

Oral History Interview
with
NEALE ROACH

Writer for the Democratic National Committee, 1936-40; assistant to the treasurer of the Democratic National Committee, 1940; chief clerk of the Democratic National headquarters for the 1940 presidential campaign; assistant director of the Democratic National Convention, 1944; and manager of the 1948, 1952, and 1956 Democratic National conventions.

Washington, D.C.
January 21 and October 2, 1969

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Roach, would you give me a little of your background for the record: Where were you born, where did you go to school, and what positions did you hold prior to your service with the Democratic National Committee?

ROACH: I was born in Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, December 29, 1912. I went to parochial schools in Washington and in Maryland, I completed high school at St. John's College High School in Washington, D.C.

While in St. John's High School, just by accident, I had my first and also very early entrance into national Democratic politics. I obtained a part-time, after-school job, and full-time summer job at the Democratic National Committee. This actually happened in June of 1929. I worked under the then national chairman, John J. Raskob, and had the grand and glorious title of copy boy, working with Charles Michelson, who was then director of publicity

This actually was a fascinating job to me, it helped

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me in my school work, and facetiously enough I was the envy of a lot of my classmates, because in 1932, I attended my first Democratic National Convention, had the thrill of being in the basement of the old Chicago stadium at the time that Tom Gary, the famous "voice of the sewer" started the chant, "We want Roosevelt," which was the beginning of the stampede of delegates away from Alfred Smith to Roosevelt, who of course was later nominated.

I had the added thrill of being present when Franklin Roosevelt broke the first precedent by flying into Chicago to accept the nomination on the spot, rather than wait for the usual nominating committee to call on him at his home.

There were many thrills for a young man, more than I can think of at the moment, in connection with that convention, but one of the heartaches in connection with that convention, was that the day immediately after the session ended, the new chairman, James A. Farley, notified all employees of the Democratic National Committee that they were no longer employees and in other words we were actually given pink slips and told to return to our place of origin under our own steam, and we would be reimbursed later. My salary at that time was \$6.00 a week. I had to borrow enough money for an upper berth on the B & O

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Railroad from Chicago to Washington, it took me about eight months to pay it off. However, much to my pleasure, I was rehired by the Democratic National Committee and served with them until I was loaned to the National Recovery Administration, along with Charles Michelson, the director of publicity, and was given the spot of supervisor of printing and publications, and supervised 400 people. I was a rather young man to have that much responsibility. I served in that capacity for almost a year after the NRA was declared unconstitutional, and it was in 1936 when I returned to the Democratic National Committee as a writer, writing speeches and press releases, and was taken to the 1936 convention in Philadelphia. After that convention, of course, Roosevelt was re-elected for his second term.

I stayed with the national committee full-time, working in various capacities and fundraising, working on registration drives, and doing some speechwriting. In 1940, I was made assistant to the treasurer who was the director of the 1940 convention in Chicago, and this, of course, gave me added experience both in conventions and in fundraising, which I participated in following the 1940 convention.

In those days our presidential campaigns were run out of New York, so after the convention in Chicago in 1940,

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I went to New York and served as chief clerk of the Democratic National Headquarters until the end of the campaign, and of course Roosevelt was re-elected for a third term. In 1940, this was my first experience in having anything to do with a presidential inauguration, in 1941, and at that time I worked with the chairman as liaison with the inaugural committee. In 1944, I was actually director of the convention, although Ed Pauley, who was national treasurer, had the title. He gave me the title of assistant director, and turned all the mechanics of the convention over to me, because I had had some little experience in the past. This was my first meeting with Senator Truman, at the 1944 convention. Shortly after the so-called Wallace stampede on the convention floor the night we were nominating for Vice President, the next day I met Senator Truman for the first time. After the convention, of course, we set up our headquarters in the Biltmore Hotel in New York as we had done in past campaigns. Vice President-elect Truman, came to the Biltmore Hotel one day for the purpose of going to the National Democratic Club, commonly known as Tammany Hall, for a fund-raising luncheon. I had the honor of escorting him to that luncheon. This was my

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first real impression of President Truman. As we came out of the Biltmore Hotel, I had a limousine and driver waiting and Mr. Truman said, "How far is it?"

I said, "It's about an eight-block walk."

