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Interview with Newton Minow
2 October 2003

Location: Office of Newton Minow, Chicago, IL.
Present: Newton Minow, Dr. Robert V. Remini Ph.D., and Dr. Fred Beuttler Ph.D.

(There is over eleven minutes of silence at the beginning of tape one. The transcription begins at the 11:39 mark on the tape, when the audio begins).

Newton Minow: I realized that that was totally incompatible and contradictory to the Illinois Law. The Illinois Law provided that anyone who wanted to run for delegate under any candidate's banner could do so. For example, I was chairman of the Muskie Campaign in Illinois in the Tenth District. There were seven slots for delegates. But we had fourteen people running as Muskie delegates. So if all men got elected, all women got elected, or whatever got elected, there was nothing you could do about it. So I called the mayor and I said, "I'd like an appointment to see you." I went to see him. I said, "Have you read these rules about the 1972 convention?" He said, "Not really." I said, "You have a big problem that's going to come up here because our statute does not permit what the Democratic National Committee wants." We could elect seven Asian women and there's nothing anybody could do about it because the voters would have made the choice, not the candidate. He said, "Oh, don't worry about it."

Well, you saw what happened in 1972. They threw out the Daley delegates. You remember that in Miami. I voted at the convention to seat the Daley delegates. When I came home from the convention, which was in Miami, there was a phone message for me to call the mayor. So I called the mayor. He said, I just called to say thank you for supporting our delegates." I said, "Mayor, you don't have to thank me. I did what was right. That was an outrageous thing. And the fact was, nobody understood what the Illinois law was." He said, "Well, I want to ask you to do something if you would. You know, the new rules have enlarged the number of Democratic national committeemen and committeewomen. I would like you to become one of the Illinois national committeemen." I said, "Mayor, I'm very flattered. I'm very honored. I'm not going to be able to accept." He said, "Why not?" I said, "Well, I'm going to tell you something that I observed at the convention, which shows that the Democratic Party is in a case of

temporary insanity (RVR laughs). I don't want any part of it." He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, our Illinois delegation was housed with New York, about twenty five miles from the convention center. You had to take a bus. We were in Hollywood, Florida. One morning I was waiting for the bus. A young man who was a New York delegate came out. He said, 'Does anybody know a Puerto Rican? Does anybody know a Puerto Rican?' So I said, 'Yes. I know a Puerto Rican.' He said, 'Where? Where?' I said, 'The Puerto Ricans that I know are in Chicago where I live.' He said, 'Well, that won't help.' I said, 'What's the problem?' He said, 'We're short one Puerto Rican on the New York delegation (RVR laughs). We're looking for a Puerto Rican.'"

So I was looking over his shoulder. The lobby of the hotel was open. There was Averell Harriman sitting all alone. Nobody talked to him. I said, "You see that man over there?" He said, "Yes. Who is that?" I said, "That's Averell Harriman." He said, "Who's that?" I said, "He's the former governor of your state. He's the former ambassador to the Soviet Union. He's one of the great statesmen of our time. Why don't you get him?" The young man said, "Is he a Puerto Rican?" I said, "No. He's not a Puerto Rican." He said, "Well, we can't use him then." So I said to myself, "What madness has descended on the Democratic Party?"

Dr. Robert V. Remini: (Laughs) Are you sure that you didn't make this up?

NM: I didn't.

RVR: It's unbelievable (laughs)!

NM: The mayor said to me, "You made that up."

RVR: Did he (laughs)?

NM: He said to me, "You made that up." I said, "Mayor, I saw this with my own eyes. I heard this with my ears. And I said to myself, 'The Democratic Party has gone mad.' It

was an unknown faceless Puerto Rican. Nobody knows who he or she is. But it's more important than Averell Harriman." So I said, "I don't want to be a Democratic national committeeman." Then the mayor said something to me that I felt very badly about. I still, to this day, feel very badly about it. He said, "Newt, if guys like you aren't going to do this, who's going to do it?"

RVR: That's true.

NM: I said, "Well, I'm sorry. I regret it. I thank you for thinking of me. But I can't do it." So I wanted to tell that story. The mayor wanted it. He was a real Democrat. Then in one of those years, I'm trying to remember it exactly. Senator Muskie called me and asked me to be the chairman of the big fundraising dinner for the Democratic Congressional Committee in Washington. President Johnson was the president. I did it. I think it was in 1967. And I suggested that they honor a Democrat who was not from Washington. They said, "Well, what about Mayor Daley?" I said, "Fine." They said Mayor Daley, not me. Mayor Daley came with his family. They were all there. I said to Mayor Daley, "Would you like to sit at the speaker's table?" He said, "No. I'd prefer to sit with the family," which he did. President Johnson presented him with an award. So he was recognized by the party, and it was a big moment for him.

But I heard then, I'm trying to remember who told me this, that he was against the Vietnam War. So I called him and said, "Mayor, I'd like to see you." I went over to see him. He saw me alone in his office. I said, "Mayor, I understand that you're against the Vietnam War. Is that right?" He said, "Yes." This was after the 1968 convention. This was after he'd been criticized and so on. I said, "Do you mind telling me why?" He said, "The son of one of my very best friends was killed there." He was a Harvard graduate with an Irish name. I forgot it. I've since talked to the current mayor about it. He knows the name. But it was a close, close friend of the mayor. And the boy was a star student. He'd gone to Harvard. He went to Vietnam and was killed. The mayor said, "I don't understand why. That's why I'm against the Vietnam War." I said, "Mayor, I'm very much against the Vietnam War. I think that of all the people in the United States, President Johnson is more likely to listen to you than he is to the foreign policy experts because he

needs you for his re-election. Why don't you go down to Washington and tell President Johnson what you think?" The mayor said, "I can't do that." I said, "Why not?" He said, "He's the president. He's got all of the information. I don't have the information. What do I know? I'm not going to do that." I told that story to the current mayor and to Bill. They said, "Well, he did go."

RVR: Oh yes?

