

Oral History Interview
with
JUDGE MONROE FRIEDMAN

Member of the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee, 1940-52 (chairman 1942-53).
Alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention, 1940. Delegate to the Democratic
National Convention, 1944, 1948 and 1956. Later a California Superior Court Judge.

Oakland, California
March 16, 1970
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
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FUCHS: Judge Friedman, I wonder if you would mind starting out by giving me a little of your
background; when and where you were born, and your education, and your early career coming
up to the time that we are interested in?

FRIEDMAN: Well, I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in October 1895, and came here with
my family, that is my father and mother and my brother and sisters, in 1905 we came to Oakland,
California. I graduated from the Oakland High School and the University of California. I had
graduate work at the University of Michigan, and I got the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the
University of California, and then the degree of Juris Doctor from

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the University of California in 1920. In 1917 I went into the Army as a second lieutenant, and in 1918 I was a captain in the Army, infantry, captain of infantry, United States Army, First World War. Later I became a major of infantry in Reserve.

All right, I practiced law here in Oakland from 1921 on. I was admitted to the California bar in 1920. I was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States in 1930. Let's see what that will bring me up to. In 1936 I began to be interested in Democratic politics. I was a delegate to the state convention to start with. Beginning with 1940 I was a member of the County Central Committee for twelve years.

FUCHS: This was what county, now?

FRIEDMAN: Right here. The County of Alameda.

FUCHS: Alameda County.

FRIEDMAN: And I was chairman of the Democratic Central Committee in Alameda County for ten years, from 1942 to 1952. I was an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1940; and I was a delegate in 1944, 1948 and 1956. In 1944 I remember when

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President Truman was nominated for Vice President. It looked as if [Henry A.] Wallace was going to be nominated, but the senior member of the Democratic party in this county at that time was Patrick McDonough, who is now gone. But after looking over the ground he said it was Harry Truman who was going to be nominated for the office, and of course he was right.

Now, I remember President Truman in May 1944, I remember attending a dinner in San Francisco where Truman and [Alben W.] Barkley both spoke. Both of them were United States Senators at that time, 1944, in May.

FUCHS: This was the campaign?

FRIEDMAN: That was before. No, that was before the convention of that year.

FUCHS: I see. Why were they out here?

FRIEDMAN: Well, I guess they were out here looking over the ground to see where they were going.

FUCHS: It wasn't on Truman Committee business?

FRIEDMAN: I don't know, they were out here speaking at a

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large Democratic dinner in San Francisco. But in those days it was \$25 dinners, not \$100 dinners, or as they now have -- the Republicans have, I noticed last week, a \$250 dinner. This was a \$25 dinner.

Now, let's see. In 1944 when I was a delegate, I remember when Truman was nominated. That was the year he was nominated Vice President; and then, of course, I remember in January '45, I went to Washington for the inauguration and there were several receptions. One was given for Vice President Truman at somebody's house on some street there. I can't remember the people who gave the -- it was a large reception with a...

FUCHS: It wasn't Victor Messall was it?

FRIEDMAN: I can't remember the name, but I remember I saw Mr. Truman there at that time and spoke to him. And then of course a few months later he became President. Well, that brings us up to about all I can tell, bringing us down to 1948.

FUCHS: Did you have any relationship with [Robert E.] Hannegan in the years prior to...

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FRIEDMAN: Yes, when he came out here. I remember -- the only relationship I had, he was the National Chairman -- I remember he came out here, I remember he always told us that one thing he learned from many years of experience, and that is to keep his big mouth shut. He died at an early age, I think. And of course, I knew McGrath, what was his first name, Harold?

FUCHS: J. Howard.

FRIEDMAN: Howard. Howard McGrath.

FUCHS: You're talking about the National Chairman in 1948?

FRIEDMAN: That's right. He was the National Chairman, United States Senator; he was formerly Governor of Rhode Island, I think.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: And United States Senator, and in 1948 he was the National Chairman. He would send us letters and telegrams all the time, but it looked very, very bad for President Truman.

I remember the convention in 1948, which was a very worried convention. They didn't think that

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Truman was going to be re-elected. And I remember it was 2 o'clock in the morning when he got up to speak, and he just put that convention on fire at 2 o'clock in the morning, all tired out. He gave them new spirit.

Well, we came back here and the raising of money was very tough. One of the things you need for the campaign -- I haven't been in any campaigns now for a dozen years, I've been on this bench for eleven years.

FUCHS: That takes you out of politics.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes, it does, and I have refrained from it because I feel that that's what we're supposed to do, and I do.

But in 1948 it was very difficult to raise money. It was very difficult to get any action. We'd call a meeting together and we'd turn up twenty to thirty people. And then I got a telegram saying that President Truman was going to stop over here in Oakland and make a speech.

So, I called my little group together. I was County Chairman. I said, "What are we going to do, the President will come here, we'll turn out thirty-forty people, it's terrible. We'd better get a small hall

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because it's better to pack a small hall than it is to have a large place and have it half or two-thirds empty."

So, we decided we're going to get a hall that maximum would hold eight hundred people, and then we figured we'd work hard and get that place filled. Of course, we could take the auditorium, the auditorium theater, which holds two thousand people. Or we could take the auditorium arena which holds about six thousand people; but we were afraid to do that because we were afraid that we wouldn't have any audience and it looks terrible. So, finally I struck on the idea, " Let's have it in the park, because you don't even -- if there's only a few people, it won't matter because nobody knows. The park is dark and the lights are all on the bandstand where the speaker is."