He said, "Well, let's walk." And as young as I was in those days I had difficulty keeping up with the Vice President-elect. He had as brisk a walk then as he always had, and when we arrived at the Democratic Club, I was breathless.

But on the way he said, "Neale, what do I do at this luncheon? Just ask them for money?"

I said, "No, Mr. Vice President, there will be others there who will ask for money, you just ask for their support in the campaign. We'll handle the crass subject of money in our own way."

He laughed at that and he said, "I know a little bit about fundraising. I've run for office myself before."

I said, "I know you do." I had trouble calling him "Senator" even then. I said, "Senator, you are now a candidate for Vice President and we just can't let you ask for money personally. We'll do the job."

My next experience with the Vice President actually was when he was President in 1948. I had the honor again --

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I should say the first time I had the honor of actually being the full manager was during the 1948 convention in Philadelphia. Howard McGrath, the late Senator from Rhode Island was national chairman and the Republicans were holding their convention in Philadelphia.

At the same time I had worked with the Republican group in 1944 in Chicago when the Government asked both political parties, or directors of both political parties, to hold their conventions in Chicago because it was a central location, and it being war time transportation was extremely short. As a matter of fact, delegations had to be certified before they could even get space on trains going into Chicago, and getting more to the point I had worked with the Republicans very closely on that convention, so in 1948 it made my job a lot easier because the same group of Republicans were running their convention which preceded ours by one week.

The Republicans opened their headquarters in Philadelphia in October, 1947, and a few weeks after that, began to berate the Democratic National Chairman, Senator McGrath, to send somebody to Philadelphia because we had a lot of mutual problems. We were sharing expenses on construction work and other matters that had to be closely coordinated between both parties, and Senator McGrath finally

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appointed me as convention manager. This was in November of 1947. He asked me then if I should move to Philadelphia.

I said, "I don't see any point in moving to Philadelphia. It's only a short train ride. I can commute whenever the Republicans want to meet."

Actually, I did not open the headquarters in Philadelphia until February of '48. After having opened the headquarters I still commuted back and forth. I would go to Senator McGrath's office and fill him in on what had transpired until he got tired of seeing me and he told me that I knew more about conventions than he did, and not to waste my valuable time or his unvaluable time in bothering him, just go on and do what I thought had to be done.

I went to see Matt Connelly at the White House on several occasions, to ask him if President Truman didn't have some particular desires about the convention's arrangements, and so Matt said, "You've been through this. You run it your way."

From that standpoint it was one of the finest conventions that I've ever had anything to do with, speaking only from a personal standpoint, not in the sense of braggadocio. But not once did the White House staff, or the President himself, or Senator McGrath,, tell me how

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to set up the convention. I was told when it was all over it was one of the smoothest that we had ever had.

HESS: What are the duties of managing a convention? What are the different aspects?

ROACH: Since I haven't managed one since 1956, I can only talk about the way I handled it. I handled it in 1944, '48, '52 and '56, up until a couple of months prior to the convention in '56.

I have always operated almost as a one-man show, with a very limited staff. I have had the experience that sometimes when you turn duties over to people unless you're with them every day, they sometimes fall down. It's a bad habit to get into to be a one-man show, because you spread yourself too thin.

But basically, the duties that I took on, number one: The minute that I would set up the convention headquarters, of course, I'd have letterhead printed with the address, phone number, my name as convention director, and I would write a letter to each national committeeman, committeewoman, state chairman, in each state, this of course with prior approval from the national chairman, asking those three state party leaders to designate one person to handle the convention arrangements for that state delegation.

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This made a lot of sense because as history shows, not in every state, but in most states, you have several factions, and we do have to look to our national committee members and state chairman to be our voice and our pulse so they would designate one person who would be my contact on housing, particularly on housing, and all other facets of the convention. The housing and the seating of delegates were probably the two most difficult problems, particularly when you're in a city with a few hotel rooms, or few first-class hotels.

In the case of Philadelphia that was a major headache. We housed people in Atlantic City, Wilmington, Delaware, Baltimore, Camden. As a matter of fact, I think we took care of only about fifty percent of the delegates in Philadelphia proper.

I'm getting away from the subject a little bit, but I want to bring in the part about housing because it has a bearing on the immediate present.