NM: You ought to ask them about it. They said, "He did go." I said, "I didn't know that. He said he wasn't going to do it." He said, "He did. He went to see the president. He told him that this war was a loser and that we should not be there. He suggested specifically that the president create some blue ribbon committee that would advise him to pull out." So he did do it. And I think that is a very important story for the mayor's history. The sons told me that he did go. They would know exactly when that happened. But it's such an irony to me. And I wrote a little piece about this for the Chicago Tribune years later. I said, "What is loyalty? In this case the mayor was loyal to the president. What's more important, being loyal to the temporary president or being loyal to the country? What is political loyalty?" And the mayor's view, I think, was the old fashioned view. I don't think it's as true today as it was then. You're loyal to the person who's in office.

RVR: So he would never publicly announce his own opposition to the war?

NM: He never would, even though he was against the war, even early against the war, not late against the war.

RVR: Early?

Dr. Fred W. Beuttler: You mean before the convention?

NM: Yes. It was because this kid had been killed. And he said, "Why?"

RVR: That's a fascinating story.

NM: Are you going to interview the current mayor and Bill?

RVR: Oh yes.

NM: Ask them that because they'll tell you. He went there. They will know when. My recollection is that the dinner I'm telling you about was 1967. I'm quite sure that it was 1967.

RVR: When he received the award from the president?

NM: It was when he received the award. Then you had the 1968 convention. And I believe that he went to see the president somewhere in that in between period.

FWB: It had to be before March.

NM: Now, the other interesting thing is that I've since talked to the mayor and Bill. They say, with assurance, that their father would have come out for Bobby Kennedy, if Bobby Kennedy had not been killed. That surprised me. I didn't think that that was the case. But they said that there was no question.

RVR: That he wasn't he strong for him?

NM: Right. But at that time, Johnson had come out for Humphrey. But they said that there was no question about it. Well, I forgot one thing.

RVR: Okay. It's all right.

NM: I went to see the mayor another time. It was before the 1968 convention. And there were rumors at that time that there were going to be protests. So I went to see him. I said,

"Mayor, can I make a suggestion about the convention?" He said, "Please." I said, "Why don't you have a press conference and say, 'We want to do two things simultaneously. We want to nominate the next president of the United States. We also want to honor the civil liberties of everyone who wants to protest. We want to do both. How are we going to do both without having any trouble? The way we're going to do it is here's the area where the protestors convene. The press can cover it and everything else. But they will not be allowed to block the way in and out of the convention.'" He said, "Oh, don't worry about it." I believe that some forward planning could have averted the disaster that happened. I don't know.

That was one side of the mayor that I never understood. I think he was confident, just like on the picking the delegates with those rules. I think he was confident that none of this stuff was going to bother him. It certainly didn't. Then, the press jumped all over him for what happened. You're the historians. It seems to me that people will look back on it with the cold, objective view and that there were two sides to that story. Now, the last time I saw the mayor, I was the chairman of WTTW. We had some event out there. We had a bunch of politicians. I remember that Humphrey was there and the mayor was there. When the event was over, the mayor said, "Do you want a ride back downtown?" I said, "I sure do." And he took me. It was just the two of us in the car. I'm not a doctor. But I noticed that he was slowing up. He was not the same guy. It was not more than a few months after that that he died.

Now, I'll answer any questions. But those are my notes of my relationship with him. Oh, there was something else important. Either in late 1959 or early 1960, I was practicing law with Adlai Stevenson. The mayor came over for lunch. We used to have lunch in Adlai's office. I was there. The mayor said, "Adlai, you've run for president twice. Are you interested in being a candidate next year?" He said, "No. I'm not." The mayor said, "I wanted to know because I wanted to know if I can be free." I was there. I heard this myself. Then we got to the Democratic National Convention in 1960. And I went out to the convention with Adlai, Bill Blair, and Bill Wirtz. Adlai was staying in a little cottage he had on the grounds of the Beverly Hills Hotel. This was a Sunday. The convention was to begin on Monday.

We went out on Saturday. On Saturday night, I made a point to see two of my friends. They were Hy Raskin, who worked for Kennedy, and Bill Brawley, who worked for Johnson. I asked them for their vote counts. They gave them to me. Included in both of them was Illinois, who was going to go, with the exception of two or three votes, with Kennedy. So Sunday morning, I went out to the cottage at the Beverly Hills Hotel. I found twenty people. There was a living room, a bedroom, and a bathroom. In the living room, they were all Stevenson's supporters. They were all showing him that there was no majority for Kennedy and that Stevenson could be nominated (RVR laughs).

So I tapped Adlai on the shoulder and said, "Could I talk to you privately for a moment?" He said, "The only place that we can go is in the bathroom." So the two of us went into the bathroom (RVR laughs). I pulled out my count and said, "There's no way you're going to be nominated. They're giving you a bunch of nonsense in there. Why don't you pull out and nominate Kennedy? Look at Illinois. Illinois is not going to vote for you. He said, "Oh, I'm sure that they will on the first ballot. I said, "I'm telling you, they won't. Do you remember that lunch with Mayor Daley? He made a commitment. Don't believe me. Why don't you call the mayor?" Which he did. The mayor told him, "I asked you. You told me no. And we're going to go with Kennedy." So at that point, Adlai was kind of shaken by that. I don't understand why he didn't know that. Then he looked at me and said, "If I get out this way, what am I going to tell Mrs. Roosevelt?" (NM and RVR laugh) So that's what happened. But I wanted to get that on the record. But I don't think that the mayor would have wanted to support Adlai. But he did ask before.

RVR: You've confirmed what several others have said.

NM: Several others have said the same thing?

RVR: There's his sons, for example.

NM: His sons said that?

RVR: Yes.

NM: Well, I was there when he asked him.

RVR: But Eleanor Roosevelt was putting pressure on him.

NM: She was. And for some reason, I don't know exactly why, Adlai was afraid to look her in the eye and tell her no. He couldn't do it. Go ahead. That's what's on my mind.

RVR: That's great. That's wonderful. I'd like to ask a few general questions about your impression of Richard J. Daley as a man, as a politician, as a statesman, as a mayor, and anything you want to say about him. I mean both his strong points and perhaps where he was weak, where he made mistakes, and where he'd done so much for the city, generally speaking.