So, we had it at the park and the amazing thing was this: The *Oakland Tribune*, which is a very conservative paper and Republican paper, reported as 15,000 being there. The FBI, who of course came here, reported 20,000.

FUCHS: This the Secret Service you mean?

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FRIEDMAN: Yes. The Secret Service, not the FBI. The Secret Service people who came here in advance, and worried me about what we had to do for the protection of the President, they estimated 20,000. And the *San Francisco Examiner* estimated 25,000. So, we could say that there were not less than 15,000 people there and a very enthusiastic audience. That was on September the 19th, 1948, on a weekday night. And from then on I began to see hopes that there might be some chance of carrying California, but Alameda County we figured was pretty tough to carry.

Well, in the campaign he carried Alameda County by 17,000 votes out of a total of approximately 250,000 votes cast, which is a very small margin, and peculiar as it may seem, that's exactly the amount that he carried the state by. The whole state of California he carried by about 17,000. So, he got all of California's votes, which of course was less than we have now, but it was a sizeable electoral vote.

Well, now, let's see, what else can I tell you. Oh, I remember the train they came on. It was described as a gamey train. Do you know what a gamey train is?

FUCHS: What did they mean by that?

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FRIEDMAN: G-a-m-e-y. The reporters on there and all the visitors, they needed a bath. It was gamey. Have you ever heard of that expression before?

FUCHS: Well, I've heard it in regard to game you know, or meat, tasting gamey, you know, strong...

FRIEDMAN: Well, that's exactly the way these...

FUCHS: They smelled strong.

FRIEDMAN: The first thing these reporters did, and everybody else, was to run to a hotel to get a bath because that's what they needed badly.

FUCHS: Well, now you had joined the train...

FRIEDMAN: At Sacramento.

FUCHS: At Sacramento.

FRIEDMAN: He spoke from the rear of the train there to, oh, maybe six, seven hundred people, it was in the afternoon, he was coming down to Oakland. He stayed that night I believe at the Army terminal. I'm not sure exactly, but he did not stay at the hotel. Arrangements had been made for purpose of security.

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FUCHS: You mean he stayed on the train in the terminal?

FRIEDMAN: No, I think he had some kind of accommodations at the Army post. Maybe not so, or...

FUCHS: I hadn't heard that.

FRIEDMAN: Well, maybe not. Maybe I'm not -- I can't quite -- memory sometimes plays faults, and since I didn't see him there, so I can't say exactly.

FUCHS: Did you meet him on the train?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. I met him on the train in Sacramento and -- with others. I mean, as Herb Caen said, "I was lower in the hierarchy, although perhaps higher in the lowerarchy." So, you see I wasn't important enough to be one of the hierarchy, you see.

FUCHS: Now, had you met him before when he was here in '44?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, just met him as casually, but I don't think he knew me. But at this time I got acquainted with him a little bit, so the next time I ever saw him he knew me, although I don't know if he could remember my name. But I always make it a business when I meet somebody of that type, to tell them my name so that he won't be stumbling around, and usually I remind them when I met them, so that he'll have some basis from which to talk. It isn't fair to do that to a man who, as President of the United States, meets so many hundreds of thousands of people. Its a little too much to expect him to know people.

Well, let's see, what else?

FUCHS: Do you recall any of the conversation, any anecdotes or anything humorous or anything at all that might be...

FRIEDMAN: Well, you know that old one about staying out of the kitchen. Of course, you've heard that many times, I'm sure.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: I remember him saying something about it that night.

FUCHS: Oh, is that right?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah, somebody said to him something about "the newspapers are panning you pretty hard." He said, "You know, if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen. "I've always remembered it, because I've applied it -- I have quoted it many times when somebody

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said to me, "My, that trial that you had must have been a tough one, and you received some criticism."

I said, "You know, as Harry Truman says, 'If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen'."

Now, let's see, any particular...

FUCHS: Is Alameda County normally Democratic or Republican?

FRIEDMAN: Well, it voted for [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. It didn't vote for [Adlai E.] Stevenson. This last election, I think it voted for [Richard M.] Nixon with a little extra -- little vote, but I'm not sure. I don't follow it as closely as I did. In those days I could tell you exactly how every county voted; I can't do that anymore.

FUCHS: Were there any particular issues that you thought were responsible for the votes in the campaign?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I think his appeal to his -- I remember his strong appeal to the effect -- I think it was the 80th Congress that he constantly condemned -- that they were anti-labor, anti-racial, anti-everything, that was his play. Now, the great thing that happened here in this county, I was amazed how all these elements all turned out to do something for him. Labor...

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FUCHS: Do you think labor was a big factor here?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: The fact that the Taft-Hartley Act had been passed over his veto?

FRIEDMAN: That's right. Now, see I've forgotten that. I remember now, the Taft-Hartley Act had been passed over his veto. That was very strong. I remember the fact he had vetoed the McCarran Act and they passed it over his veto. I'm not -- you must check all these things because I, when I make these statements I'm not -- I may not be accurate.

FUCHS: Memory does strange things.

FRIEDMAN: McCarran was in connection with the immigration law. That was one of the things. Labor -- and then of course, you remember that in 1947, I think, there came out that report of the committee that he appointed concerning the position of the Negro and desegregation in the armed forces. That came in his first term, I think.

FUCHS: Yes.

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FRIEDMAN: All these things. We have in this county though, a twenty percent black population. It's the largest percentage of any county in the state. Not the largest number.

FUCHS: I didn't realize that.