One of the things that happened on housing in Philadelphia in '48 was that there was such a shortage that we housed the press, or I should say a great majority of the press and the other news media -- this was the first time that both conventions were being televised nationally, or as far as they could go

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nationally. They used the coaxial cable. But it was the first time convention hall was covered and all of its proceedings, both conventions, by television. They had to house these hundreds and hundreds of staff people, and technical people from the networks and wire services, metropolitan dailies, weeklies, magazines, and so on, in dormitories at the University of Pennsylvania.

You can imagine the howl that went up when some of the members of the news media had to sleep in dormitories and bathe in a community shower. Bathing in a community shower for most of the news media was just something that was absolutely obnoxious.

As a result of this, the representatives of all of the news media got together and at the 1952 convention, they passed their own resolution. After the '48 convention they passed their own resolution that all news media would have equal housing with delegates and would have first-class hotel rooms. And of course, this has created a monstrous problem at recent conventions.

The housing problem is, no matter where you are, even in Chicago which boasts the greatest number of hotel rooms, and that's probably accurate insofar as first-class rooms are concerned, it's still quite a job. Our only responsibility, I say ours, I mean the directors of the

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conventions, is to house the delegates, the delegations from the various states, by giving them a block of rooms.

Invariably you put them in the wrong hotel, and when they get notification as to which hotel you have assigned them, they put all sorts of pressure on, and you have to sort of stand pat, be a little firm with them, reason with them as pleasantly as you can, make adjustments by juggling housing wherever you can, and so on. With the press, you assign them a block of rooms, not necessarily where they want to go, but where you want them to go.

In the headquarters hotel, of course, you do have to consider the major networks, and the metropolitan press, the daily press, the telegraphic press, so-called, the wire services, and see to it that they have reasonable space within the headquarters hotel so that they can be on the spot to cover any news that develops.

Transportation is always a big problem in setting up a convention. Car manufacturers usually provide an ample number of cars for free, they do not provide drivers, you have to look to the local political leaders to provide drivers and this is usually done without too much trouble. The local people pick up the cost of that. Transportation in and out of the city is usually handled by the railroads

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and airlines, but the convention director's office has a lot of pressure on that point.

The biggest problem, of course, is seating of delegates and guests and the issuance of tickets. There's only one hall in this country that I know of that can satisfy everybody, and that's the Astrodome, and I doubt if you can ever put a convention in that hall. It may come about some day. They put in a bid for the 1968 convention but they could not come up with enough hotel rooms within a reasonable distance from the Astrodome. As a matter of fact, in order to come up with enough hotel rooms, about fifty percent of the required amount, which was 12,000 rooms, would be in the area of Galveston and other places, thirty, forty, fifty miles away from convention hall. So this is one of the reasons why the Astrodome was not given a chance in 1968.

Getting back to the 1948 convention, if I may for a moment, I think I've covered -- you asked me the duties of a convention manager, I haven't actually covered them all because if I get into chapter and verse on the duties -- I'll tell you about the times that my shirt has been torn off my

back by irate Senators and delegates who couldn't get enough tickets and badges. As a matter of fact, my own Senator, in 1948, the late Senator [Herbert]

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O'Connor, rest his soul, met me in the hallway of the Bellview Stratford Hotel and wanted to know where in the devil was his box. We had given box tickets to each Senator, and I told the Senator that all tickets had been turned over to the secretary of the Democratic state committee, and that was under instructions of the national committee members from Maryland, and the Senator, in effect, told me I was a prevaricator and with that grabbed my shirt collar, and there I was standing in the corridor of the hotel with my shirt torn to shreds. And all I could think to do was to turn around and smile at the Senator, which made him madder. Finally, I took him by the arm and took him into my office, called my secretary and I was able to borrow a couple of other tickets to pacify him because I realized that for me to send him to the secretary of the Democratic state committee was making him go down the ladder too far, and in his frame of mind, I just didn't want to irritate him any more. The sad part of it was, the Senator didn't even offer to buy me a new shirt.

