into 70 percent on it. The vote was very close. I think B got slightly more votes than A, the bond issue itself.

DOUGLASS: Yes. It would have been ironic to have one pass and the other doesn't.

ROSS: That is what we used to worry about. "My gosh. What if we pass one and not the other?"

Another thing that we did in that campaign which helped us was in the San Fernando Valley. It is hard to believe at this time because later on it was a detriment. But at that particular time, expanding the Valley airport was part of it. It made things a lot easier for a lot of businesses out that way. To bring in air freight and so on and convenience to Valley passengers.

And, also, part of the expansion was that people in that area on the ground--those are light planes coming in, not the big jets coming in there--the ground noise when the people were revving up and taking off. That was what was objected to. It wasn't like the jets taking off and landing over [Los Angeles] International [Airport], creating noise. Part of this program was to build sound-deadening berms all the way around there on the airport. We got those explained to the people that we were taking in extra land to create these berms and also to lengthen the runways at that time.

DOUGLASS: When you say the Valley airport, which airport do you mean?

ROSS: Van Nuys. It became Van Nuys Airport. We had a lot of people in the Valley getting out and working for us because they wanted to take care of that. Then we had a heliport system that seemed to be important at that time. That was before buildings began to put heliports on the top of them.

DOUGLASS: Yes. There used to be a heliport in Pomona near General Dynamics [Corporation].

ROSS: We had these airports where we could dispatch fire fighters and ambulance planes and all that sort of thing.

DOUGLASS: That was really a critical turning point in the development of Los Angeles as an international airport.

ROSS: It sure was. That old building became the freight terminal. Then everything else was new.

DOUGLASS: Was part of the pressure there because they needed to have the capability of landing jets?

ROSS: They weren't thinking about jets at that particular time. It was just the competition with San Francisco. You had to have the repair facilities, and we didn't have the land for a repair facility. The buildings were more or less wooden, temporary structures, anyway, at our old LAX airport here. They had but one dining room for the entire airport, for example. It was a small operation. It was converted immediately so you could separate freight from [commercial]. They were in bad shape there.

DOUGLASS: That must have been a feather in your cap.

ROSS: Yes. It was. It was a lot of fun.

DOUGLASS: In '58, I want to ask a question about something that Mr. Baus mentioned and find if you recall

anything about it. Apparently, as an extension of or maybe having something to do with those earlier things about public housing in Chavez Ravine, there was a referendum in the city to send the Dodgers back to Brooklyn. You people handled the campaign to uphold the L.A. City-Dodger contract. What do you recall of that?

ROSS: That was a real, rough, tough campaign.

DOUGLASS: Who got together the demand for the referendum?

ROSS: The demand for the referendum, the great force of it fundamentally, were the people who were opposed to Poulson. It was more or less the liberal Democratic side of the thing who were opposed. Basically, they were still upset over that public housing business. This was a public housing site which was now being given away, they said, to the Dodger organization.

DOUGLASS: They had been here a few years already? The Dodgers.

[Interruption]

ROSS: Yes. The Dodgers had been playing in the Coliseum.

DOUGLASS: So this was a vengeance campaign against Poulson.

ROSS: Yes. It was a funny amalgamation. The anti-Poulson people were in the thing like crazy. The Democratic group who were built around this public housing thing were in it.

But, also, it attracted the attention of John Holland, who was a very conservative city councilman who have been very anti-public housing and pro-Poulson. For some reason or another--I don't know whether he was upset with Poulson--he gave them real substance in the conservative community. He really took this thing on. If the Dodgers wanted to buy Chavez Ravine, make them buy it. Don't give it to them. It had reverted to the ownership of the city public housing authority. The Dodgers had been attracted here with all kinds of promises made to them based upon this. Well, forget about those promises. The people didn't promise it. The politicians did. That is their problem and not yours. He ran quite a rough, tough campaign against us with very little money.

Our side of it had very little money also. Walter [F.] O'Malley said that this was something for the people of Los Angeles to decide and not the Dodgers. If he put money

into it, the Dodgers were trying to buy the campaign, they were sure to believe. That was his feeling about it. So he wasn't going to put any money into it. The negotiator for the Dodgers on behalf of the city was [ ] Chad McClellan. And Chad was the past president of the chamber of commerce. He went around to raise money for it. All the firms laughed. They had just paid money for season tickets and they would be damned if they were going to pay money for Walter O'Malley's deal. So it was a rough, tough campaign.