FRIEDMAN: Not the largest number, but the largest percentage. One of the reasons is that this was originally, you see, the home base of many black people who worked on the railroads. This was the end of the railroads. So, many of them made their homes here, and their children and grandchildren are here. In addition to that, large numbers came from the South after the First World War, some did. And after the Second World War, and during the Second World War many of them came here to work in the shipyards. So, anyway, we have a comparatively large

percentage, comparatively, of black people in our county. The city of Oakland has over thirty percent black, and the city of Berkeley has, reportedly, forty percent black, but the entire country, including South County, San Leandro, Hayward, Fremont and those cities, don't have so many, so that the whole county overall is twenty percent.

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FUCHS: I see.

I wanted to ask you, were you apprehensive as a leader here in the county, about the Wallace movement, the Progressive Party? Did you think that that would cut into your Democratic vote?

FRIEDMAN: Oh yes: It did cut in. For example, I think Wallace got about five percent of the vote here in this county. And Truman, in this county, got about forty-eight percent, and Dewey - it was [Thomas E.] Dewey, wasn't it?

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Dewey got forty-seven percent and Wallace about five percent in this county, and I think that's about the way the state ran. Now, other states didn't give them so much, but Wallace had -- well, I don't know, five percent, after all -- you're talking about that Wallace, we've got another Wallace now haven't we?

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: You're talking about Henry Wallace?

FUCHS: Yes.

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FRIEDMAN: What's this man's name now, in Georgia-Alabama rather? His name isn't George Wallace is it?

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Well, he got seven percent in this county.

FUCHS: He did?

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. You see now, of course, it's nothing to do with the Truman matter that you're talking about, but with just a little bit more pushover, that Truman did -- I've compared those campaigns of '48 and '68. Truman just pushed that over, just that little extra that was required in order to carry the crucial states. Of course, he didn't carry New York.

FUCHS: No.

FRIEDMAN: As I remember he lost that by a small amount.

FUCHS: He lost New York, that was Wallace's principal stronghold.

FRIEDMAN: Yes. But he did carry California.

FUCHS: Dewey won New York, but it cut into Truman so much that they credited him with defeating Truman in...

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FRIEDMAN: Because the Wallace vote took away Truman's...

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Well, [Hubert H.] Humphrey wasn't able to do that with the other votes around here. Well, now let's see, what else can I tell you?

FUCHS: When you went to the convention as a district delegate, do you recall...

FRIEDMAN: Went as a state delegate, you don't go -- oh, district, all right, go ahead, that's right.

FUCHS: I believe that they had...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, that's right. We had a system -- there were two from this county.

FUCHS: I see.

FRIEDMAN: From this congressional district, that's right; Pat McDonough and myself, that's right.

FUCHS: What do you recall about Jimmy Roosevelt's pre-convention maneuvering --the revolt...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, back in '48?

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FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Well, I really don't know much about that, frankly, except that I know that there were a group that were strong to have him do something; but I think in the final vote, I don't think they -- I think they all went with Truman.

FUCHS: Yeah, well, he switched back to Truman by the time he got to...

FRIEDMAN: I wasn't on the Roosevelt group. In fact, in our state at that time -- I don't know what it is now exactly -- you had to declare for a candidate to get on the ballot for delegate. So, it was the Truman slate that was elected to go.

FUCHS: Yeah, they had a preferential poll I believe or something, that you had to sign...

FRIEDMAN: So, both Mr. McDonough and I were, we were on the Truman slate. Frank Dunn I think was one of the others from the other congressional district.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything about the civil rights minority plank there?

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FRIEDMAN: I remember the speech of Humphrey's. In 1948 he was Mayor of Minneapolis. Of course, I'm telling you things that you know. And he was a candidate for United States Senator from Minnesota in 1948. And I remember that speech that he made for civil rights, because sitting next to me, just by chance, was a man from Mississippi, a delegate from Mississippi. I don't know why I shouldn't tell this, it doesn't make any difference. And as he was talking, this delegate here was mumbling into his beard, he was mumbling. So, I turned and I said, "What's the matter?"

He says, "If that man," I can't imitate his southern accent, but he said, "If that man had his way, why all the delegates, all the officers in the county, would be black. I live in a county that's seventy percent black."

I said, "So what?"

He said, "So. What? What the hell are you," he said, "What the hell are you, a Communist?"

FUCHS: Is that right?

FRIEDMAN: I gathered -- I didn't know his name, I can't remember who he was, he was a delegate from Mississippi,

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that's all. So, I remember that speech very well. I remember Humphrey. He was a fiery speaker, very, apparently very sincere, and at that time his speech was what you would call a little bit advanced for the time, and the place. I don't mean that there was anything wrong about it, because the speech for nowadays would be very mild; but for that day, which was twenty-two years ago, it was quite advanced. As a matter of fact, there was a question of voting on that plank. My alternate was a man by the name of Byron Rumford, who was a Negro. So, I asked him if he wanted to go in, I would step out, because the alternate could vote only when the principal was absent. So, I went out so he could vote on that civil rights plank, so he could come back home and tell them about it.

FUCHS: I see.

You don't recall anything of the actions of Jack Shelley in regard to that?

FRIEDMAN: No, I don't. I don't remember.

FUCHS: I understand that they...

FRIEDMAN: Jack Shelley was the delegation chairman in '48, was he? Do you remember?

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FUCHS: Well, I'm not sure of that. I'm not an expert on California politics, but I understand that he sort of got mad when they didn't take the roll call on the seating of the Mississippi delegation, on that.

FRIEDMAN: I frankly don't recall the convention on that particular point.

FUCHS: Or you might have stepped out and not even seen it, but I guess he got pretty agitated about this.