NM: Well overall, I'd give him an "A" for being the mayor. My test would be to compare Chicago with other major cities. Look around the country at major urban centers, during the sixties, seventies, and what happened. Clearly, if you look at New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and Cleveland, Chicago came through those years much better than anybody else. And I attribute that, for the most part, to the mayor. So I'd give him an "A" on that. Where I think he tended to make mistakes, it was that I think he had a fairly narrow group of advisors who were sometimes afraid of him and sometimes would be "yes" men. I mean, somebody should have gone to the mayor and said, "These Democratic rules are a big problem. You'd better get on this thing." Nobody did. Somebody should have gone to him before the convention and said, "You're going to have a big problem here." I don't know that he welcomed some strong contrary advisors. But they certainly weren't there. There was nobody who would say, "Mayor, you're making a huge mistake here. Just wait a minute." I don't think he had that. So I think that was an error. Also, the other place where I would fault him a bit was that he was very anti media.

RVR: He was?

NM: Yes. He didn't trust the media. And as a result, the media would not get his version of events. He was never really that open with them. I'll give you the opposite extreme. It would have been, for example, John McCain's race for the nomination two years ago where everything was out in the open. The mayor was never willing to open himself up to the press. So those would be the downsides. But overall, as a mayor and a political leader, I would give him an "A." I went to law school with Harold Washington. I knew Harold fairly well. Harold is an example. Many of them were Democrats. They called it the machine. The mayor called it the organization. Many of them were in that thing for years and were perfectly content. A few got very unhappy. But the mayor tried and didn't always succeed. He tried to take all of these various constituencies and somehow get them working together.

RVR: You don't think that he was anti-black?

NM: No I don't.

RVR: You don't think that he deliberately positioned the Dan Ryan to separate whites from blacks?

NM: I've never even heard that before.

RVR: You don't think his housing was….

NM: Well, I read the book. That book was so critical of him about public housing. I forgot the name of it. You know the book. The book came out a year or so ago. I think that he was against high rise housing all of the time. He didn't think that the high rise housing was a good idea. No, I don't think that he was prejudiced. I think he was trying, if he could, to reconcile a lot of varied groups. Actually, I think he died before the

Hispanic population grew so large. If he were here now, I'm sure he'd be trying to figure out how to accommodate them. But he was trying to accommodate everybody.

RVR: Is he a boss? Was he a boss?

NM: Yes. I think so. I think he combined the power of the government and the party into one hand. He believed that you could call him a boss or you could call him a strong leader, depending on your semantics. But clearly, he was in charge. I mean, my Adler Planetarium story is a good example. Here, you had to change laws. You had to change statutes. You had to change everything. He said, "You got it." I mean, you couldn't do that today.

RVR: You've read the various accounts of the mayor?

NM: Yes.

RVR: Are any of them remotely like the man that you knew? Or are they all so negative that they give a false impression?

NM: I think that they tend to give a false impression. A lot of that was the mayor's own fault because the mayor was not open with interviewers. The mayor didn't trust the media. He thought that they were out to get him.

RVR: Why was that?

NM: I'm not sure. This is my intuition. He never said this to me. I think that the mayor always felt, "Well, I'm not that highly well educated. I came up the hard way. I came from a humble background. These guys know more than I do." I think he always felt….

NM and RVR: "They're laughing at me."

NM: Or, "If my syntax is wrong or I make a mistake on the language, they're out to get me," and so on. The mayor did not, in my opinion, have a fantastically good sense of humor. He was a pretty serious guy. He was not terribly good at telling jokes. That was not his thing.

RVR: What was his power then based on? What would you say was the underlying strength that he had that allowed him to become this force?

NM: Well first, I think that he was honest. I think that he had financial honesty and integrity, which was a rare thing in Chicago politics for a long time. Second, I would think the most important thing is that he truly had a love affair with this city. He would rather have been mayor than president. He loved the city. He loved what was going on here. He wanted Chicago to be seen as a great city. I think everybody, whether they liked him or not, knew that he was trying to do the right thing for the city. And I think that came across.

RVR: I think that's very true.

NM: Now, if you're going to interview some of his critics like Leon Despres or others, you should. He was not quick to try to compromise with critics, if he thought he was right and he had the votes. The one thing about the mayor, and I tell this to people all of the time, he knew how to count. He knew ahead of time how a vote was going to come out, or he wouldn't push it.

RVR: You mentioned that he probably was a financial whiz, if not genius.

NM: I think he was. And that's what Adlai had him doing for the state.

RVR: Was he also an administrative, organizational whiz? Did he know how to run things because he was a great administrator?

NM: I think that he knew everything that was going on. The other side of him was that he had that Irish conviction to help widows and to help kids that grow up without a father. I don't know if it was from religion, culture, or what. But he went out of his way to take care of people who needed help.

RVR: He was a very religious man, as he understood.

NM: Right. You know, across the street is where he'd go for a cup of coffee in the morning. In that place I used to run into him every once in a while. He worked hard. He was committed to his work. We don't have many people like that around now. I knew his kids a little bit. But I never really knew this mayor until he became mayor. I know Bill pretty well. Bill, I think, has the best political mind of the family.

RVR: Really?

NM: Yes.

RVR: Yet he's not seeking office.

NM: I was surprised. He was talking, and I talked to myself about him running for governor. I thought that he was going to do it. I don't know what happened at the last minute. But Bill has got a first class political mind.

RVR: You think more so than his older brother?

NM: I think so.

RVR: That's interesting.

NM: I had a funny experience with Bill a couple of years ago. Johnny Apple of the New York Times is a close friend of ours. He's probably the best political reporter in the

country. One day he called me and said, "I'm coming to Chicago. I'd like to have a chance to meet a couple of political people. Maybe we can have dinner." So I arranged a dinner. We had Bill and his wife and Don Rumsfeld and his wife. They'd never met each other. And there was also Johnny Apple. It was a fascinating discussion. A couple of years went by. Daley was nominated for a cabinet position. Rumsfeld went to his Senate confirmation hearing and put in a word for him to the Republican Senators. Years went by. Rumsfeld was appointed to a cabinet position. Daley goes (NM and RVR laugh). It all started with that small dinner. With Bill Daley, I don't know why he didn't run for office. I know they were concerned about a mayor and a governor from one family. I know all of that. But I still don't know why he didn't run. But he's got a first class political mind. I'll give you an example of it. There was the congressional election after Clinton was elected in 1994. Bill called me one day and said, "I'd like to have lunch with you. I want to ask you something." So we had lunch. Bill said, "What do you think is going to happen in the congressional election?" I said, "I think that the Democrats are going to lose the Senate. It'll be very close. But I think they'll probably keep a slight majority in the house." He said, "You're wrong." I said, "Why?" He said, "They're going to lose the Senate. You're right about that. But I think that they're also going to lose the house. The reason I called you is because the White House asked me to take some soundings of people whose judgement I trust about that, because the White House thinks they're going to win the Senate and the House." I said, "They're out of their mind." He said, "That's why I called you." Bill has a deep understanding of national politics. I hope that he stays with it.