The question of seating of delegations and the issuing of tickets to delegations as I have said before, probably repeating myself too much, is an extremely difficult one. It takes more than a Solomon to figure

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it out. You do have to use some intelligence in your floor plan because you have to keep your delegations together as much as you can, and then of course, they're not all the same size. You really have to use a draftsman to start planning, and you usually draw up four or five rough drafts before you finalize the most intelligent plan that you can get. And you have to be careful not to print that final seating plan or let anybody see it until the very last minute.

Tickets normally are distributed to the two national committee members from each state. They are required to sign a receipt, they are required to call for the tickets together and sign the receipt jointly, and then let them squabble over it. They get all the tickets for each delegate and each alternate, and what few guests tickets that they have at their disposal. And naturally none of them are ever satisfied, not even the Canal Zone, and certainly not Texas or California, New York, or any of the other states. But you just have to weather the storm.

You know that you're going to get brickbats, and if you know these things in advance, you can usually prepare yourself either by taking some kind of a sedative, or you ask your doctor to give you an extra shot of vitamin B+, you get a good night's sleep before the convention opens,

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when is an impossibility, but always be prepared that you're going to have at least ten or twenty irate national committee members or state chairman, Senators, Congressman, others, who think they're entitled to more than they're getting. In addition to that you have the sustaining contributors to the party, and they're certainly entitled to some consideration. Invariably some of the bigger contributors are not given what they should get so they're on your back. But by and large, your biggest problems boil down to housing, transportation, seating -- not putting them in

the order of their magnitude, but those are the biggest problems, and it take about five months of constant work. Now, I don't mean five months around the clock, but five months starting off at an intelligently slow pace, planning, as I say, by getting your contact people in each state.

You have to make a thorough check of each hotel and not let the hotel manager just show you his clean sample rooms, but it's really necessary to make a thorough check of every hotel that has allocated space to the convention headquarters for the convention, not only their guestrooms, but you really ought to go into every floor, check their housekeeping methods, check all of their public rooms because each state delegation

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must have caucus rooms, meeting rooms and social rooms, and all these things take a great amount of time. You have to work closely with the local board of trade and the local convention bureau, and of course, the local political leaders.

This is what requires, I would say, at least five months to be actively, full-time, on the scene, right up until the end of the convention. And of course saying that sentence, "the end of the convention," brings up a mountain of headaches, and reminds me vividly of the 1952 convention.

I had already resigned from the national committee, effective after the convention, and Governor Adlai Stevenson had been nominated. He found out that I had resigned and pleaded with me to stay on at least through the campaign, and I swallowed my tongue, I guess you might say, and choked up a little bit, because I had been on the road for ten months in 1951 for the Democratic National Committee raising money, setting up registration drives, and then had been convention manager in Chicago and spent five more months there. Anyway, I figured what's another two or three months out of my life. But I still had the cleanup work, and that's the big headache of closing out a convention, not only getting all files

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shipped back to national headquarters, but paying all the bills and in some cases they won't let you out of the city until that's accomplished.

A few of the things that occurred in 1952 come to my mind. I had been in Chicago as convention manager since February of '52, and of course working closely with the late Walter Hallanan, who was chairman of the Republican convention on arrangements. I had worked with him in '44 in Chicago and '48 in Philadelphia, and we had become most compatible in our working together on our mutual problems of construction of the speakers' platform, the press stands, and the camera stands and so forth, and Walter Hallanan had so many problems that I used to chide him in a nice way because he had so many candidates. They were coming out of his ears and he couldn't satisfy them all. I can't remember the names of all the candidates he had. I know that Senator Taft was a front runner, and a great many people were pushing for General Eisenhower, and I believe all together there were about five active candidates. Mr. Stassen, of course, was one of them. I used to sit back and laugh at Walter in some of our joint meetings.

I had no problems at all. I had an incumbent President, and I was out there representing the Democratic

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National Committee.

One night in March of '52, I had been commuting back and forth to Washington to help set up a fundraising dinner in the National Guard Armory. I was not in Washington the night of the dinner, I was in Chicago, and I listened to President Truman's speech on the radio in my office there in the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago, the night that President Truman announced that he would not be a candidate. I don't think ninety seconds passed before I had a phone call from Walter Hallanan and he just laughed and laughed and laughed because he knew then that I would have candidates coming out of my ears, and I did.