FRIEDMAN: I don't remember that...

FUCHS: He must have been the head of the delegation.

FRIEDMAN: I think so. I'm not sure, but I think he was. And in 1956, Brown was the -- in 1940 I think Governor Olson was the chairman of the delegation. I'm not sure, but -- I was an alternate that year.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything of the sentiment in '44, for or against, Henry Wallace?

FRIEDMAN: Well, we had a few people in our delegation. Of course, the real thing that had to do with -- '44 you're talking about?

FUCHS: Yes, when Mr. Truman was replacing Wallace.

FRIEDMAN: We weren't pledged to any Vice President.

FUCHS: No. No, of course not.

FRIEDMAN: We were pledged to Roosevelt and Roosevelt had had no opposition in the convention. That is, at least there was no real opposition. There was some. I think Mr. [James A.] Farley was nominated, I'm not sure. I can't remember exactly. But there were some Wallace votes from California, but I can't recall what they were. They were not from our county.

FUCHS: I just wondered if he was more or less in good favor in Alameda County and whether the...

FRIEDMAN: No, none of the delegates of Alameda County voted for him, because we were -- well, we were administration men, I guess you'd call it that, if you wish. Other people were talked of. [William O.] Douglas was talked of for Vice President, whom I recall.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Farley.

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FUCHS: I believe he was, although I don't...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes, I think he was.

FUCHS: But Douglas was one of the primary ones.

FRIEDMAN: Yes.

FUCHS: And there was some sentiment for Barkley, I believe, even in '44.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, that's right. But I remember it wasn't one ballot, we had -- they took several ballots. I can't remember how many.

FUCHS: Two, I believe.

FRIEDMAN: How many?

FUCHS: It seemed to me that there was two ballots. Hannegan let it out that Mr. Truman was Roosevelt's favorite, but I think they took a second ballot.

FRIEDMAN: Well, it took more than one ballot. I remember that because there were several candidates. I don't remember how California voted, but I do know our county voted for Truman.

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FUCHS: I just wondered if you favored one candidate over the other? If you recall, initially? Was Mr. Truman considered a strong candidate by you at the time as you think back?

FRIEDMAN: As I think back, I think the general idea was that that was a man that Mr. Roosevelt had, how shall we put it, favored. And I think that those of us -- there were four of us from this county who were delegates; we have two congressional districts, and I think the system was to give two from each district and some at large in the state. Well, the four of us, my recollection is, all voted for Mr. Truman on both ballots.

FUCHS: What was your.....

FRIEDMAN: I don't remember, did Mr. Truman have the top vote in the first ballot?

FUCHS: I would have to look that up. It seems to me there was two ballots, but now I can't...

FRIEDMAN: My feeling is offhand that he was second.

FUCHS: I can't think how it would have gone.

FRIEDMAN: I have a feeling that nobody got -- nobody got a

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majority on the first ballot and I'm under the impression that Truman was second place. However, I don't know, I'm not sure. If I had kept a diary I would be able to tell you all these things, or if Pat McDonough was here, he would know. Pat McDonough was the president of the McDonough Steel Company and a strong, ardent, Irish Democrat; and what we call a "positive" one, and he didn't mind saying what he thought.

FUCHS: What was your reaction when President Roosevelt died and Mr. Truman succeeded him?

FRIEDMAN: Well, of course, everybody was sorry to see anybody die and Mr. Roosevelt died, but as far as I was concerned I felt that we had a very good man. In fact, where did I read the other day that among historians that President Eisenhower rated twenty -second in the Presidents and Truman was number eight. Did you read that somewhere?

FUCHS: I didn't see that recently, but there have been several polls and also appraisals by historians who tried to rate them as, you know, "great," and "near great," and "mediocre," and "poor" and

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FRIEDMAN: Well, I think they rated him as number eight among all the Presidents, and if that is a fact, that's pretty high, because we've had thirty-six or whatever it is, thirty-six Presidents, something like that.

FUCHS: Yes, he's been coming up and, I think, even a number of years ago it was Allan Nevins that rated them. I think he was among the "near greats" then.

FRIEDMAN: I personally have great faith in President Truman. I felt that he was a very honest man. That's a feeling I personally have. As you knows there's a great deal of an image that you get of a man. I had met him, I had seen him, I had heard him make speeches, I had seen him sitting around with a group of people, and I had great faith in the fact that he was a very honest man who would try to do what he thought was right, and who had a great feeling for people, an honest feeling, not a political feeling. Now, I know that this sounds as if I'm just trying to give him a big boost, but there's nothing for me to give him a boost for, because he doesn't need it from me in the first place, and it won't do him any good anyway. But I always did feel that way. He was a man who came up from the bottom and it's really remarkable

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what he was able to do; but of course, not only that, but he grew in stature with the office. As soon as he got his confidence back; especially for his second term -- because his first term, there was always a little hesitancy, although I don't know, he vetoed that Taft-Hartley Act in that first term.

FUCHS: He had quite a few important decisions to make in his first term; the Truman Doctrine.

FRIEDMAN: That McCarran Act that I spoke of, I think was his second term. I think that was in 1950.

FUCHS: McCarran-Walter...

FRIEDMAN: Well, I'm not sure, but I think that was in 1950, I'm not sure. So, it wouldn't affect the '48. But labor was a tremendous part; they felt that they had no chance otherwise, and they sold it, they sold that to this county. I can only speak of what happened here because I'm not enough of a politician to be able to figure out what they do other places; but labor was very influential; and so were the black people; so were the Jewish people. They were very strong for him. Of course, he had -- incidentally, he had recognized

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Israel, which meant something to a lot of Jewish people and to a lot of other Americans who were not Jews.