DOUGLASS: Wasn't this the first telethon?

ROSS: It was the first telethon. We just really got lucky on that thing.

[End Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

ROSS: Ruthrauff and Ryan had handled the Dodger broadcasts back in New York and packaged them. Ruthrauff and Ryan also had out here in their West Coast office Jack Benny under contract. They had George Burns and Gracie Allen and others. There was a lot of talent of that kind on radio shows. So Ruthrauff and Ryan had this telethon idea.

The idea was to build it around the last baseball game before the election, a road trip the Dodgers were taking. There was going to be a great big welcome-home celebration on the weekend before the election built around this telethon on KTTV. That was channel 11. And KTTV was giving us every break on the thing. Production and help. Because KTTV wanted the Dodgers here, and they wanted to be the station that broadcast the Dodger games. So we had KTTV and Ruthrauff and Ryan helping us line up talent.

We lined up what we could. We were going to put on this Dodgerthon. The general idea was to put on little acts. Then we had a segment in it, "Ask Walter O'Malley" because O'Malley was a

very persuasive guy. We had a desk all set up for Walter O'Malley, and he would answer questions coming in on the telephone. Are the Dodgers going to move if they don't get this? Various things like that. He was very persuasive and answered these questions. He had good humor.

The program went over like a ton of bricks. Some of the amateur people who came on were just absolutely fantastic. I remember a black minister who had one of the churches in the black area, the Watts south-central Los Angeles area, who came in. We didn't know him from Adam's off-ox, but he wanted to say some words about the Dodgers. He didn't want to stand up. He didn't want to sit down at a desk. He knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to sit on a stool. We found a stool for him. He sat on a stool and we cut to his mike.

He started talking and gave a real rousing come-to-Jesus routine. [Laughter] "Come to support the Dodgers." How great they were and what they had done for Jackie Robinson. And what they had done for the black community (in those days it was the negro community) in

ROSS: Brooklyn. People were just fascinated with him. We were just riveted on him. The producer from KTTV kept signaling not to cut him off at two minutes. He talked for five minutes. He did one whale of a job.

DOUGLASS: Did this catalyze the pro-sport, pro-baseball group in town?

ROSS: Yes. It was a Sunday night show. There was nothing on TV at that time. So everybody tuned into the Dodger program. Walter O'Malley was kind of a hero. We had these stars walk on. Burns. We had [Joe E.] Joey Brown as master of ceremonies on it. Of course, we could advertise Joey Brown and some these stars because we knew they were going to come. The rest of them just came in.

DOUGLASS: Was this telethon a relatively new phenomenon? Had that been done much in our area?

ROSS: It had not been done in politics at all. It was done a couple of times for arthritis and that kind of thing.

DOUGLASS: So you were a kind of a first.

ROSS: Yes. And we just had two hours of time on the thing. But we had so many people coming in that the thing went to three hours. The pitch on the

whole thing was "Everybody go down and welcome the Dodgers." Wouldn't you know that day they won. It was a tough road trip and they won the Sunday doubleheader. They flooded that airport.

DOUGLASS: So you got the media coverage.

ROSS: It was so good that KTTV went back to first and reran it all over again. So the whole night was a Dodger night. They took our three hours and extended it to six hours. "During the proper times you can go down to Dodger Stadium and see such-and-such place and welcome the team home and let them know they are appreciated." They had a whale of a turnout.

DOUGLASS: Did this bring in some money for the campaign?

ROSS: No. Not a dime.

DOUGLASS: But it got votes, you think?

ROSS: It got votes.

DOUGLASS: What was the margin on that vote?

ROSS: It was close but comfortable. Beforehand, it was a squeaker. It went over big. I think we got 57 percent.

DOUGLASS: All right. In 1960, you handled the senate reapportionment campaign. Proposition 15. You were working to defeat this plan which was presented. This is important. Reapportionment.

That was the beginning of a long series of problems in the early sixties dealing with reapportionment.

ROSS: Yes. There was a supervisor by the name of [Frank G.] Bonelli who came up with this Bonelli plan. It was very much opposed by northern California. If this thing went through, where the senate suddenly became reapportioned based upon population, the south would control the senate, they felt. Because up to this time there were forty senators from the fifty-eight counties. All the large counties had one senator, period. Then the so-called "cow counties," as we called them in those days, two or three counties would have one senator. You had forty senate districts that were done by county rather than population.