Although the late Senator [Estes] Kefauver had already announced, which, of course, I thought was premature. He had not waited to see what President Truman was going to do. As a matter of fact, that rankled quite a few people. So in addition to Senator Kefauver, we then had Senator [Richard] Russell, Senator [Robert] Kerr of Oklahoma, and a few others. I remember Senator Kerr calling me and wanting me to set up headquarters space for him at the Conrad Hilton Hotel, and I had already made the decision immediately after President Truman's decision not to run that I would not show any favoritism -- that requests from candidates would be handled on a first come, first served

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basis.

I knew there would be other candidates, but Senator Kefauver's representative had already asked for the main ballroom in the Conrad Hilton for their headquarters, so following the decision that I had arbitrarily set up I allocated the space to Senator Kefauver. When Senator Kerr asked me what space was available, I named all of the public rooms that were available in the headquarters hotel, which was the Conrad Hilton, and he said, "What about that ballroom?" And I told him that Senator Kefauver already had it and I told him the reason why, and he said, "That's fair enough. I don't want the most ostentatious space because everybody will think that because I am supposed to be a millionaire that I'm just flaunting my wealth. What else have you got?"

I told him about the Normandy Lounge, which actually was the entire mezzanine area which completely surrounds the open lobby in the Conrad Hilton and probably it's the showiest area, and Senator Kerr selected that, in spite of the fact he did not want to flaunt his wealth. I say this in all kindness, because he was one of the greatest friends that I ever had, and I know that if he's looking down now he won't mind me telling this story about his selection of space. When he finally established his

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headquarters you couldn't see anything but Senator Kerr's pictures all around the balcony of the lobby.

Another little story I know that Bob Kerr wouldn't mind me telling, was that he wanted to bring a band to Chicago.

Down in Oklahoma City they have a band known as the Kilties Band. This is made up of some sixty or seventy-five girls, as a matter of fact, my wife used to be in that band when she was a young girl, and they played bagpipes.

I remember the band well because in 1932 when Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was a candidate for President in Chicago, he brought that same band to Chicago with him and they played day and night in every lobby of every hotel and every street and bagpipes were coming out everybody's ears for weeks.

Anyway, in '32 things were much looser than they were in '52, and the musicians' union had established a rule that any bands that were imported, whether they be amateur bands or high school bands or professional or what have you, that for every man, you had to pay the musicians' union, that is the American Federation of Musicians, "standby." By that I mean that if you had a fifty-piece band that you had brought in from Oklahoma City or Oshkosh, Wisconsin, you had to pay the musicians' union, the American Federation

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of Musicians, the equivalent scale for fifty men, even though those fifty men didn't play. It was what they called "standby" payment. So Senator Kerr wanted to know what this would cost him, and I said, "How many are in the band?"

And he told me and I think it was about sixty or seventy girls, so I figured up the scale and I said, "How long do you think they'll play?"

He said, "Oh, they probably will be playing every day."

I said, "Let's say they play on the average of six hours a day," so we did a little multiplication, and by the time we figured out what it would cost him not only to transport the band and house them and feed them, but the standby he would have to pay the musicians' union, it would probably cost him more than his entire campaign. So he scrubbed the entire idea immediately. He said, "Neale, I think that would really be flaunting my wealth."

Senator Russell was a candidate. He is one of our greatest statesmen, a true statesman, and a true Democrat. I hope he lives a long, long time. He made the mistake of selecting three convention managers, and each one of them called on me at separate times and of course gave separate orders, which added up to confusion. So rather

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than embarrass the Senator I called each one of these managers separately and asked each one of them to attend a meeting in my office, and it may have been a little embarrassing to them, but I just had to meet it head on and say, "Who's calling the shots?" So we got it straightened out anyway. There were no problems there, except that they wanted the very space that I had already given to, I think, Senator Kerr at Stockyard Inn, which was right next to the International Amphitheatre in Chicago.

By and large, we weathered the storm, and I don't think I came out of it with any scars because I went out of my way to make sure that I did everything I could for each one of the candidates. With regard to space, if they didn't like the space that they had, I would try to improve on it, give them additional space. Of course, each candidate pays for their own. I don't mean that I was taking money out of the national committee or out of my own pocket to do them a favor. I was simply trying to do my job as convention manager and make sure that I couldn't be accused of playing favorites with any one of them.