FUCHS: In June of '48.

FRIEDMAN: Yes. And then there were a lot of people who were interested in the Marshall plan. There are all sorts of reasons why, but they just didn't quite trust Dewey. That was about it. It's a peculiar thing about the electorate. If they get a feeling that they're afraid of you, they won't vote for you. Whereas if they feel that they can trust you, somehow it doesn't matter so much what you do, they feel that there must be some reason that you're doing it for their good.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Now what else can I tell you. I can't think of anything else that I can tell you.

FUCHS: In connection with the pre-convention maneuvering, Jimmy Roosevelt had proposed a statement of policy which he wanted the party in California to pass a resolution on, and he was against the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall plan. He thought this should all go through the United Nations. Do you recall anything about that?

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FRIEDMAN: I don't recall, but I don't think it was adopted by the California delegation was it? Do you know?

FUCHS: No, it wasn't.

FRIEDMAN: It wasn't.

FUCHS: I wondered if you recall anything about the maneuvering on that. Will Rogers, Jr. came out and wrote a long memo about it.

FRIEDMAN: That's right, Will Rogers, Jr., and there was James Roosevelt, there were some others, and we were called the liberals. I don't mean by that that Mr. Truman wasn't a liberal, but you have degrees of liberality, or liberalism. No, I don't recall the -- I don't recall it at all.

FUCHS: Have you any recollection of the dispute between Ed [Edwin W.] Pauley and Jimmy Roosevelt? Pauley, of course, was national committeeman before him.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I know Mr. Pauley and I remember him at the convention. I don't know those things, you see, as I have told you before, I was lower in the hierarchy. The only reason I can tell you anything is because I

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was higher in the lowerarchy. I can't recall it. I think in 1944, I think Robert Kenney was very active.

FUCHS: Let's see, he ran for Governor in '46, is that right?

FRIEDMAN: That's right. He didn't get the Democratic nomination because that year we had cross-filings, and Mr. Warren got both nominations.

FUCHS: Why was Warren so popular?

FRIEDMAN: Well, Warren was popular because, in the first place his Republicanism generally was rather toward the middle of the road. For example, the American Federation of Labor supported him, the CIO did not. In those days they were two different organizations. But since he had the support of what we would call, as between the two, the conservative group of labor, he was able to go in. And of course in addition to that, there were other elements. He was a very personable man, fine personality, and a good honest record. And while I always voted a Democratic ticket, I realized that Mr. Warren had a great deal of fine assets; so that that's why the people voted for him.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman was supposed to have said he's a

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Democrat but he didn't know it.

FRIEDMAN: Well, that's not a bad view. He was saying in other words something that I'm saying. I'm saying it in different words. You will notice that the people who get elected as a rule, are not what we call the extra conservative Republicans, or the extra liberal Democrats. They, both of them, have to be somewhere along that middle road, either a little bit to the right or a little bit to the left of the center line. Now, sometimes we elect a man a little bit to the right of

the center line, and sometimes we elect a man a little bit to the left of the center line, but rarely do we elect people on the outskirts. This is not original with me, I'm sure you've heard it before. Now, Mr. Warren may have been a little bit to the right of the center line, and Truman a little bit to the left, but they were both on the center line. Now, that's what he meant by that. Of course, you know Warren's answer when they asked him in 1948 when he ran for Vice President, you know, with Dewey, the next morning they asked him how it was -- to what reason did he ascribe the fact that he wasn't elected. You know what his answer was? "The other fellow got more votes."

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You can't beat that answer.

FUCHS: Yeah, you can't beat that.

FRIEDMAN: It's true.

FUCHS: That's pretty close to the truth. Did you go back to the inauguration in '49?

FRIEDMAN: In '49, yes. In '49?

FUCHS: That's when Mr. Truman was elected.

FRIEDMAN: In '45 and then '49, yes. Yes, yes, I remember it very well. Howard McGrath was the important man then because he had been, shall we say, very instrumental in having Mr. Truman elected. He was National Chairman. Yes, I remember and I remember the ball that they had there in the -- I've forgotten the name of the hotel. They had several balls.

FUCHS: Yes. You said you did go to Roosevelt's last inauguration in '45?

FRIEDMAN: In '45, yes. The inauguration was from the back porch of the White House. Elaine, our daughter -- Elaine was in the Army at that time, she was twenty years old;

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and she was in the Signal Corps stationed at Arlington, Virginia. So, I went out there and she and I stood in the snow. It was in the snow outside the White House. It was in January, January the 20th I presume, when he took the oath, I remember -- distinctly on little things like that -- his son James was there with him, and I remember he, when it came time to take the oath, he began to struggle to get out of his chair to rise, and his son started to help him and he said, "Leave me alone, I can get up myself;" and he rose to take the oath, which was administered by the Chief Justice. Yes, I remember that.

Now, in '49 as you say, I was there also. That was a great celebration, because remember that was a victory which was snapped out of the jaws of death, so to speak, because it was something that was really an overturn -- is that the word you use?

FUCHS: Overturn. Somebody wrote a book, you know, called *Out of the Jaws of Victory*. Dewey lost the thing out of the jaws of victory.

FRIEDMAN: Well, all right. Now, I remember when -- yes. Oh, I remember the betting around here was anywhere

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from nine to one to fifteen to one that Dewey was going to be elected.

FUCHS: Did you have any confidence on election eve?

