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Interview with Judge Richard Elrod

Date: 10 April 2009

Location: Office of Richard Elrod, Chicago, IL.
Present: Judge Richard Elrod, Dr. David W. Veenstra Ph.D., and Jason Marcus Waak

(the interview has already begun)

Judge Richard Elrod: Was it Gus Newberg that was in the construction, that was doing the construction at the time?

Jason Marcus Waak: I don't know.

RE: A guy named Durocher was the superintendent. They had their construction hut up there. There was going to be a demonstration by, I want to say the black building contractors or something. They were construction workers. They were kind of formed as a quasi union. They wanted their work to stop, they weren't getting enough money, etc. One of the spokesmen for them was Jesse Jackson. I remember very clearly that he had asked all of the street gangs to participate. Has anyone talked to you about this issue before?

Dr. David W. Veenstra: No.

JMW: Was this the Black Stone Ranger crowd you're talking about?

RE: Well, it was not only the Black Stone Rangers, but I think the Disciples were there. There were like three or four groups. They all met west of there at St. Ignatius Church, just west of where the construction was going on. After I went out there, when these problems were going on, the demonstrations, the marches, and the marches on Lowe Avenue where the mayor lived, when those marches were going on, it was difficult for the police department and lawyers to be able to determine the difference between First Amendment rights, the right to free speech, and the right to peacefully petition for the

redress of grievances. And there was obstructing traffic, blocking the entrance to buildings, and streets.

O.W. Wilson, who was the Superintendent of Police, did ask the mayor for some type of legal presence during these situations. Some of the other occurrences were Ben Willis was the Superintendent of the Board of Education. They had these Quonset huts that were being used for teaching in certain areas. There were a lot of demonstrations against using them. For whatever reason, it became habitual almost daily, that there were these type of demonstrations. We kind of formed a unit. It was under my auspices that when this type of demonstration occurred, we would be there. It was not to tell the police what to do, but to advise them, and to advise the people who were demonstrating.

Many of them did not want to violate the law, but did want to exercise their rights under our constitution. We were there, and we were there almost on a daily basis, or on a nightly basis, when these demonstrations did occur. Getting back to the situation on Roosevelt Road near where the UIC campus was being built, the protestors did come up, almost en masse. And fortunately, O'Brien's school was about a block to the east. That's where the police training academy was. I say fortunately because there were like two hundred recruits that were on in service training, or finishing up a ten month training program before they could go out in the streets. So we had two hundred instant police officers that were there as this group came up.

John Hartnett was the deputy chief of police from the Fourth area. He was in charge of the police. At that point, I met with Jesse Jackson and with Dick Newhouse, who was a state senator. I said, "Obviously gentlemen, you're not going to have this group with these people, with all of their different colored berets." The Black Stone Nation had a certain type of beret. The Disciples had a different type of beret.

Jackson and Newhouse said, "Can we talk to the construction people?" We went into the construction hut and we agreed that there wouldn't be any police officers there. I went in, unarmed, of course. Two or three of the Black Stone Nation went in with Newhouse and Jackson. We also agreed that they would not be allowed to demonstrate inside the work area and the work premises. As we walked out, it was Jackson and Newhouse. Jackson started preaching to the workers that were working on the university buildings, contrary to our agreement, and contrary to the law, because he was trespassing.

So he was arrested and put in a paddy wagon. And he was yelling on the way out. We went to the Police Headquarters at Eleventh and State Street, where there was a court room. We were there to charge him for disorderly conduct and trespassing, and to set a bond. Jackson wanted to get into the county jail at that time, because he wanted to call attention to the poor conditions at the county jail. I did indicate to the judge that was setting the bond that the city would have no objection to an "I" bond, which is an individual bond. The judge looked at me and said that those charges should have a thousand or two thousand dollar bond. But he gave him an I-bond. Jackson did not have his opportunity to further preach….

JMW: At the county jail (JMW laughs)?

RE: Yes. The nexus there, of course, did occur at the University of Illinois. That's why we were there.

JMW: So what year would you say that was, roughly. I mean, construction was in 1963 to 1965.

DWV: Yes. The construction continued on.

RE: The construction wasn't far from Roosevelt Road on the south. Now, I want to say that it was in 1966. It could have been in 1967. I'm just trying to think of events that took place in my life. I was elected a state representative in 1968. I went down to Springfield. I knew Senator Newhouse because we were on the floor together. I don't think I knew him that well at that time, so it had to be before that. I'm just trying to think in terms of when it did take place-I would say 1966 to 1967. And I didn't start in this position until Memorial Day, in May of 1965. So it had to be between 1965 and 1967.
JMW: Well, let’s work chronologically through some questions.

RE: Absolutely.

JMW: Judge, could you please give us your experiences growing up, and your educational background?

RE: Yes. I was born in 1934 on the west side of Chicago, on Independence Boulevard. When I was born, we lived at 1101 South Independence Boulevard. We moved shortly thereafter to 1147 South Independence Boulevard. Then we moved when I was about eight years old to 1323 South Independence Boulevard. I went to grammar school at Gregory School, then I transferred to Lawson School, and then I went to military school. My folks sent me to military school for seventh and eighth grade, and then through high school.

JMW: Where did you do military school at?

RE: I was at Riverside Military Academy, which was in Gainesville, Georgia. Then I went to Northwestern University in Evanston in 1951. I played football there. I graduated in 1955. I met my wife to be during our freshman year at Northwestern. We graduated on a Monday in June and we got married that Saturday, shortly thereafter. That was in 1955. We've been married now, figure it out, fifty four years in June of 2009. My wife is from Oak Park. We have two children, my son Steven, who is a lawyer. He's a partner in the law firm of Holland and Knight.

My daughter Audrey has her own event planning business. They each have two children. I therefore have four grandchildren. My oldest is twenty five and she is engaged to be married in May of 2010, next year. My next oldest is graduating from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, at the beginning of May 2009. I have another grandson, who is also at the University of Michigan. He's finishing his freshman year. My granddaughter is a sophomore at Highland Park High School. Both of my children live in Highland Park, Illinois. They're about three blocks from each other, which makes it very convenient for me, too.