The result was that the cow counties were just as strong as Los Angeles County. Northern California was stronger because there were more counties north of the Tehachapis [Mountains] than there were south. They were against this reapportionment. The problem was to beat it down here. The proponents may have had an organized campaign, but I don't recall it. We

had the "no" campaign down here. The basis of the whole thing was: This is the right idea but it is done the wrong way. You have got to do it in a different way.

DOUGLASS: A little bit of the specifics was that the legislature would fix the boundaries. Counties with more than one district would have districts based on the affinity of the population, area, and economy. In other words, another basis other than the boundaries. And no county would have more than seven assembly districts. So you were fighting the details of this.

ROSS: We were fighting the details. Los Angeles County was going to get the shaft on this one. They could do better on a straight population basis than they could do this way. It seemed to work that way also in San Diego, as I recall.

DOUGLASS: You won overwhelming. It was 3,408,000 to 1,876,000. That was kind of different. You had not been in a reapportionment campaign.

ROSS: Yes. And it was kind of funny to run a "Yes, but" campaign. [Laughter] It is a great idea, but this thing is wrong.

DOUGLASS: You were really winning it in the north because the status quo wanted the status quo. In the

south, it wasn't viewed as something beneficial to Los Angeles County.

ROSS: Another thing, I think we touched on it before, you did not have the power of television at that time. We sent people out to all of the newspapers and to the radio stations and the TV stations, to the editorial departments, those who took a stand for and against. We had a tremendous endorsement campaign on the no position on this one. We had sample editorials, "Let's come back two years from now with a better plan. This is a great idea, but this is a bad situation." We had all the newspapers. We had labor against it, as well as the establishment. That is why we won the way we did.

DOUGLASS: Up north did you use your northern extension person?

ROSS: Harry Lerner?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

ROSS: No. We did not use him.

DOUGLASS: Did you run it from here?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I am trying to pinpoint the ones you ran. In '62, there was a L.A. school bond election that

lost. It happened to be when there were five major bond issues on the state ballot. You fell short of the two-thirds vote. Does that strike you as having anything about it you remember? I think it probably was the only one you lost, wasn't it?

ROSS: It was. The thing was that we got 63 or 64 percent; we did not get the 66 2/3s plus one [percent]. We may have even got 65 percent.

DOUGLASS: I have that you got a very high vote.

ROSS: We got a very high vote. On the state bond issue, they threw in all these big bonds on top of the school bond issue. And there had been so many school bond issues, it was kind of rough at this time.

DOUGLASS: It is pretty hard anytime, I suppose, that you have both a local and statewide bond issue on a ballot.

ROSS: Yes. We lost it.

DOUGLASS: In '64, you handled the so-called "free" TV Proposition 15. This was yours.

ROSS: That was a campaign we won, but it got lost. Under the guidance of Jesse Unruh, who was then the very powerful speaker of the assembly, a bill was quietly passed. It was never debated.

It never appeared in the newspapers. It was a bill that permitted cable television people to string their wires and to use telephone company cable. You can see how it could get lost in something like that.

But it was done at the behest of Sylvester [L.] Weaver [Jr.], who had been president of NBC, and a group of people in New York. They were interested in the idea of pay TV here in southern California. The Dodgers, incidentally, were very much interested in the thing, too. Their New York contact had been contacted and told, "Hey, you can go on pay TV with your Dodger games."

The theater people were very upset about this. They were upset because they were taking a lot of beating anyway from television. The idea was that on pay TV they expected it would take over the theater business. Pay TV would be running first-run films. By this time the studios had lost their control over the film chains. They had been broken up. They were afraid they would be put out of business by that.

ROSS: So we ran a referendum on that. We first circulated the petitions. It was a very popular thing. You just ask the people, "Do you want to pay for what you are getting for free? If no, sign this petition, stop pay TV." We had a very popular position, we found.

We were bothered on two flanks. Number one, that people who thought they wanted to vote "no" [on pay TV], they had to vote "yes" for the referendum to repeal pay TV. They didn't have pay TV so they didn't get the idea of what you were doing. We worked very hard on research on to get slogans that would get people to vote yes, to keep TV free. That is the way we had the thing worked out. "Vote Yes. Keep TV free." The other thing was that the theaters were financing the thing and they tried to use that against us constantly.

Our strengths were that people didn't want to pay for it, of course. And, also, the California Federation of Women's Clubs had a long-standing policy against pay TV. It started out back East, but it was here. They had this long-standing policy against pay TV. They were very active in it. Exactly why, I don't know.