RVR: The late mayor said he felt that his greatest contribution to the City of Chicago was in bringing the University of Illinois to Chicago.

NM: I've read that. Yes.

RVR: Do you think that's true?

NM: Yes. I think that's a very important legacy that will go on for hundreds of years.

RVR: That's true.

NM: It will enable a lot of people to get an education who couldn't do it otherwise.

RVR: Do you know personally anything that he did to assist that process in any way?

NM: I don't personally. But I know that he ran into all kinds of opposition. But he was determined to do that. I think that is, in many ways, his major legacy.

RVR: Do you think he was offended that the faculty always regarded him as a machine politician, and therefore slighted him for that?

NM: I'm sure he was disappointed. I don't know that I would use the word offended. But it goes back to what we were talking about before. I think that the mayor always felt, "I'm not a highly educated guy. I murder the language from time to time and people make fun of me." But that's life.

RVR: Right. Would you say that the term machine politician is an accurate description?

NM: You've got to remember. I lived in the suburbs. There are a lot of people out there like Lynn Williams, who was our committeeman from the Tenth District, who had a chip on their shoulder against the machine. I never had that chip on my shoulder. When I was a delegate to the national convention, the delegation needed a caucus. Everybody talked. You had every color and every ethnic group. It seemed to me that the mayor had done his homework. He got the Poles, the blacks, the Jews, the Italians, and the Hispanics. He got them all in one room and they were all working together. That's an accomplishment, unlike New York, Los Angeles, or those guys.

RVR: How about his relationship with business?

NM: They were excellent. I know that. The mayor was very supportive of the business community. The business community was largely Republican. But they knew that the mayor was trying to help them.

RVR: Can you give instances where he did help them that you know of?

NM: Well, I was very involved in the development in the South Loop here. That was a good example where the business community went to the mayor and said, "We've got an extraordinary opportunity with this land right next to the Loop. It's now covered with railroad tracks and it's not being used. We could have middle class housing and so on." And the mayor immediately went to work on that. I was the lawyer on that for the private group, Fred Kramer, Phil Klutznick, and Tom Ayers. Lois Wille wrote a very good book about that. The business community, I think, always felt that if they had a problem, they could go to the mayor. The mayor would give them a fair hearing. And if he could help them, he would. Now, I don't know who you're interviewing. I'm curious to know about the black community today. I know that at the time there was a lot of hostility. But today, I think a lot of the black community will look back at the mayor and say, "Well, he was all right."

RVR: They supported him then?

NM: They supported him then. They had that old time, Democratic congressman. I forget his name.

FWB: It was Dawson.

NM: Who?

RVR and FWB: Dawson.

NM: It was Dawson, who was not the greatest guy (RVR laughs). The mayor had made a spiel. I'm sorry that Abe Marovitz isn't here, because he could tell you a lot of stories about the family. Adlai had great respect for the mayor as a public official. I'll give you my thesis. A lot of people think of the mayor and they think of the 1968 convention. That's what comes to their mind. And that seems to me to be very unfair.

RVR: Do you feel that his behavior at the 1968 convention was wrong?

NM: Yes. I think that he went overboard. It would have been much better if he had planned it better at the beginning. And I also think it would have been better if he hadn't been so belligerent at the end. It was a tragedy.

RVR: Going back to businesses, was it your sense that contracts were ever let out?

NM: I'm sure that happened sometimes. I think that was the nature of things. But I don't think that was a major thing. I think that happens in every political movement.

RVR: (inaudible comment)

NM: That's right. Look at what's going on in Iraq right now. You know, I'll tell you one story about that 1968 convention. It's not directly involved with the mayor. But I'd like to have it on the record anyway. I was for Bob Kennedy. Bob Kennedy was killed. Young Adlai, Senator Stevenson called me. He said, "I know you were for Bob Kennedy. I know that he's mourned. Will you please help Hubert Humphrey?" So, my friend Andrew Geocaris and I arranged a luncheon for Humphrey. I never forgot it. It was at the Blackstone Hotel the week before the Democratic Convention, to raise a little money for him for the convention. When the luncheon was over, Humphrey said to me, "Are you busy?" I said, "No." He said, "Can you come up to my room for a few minutes?" I went up to his room. I could see that Humphrey was physically exhausted. He took off his shoes and his tie. He lay down on the bed. He had two of his staff there. One was a doctor, Dr. Edgar Berman. The other one was his chief of staff, Bill Connell. Humphrey

looked at me. He said, "You've been around a long time." I said, "Yes." He said, "What do you think?" I said, "Do you know what a Bar Mitzvah is, Hubert?" He said, "Do I know what a Bar Mitzvah is? I've been to more Bar Mitzvah's than you have in your life." (RVR laughs) I said, "Well, next week is your Bar Mitzvah. You must prove to the nation that you are no longer LBJ's boy. You are now a man, on your own. This means that you've got to walk away from LBJ on the Vietnam War." So Dr. Berman looked at me. He was on one side of the bed. He said, (NM shakes his fist). The other guy, Connell, looked at me like he was going to kill me. I could see (RVR laughs). Humphrey was getting contradictory. So Humphrey said, "Do you really think so?" I said, "It's not that I think so. I know so." He said, "Would you do me a favor in how you would do that? Will you draft that?" I said, "Fine." So I took him very seriously and I drafted the best political speech I ever wrote, which was never given. You've got to remember now, this was a week before the convention. This was before the riots and before all of the trouble. I said, "The speech begins this way. The speech, 'Eight years ago, I ran for the Democratic nomination for president against Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy defeated me. Then all of us helped Jack Kennedy defeat Richard Nixon. Well, eight years have gone by. Jack Kennedy is no longer here. Richard Nixon is still here. And I'm not going to see the man that Jack Kennedy defeated eight years ago become the president of the United States, and neither are you." I figured at that point, everybody would be up on their feet, screaming.