JMW: You have family get togethers and seeing your grandkids.

RE: Exactly. Do you want anything else as far as background? When I got out of law school, I went to work with the City of Chicago.

JMW: Yes. That was the next question.

RE: During the summers, before that, I did work at the state's attorney's office. I was working for the state's attorney's office until 1956, when Ben Adamowski, who was a Republican, defeated John Gutknecht, who was a Democrat. The services of a nice, young Democrat like myself were no longer needed. So I did clerk that summer at the corporation counsel. I joined the corporation counsel upon graduating law school. I graduated from Northwestern School of Law in 1958. I was with the city, from that time until I was elected sheriff. In November of 1970, I was elected Sheriff of Cook County. Do you want me to keep going?

JMW: Sure.

RE: I served for four terms until December of 1986. I spent a year and half with the Attorney General of the State of Illinois under Neil Hartigan. In 1988, the Supreme Court appointed me as a Judge of the Circuit Court. I was elected to that position in 1990. I was retained in 1996, 2002, and in 2008.

RE and JMW: And here we are.

JMW: When did you come to know Richard J. Daley?

RE: When did I come to know him?

JMW: Yes. At what point did you begin to interact with him?

RE: My father was a ward committeeman of the twenty-fourth ward in the City of Chicago. I distinctly remember Mayor Daley. In 1948, my father as a delegate, my

brother in law, and I went to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. I was fourteen years old at the time, but I was big for fourteen. Most of the Illinois delegation went by train. There were a couple of cars that we all were on, going from Chicago to Philadelphia.

In 1948, there was a question. Could the President, Harry Truman, win the election? The Democratic national committeeman from Illinois was Colonel Jacob M. Arvey. Colonel Arvey and my father were very close friends. In fact, when Arvey went into the service in 1940, with the Illinois National Guard, my father took over as the committeeman of the twenty-fourth ward. Arvey was making overtures, I think, to General Eisenhower, to see if he would run as a Democratic candidate in 1948.

President Truman did not necessarily appreciate that, because he was going to run. Perhaps Illinois was going there to say, "Mea culpa. We're for you. We love you, Harry. We're going to do everything we can for you to win." So we were there. We were on the train. And I distinctly remember this young man, who was a state senator, Richard J. Daley. He was young, as far as the people there were concerned. We were with Joe Gill, Al Horan, and older people.

Daley was the kind of person that had all of the beer and the sandwiches. If you wanted something, Daley was the guy that everyone went up to and said, "Dick, do you have a sandwich," so on and so forth. I remember being with him. I admired the fact that he knew everyone there. He wasn't in charge, but he knew what he was doing. He made an impression on me, a fourteen year old kid.

And that convention, by the way, was a most interesting one. That's when Hubert Humphrey, a young mayor from Minneapolis, gave a minority report on the Civil Rights plank. His oratory was fantastic. It greatly impressed me. And that's also when the Dixiecrats got up and walked out of the convention. I was sitting there watching all of this. Then, when Truman was nominated, we were allowed to be on the floor of the convention. Because I was kind of tall and strong, I held the amplifier up when someone said, "Illinois is for Truman." I was holding it up and we were walking all around the convention hall in Philadelphia.

That's when I think I first met the mayor. I don't know if he was a committeeman or not. He was a state senator. Then he was appointed the Director of Revenue for the

State of Illinois by Stevenson, who was elected the first time in 1948. He ran for sheriff of Cook County and he was defeated. Then he became the county clerk.

I got to know him much better after he was the Mayor. I remember working for his campaign in 1955. I was a senior at Northwestern and my major was political science. Our seminar group picked out the 1955 election to analyze because there were three relatively strong candidates in the Democratic primary. There was Mayor Kennelly, the assessor Frank Keenan, and Richard J. Daley.

We were trying to show what a political organization is all about. We went to different wards. Naturally, I suggested that we go to the twenty-fourth ward to see how a good organization was run. The precinct captains were bringing in the results to the committeemen, and we were allowed to sit in the room.

There was a big map of the twenty-fourth ward, by precincts, on the wall. For example, a captain would report three hundred sixty votes for Daley, ten votes for Keenan, and five votes for Kennelly. My father would say, "Great job, Joe. You did a super job." Then another one would come in. There would be three hundred eighty votes for Daley, then ten for Kennelly, and five for Keenan." Again he'd say, "Great job." Then right next to that, someone would come in. It would be Daley with fifty two votes, Keenan with three hundred votes, and Kenelly with five votes. He'd say, "Great job. That was tremendous."

I said to my father, "These precincts are the same demographics." He said, "Yes." I said, "Why did you say 'Great job" when everyone voted for Keenan?" My dad said, "That captain has got a big job in the assessor's office. Protect yourself, because Keenan was going to continue to be the assessor."

But what it also showed was the effect that a precinct captain could have in those days, and it was something that I never forgot. Everybody was carrying Daley by three hundred to two or ten or fifteen. And here was someone carrying Keenan in an adjacent precinct. Well obviously, people were voting, not for Keenan or Daley, but they were voting for their precinct captain. That was the strength of the Democratic party in those years. This was in 1955.

JMW: Can you talk about your experience working for the corporation counsel, leading up to that period? I want to deal with that. Then I'll deal with your term in the state house. Then we'll move on.

RE: I started in the corporation counsel, drafting-actually I wrote opinions for the corporation counsel. But there was an older man who had to be in his eighties then. His name was Casper Nathan. Whenever an alderman or someone made a request, his job was to answer and write an opinion of the corporation counsel. Well, I wound up doing that and he would sign his name to it. That was my initial job. Then when I was in law school, and when I became a lawyer, I was assigned to a task force. It was called building code enforcement. There was someone in charge of fire prevention, someone in charge of plumbing, and someone in charge of electricity.

My job was zoning violations and it was good. Zoning violations could get into building developments, better than if your expertise was electrical code or plumbing. I appeared in building court on a daily basis. My job was to prove that there were zoning violations. The comprehensive zoning ordinance was passed in 1954. So shortly thereafter, maybe three or four years, what I was dealing with was illegal non-conforming use, and what was not. Were there four families in what was built or zoned for a single family residence or a two flat? It was things like that. And I did that for about two years.