FRIEDMAN: On election eve I didn't have any confidence. On election day I was still plugging along, but the night before was the night that I realized for the first time that he may carry this county. And that is the reason. As is usually the custom as county chairman, I called together the precinct captains. We had it divided so that one captain had several precincts. Altogether we had about five hundred precincts. And usually we sent for the precinct captains and you get fifty who come around, the old faithful. Well, I wrote a letter to the precinct captains for Monday night, and much to my surprise, over three hundred turned up. And at that point, I said to myself, "Can I be mistaken? Can it really be that this is going to be?" And even then I didn't think much of it, kept on working, and finally about 5 o'clock in the evening (we were all through now), I went over to a club that I belonged to to play a little cards; and about 7 o'clock I began to hear on the radio votes coming in. And so at 7:30 I threw the

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cards down and said, "I'm going down to the courthouse. This is different than I thought." This is not really important.

FUCHS: It's of interest, human interest.

FRIEDMAN: You have brought these out by asking me questions to make me talk, but I realize that this is not important enough for posterity.

FUCHS: Well, we like to show these little sidelights. I think it adds color to the story.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: You were the county chairman, you went to play cards and then you changed...

FRIEDMAN: That's right. About 5 o'clock I figured, "Well, it's all over, there's not much chance. I've done all I could." You see that's the theory. We plugged all during the past week, and the night before, and all day, seeing, you know, the ordinary things you know what the duty of the precinct chairman is to call up the people who haven't voted that you know are Democrats and, "For God's sake, get to the polls and vote," you know.

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I presume you know all these things. Of course you do.

FUCHS: I don't know a lot about politics, especially the operations at the grassroots I know very little about.

FRIEDMAN: Well, that's what you're supposed to do at the grassroots. And we did it. But it didn't look good. But beginning at 5 o'clock it began to look fine.

FUCHS: Did you stay up most of the night?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes, sure. You remember meeting him in '55, I think it was? Remember it was in San Francisco or '56 when President Truman came to -- he was then ex-President, came to San Francisco, we went over to see him, when he autographed the picture that I have?

MRS. FRIEDMAN: And also at the Claremont Hotel he spoke.

FRIEDMAN: Was that that same year?

FUCHS: Was that when he came out in the pre-convention, so-called non-political tour in June?

FRIEDMAN: Remember you were with me then?

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Yes. Yes.

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FRIEDMAN: You were in San Francisco, we went over to see him. He was staying at the hotel, and we went up just to say hello to him, and he autographed a picture for me you know.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: I think he autographed a book at that time.

FUCHS: Would that have been the fundraising dinner in '55?

FRIEDMAN: I can't remember.

FUCHS: His first volume of his *Memoirs* came out in '55, and then the second volume in '56.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: In '56 we saw him in Chicago.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, we saw him there.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: I know we saw him -- he spoke at the Claremont Hotel. Maybe that was after. I think that was about the last week in...

FRIEDMAN: May of '57?

FUCHS: He was here for the Truman Library fundraising dinner in '55, and then he was out here in '58 for...

FRIEDMAN: For Brown or something, or...

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FUCHS: Something. I really don't recall.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: He spoke in Oakland -- Berkeley at the Claremont Hotel, I remember, and then we saw him at the convention in '56 in Chicago.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, that's right. That's right.

FUCHS: How do you...

FRIEDMAN: He was a great character. I am very fond of him.

FUCHS: The nomination of Stevenson in '52, how did you feel about that?

FRIEDMAN: Well, I didn't go to that convention. I wasn't there; but I remember that -- after he was nominated I remember that -- Truman, I remember spoke for him.

FUCHS: Stevenson?

FRIEDMAN: Remember that?

FUCHS: Stevenson sort of shied away from running on Truman's record, and he displaced Frank McKinney with his own man, so to speak, Steven Mitchell, you know.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, yes. Well, it was very bad you see, when

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a candidate for office, Democrat or Republican, tries to run against the administration. For example, if you run against -- if you're a Democrat and the previous administration was Democratic, it's pretty tough to run against it. If you do that, there's no confidence all around. The same thing is true of Republicans. You notice how Nixon, for example, boy how he hung on Eisenhower's tail: I mean in his campaign. Although Eisenhower hadn't been President for eight years, he always, "The Eisenhower years, those were the great years." Well, that's what you've got to do if you're a party man, you know, because in the first place you've got to hold what we call the Democratic faithful. There are approximately a third of the people that will always vote Democratic, and there about a third of the people that will always vote Republican, now you've got that third in between that you've got to convince, and that's about what happens. If you look at all these percentages, in the worst years, Landon got 38 percent, he got his Republicans, he got his third Republicans and just a little more.

FUCHS: Yes.

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FRIEDMAN: Now, that's the best you can do. If you're going to start complaining about other Democrats you're in trouble.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Well, the whole concept of electing Presidents is changing.

FRIEDMAN: Have you read the book *The Selling of the President*?

FUCHS: No, I haven't

FRIEDMAN: Bring it out and show it to him.

FUCHS: I guess it's had a very good sale.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, I want to tell you, if you read that book, and if it's true, it's bad.

FUCHS: I read a long review of it.

FRIEDMAN: I know, but this is the book itself.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: If what he says is true, and of course, I am in no position to know -- but it sounds true.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: This will give you an idea of what's going to happen in...

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FRIEDMAN: Have you read it?

FUCHS: No, I haven't read it.

FRIEDMAN: I'll tell you what I'll do.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: It's not what a President is... .

FRIEDMAN: You've read it?

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: I've read it. Let's give it to him.

FUCHS: Oh, no, no.