We quickly found out about it. They came in, you know, "What can we do to help?" They had one woman who was very, very good and became our vice chairman. She was a good speaker.

The other group who had very much interest in it were the television repair people. It seemed that back East what would happen was that the pay TV people went into the repair business. People would say, "I am not getting my pay TV signal." And they called the cable company to come out and fix it. "The trouble is with your set and not with that." They would fix their set and bill them for it. So local repair people were upset about it. There was the economic interest plus the broad interest of you don't want to pay for what you are getting for free. That thing went over very, very well.

DOUGLASS: You were very successful. You won by over two million votes.

ROSS: The thing lost in the courts on a constitutional issue, which was freedom of expression. Our proposition was drawn up by an attorney who knew that there could be that problem. We had a severability clause in it.

DOUGLASS: You later lost it in the courts.

ROSS: Yes. We lost it in the courts.

DOUGLASS: How did you happen to get that contract? And who contracted with you?

ROSS: Eugene Wyman and his wife recommended us to Fox West Coast Theaters and Gene Klein. There was a loose group in a Theater Owners Association, the two strongest figures in which were Fox West Coast Theaters and Pacific Drive-ins. Then there was Loew's State [Theaters], Mann Edwards [Theaters] and others. The two big chains were Fox West Coast and Pacific [Theaters]. They assessed themselves in some way or another and asked us to do the campaign. We organized them into citizens' committees everywhere we could go. I told you how we used to go down the organizational line. It was very helpful. Between the TV repair people and the California Federation of Women's Clubs, you could organize little local groups. They got pretty excited about this thing when you showed them what was happening elsewhere.

We had support from some of the people from the networks in a rather peculiar way. The networks would take no position on this, except to say, "If this is going to happen, we are

going to go into pay TV." They would come out with those statements. They kind of believed they would be driven to protect themselves and they would have to go to it. As you know, it went the other way. Pay TV got in there and started competing for advertising. You get as much advertising on pay TV now as you do on the other.

DOUGLASS: Exactly. That is when you won, but eventually the issue didn't win.

ROSS: The most interesting thing to me was the way we had to work to get the yes vote on essentially a no proposition. "No. I don't want to pay for my television."

DOUGLASS: So you kept calling it the "Free TV" proposition to get the "yes" vote.

ROSS: Yes. The other thing was that we earned the undying enmity of Jesse Unruh, who used his influence to. . . . Somehow he was tied into these pay TV people, probably through campaign contributions to his various assembly [members]. He was the guy who created the idea that money goes to the speaker and then out to all his assembly candidates.

DOUGLASS: There was political reason why he was against this ballot proposition?

ROSS: He was the guy who pushed the bill through in favor of allowing them to use the telephone company cables and so on.

DOUGLASS: Did he pull any muscle in terms of the campaign?

ROSS: Yes. He did.

DOUGLASS: He gave money, I presume. Did he also have people who would work on it?

ROSS: He gave money to the thing and he gave people to work on it. For example, Unruh in his district, which then extended into the black community, he organized a big campaign down here against this thing. But we beat them solidly down there just on the plain old economic argument. Do you want to pay for the World Series and pay for this that and the other thing?

But the machine politics down there, where on their slate cards they were all to vote no on this. Again, they went for the confusion issue. "Vote no on that pay TV." And they had a group they called the "No, No, No Girls." There were three propositions they were against. It was like [Propositions] 14, 15, 16 or 16, 17, and 18. Something like that. That was the ticket

down there. To vote "no" on those. And they were civil rights issues and throwing us in along with the civil rights issues. "Vote no, no, no." It was fun.

DOUGLASS: That was sort of a mixed experience. I gather that Mr. Baus may have had some reservations about that campaign. About the stand?

ROSS: Herb was a very strong free enterpriser. I was more of the liberal in the campaign firm. Herb went along with the chamber of commerce, which went for no. Usually, we had the chamber with us on these things. The chamber of commerce came out against that.

DOUGLASS: In other words, they should have the right. The cable business?

ROSS: Yes. I believe the L.A. Times came out for "no" on that. The staunch conservatives, free enterprise people. . . . The opposition, for example, part of their literature was "Who is trying to kill baby?" Here is this little baby, an infant industry. They had a drawing and so on, and somebody was trying to garrote it with our proposition. It was a free enterprise thing versus us. But we went very egalitarian at this point. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Did sometimes the assignment of an issue depend a little bit on how strongly you felt? If one of you felt much stronger, you could get into it more in terms of your personal beliefs?