Then I was moved to the General Counsel division. The general counsel defended ordinances that were allegedly violations of the constitution or unconstitutional for one reason or another. We had some pretty good cases. Many of them were zoning cases, where developers wanted to put up a unit containing a hundred units that exceeded the minimum lot area, or it exceeded the floor area ratio. We had to contest it. And in those days, they had masters in Chancery.

Often times, we would hear the whole case before the master, and then before the judge of circuit or the superior court. He would either agree with the master or disagree with the master's findings. But we didn't win all of those cases. My job was to make a record, so that our appeals division could sit down and determine whether we could appeal it or not. We had a case against W.F. Monroe Cigar Company, where the city was charging seventy five dollars license fee on a semi annual basis. That's one hundred fifty

dollars a year. And W.F. Monroe said, "We're raising revenue from that." Our defense had to be that it was for the cost of providing protection and other municipal services. And we couldn't really even prove that at all.

We weren't allowed to generate revenue unless authorized by state law. An exception was that there was a case that said you could on the sale of alcohol. They repealed the Volstead Act. The court said, "Well, the city can make revenue on that." This was 1960 maybe. I read an article where the Surgeon General was saying that tobacco could be inimitable to the health of the people, so we put that in our pleading. We were going to get the Surgeon General of the United States to come in with his report. With that, the tobacco company dropped their lawsuits. We won the case. We were allowed to make revenue. They didn't want to put us in as a test case. It could have been one of the big test cases on the dangers of tobacco.

I was in general counsel. I learned a lot about the trial of these types of case. They were what we called extraordinary remedies at that time. They were cases from mandamus to injunctive relief. It was an excellent training for me because we were dealing with the top lawyers in the City of Chicago. I was relatively young and I enjoyed that very much. Then in 1965, Ray Simon, who was the corporation counsel, assigned me to be the head of the Ordinance Enforcement Division.

At about that time, as I told you, Superintendent Wilson asked the mayor to have some type of legal presence in these types of problems. And I did that from 1965 until I was injured, which was in October of 1969. In the interim, I was elected as the state representative in the November election of 1968. I took office in January of 1969. There were some interesting cases that we had. One of them went up to the United States Supreme Court. Another two cases went up to the Illinois Supreme Court. I ran for alderman of the fiftieth ward in 1967. I was running against an incumbent, Jack Spurling. I made this runoff from the February election. And I lost in April of 1967.

DWV and JMW: Yes.

DWV: Can I interject?

JMW: Yes.

DWV: You really started getting involved in the city in about 1957.

RE: Let me tell you something else. You asked me about the city. In 1959, I was elected the chairman of the Young Democrats of Cook County. And I was the county chairman for a two or three year period.

JMW: So you had some involvement with Alex Seith?

RE: Alex Seith was three presidents after me. Did you interview Alex?

JMW: Yes. We interviewed him.

RE: How is he feeling, by the way?

JMW: He's doing pretty well.

RE: Alex was involved. He was from Lyons Township. I can give you some anecdotes, especially involving the mayor, when I was the chairman of the Young Democrats. The secretary of the Young Democrats at that time was John Stroger. We had Rosewell, who is deceased now. He was the county treasurer. He was the treasurer of the Young Democrats. We had some very interesting people that were there, including Alex. You wanted to ask me a question.

DWV: Now I've got a more interesting one. You were the chairman of the Young Democrats in 1959 through the 1960 election then?

RE: Yes.

DWV: Can you share anything about the 1960 election?

RE: Yes. Well, first of all, the unwritten rule was that we have a new chairman each year, so that one person wasn't the chairman for five or six years. I went to see the mayor as the county chairman of the Democratic party. Quite often, as the chairman, I went to see the mayor. On one particular time, when my term was winding down, I said, "We have to pick a successor." He said, "Well, who do you have in mind, Richard?" And I said, "Ed Rosewell has been very active. He's from the twenty ninth ward. The first vice president now is a young man by the name of Bill Harris. He's from the third ward. Those are the two that I would suggest." He said, "Well, Ralph has been pretty good to me. Let's give it to Ralph."

Ralph Metcalf was the committeeman of the third ward. And he was the alderman at the time. That was before he became Congressman. He said, "Let's give it to Ralph." I said, "Fine." Now, I knew in my mind that wasn't going to be an easy thing. That was because we had a lot of people that did not want a black person to become the county chairman. But if I had anything, if I were a good chairman, I could do it the way I wanted to. By the way, Dempsey Travis wrote a book about Harold Washington. Are you familiar with it?

DWV: I'm not.

RE: He went into this whole incident about Bill Harris becoming the county chairman. That was because Harold Washington was still involved in the Young Democrats, at that time, as a representative from the third ward. He was allegedly behind the scenes and was the one that made Bill Harris the county chairman, according to this biographic book about Harold Washington. I happen to know that's not true, because I know how Bill Harris became the chairman. It was because of Mayor Daley and for no other reason. But I had a floor fight because some Democrats did not want Bill Harris. Bill Harris was a nice guy. Bill Harris became the county chairman. That's just anecdotal.

JMW: What year did he become the chairman?

RE: I think it was probably 1961, or 1962 maybe. I'm not quite sure.

JMW: So he succeeded you.

RE: He succeeded me as the chairman, then Rosewell, and then, I think, Alex Seith. You were going to ask me a question.

DWV: We're very interested in….

RE: You're interested in the 1960 election?

DWV: Well, it's -not just the 1960 election. It's certainly the 1960 election. One of the things that's coming up in the 1960 election was the bond issue for the university. Obviously, there was Kennedy's election. Do you have any recollections?

RE: Yes. Well, I was not only the county chairman. I was the precinct captain in the fiftieth ward, which is on the north side of the City of Chicago. But my whole precinct was single family residence. I carried the bond issue, if that's your question.

DWV: Yes.

RE: I did so because I told people that this was what was important. In the general election, we had a race between Dan Ward and Adamowski. People would look to me for guidance because they didn't know Ward or Adamowski. He was the dean of DePaul Law School. And I didn't have a lot of Polish people living in the precinct. But I was interested in Adamowski. To go out and sell Kennedy over Nixon, these people were intelligent. Television was just coming into its own. It wasn't as involved as it is now.