FRIEDMAN: There's the kind of a man who will enjoy it.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Yes, this is...

FUCHS: No, you might want to show it to someone...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, well, we'll get it again. I want you -- you should read it. You absolutely must read it, and the best way to do is just take it.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: You don't know what's going to happen in elections from now on. It's the image.

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FRIEDMAN: It's the television and the image.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: That's what I meant. Regardless of (according to the television), regardless of what a man is, or what he stands for, it's how he appears on television.

FUCHS: Someone else mentioned this to me that a man almost has to be, you know, tall, and good looking, and have that certain something, whether he's got any...

MRS. FRIEDMAN: He has to have a fine coach for television appearances.

FRIEDMAN: Well, he tells how they put them under wraps. Are you taking all this down, too?

FUCHS: It's on there.

FRIEDMAN: That's all right, I don't -- as I say, if that is true, it's a sad commentary, it's a sad commentary of American politics.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: It doesn't matter what you believe, or what you stand for, it's what you make the people think you believe.

FUCHS: It's supposed to be a very good book. I think I

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read the review in the *New York Times* book review section.

FRIEDMAN: Well, you read the book. You take this with you. You know what's going to happen? You aren't going to go to sleep tonight. You're going to sit and read that whole thing. It's a fascinating to anybody who likes to...

FUCHS: Maybe your wife would like to have -- send it to Nixon to be autographed.

FRIEDMAN: What's in there? What is that?

FUCHS: It's got your...

FRIEDMAN: No, no, what's inside.

FUCHS: Oh, it's a *Life* magazine...

FRIEDMAN: You can't have that, because it's...

MRS. FRIEDMAN: That was my bookmark as I read it.

FUCHS: Well, this has your bookplate in it, you don't want to give me that.

FRIEDMAN: No, I'm giving it to you. Now, you'll know who it came from.

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FUCHS: "A book is a journey into new lands."

FRIEDMAN: Sure it is, too, right.

FUCHS: I'd like very much to read it.

FRIEDMAN: I know you would. You won't go to sleep tonight.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: What can be done these days...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, boy, if that book is true: If what McGinnis says is true there...

MRS. FRIEDMAN: I heard Unruh on television the other day and they said. "Are you working hard for your campaign? I understand that you're taking coaching lessons for television."

He said, "That's right." And he said, "They want to make a different image. They tell me I must smile more."

FUCHS: Who was this?

FRIEDMAN: Unruh, Jesse Unruh, the man that ran for Governor in California.

FUCHS: Unruh.

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FRIEDMAN: Yeah, he is a candidate for -- he is the candidate for the Democratic nomination for Governor this year. He has announced that he is going to run.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: And you know his whole personality, that is that we get, the whole concept that we get, has changed completely since his few lessons in television approach.

FRIEDMAN: What is it now? I haven't seen it.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Smiles.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, he smiles.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: He was always very, very serious. He's quite a very deep thinker, I mean; but before you always got the impression he was worried, but now it's this happy face. And he said that's what he was told to do.

FRIEDMAN: According to that book, and I don't...

MRS. FRIEDMAN: After reading that book you will understand it.

FRIEDMAN: As I say, I don't know whether it is true or not, but they say they deliberately and willfully kept Nixon under wraps, and only let him out, on certain occasions, very carefully. And when they had a panel they very

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carefully chose the panel to ask "spontaneous" questions. I don't know if that's so or not.

FUCHS: Well, you know, I saw him come out a couple of times, you know, it was like a big act, that was my impression.

FRIEDMAN: I'll tell you. I don't know anything about Nixon but I know that Truman never did that. Truman just honestly liked people and he'd get out and see people, he liked them. He liked to be with them, he liked to talk to them, he liked to do things for them if he could. At least that's the impression he gave me, and I think that's the impression he gave a great many people.

FUCHS: Well, I've got about...

FRIEDMAN: Well, I guess that just about covered all of the subject I can do.

FUCHS: You don't recall any other personal contacts with him?

FRIEDMAN: I can't remember now, that's about all. I don't remember any other personal contacts with President Truman. That's about all unless you have some questions that you can ask so that I can tell you whether I do

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know or do not know.

FUCHS: Did you normally go over to -- across the Bay to attend the meetings they had there; the speeches and various...

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: Did you go to the...

FRIEDMAN: Well, San Francisco, you see at that time, I don't know what it is now, maybe it still is, was always the headquarters for northern California.

FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: So, whenever you had a \$100 dinner ordinarily it was over there, and the people from all northern California who were interested enough, would come down and I always went to those dinners, sure. And whenever Truman was there, I was there.

FUCHS: Did you go out to that pre-convention meeting they had in Golden Gate Park, in San Francisco. This was in June when he came out to accept the degree you know, the day before, at the University of California.

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FRIEDMAN: June of what year?

FUCHS: '48. He made a...

FRIEDMAN: June of '48.

FUCHS: He made a, what they called a non-political tour.

FRIEDMAN: Where did he speak?

FUCHS: Golden Gate Park. It was the Elk's sponsored Flag Day ceremony.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, I probably -- oh, I got another time I remember him. I remember him in 1945 and the founding of the United Nations.

FUCHS: Oh, did you go to that?

FRIEDMAN: In San Francisco. Yes, I went there. I had a seat down there. I think it was 1950, or would that be...

FUCHS: He came back out for the fifth anniversary I believe.

FRIEDMAN: I think that was it.

FUCHS: But the original signing was in....

FRIEDMAN: No, I'm talking about the fifth anniversary.

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FUCHS: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: In 1950.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: At the Opera House.