ROSS: There were a lot things you wouldn't touch because of personal beliefs. My argument on this one to Herb was: "Look. This is strictly an economic argument. You have a bunch who want to stay in the free television business. You have a bunch of individual merchants who want to be able to sell TVs and repair TVs. On the other hand, you have people who want to start a brand new business and put these guys out of business." This is six of one and half a dozen of the other. I said, "If the Dodgers had come to us and asked us to do the 'no' side of this thing, we could do that. The theater people have come to us and want us to handle their side."

DOUGLASS: So if you had been approached by the Dodgers, you might have been on that side.

ROSS: Yes. I had some particular in with Fox West Coast at that time.

DOUGLASS: I know you mentioned them before.

ROSS: Anyway, Fox West Coast wanted us. Out of that I made a very good friend of the drive-in theater people.

DOUGLASS: This would be a real problem for them.

ROSS: When did daylight saving time come along?[1]

DOUGLASS: There was a proposition in 1962 that extended daylight saving an extra month through October.

ROSS: The one before.

DOUGLASS: Did you work on the original one?

ROSS: Yes. My point I am trying to make is that in getting daylight saving time we had as an ally the Fox West Coast Theaters. The reason they thought it was great was because the Pacific Drive-in Theater people were giving them a lot of competition. They figured if it were daylight, these guys would not be able to open their screens at the popular seven or eight o'clock time. They are going to have to wait until nine or ten o'clock. This is the economic thing that got them in on the "yes" side of daylight saving time.

Our client in that particular case was the stock exchange. I am sure Herb told you that. He was the public relations man for the stock

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[1]Proposition 12 (1949), November initiative.

exchange before he and I went together. It was an account of his. The stockbrokers were having an awful time with daylight saving time because there was a four-hour difference between New York, which had daylight saving time, and California, which did not. And it was costing them an awful lot of business. Plus the fact that they had to get up awfully early in the morning. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: So your firm was involved in both the original daylight saving proposition and this one?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: There was one other one I believe you ran, which was Proposition 16. That is the same year as Free TV, '64. You battled against a state lottery proposal.

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Was that the first time that the state lottery was on the California ballot?

ROSS: As far as I know, yes. That thing was run strictly on a law-and-order basis.

DOUGLASS: You ran your campaign on law and order?

ROSS: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Who were the parties pushing for a lottery?

ROSS: I forget who they were, but they were not upstanding people. They were the kind of people that everyone had a question: Who is really behind them? I have forgotten who they were. They were not local people. They were up north, as I recall, and at one time pushed for dog racing.

DOUGLASS: But they got enough signatures to get this on the ballot.

ROSS: Yes. They hired [Joseph] Joe Robinson, a paid petition circulator, to put it on the ballot. Then we defeated it quite handily.

DOUGLASS: What was your strategy because it didn't get defeated more recently?

ROSS: It was strictly on the law-and-order argument, using law enforcement people to condemn it.

DOUGLASS: Was it your contention that it would bring elements to the state that we wouldn't want?

ROSS: Yes. Again, we did a very strong endorsement drive. I don't think there was anybody on the other side of this thing. Organized groups. They were either neutral or they came out on our side. So all the marked ballots up and down the state were for "no."

DOUGLASS: So the newspapers and the usuals were against it?

ROSS: Yes. The chambers of commerce. The newspapers.

DOUGLASS: Would the difference in the times account for that? There is always pressure for money, but the pressure for money for schools and the kinds of things used in this recent argument wasn't a perceived problem then?

ROSS: I think it was a perceived problem. I think what they were going to give the state was much less than the percentage schools now get. Educators and their lobbyists didn't support it.

DOUGLASS: There weren't as many lotteries in other states then.

ROSS: No. Back then it had not been going around at all. But when it came again on the California ballot, it had been tested. It was pretty hard to use that law-and-order line because it had not turned out that way in other states.

DOUGLASS: Who were the elements in the community that got you to do the campaign again? Who contracted with you?

ROSS: I would tell you, fundamentally, it would be the business group. That is where most of our stuff

came from. Many of our issues campaigns came from out of the chamber of commerce.

DOUGLASS: We are getting to the point where you need to depart.

ROSS: I had better get going.

DOUGLASS: Thank you very much.

[End Session 3]

[End Tape 5, Side B]

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