But people kind of make up their own mind for the president of the United States. But for the State's Attorney of Cook County, or a bond issue, you could sell a bond issue. You kind of had to, because these were single family owners and taxpayers. But I do recall being able to talk for Dan Ward. I do remember talking for Kennedy. I remember

that there was a bill. Was it the Forant Bill? It was the beginning of Medicare, I believe, not necessarily Medicaid. Medicare was important for people that were in my precinct. And I did do some talking.

I also remember a couple of weeks before the election. I was going around door to door and asking to put up a picture of Kennedy on their window. It was not cardboard. It was something that you tear off of each side and just stick to the window. I went around. And each house had a Kennedy picture in the window. I had skipped this one house. The answer was a straight Republican and always had been. I didn't even stop to ask him. I went to the next house. He came out and said, "Hey Elrod! Where's my picture (DWV and JMW laugh)?" I said, "I'm sorry. Do you want to put a picture up?"

This guy was a Catholic and a Republican. And I said, "I didn't mean to." He said, "Hey, he's a good Irish Catholic guy. I'm going to vote for him, naturally. Why wouldn't I?" In every election, he took a Republican ballot. And every election, as far as I know, he voted straight Republican. And here, he was angry with me for not giving him a picture of a Democratic candidate (JMW laughs). There were a lot of people, not necessarily in my precinct, that voted against Kennedy because he was Catholic. But this was the reverse.

I remember the rally that they had in 1960, which started in Grant Park. In as much as I was the president of the fiftieth ward Young Democrats, we built a float. The wards would come out, the first ward, then the second ward, and then the third ward. I think, if I recall, Daley said that each organization should have at least one hundred fifty people. They wanted fifty at the Chicago Stadium. They wanted fifty to be marching. And they wanted fifty people on the parade route. That way, if you multiply fifty times fifty, you had a lot of people on the parade route, a lot of people marching, and a lot of people in the stadium.

That didn't include the thirty townships, because Daley couldn't count too much on getting that type of participation, back in those days. Now you can. Then with the labor organizations, he would do the same thing. He wanted fifty, fifty, and fifty. So there would be a plumber's union float that would come down Madison Street. They'd have at least fifty people in the stadium. So he'd have twenty or thirty unions, and fifty or sixty wards and townships. And we got good participation.

But being the fiftieth ward, we were out there and everyone was marching. Finally, we started to move. We were not even halfway through to get through the stadium to hear my idol, a great guy, John F. Kennedy speak. Here, we saw the whole motorcade coming. And they were taking him back to Meigs Field. So we missed everything. And we were still marching. What had happened, obviously, was that people were marching a half hour after everything was over at the stadium (DWV laughs).

JMW: You missed your chance to see him.

RE: Well yes (laughs). People in my float were a little bit upset.

JMW: So were you guys the last in line? Or were any of the unions behind you?

RE: No. We were the last in line. The unions went off before us (DWV laughs).

JMW: You were telling us that you had some anecdotes as a member of the Young Democrats during Richard J. Daley's era.

RE: I don't know if he did this with prior chairpersons or subsequent chairpersons of the Young Democrats. But I knew that I always wanted to get some type of direction from him before I made a move, especially as to who the next county chairman was going to be. On other issues, here we were. We were having a big rally. Or we needed petitions. He would call us in and say, "Can you get fifty to one hundred people to do this?" Naturally, it was done. And it was done, hopefully, because of my charismatic leadership. I would say, "We want this," or "We want that," but oftentimes, I would say, "And the mayor wants it, too (RE and DWV laugh)." If I had any resistance, it was always good to say that (RE laughs).

JMW: Right. It was the trump card. Did you have anything else that you wanted to ask?

DWV: We can get going here on your list. In 1957 and 1958, you were working with the city. What impressions do you have of Mayor Richard J. Daley as a building mayor? He came in as mayor in 1955. And it was very clear that he was going to be a building mayor. He was going to develop the city. I mean, there were a couple of ways that it could go.

RE: It was going pretty much downhill, as far as the city was concerned. The south side of Chicago was not run properly. I think our bond ratings were down. I'm talking about 1954 and 1955. From my research, this is anecdotal again, my granddaughter, who is my oldest one, went to Highland Park High School. And she was taking a class on civics during her senior year. The book that they were given to read was, "Boss," by Mike Royko. I said, "Jesus! You don't really think that this is right?" She was a high school student. She said, "That's what they gave us to read."

It was Grandparents Day at Highland Park High School (RE laughs). And I made sure that I went to that class with my granddaughter. Naturally, she was a school teacher during the fifties and she was not happy with the way that Daley ran things with the Board of Education. So I did a little research. And I tried to present Daley in a different light. Then, as each of my grandchildren went with her class, I became a fixture (RE laughs). She always invited me.

JMW: It was point and counterpoint.

RE: Exactly. She was a nice woman. But anyone who goes out and hears Royko's "Boss," they start out looking at his ring or something. So what I was saying was that in 1955, the city had to move. They needed someone that could lead it in that movement. And they needed someone strong. People are always resistant to change. And when you do have change, oftentimes it means higher taxes although, if you look at building up an infrastructure, there's bringing in the tax dollars, taking property that is not on the tax rolls and putting it on the tax rolls.

Yes, I think that Richard J. Daley became more than a building mayor. Somehow he was sold, and this was before the St. Louis plan, on high rise public housing. It may

have been an error on his part or not. But when you saw what that replaced, if you went out to some of these slum areas in Chicago, and if you saw what Robert Taylor homes replaced. Right here on the near north side, there was the Cabrini Green replacement. It was one hundred thousand times better. Then there was the St. Louis plan. Now, Chicago is tearing down and they're building low rise. So you go through this. But anything was better than what was existed at that time. And he was a building mayor.

People resisted the change. The Italian neighborhood, where the university is, resisted the change. They didn't want a university. They wanted their nice, little bungalows. That's where they lived. That's where their parents lived. And that's where they wanted their children and grandchildren to live. I can see what Florence Scala had in mind. But sometimes you have to look at what's better for the overall good. She did her thing. In most ways, she did it peacefully and the people voted. I think if you had someone less forceful than Richard J. Daley, it might not have happened. "We can't do it. We've got too much resistance."