RVR: Sure! That's a good opening!

NM: "Now, I'm the vice president of the United States and as such I owe a paramount obligation and loyalty to the president. And I've honored that twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. But as of this minute, my situation changes because I accept your nomination for president. And as a candidate for president, I've got an obligation to tell you what I would do if I were president. You've got a right to know what I would do if I were president. Then, I proceed to walk away from LBJ." I believe that if he'd done that, he'd have been elected. I don't think that the country wanted to elect Nixon. But they

couldn't stand the Democrats because of all of the commotion and grief at the convention. So that's what happened.

RVR: Could he have done that? Could he have run?

NM: Well, he started to the last week of the campaign. Why he didn't do it, I don't know. Years later, I was in Washington Hotel having breakfast and I ran into Dr. Berman. He's now no longer living. I said, "Edgar, why didn't Humphrey walk away from LBJ on the war?" And he gave me a very peculiar answer. He said, "Hubert was physically afraid of LBJ." I said, "What?!"

RVR: A lot of people were, too.

NM: I said, "What was he going to do, hit him?" He said, "He was physically intimidated by him." You figure that one out.

RVR: I know he was intimidated, but I didn't know it was physical.

NM: Well, that's what he told me. I still don't understand it.

RVR: LBJ did that all of the time, emotionally and psychologically intimidating people and coming at them.

NM: Do you remember I told you about that Democratic congressional dinner that I was in charge of?

RVR: Yes.

NM: Part of the arrangement for the protocol was that you went to call on the president to invite him. So I went with Muskie and some other congressman to invite the president. We thought we'd be there for two minutes. We were there for two hours having an

argument about that war. I remember what the president said to me. He got very angry with me. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "I was a soldier in Asia in World War II. I got the view from General MacArthur that we should not have American ground troops over there in Asia.

RVR: Really?

FWB: I have to change the tape.

(End of Tape One)

RVR: There are biographies that have been written. The family doesn't feel that the real man has emerged. He was very devoted to his family and believed in simple virtues, as you say, of taking care of widows and orphans and such. He tried to use his influence and authority as mayor. He really made this city what it is.

NM: I think that's right. As I look back on his life, the thing I think about the most is why he wouldn't go to the president on, let's say, Vietnam and say, "Hey listen. I think that you're making a big mistake." It was because his concept of loyalty wouldn't permit that. Although, as I say, his sons said that he did go.

RVR: What do you think caused it? Was it an Irish thing?

NM: That was part of it.

RVR: You're loyal by God, and "We're with you. And if you're ever against us, we never forget."

NM: I never thought of it that way, but you're right. It's that Irish, Catholic culture. I'm the first Jewish trustee of Notre Dame University. And I've learned a lot about the Irish Catholics. I never quite put it together that way, but that's true.

RVR: I don't mean to put ideas in your head.

NM: No.

RVR: But if you have a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and a priest….

NM: It's a hierarchy.

RVR: Right.

NM: It's a discipline.

RVR: This is the authority on matters of religion, morality, and so on. And in politics, it should be the same.

NM: Right. I should have mentioned it earlier. The mayor, not only with own his family, but he admired people who had strong families. People who had not had a steady family life, he would regard as not very good people. It's interesting.

RVR: I don't mean to get into ethnic or religious stereotypes.

NM: No. That's true.

RVR: There may be something there.

NM: I think that there is something there.

RVR: That explains his behavior. It wouldn't be true today, would you say. I mean that kind of authoritarian….

NM: Well, I think what's happening today is that you've got so much intermarriage and so much mixing of different religions and cultures. I see in my own family and in other families that things have changed enormously. What year did the mayor die?

FWB: It was 1976.

NM: It was 1976? That's twenty-seven years. There's been a very dramatic change, I think.

RVR: Has it been for the better, wouldn't you say?

NM: Yes and no. I'd say there's been some good things that have happened and some bad things, too. The older I get, the more interested I am in history, in your profession. I'm reading the Isaacson book now about Franklin. The current mayor, incidentally, is a great reader of American history.

RVR: Is he?

NM: Oh yes, very much so.

RVR: But that was not true of his father?

NM: I don't think so. I went to a small luncheon when the John Adams book….

RVR: That was McCullough.

NM: It was McCullough's book. There was a small luncheon. The mayor read it and studied it. It was very interesting. He's very interested in history. What I find reoccurring over and over again in American history is that there was a good reason for something at one time. But then the facts changed. Then the situation changed. But the same policy continued because nobody adapted it. And that happens over and over and over again.

And people who are very critical don't go back and study history. They forget that when our great constitution was written, women didn't count. Two-fifths of a black didn't.

RVR: There were the Indians in America.

NM: Indians didn't count. They forget all of that. Democracy is a thing that keeps moving, enlarging, and changing.

RVR: When you change with it, you move with the process.

NM: Well, that's right. Now, that's why I'm so interested in this project with Donald Rumsfeld. And I've thought a great deal about it during the last few months. It seems to me that what you've got here is a technological revolution with the computer and information technology. That makes information instantly accessible in ways that it never was before. If I go to Google and I look both of you up, I can find out things about you that you probably have forgotten about yourself (RVR laughs). So where is privacy, given this kind of technology? Where should it be in this commonwealth? There was a thing that we got very interested in at our meeting on Tuesday. We had a bunch of technology people in. They said, "You can anonymize information. The computer doesn't care if a person's name is on it. You can give somebody a number without [inaudible] a name. And then, if you have to find out who that person is, then, maybe you should have to go to a judge to get a warrant. But you don't have to start out knowing all of that." Now that's very interesting. So we're learning. But with the history of the mayor, I don't know any other mayor, contemporary with Daley, who left a legacy like that behind. You had LaGuardia in the thirties.

RVR: He's regarded as probably the greatest mayor in the history of American mayors.
NM: Right.

RVR: But Richard J. Daley is right up there in the top ten.

NM: I grew up in Milwaukee as a kid. We had a mayor who was a socialist. He was the mayor for thirty-five years. I don't know what he left behind. But he was thirty-five years as the mayor. That's why I'm glad that you're doing this. A lot of young people don't know anything about Richard J. Daley. Or they remember 1960. That's what comes to their mind.