FRIEDMAN: At the Opera House. He came back from a trip from, I don't know somewhere there, from Korea or Hawaii or somewhere.

FUCHS: From Wake Island, maybe?

FRIEDMAN: Maybe. Was that the year, with [General Douglas] MacArthur?

FUCHS: In '50 I believe.

FRIEDMAN: That was the time. He came back, and in 1950 they had a -- some kind of a celebration at the Opera House and I was there. I remember he spoke and that's all I remember. I don't remember anybody else, and I don't remember what he said, but I was there.

FUCHS: I know they had an anniversary celebration.

FRIEDMAN: You know what else there was at that time? I remember it was in the Opera House in San Francisco.

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MRS. FRIEDMAN: I remember. And you had to have tickets to get in.

FRIEDMAN: Yeah. That's right. I was given tickets, I was -- I was just high enough in the lowerarchy to get tickets.

FUCHS: Higher up in the lowerarchy. What about the Nixon-Helen Gahagan Douglas campaign in 1950? Do you have any recollection of that?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes. Sure I have. What are you doing with that?

MRS. FRIEDMAN: I was just showing him one of my -- this is one of my prized possessions.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, that's a book, *Profiles in Courage*.

FUCHS: Oh, nice.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: That's John F. Kennedy's book.

FUCHS: "To Monroe and Dorothy Friedman, Best wishes, John."

MRS. FRIEDMAN: John. It's hard to read the signature.

FUCHS: Oh yes, real nice. Looks like "John F." doesn't it?

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FRIEDMAN: That's right.

FUCHS: *Profiles in Courage*.

FRIEDMAN: We took the book and asked him to autograph it. But that book we won't give you.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Oh, no.:

FUCHS: I bought a copy of that one. This is probably an earlier edition.

FRIEDMAN: We won't give it to you anyway. It's signed. Let's see now.

FUCHS: I don't have a signature of his.

FRIEDMAN: Well, I'm going to ask Mr. Nixon to sign that one.

FUCHS: You're what?

FRIEDMAN: That book you've got there.

FUCHS: I have one of Lyndon, Lyndon Johnson, but I never got one of Kennedy which I'd like to have.

FRIEDMAN: This book was in 1960 when he had been nominated

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for President, but had not yet been elected. What was the date given on it, September 1960.

MRS. FRIEDMAN: I went over when he was going to Hawaii and he had -- at a luncheon, it was at the airport in San Francisco and had my picture taken...

FRIEDMAN: Where's your picture?

MRS. FRIEDMAN: Oh, my picture's down in the art gallery.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, downstairs in the archives.

MRS.FRIEDMAN: In the archives. I think maybe I have a picture up here. I had my picture taken with him in

FRIEDMAN: Had her picture taken with Kennedy, shaking hands with Kennedy, and boy, she's never forgotten it. Well, you asked about...

FUCHS: Helen Gahagan Douglas.

FRIEDMAN: Oh, I remember that campaign. That was a rather bitter campaign; but of course you must remember, in politics that things are said sometimes when you run for office, that you want to forget afterwards. But

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that was it, that is the way politics sometimes run.

FUCHS: Sheridan Downey, he resigned to give Nixon a little seniority, didn't he?

FRIEDMAN: Well, he -- Nixon was already elected.

FUCHS: Yeah.

FRIEDMAN: And Downey was leaving on the first week in January, so he resigned at the beginning of December, I think just to give a little seniority which is perfectly proper, after all. If you're from California, there's no reason why the Senator from California shouldn't be assisted, and to that extent, he's not -- by doing that he's not opposing a Democrat so to speak.

FUCHS: Well, that's about all I have unless you can think of something else in connection with Mr. Truman.

FRIEDMAN: In about August 1948 we got a telegram from Howard McGrath the National Chairman. He said, "Some of the columnists have designated President Truman's train trip, which he's about to take as a "whistlestop"; and one of the -- one of the places he's going to stop is Berkeley and another one at Oakland. What do you

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think of calling your places "whistlestops?" So, that's all the story.

FUCHS: Did you wire him back an answer?

FRIEDMAN: No. No, I didn't wire that back, but you know the story they told about the telegram from Grover Cleveland?

FUCHS: No.

FRIEDMAN: The county chairman in Oakland here was a man by the name of Bunker, and this was in 1884. I wasn't alive then; but he was alive, and now he was an old man, and he used to tell the story to the group of the Young Democrats, and he said, "There's a lot of noise going around that Cleveland was the father of an illegitimate child in Buffalo." As a matter of fact, historians do tell us that when he was a sheriff in Buffalo, an unmarried man, there was a widow with whom he contracted a liaison, not married, and he did have a child with her, so the historians say. I don't know if this is true or not. So, when he was running for President in 1884, people did a lot of talking about that. So, Bunker wired then to Grover Cleveland and said, "People

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out here saying that you're the father of an illegitimate child. What shall I tell them?"

And the answer came back, by telegram, "Tell them the truth."

And Bunker said, "How the hell did I know what the truth was?"

You better cut that off now because that hasn't anything to do with Truman now.

FUCHS: Okay.

FRIEDMAN: We decided on a method of -- we had to raise money in the summer of 1948. You can't conduct a campaign, even a small campaign, without money. So, money was tight to come in. People were hesitant. So, we decided we would send out a letter to all the Democrats in the county asking for a donation of any amount from \$1 to \$10. It cost us \$800 to send out 8,000 letters and we got \$800. Now you understand the problem of raising money.

Now you can turn it off.

FUCHS: That is something.

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