I can't talk about anywhere else, but the media in Chicago makes mountains out of molehills. I think they made mountains out of molehills here. They made martyrdom out of Florence Scala. I'm not saying that she was not within her rights to protest. But that's what we have courts for. We have eminent domain. We try to reimburse people in accordance with their loss. You have to show that it's for the better and overall good. Obviously, that was and is the situation. It's a beautiful area, the near west side. With what it was, what it could have been, and what it is now, it's fantastic. Do you want to talk more about 1955 and Richard J. Daley?

DWV: Oh, 1955 and Richard J. Daley would be fine. Yes.

RE: Well, I just think that Daley went in and, to many people's surprise, he appointed young, professorial type of people to key positions. And he relied on them. He didn't say, "Do this," or, "Do that," with Lou Hill, Milt Pikarski, or Jim McDonough. I'm looking at Ray Simon. I'm going back to the people that he surrounded himself with. They weren't all, “Yes men.” They were people who were unique in their fields and in their

professions. And I think that they were part of the growth of the city of Chicago. I know that I left out a lot of people.

JMW: Sure. But basically, he relied on trained professionals to come in here, not just sort of political….

RE: Exactly. And I'm sure that it was to a lot of people's disconcert. The city council in Chicago was always a "strong city council, weak mayor." It was not that Ed Kelly or Martin Kennelly were weak. But the city council had its say. And you didn't get much done unless the city council said it should be done. He changed all of that by saying, "I say that it should be done. And this is what's going to happen." A lot of aldermen, not only Paddy Bauler, Charles Weber, Ken Campbell, or Claude Holman, a lot of people were very upset that they were in the city council.

JMW: Just briefly about the bond issue in 1958 and then in 1960, do you have any memories of your work on either of those or how you sold it to your people?

RE: Well, I do remember as a precinct captain that I talked to the people in my precinct. And I would convince them that this was good for the City of Chicago. With local bond issues, it was, "Well, I don't have any children that are going to school." I'd say, "This is what we need and this is for the overall good." And I can't say that I carried the bond issues four hundred to ten. I can say that I carried them like three hundred to one hundred, or somewhere around there, which was pretty darn good. But if you get into some precincts, I didn't have that control on those type of issues.

JMW: Okay. Can you talk about your one term tenure as a state legislator?

RE: I learned quite a bit in that one term. It was amazing. We were the minority. Here's another anecdote. The state income tax was passed during that term. Russ Arrington kind of ran the Senate with an iron glove. He would speak to Ralph Smith, who was the speaker of the house. They were both Republican. Ogilvie said, "We need this." In my

analysis, yes, we needed this. I was just a freshman, sitting there. And I agreed. At any rate, they struck a deal.

Jack Touhy, who was the minority leader, came up to us in the Democratic Caucus. And he said, "We're going to help the Republicans pass the state income tax. But I don't want anyone to vote for it until it's time to vote for it." In other words, if two Republicans came on, he would put in one Democrat. But it was done by waves. Before 1968, my district that I won in were two Republicans and one Democrats. And we turned it around in 1968 to two Democrats and one Republican.

So I was on a very low wave, because they felt that I was in a tough district. My wave commander was Sparky Garmisa. Each wave had a commander. For example, when Garmisa went on the board as voting yes, then our whole wave could go on the board as voting yes. And I was maybe the fourth wave down in the Democratic party. Then we were watching the vote. Before I got to my wave, it came on and passed. So my vote was recorded as no. That was very sharp, because Ogilvie got all of the blame. The people, in my opinion, got all of the good part and Ogilvie got all of the blame. Then, I was campaigning for sheriff in 1970. Going into all of these neighborhoods, I said, "And I voted no on income tax (RE, DWV, and JMW laugh)," although I was very much in favor of voting yes for it.

JMW: It was plausible deniability.

RE: Right. That's politics.

JMW: Yes. How much influence did Richard J. Daley have on the state legislature?

RE: He had a lot of influence. And I don't say it was on the legislature, but on the Democratic party. He used to go down for what the city needed. Russ Arrington was a very pragmatic person. So he used to get down there and be able to sell. The mayor had some good people in the Senate. I think that Don O'Brien had left already. But Cecil Partee and Bernie Ninestein were there. No, that was Sam Shapiro. At any rate, Daley used to come down there and he used to make a good case. He'd only come down once.

But Ray Simon was his liaison with Ogilvie. There were people that knew what they were doing and how it would be done.

JMW: We're about to run out of tape. Can you stop that, Dave?

DWV: Sure. We've got another tape recorder. We're fine.

JMW: So Daley would make an appearance once a year. But in the meantime, Ray Simon would sort work there?

RE: Well, we'd sort of know what bills the mayor was interested in.

(end of video tape one)

RE: It was a great learning experience. A lot could be and was done to help the City of Chicago, compared to the constitutional convention, as far as home rule was concerned.

JMW: Okay. So you did your two year term in the state house.

RE: Well, I didn't really do two years. I was elected in 1968 and I took office in January of 1969. I was injured in October of 1969. Maybe I went down there a couple of times. But I was slated for sheriff of Cook County in November of 1969. I didn't have a primary opposition. Bernard Carey was my opponent in 1970. It was a very close election.

JMW: What was your motivation for running for sheriff, I guess, and leaving your position in Springfield?

RE: Well, I was leaving my position with the City of Chicago. That was my primary job. Before I was slated for sheriff, everyone used to come and visit me in the hospital at the University of Illinois. I remember Sam Shapiro coming in. I said, "Sam, I have an opportunity, I think, to run for state senate. The gentleman who was the state senator

turned Republican and Ogilvie appointed him to an office. Or, I could stay on as state representative. I've made a good name for myself." He said, "Be a state senator." This was a time when there were three state representatives in each district.