RVR: (inaudible)

NM: There's one thing that I never knew, even though I've read a number of the Franklin biographies. I never knew until I read Isaacson's book how hard Franklin fought to keep the U.S. as a colony of Britain. He tried for fourteen or fifteen years.

RVR: He would have made it.

NM: And given his desire, he would have done it. I didn't realize that. It's very interesting. It's fascinating.

FWB: I have a question.

NM: Yes sir.

FWB: You talked about privacy and privacy issues. One of the things that the mayor did to make it private, as you described it, you walked into his office, and he didn't take any notes.

NM: That right, nothing.

FWB: How did the mayor operate without any written paper notes that historians use? How did you see that, how he operated?

NM: That's a very good question. I don't know what he did. He called some of the staff in, I suppose later, and said, "I want you to do this, this, this, and this."

FWB: You didn't see anything or anyone come in?

NM: In every time I was with him, I never once saw him take out a pencil and a piece of paper to write something down. Now, I'm sure you're going to interview people like Ray Simon, Neil Hartigan, and so on. You'll have to ask them, or Tom Donovan. I don't know how he did that.

FWB: You didn't see anything?

NM: No. And not only that, he didn't have a staff person with him.

RVR: It might have been that he was incredibly good and that he had total recall. Some people do have that. But you wouldn't know.

NM: No. But I was very conscious of the fact that I never saw him take a note. What was left behind in terms of his papers?

RVR and FWB: We haven't seen them yet.

RVR: The family still has them. They're in the final stages of reading them. I've been in the house. I saw some of his things. I'm not sure what's there. There could be a lot of official kind of stuff.

NM: I like to use the Adler as an example. If you tried to do that today, you'd go over there and there'd be twenty people on the staff from different departments. They'd be taking notes and checking everything. It's totally different.

FWB: It's amazing how he could be that effective and not write anything. I know other politicians that have done that. They'd remind themselves of conversations. But you'd never seen him do that?

NM: Never.

FWB: I have a couple of other questions. One of the things that you were well known for was television. Did the mayor ever talk to you about television? One of the ways that you could avoid miscommunication was to go directly through the television.

NM: That's a good question. But you reminded me of something. When I was at the FCC, he called me up one day. He said, "Why is a television station editorializing or endorsing a candidate. They're not allowed to do that, right?" And I said, "No mayor, they are allowed to do that. However, they're required to give both sides of every issue. They can't just give one side of every issue." He said, "Well, why do you even let them do that at all? They should just report the news and not give their opinion." I said, "Actually, we encourage editorializing because there's a declining number of newspapers. And we think that it's more important to have many different opinions out there. But they've got to give both sides." He said, "That's wrong. You shouldn't let them do it. Good bye."

RVR: It was the authoritarian in him.

NM: Yes. That's right. He did not believe in it.

FWB: So other than that, he really didn't talk to you about how to go direct to people through television?
NM: No, never. I think that he was bad on television.

RVR: He was?

NM: Yes. He was bad on television. He was nervous and he was not at ease on it.

RVR: You don't know that he tried to learn how to improve his….

NM: On television?

RVR: Yes.

NM: That wouldn't surprise me. But I didn't know it. No.

FWB: (Inaudible comment) Some used television as a medium to get directly to the people to get his message across. The mayor never seemed to be able to do that.

NM: No. I think that he was very uncomfortable with it.

FWB: So, beyond that one time, he didn't talk to you?

NM: No.

FWB: There're a couple of other questions. We talked about issues of boss and how the machine organized. One of the things that we've seen over the last number of interviews is that the mayor was trying to move away from the Democratic machine and away from patronage, to make the mayor's office in many ways more professional to train people. Did you see that? How would you react to that professionalism versus patronage?

NM: I remember that I dealt with him once. Adlai Stevenson and I represented the Illinois Bell Telephone Company in some dispute with the city. He had a man named Carl Chadders. I don't know what his title was. He was not an elected official. But he was a financial guy. He was totally non-political. If he was not an academic, he came from a completely non-political background. I think the mayor would use people like that if he had something that required an intellectual background. He looked at the precinct captains as guys with low level jobs that didn't require great intellect or education. The

other thing is that the mayor used to hire bright young kids to go to work for him. There's Neil Hartigan. I don't know if you're going to interview Neil.

RVR: Yes we are.

NM: Neil will tell you about that. He would bring in some bring young kids to help on some things. Then he would bring in a guy like, he's dead now. I'm trying to think of his last name. He was the zoning expert, Harry. What was his last name? He wrote the zoning law. It was Harry Chaddick. The guy knew more about zoning than anybody in America. He'd use him for that kind of thing. Ben Heineman Sr. would be a very interesting person for you to interview. He's still here. Ben Heineman Sr. is in his late eighties. He and the mayor were close. He's in town. He lives there at the Water Tower Apartments. But the mayor used to lean on Ben very often for this assignment, for that assignment, and for advice. So he would look outside the politicians for stuff like that.

FWB: (Inaudible).

NM: Not really.

FWB: It's interesting that you worked very closely with the senior Adlai Stevenson.

NM: Yes.

FWB: His son was very important. Could you help us understand the relationship between Daley and young Adlai throughout it, until the man's death?

NM: Well actually, young Adlai I think crossed two lines. He had the support of the organization. But he was also able to do something that the mayor couldn't and that was to reach into the reform groups. It all came to a head. I remember the day. Adlai became a candidate for U.S. Senator. There was a big rally out at his place in Libertyville.

RVR: Yes. That was famous.

NM: The mayor showed up. That sort of sent a signal to the organization. Let me digress for a minute and tell you an Adlai story. Young Adlai went to his father and said, "I want to go into politics." His father said, "Well, let me call some of my friends. You'll go around and you'll get some good advice." So one guy they called was the alderman and the committeeman on the near north side named Botchy Connors. Do you remember Botchy Connors?

RVR: No.

NM: He was a state senator, a des, dem, and dose tough guy (RVR laughs). He had a bar. Adlai went over. Botchy Connors said, "Yes kid, your dad called me about you. Come into my office." So young Adlai went into his office. Botchy closed the curtains and locked the door. He said, "Now kid, I'm going to give you a few words of advice that are worth millions of dollars. Listen to me carefully." So Adlai listened. Botchy said, "Whatever you do, don't change your name." (NM, RVR, and FWB laugh) So young Adlai said, "Is that it?" He said, "That's it! Don't change your name." (NM, RVR, and FWB laugh)

RVR: That's worth a million dollars (NM laughs).

NM: Young Adlai was never comfortable with the regulars. But they accepted him because they thought that he could win. I don't think that the mayor disliked young Adlai. Are you going to interview young Adlai? You ought to.

RVR: We have.

NM: You have? I don’t think that he ever disliked him. But they were never close.

RVR: Let me ask you this. Young Adlai told us that they asked him if he'd like to run for the presidency of the United States. (Inaudible).

NM: That's interesting. I never knew that.

RVR: Adlai said no, for reasons that escape me completely.

NM: Was he then a senator?

RVR: He was then a senator.

NM: Actually, Adlai was trying to be picked for vice president. I know that for a fact.

FWB: It seemed that he was being like Adlai, his father, in 1964.

NM: Oh, he went for an interview for vice president.

FWB: According to at least from what he was saying, it seemed like Daley had asked him to be president. He didn't want to do it. He asked him to be vice president and he vacillated back and forth, but finally allowed himself to be. According to Adlai, Daley was going to hold delegates in order to vote, you know, to push Adlai's candidacy for vice president. (Inaudible).

NM: Well, there was a similarity there. I think the feeling was, "I shouldn't have to run or ask for it. They should ask me."

RVR: My question is this. If Adlai, let's say had run, could he have gotten a running mate? (Inaudible).

NM: No, not with the primary system the way it was. The primary system had really come into effect after 1972. It's very interesting. I never knew that about president. I

think that he could have helped as vice president. But I don't see how he could have gotten president. In fact, I've very surprised that Daley asked him that. I think Daley was not keen about Carter.

RVR: He was.

NM: Well, I'll tell you an interesting story. I was, in that year, the chairman of the Muskie delegates. And if Muskie was going to go out, we didn't get anywhere. Carter came to Chicago and wanted to meet with the Muskie delegates to get us to vote for him at the convention. There were about twenty of us. I remember this very clearly. In fact, I told this story. One of the members of my commission is Griffin Bell, the attorney general. Carter came to Chicago. We had a breakfast. I remember it at Mid America Club. He talked for a few minutes. He said, "You know, I'd rather that we go around the room and each of you can ask a question. That way we'll have a conversation." So it got to be my turn. He said, "What's your question?" I said, "What do you think that your biggest weakness is?" He said, "That's very easy. I'm not good at good at compromising things. When I was governor, my staff would come in at the end of the day and they'd say, 'Why don't you invite the legislators in for a beer, take your shoes off, talk things over, trade things, and work things out?' I said, 'I can't do that.' I'm not good at that." I said that to Griffin Bell. He said, "He told you the god's honest truth. That's just exactly his problem. That's why he was not effective as a president." I think that Daley didn't like Carter. That would be my guess.

RVR: He had nobody else for advice?

NM: Well, were they still talking about Ted Kennedy then? No. This was after Chappaquiddick. They didn't have anybody else. Humphrey was gone.

RVR: It does seem presumptuous.

NM: It does. He may have been just being polite, too.

RVR and FWB: (Inaudible).

NM: Well, I think that the enmity between Daley and the reformers was overstated. Now there's Dick Friedman. I happen to see him yesterday. How are you going to do all of this? How you're going to do all of this, I don't know.

RVR: We're waiting for people to come to us.

NM: Really?

RVR: We've sent letters.

NM: It's very important that you do this.

RVR: We'll have to go out eventually to see people.

NM: Well, Ben Heineman I'd really put on your list because the mayor had an enormous respect for him.

RVR: Maybe we should do that pretty soon.

NM: Yes.

FWB: I have one question on the analysis of the mayor. The election of 1963 was extremely important. The mayor almost lost and had low voter totals. One of the things that I've noticed is a shift towards the white ethnic vote. Before that point, the strongest voting block for the mayor was the blacks and the black votes. After that point, it almost appeared went and almost played to the white ethnic vote and some blacks. Were you aware of that?

NM: No.

FWB: Is that how you would analyze the mayor in the sixties?

NM: I was not. I remember that the election was close, but it wasn't that close.

FWB: Okay. But it was the closest he ever had. Some analysts have suggested that the mayor went to the right, actually.

NM: I was not aware of that. My feeling was that the mayor was trying to find a way to get everybody into the same tent. I think that was his strength. I'll tell you when it hit me. It was at the Democratic Convention in 1964 when we had the meeting of the delegates. I saw it, with my own eyes, that with every part of the city and every part of the state, there wasn't anybody left out. And I think that was his genius.

RVR: (Inaudible).

NM: I think that's right. I would guess that if you said, "What was his legacy?" I think he was the first big city mayor to do that.

RVR: Did he do that by giving into them? You said there were many of the teachers that threatened to strike, as they did. He would conciliate them and ask for it, even though it was going to cost the city a great deal.

NM: Well, I think that's right. I think that was a mistake. And I think that he looked by on it was a mistake. But he couldn't stand the strike. I was listening to the radio this morning. The teacher's union turned down the offer.

FWB: One of the things about the mayor that was a puzzle was that he was personally and extremely high in integrity. But a number of people around him were quite corrupt.

NM: That's correct.

FWB: This was especially with individuals like Tom Keane. Why do you think that is? Did he ever talk about it with you?

NM: No. It just seems to me that it's the nature of humans when they're involved where there's money. I don't care if they're in Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, or wherever it is. That seems to be inherent in the process.

NM and RVR: That's politics.

NM: It's like, what's that famous book about that guy in New York in Tammany? "I seen my opportunities and I took them."

FWB: Those are most of the questions that I wanted to ask you.

NM: Okay.

RVR: May I ask you a personal question?

NM: Yes.

RVR: Have you decided on what you're going to do with your papers?

NM: Yes. I gave my papers to the University of Wisconsin because they have a mass media library. I shouldn't have done. They came to me after I left the government and I gave them my papers. Since then, I've sent all of my papers to the Chicago Historical Society. They just took fifty-eight boxes out of here the other day.

RVR: Really?

NM: Yes.

RVR: Well, that's quite a bit.

NM: I don't know what will happen to them. But they all go now to the Chicago Historical Society.

RVR: Well, that's a good place for them.

NM: Robert Caro is coming to Chicago to speak. Did you know that?

RVR: No.