Daley said, "Well, we have good things for you, Richard. But if it comes down to it, be a state senator." In the meantime, Dave Stahl was the mayor's chief at that time. He used to visit me almost on a daily basis. I didn't know it. But they were talking to my doctor about my condition and recovery. Then, slate making occurred somewhere in November. I was still in bed with things in my head in a circle electric bed. But my doctor said that I could run and campaign. And they slated me. Dan Rostenkowski, who was the chairman of the slate making, called me and said, "You're our candidate for sheriff." And I won.

JMW: Okay. So you did your hospital stay at the University of Illinois Hospital? Is that what you were saying?

RE: I did. I was injured in October and I stayed there until February. Then I was transferred to R.I.C., the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. That's where I stayed until September, as an inpatient.

JMW: At some point, I was reading in your background, there was a University of Illinois doctor that somehow was related to your case. He was Eric Oldberg.

RE: Eric Oldberg was a neurosurgeon. He was also the president of the Chicago Board of Health. He was very good friends with the mayor and was a very high society type. Everyone knew Eric Oldberg. Dr. Oldberg was the person. And later, in September of 1970, when there was a trial, it was Oldberg's word against a neurosurgeon from the University of Chicago.

JMW: So you won for sheriff. You said that it was a close election.

RE: And it was with Daley's help. There's no question about it. I don't know if this should be on the record or not. I remember someone from Marina City, in the forty-second ward. He came up to me and said, "One of our Democratic precinct captains said, 'Give us Cullerton. That's the guy we're interested in running against Adamowski for County Assessor.'" He said, "You can vote against Elrod. Vote for Carey." So what they were doing was pushing Cullerton and trading off the sheriff's office.

We had Ogilvie and we had Joe Woods. The Democrats hadn't had the sheriff's office. And they couldn't afford to lose the assessor's office, afford meaning moneywise. So when I heard that, I went to the mayor. The next day I got a call from Mr. Cullerton saying, "Can you come over?" He said, "I want to make this contribution to your campaign."

In other words, it was saying, "I'm sorry. I'm with you. Whatever we're doing, this will make it up. Buy some television time or something," which I thought was interesting. On election night, I remember going over to the Morrison Hotel. My headquarters was at State and Jackson. I went over to the Morrison. And there were some four or five wards that hadn't came in yet. It was a very close election. The mayor called those wards who were interested in Elrod to make sure.

At any rate, it came out that I was ahead by a narrow margin. So the Republicans called for a recount. We went over to the third floor of city hall to the Board of Election Commissioners. We then chose Cicero Township. With the first ten precincts that we picked, there were like four hundred fifty registered voters, four hundred for Carey, two hundred for Elrod. Well, with the first five precincts, they were all “over counts.” Someone added a couple hundred to Carey's votes. When they saw that, they said, "Let's drop it." And they dropped their recount.

I won by ten thousand four hundred sixty eight votes. It was a very close election. Then I was sheriff. I said to the mayor, "Is there any one that you want me to pick for undersheriff?" He gave me a couple of names and I interviewed them. I was satisfied with that. One of them was a lawyer, the one that I was really interested in. I told him that he couldn't practice law pursuant to statute. The sheriff could not practice law, nor could his deputies, which meant me, too. He said, "I can't give up my law practice." There was

a retiring special agent of the F.B.I., Marlon Johnson. He was the special agent in charge of the Chicago office.

The mayor said, "Why don't you get in touch with him? Maybe he can act as an advisor." I did, and he did. With anyone that was picked, he would do whatever research that the F.B.I. does. He'd say, "He's clean," or "He's not clean." He was very good. He was with me for a couple of years. He had no title. He was just like a special advisor. Then I picked a person from downstate, Ross Randolph. He was the director of prisons under Governor Kerner. He was the former agent in charge of training for the F.B.I. I picked him as my under sheriff and he was with me for quite some years. From time to time I would converse with Tom Donovan often.

JMW: Yes. We just interviewed him last week.

RE: I would tell him who I was hiring and where they were from. He'd look at it and say, "I don't know if there's enough people from the eleventh ward here (DWV and JMW laugh)." He said, "Why are there so many people here from the fifth ward?" That's almost saying the same thing. But I used to meet with Tom, who I thought was a super guy. What else do you want to know sheriffwise?

JMW: During your time as the sheriff, what was your relationship with the mayor?

RE: It was excellent, as far as I know. With anything controversial that would occur, he'd be backing me up, and vice versa. He died in 1976. I was only sheriff six years out of sixteen, not even. I can't think of any problems that we had. You know, we were on the same page. We would see each other often. There's one other anecdote, when I was the city prosecutor. Jane Byrne, who became the mayor, was the Commissioner of Weights, Measures, and Consumer Fraud. And I was her prosecutor.

So she said, "Dick, why don't we go after these people that are false advertising around Rush Street? They're saying "Fully nude girls," and they're not. They have pasties on (DWV laughs)." I said, "Jane, do you want them to take it off?" She said, "Well, it's fraudulent." I sent a couple of inspectors out. And I said, "The alternative is, if I start

prosecuting them for fraud, what they'll say is we said to take it off. And the media will have a pass." She said, "Well, that's what I want to do." So I had to go to the mayor at that time. It was dropped (DWV and JMW laugh). Can you see the media picking up on that, with a couple of lawsuits?

JMW: Yes.

RE: It was false advertising because they were wearing pasties.

JMW: What was the state of the Democratic party, upon his passing? Was there a lot of chaos? Was it a pretty smooth transition?

RE: Upon his passing, obviously, Bilandic was there, as the city council's advisory clerk, ready to come in and step in. And he did. And it was done. I don't think that there was any opposition. Even Jane Byrne didn't oppose it.

JMW: My questions are wrapping up. What would you say were the mayor's strongest points, and maybe his weakest points?

RE: Well, his strongest point was his ability to see through people, to see who that person was. Everyone came to him with their hat in hand. He had to see who was doing it for ulterior motives, who was doing it for things that could be done, and should be done. And he couldn't say yes to everybody. Saying yes to Joe means saying no to John. But he had the ability to do that. He had the ability of having you walk out, not knowing necessarily what he said or how he said it.