NM: He's speaking at the Chicago Public Library, I think, this month I believe. I had lunch with him in New York. I'd never met him before. He said that the basic thing that has helped him are the oral histories.

RVR: Yes. I'm not surprised.

NM: I'm working on another project right now. You're a historian. Are you familiar with Justin Smith Morrill?

RVR: Oh sure (laughs).

NM: He's the guy that started land grant colleges. I'm trying to get Congress to pass a law which is based on the Morrill Act. It would take money from the auctions of the electronic spectrum and put the money into education, just as Morrill did with the land grant colleges. Morrill was such an interesting man. Do you know where he got the first idea for the first land grant college from?

RVR: (Inaudible).

NM: That's exactly right. It started at the University of Illinois.

FWB: It was Illinois College.

NM: Was it Illinois College?

FWB: It was Illinois College. Turner was a professor at Illinois College in Jacksonville.

NM: Morrill was an uneducated farmer whose family could not give him an education. He always dreamed of having an education. So that's what happened. He also was the guy that pushed the Library of Congress. There's a little statue of him. If you look on the first floor of the Library of Congress, there's a statue of Justin Smith Morrill.

RVR: Really? I didn't notice that. The next time I go, I'll have to look for it.

NM: Billington knows a lot about Morrill. This is the point I make to the people in Congress when I talk to them. Three laws in three centuries changed American education. There was the Northwest Ordinance in the eighteenth century. There was the Land Grant College Act in the nineteenth century. And there was the G.I. Bill in the twentieth century. All three were passed in or right near the time of world war.

RVR: That's strange.

NM: The Land Grant College Act was in the midst of the Civil War. The G.I. Bill was in World War II. So when they me, "Well, we don't have any money…."

RVR: They didn't then either.

NM: I say, "They didn't then either. Either you make an investment or you don't in the future." But I finally found a guy that was with me.

RVR: Who?

NM: Well, I went originally to Senator Jeffords, who's from Vermont. He loved it. Then when he switched parties, he called me up. He said, "You'd better not count on me because nobody around here likes me."

RVR: (Laughs) "I'm in favor with them."

NM: That's right. He said, "I found a Republican from Ohio named Ralph Regula, who's the chairman of an important subcommittee. And he's a former high school teacher. He loves this, so he's pushing for it."

RVR: How about Richard (inaudible)?

NM: I never thought of him. I suppose that we could have gone to him. I never thought of that.

RVR: You could have signed him up, then maybe Lamar Alexander as well.

NM: Well, we've got a good idea. I know that.

RVR: The idea is wonderful.

NM: It's a very good idea and Billington loves it. Billington said, "What would you do with the money?" I said, "Well, if it were up to me, I know exactly what I'd do with the money. But I think it's got to be broader than that. I would give the money to the libraries and the museums to digitize their collections. That's what I would do. But other people

have different ideas. But the point is to take some of that money. Otherwise, it's just going to nothing."

RVR: Now, let me understand this.

NM: We are auctioning off, well, the cellular telephone companies want to use those wavelengths. So we've run auctions. And they can from ten to twenty billion dollars. The money just goes into the treasury. It's not earmarked. I want to take what Morrill did.

RVR: You mean just like the land.

NM: That's right. So this is the equivalence of land.

NM and RVR: In the modern age.

NM: So that's what we're doing.

RVR: That's wonderful.

FWB: There was talk in the sixties of doing another Morrill Act, an urban land grant.

NM: I didn't know that.

FWB: The old Circle Campus was supposed to be a part of that.

NM: And what happened?

FWB: Nothing happened. It was one of the smaller parts of the Johnson Administration. It kind of disappeared. There was talk of an urban land grant. Clark Kerr was pushing it in the early sixties.

NM: Was he? I didn't know that. You know, the interview that I would love to read when you get it all done is Rostenkowski. I've heard about the mayor.

RVR: Oh, he's got lots of stories about the mayor. There's going to be a seminar on the speedmanship of modern speakers. He's going to be speaking at that.

NM: Is he?

RVR: It's November twelfth. I'm supposed to be at that.

NM: Are you? I hear from Newt Gingrich from time to time, but not often (NM is temporarily interrupted by a phone call). I've got to go. Well, I enjoyed this very much.

RVR: Well, I can't thank you enough, sir. It's really been a pleasure.

NM: What will you give me, a transcript?

FWB: It'll be a transcript.

NM: And then I can edit it?

FWB: You can edit it. It will be pretty verbatim.

NM: I wanted to make these notes so I wouldn't forget anything. And if I think of anything else, I'll add it.

RVR: And you have no documentation that you think we should pursue in connection with the mayor?

NM: No. I have a picture somewhere. I think I have it at home. I have a picture of the mayor. I don't have it here. I can't say I was that close to him. But if I wanted to see him, I would just pick up the phone and come on over.

RVR: You must have had great respect for him.

NM: Well, he as very candid with me. The most important thing I would like to leave with you is his view on the Vietnam War. The kid's name you ought to get from the family. It was an Irish name. I remember that the mayor said, "Why?"

RVR: (Laughs) Well, thank you very, very much. We'll get this to you as soon as we can.

NM: Thank you. I'm a great admirer of yours. I hope you'll finish that congressional thing.

RVR: Oh, I'm up to (inaudible). I've done (indaudible) at the end of the turn of the century. He was the man who counted people who were present in the chamber who wanted to be counted absent. And he said to them, "Are you saying that you're not here?" (NM and RVR laugh)

NM: I'll tell you one more story. When LBJ was vice president, one day we were over at his house and it was pouring outside. He said, "I've got a guy here that will get your car." So while this guy is getting our car, LBJ said, "Do you know who that is?" I said, "No." He said, "He's my driver. He's been the driver for every majority leader in the Senate since the days of Joe Robinson. When I became vice president, I asked him if he'd be my driver as vice president. He said, 'Vice president? That's nothing! That's not a man's job! You just stay as majority leader.' I should have listened to him." Six months later….

NM and RVR: He was president of the United States (RVR laughs).

RVR: Well, thank you again.

FWB: Thank you.

NM: I'll tell that to Mel.

RVR: Yes. I'd love to go through all of your artifacts, but maybe another time.

NM: Okay, thank you. Thanks for coming.

RVR: You're very welcome, sir. Thank you.

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