Here's another incident. This was before the 1972 Democratic Convention in Miami. The mayor called me over. And I went over there. He said, "Are you hearing what's been happening down in Springfield? They're trying to get Stevenson to be the chairman of the party in Miami." And I said, "No. I hadn't heard that." He said, "Well this Aaron Jaffe is the one that's pushing it." Aaron Jaffe was Jewish. I'm Jewish. Aaron Jaffe was living in Niles Township. I was still living in Chicago. He said, "He's the

committeeman of Niles Township. Why is he a committeeman if he's pushing Stevenson?" I said, "I don't know, Mr. Mayor."

I walked out and I told my wife. And she'd been dying to move out of the city and to get our children into Niles Township High School. She said, "Great. I have a home." Within two months, my wife had a home in Lincolnwood, which is part of Niles Township. So I went back to the mayor. And I said, "Mr. Mayor, now I'm going to have to take on Aaron Jaffe, I presume, to be the committeeman." He said, "Oh, I never told you to do that. I got Cal Sutker and he's going to straighten the whole thing out." I said, Oh, okay." I didn't say, "Oh my God. That's devastating." I said, "Okay. I'll be living in Lincolnwood." He said, "No problem." I didn't have to live in the city anymore. I was a county wide official. I had to live in the city in my representative district before that. He was hard to read. I don't know how many other people told you this. But he would say something and say, "Now, what did he mean by that?"

DWV: Yes. Some of these things are very interesting. We keep hearing it over and over. He could see through things. You came with your hat in your hand. You did not try to pull the wool over his eyes. That was several times. And he was a good judge of character too, when he was choosing people.

RE: I was going to say that, what I told you before about his bringing in people. But he brought people who were "insiders," like Ken Sain. Well, Ken Sain's uncle was an alderman and his father was sheriff. There was Neil Hartigan. Neil Hartigan's father was an alderman. I mean, these were people that he brought in. Like myself, my father was a committeeman and he had a relationship. I think that the mayor's relationship with me was more paternal than anything else. When I was injured, for a man like him to come at least once a week and talk to me….I had cancer surgery on my neck maybe two years later at Northwestern. And he came there. It was just to say hello, just to wish me well.

DWV: I'm going right in that direction. You talked early. You mentioned going to your granddaughter's school and refuting a bit of Royko's book. What are some of the myths,

or any myths, that you'd really like to go on the record that were wrong? They're getting it wrong. Was it his character?

RE: The myth was that, since Daley was the chairman of the Democratic party, it does not mean that everything was bad. Good government is good politics. And good politics makes good government. But Daley really felt that if you did your job well as the mayor, it's going to come down and you could sell the bond issue. You could sell it. And if you sold the bond issue through the political process, it made better government, because you would have better schools, better colleges, and better institutions of high learning. I really feel that he felt that way.

Now, does that mean that he would sacrifice good government to help the political process? Well, what he told me in 1960 was, "Let's take care of Ralph's person." I think he would rely on me to say that Bill Harris was a real jerk and he was stupid. He was talking to me. And if I felt that Bill Harris, in taking care of Ralph's person, I could have said, "Mr. Mayor, this will kill the young Democrats. He's just no good. He's dishonest. He just doesn't have the leadership capabilities."

I think he was relying on me in doing that. I think his first motive was political, "Let's take care of Ralph's person." But that's Ralph's person, in lieu of Bernie Neistein's person. So it was, "Who is he hurting? Who is he helping? It will be Ralph now. It will be Neistein tomorrow. But I think he would rely on me to say that taking care of Ralph's person would not be a horrible situation. It would not lead to a horrible situation. It would be fifty-fifty.

And I told him that. I said, "Both can handle it." He said, "Well, let's take care of Ralph's person." The myth is that everything that he did and every move that he made was done for profitable gain, it was not done to help the City of Chicago, but rather to help the machine, to help the political process, and to help and gain further for his political strength. Much of it was and did increase his political strength. But I think the primary reason was to help the people in the City of Chicago, which did increase his political strength. It was a balance. And his critics will say that the balance obviously went to politics. I don't think that his staunchest supports would say that nothing went to help his political career.

DWV: Well, I think if you look around, the balance went to the betterment of the City of Chicago. When he made the site selection for UIC, he took on one of his staunchest political supports there. That was a brave move.

RE: Who was that, D'Arco?

DWV: No. When the mayor decided to….

JMW: Well, no. With the near west side, that neighborhood was one of the largest concentrations of support for him. But yet, he sacrificed it for the betterment of the city.

RE: I understand what you're saying. I think that in many instances, his critics will say that he did things to help himself politically. And his supporters will say that he did things in spite of some of political consequences. But I think he had a way with each and every one of those things. I think there has to be a book, somewhere, somehow. And I've researched it. There was one article. Was it by Paul Green?

JMW: Yes. He's from Roosevelt University.

RE: Yes. Well, he was rated as one of the top ten mayors in the U.S. for all time.

JMW: Yes. That was the Holli-Green book.

RE: Yes. Someone else wrote it with him.

JMW: Yes. It was Mel Holli. We're familiar with it.

RE: The top was LaGuardia. Then it was the guy from Cleveland. Was it Young? Then it was the guy from Los Angeles, California. But he was in the top five. And this was by journalists and political people. So he had to be doing something right, even in his

picking people. Now, maybe in 1968, I'm not saying it was the ultimate pick of Humphrey. But I think that was maybe his third choice, after Johnson went out. I think he would have been for Bobby Kennedy, had Bobby Kennedy lived. When Ted Kennedy came and spoke at the Sherman, I think that he went to him and said, "Are you interested?"

JMW: I was going to ask about that, because Alex Seith mentioned that whole thing with Ted Kennedy. Alex related it as he thought Ted Kennedy declined, because he was afraid that when Daley asked him to run, he kind of hedged. Really, he was just going to be forced into the vice presidential slot. Do you have any thoughts on that?

RE: You mean instead of his brother in law? Who ran for vice president? Was it Muskie?

JMW: It was Humphrey and….

DWV: Oh, I should know (DWV laughs).

RE: Well, 1972 was Shriver. So it was Muskie. Wasn't it?

JMW: Yes. It would have been Muskie. But yes, Alex said the reason why he thought the reason why Ted Kennedy declined….

RE: This was before Chapaquiddick?

JMW: Yes. I believe so. Yes. That's because in the meetings with the mayor, I guess the mayor was put off because Ted didn't immediately go for it. But I guess Alex was saying he thought that Ted's thinking was, "Well, I might get pushed off, even though Mayor Daley is offering this. The chances are I might get pushed back to the vice presidential slot." And he didn't want to do that. I don't know. I don't know what any of the discussions were about that.

RE: Well, the only person who can answer that, and he threw out a pretty good pitch at the Red Sox game, is Ted Kennedy. I'm sure he's been asked that question. I don't know the answer. In 1968, I was on the street. Obviously, I could go into a whole thing on 1968. Oh, there's another anecdote that I can mention. I was injured in October of 1969. And here are the events that led up to that. In the morning of that Saturday, I was at the headquarters. This was at five o'clock in the morning. The undercover police officers that we had were making statements regarding the Thursday evening affair.

At ten o'clock in the morning, I was at the mayor's office. There were about seven or eight of us. I remember that Superintendant Conlisk was there. District Superintendant Rockford was there, along with McDonough and Quigley. And the mayor said, "Well, maybe we ought to cancel this march, which is scheduled at eleven o'clock." Unfortunately, I was the only one that spoke up. I said, "Well Mr. Mayor, if you cancel it now, they'll be in federal court in a half hour on an injunction case." The federal court in Alabama said that they had to let them march.

He said, "Yes. But the two main people are in jail right now," which were Dasham and, I think, Ayers. I said, "We can have someone else. We can handle this, I think." He said, "Okay Richard, let's do it." Oh, they had lead pipes in their sleeves. I said, "Well, let's get the police to take the lead pipes out, if they know who it is." I was the only one that was saying, "Let's do it." And he agreed with me. That's when I later got my neck broken, which was interesting. During the 1968 Democratic Convention, Tom Foran and I worked together. And he was the U.S. Attorney.

We were at Lincoln Park, the Sunday before. And the mayor was at the Chicago Amphitheater. Tom said, "We've got to get in touch with the mayor and see if he wants to enforce this park district curfew." I said, "Well, he told me, he said to do it. But maybe he'll change his mind." I said, "Tom, why don't you talk to him and tell him what you see?" So, we were in a pay phone, just the two of us. This was before the cell phone days. Tom got the mayor and he said, "They're this and they're that. We've got problems. He said okay, he wants it enforced." That was what his thought was at that time.

Then, later, on the Wednesday before, we had them in Grant Park. We were going to have them march from the Grant Park area. And everything would have been fine, except for the Illinois National Guard. They had their tear gas. They went around one

way and it should have been another way. I could tell you that that was not according to what he had planned and how we planned it. The mayor was pretty upset at that point. I was not there. The only time I went out to the Chicago Amphitheater during this whole period was when the police commander, Paul McLaughlin. He was the commander of the first district. I don't know if he was at that time. He got into a fight with someone. Was it Dan Rather?

DVW and JMW: Probably.

RE: It was actually a fist fight. And I had to go out there to placate the news media. McLaughlin was hot. I ran out there. I was in Grant Park at the time. I went there and did my job. So I never made the big news. But that was the only time I was out there. Otherwise, I was with the police. Do you have any other questions? You said, "What were his weaknesses?" Did I explain what his weaknesses were?

JMW: Were you talking about that he was kind of hard to read?

RE: I don't know if that's a weakness. That could be a plus (DWV laughs).

JMW: Right. So no, I don't think you really touched on any of those.

RE: I'm not comparing him to his son. But he was probably more loyal to his friends, than perhaps Richard M. Daley. If someone did something, it was like, "Well, I don't know him. Who is he?" The mayor wouldn't do that, although he was really down on Finley before the indictment, for womanizing. He was down on Danaher for a drinking problem.

He was down on Keane, when he found out what Keane was doing. But sometimes he would hold people too long and forgive some of the wrongs that they did, because of his loyalty to them. I'm not saying that's a fault at all. In fact, it could have been one of his better qualities, because that's how you get loyalty to you, when you're loyal to others.

JMW: Okay. Well, we appreciate your time, Judge.

DWV: Thank you very much for your time.

RE: You're going to give me a copy?

JMW: Yes. What we'll do is that we'll have it transcribed. I can e-mail it to you if you want. Or I send you a hard copy. Then, go ahead and look it over. Make any changes, subtractions, or additions that you'd like. There are probably some names. There are usually a lot of names that we don't get. Then you'll ship it back to us. We'll send you a final release form. And we'll send you a final version for your records.

RE: That's fine. Did I answer what you wanted me to?

DWV: Oh, very much so. I think that it was very insightful. I think we got a lot on the mayor. I was very pleased to hear about the bond issue. You've made the bond issue more personal than we've had at this point. Everybody gives us just a slightly different picture of the mayor and the process, and about UIC.

RE: Who have you been interviewing? It had to be my contemporaries.

JMW: Well, there was Alex Seith back in December. There was Tom Donovan last week. We've interviewed Jim McDonough, Dick Pavia, Gene Nolan, Bob Christensen, and John Weathers.

RE: I see Bob every so often. We went to Northwestern together. My letter was in football. He was a wrestler. He was good, too. Do you know who you could call as far as the 1968 convention? That's Frank Sullivan. He called me the other day and said, "You know, you and I are the only two that know the real story." They were interviewing an F.B.I. guy and he was screwing it up.

JMW: I'm almost sure he's on out list. But we'll definitely flag that one.

RE: He may have an eyesight problem. But I did talk to him about six months ago. Have you thought of Neil Hartigan?

JMW: We talked to him, maybe a month ago. And we're probably going to do a second interview with him. I've got a question for you. I don't know where you've thought about long term with your papers. Michael Daley has asked that folks think about, if they'd like, because the Daley papers are at UIC, and they're looking for a place to put them, if you'd like to put them with the mayor's papers, the family has suggested that that would be a place. I don't know if you're committed to some place or have even thought about it. Nail Hartigan said he's got about a hundred boxes of stuff. I'm sure that not all of it is all that valuable.

RE: Leave it to Neil.

JMW: Yes.

********END OF INTERVIEW********