HESS: Did Vice President Barkley have any requests for space in 1952?

ROACH: No, Vice President Barkley didn't. Senator Earl Clements was handling his arrangements, and he called me

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and all he wanted was a large suite at the Blackstone Hotel, and of course as history knows, certain leading political figures, and particularly the top labor leaders called on Mr. Barkley, and informed him that they would not back him, and this broke the gentleman's heart, I know that, because I saw him just a few hours after they withdrew, or did not give him their backing.

Actually, there was not time enough for any big setup. I think Vice President Barkley decided at a pretty late stage that he would get into the thing, and by that time other candidates had announced and had been given -- as a matter of fact, all the space in the Conrad Hilton Hotel had been assigned, with the exception of a few small public rooms, which of course were available to the Vice President if he wanted them. I had no personal contact from the Vice President, other than from Senator Earl Clements, who was representing him.

HESS: Do you recall what Vice President Barkley said when you saw him shortly after the labor leaders had said they could not support him?

ROACH: I just shook hands with him and I said, I always called him Mr. Veep and said, "I sure wish you were in there."

He said, "I do too."

And that was it.

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One of the bigger problems I had in connection with the various candidates in '52 was assigning the space in the area adjacent to the convention arena for the purpose of their accumulating and preparing their material for their demonstrations. Actually, each candidate wanted space closest to the convention floor and on the same level. This was not possible because all space on the same level was taken up by news media and caucus rooms and concession stands, so I simply had to put it on the basis of drawing straws and that worked out pretty well.

HESS: Mr. Roach, what do you recall about the efforts of the group backing Henry Wallace in 1944?

ROACH: Well, looking back on it now, I didn't know it at the time, of course, but as the convention opened that evening (this is the session at which we were going to nominate for Vice President), a great many of the delegates' seats were filled with non-delegates who had gotten in with counterfeit tickets, and through other methods. And a lot of the delegates, bona fide delegates, couldn't even find their seats. Now, all this we didn't find out until later.

At the time the roll call got to Iowa and Wallace's name was placed in nomination, bedlam broke out in the entire Chicago stadium -- on the floor, in the galleries.

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They had planned their demonstration very well even to the point of seeing to it that the organist and the band played the Iowa corn song as long and as loud as they possibly could.

The demonstration on the floor got out of hand, the entire convention was getting out of hand. Ed Pauley turned to me, and we had already been trying to get the organist to answer his phone, of course his phone didn't have a bell, it had a light right in front of him, right in front of his keyboard. But he wouldn't answer the phone that we picked up on the speaker's platform, nor would the bandleader answer his phone. Pauley said, "Stop that organ."

And I said, "Tell me how? He won't answer the phone."

He said, "Get an ax."

I sent my assistant, Byrne Austin with instructions to get a fire ax and stop that organ any way he could. He was on his way to do it when a motion came from the floor to adjourn until noon the next day. Sam Jackson, the permanent chairman of the convention rapped his gavel down and said, "Convention is adjourned until noon tomorrow," and with that left the podium, we cut off the mikes. Senator [Claude] Pepper was fighting his way to the platform to get the microphones and speak in behalf of Wallace, and

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I was one of those who blocked the only entrance to the speaker's platform until after the adjournment was announced and I unblocked the platform so that Senator Pepper could get on through. By that time all the officials were leaving the platform, and this was the only way that the band and the organist or anybody else realized that the convention had actually recessed, because we were able to get the spotlight operators on their phone, and they cut the spots on the platform which put the platform in semi-darkness and certainly gave everybody the cue that there just wasn't any more convention that day.

HESS: In 1944, during that convention, were you surprised that Senator Truman was picked as the Democratic nominee?

ROACH: No, I wasn't surprised, because I had been in on some discussions with Bob Hannegan and Ed Pauley and one or two others, I don't recall just who they were at the moment, I think

Paul Porter may have been in on that. But Harry Truman was really the only candidate that we could get unanimously accepted by the convention.

Everybody felt that Wallace would not be the best candidate, because a lot of people felt that going into the fourth term that -- we don't like to feel this way -- but President Roosevelt might not finish out his term and that everybody certainly wanted the best qualified man to be

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his successor.

HESS: As you will recall, James Byrnes also wanted the nomination. In fact, he had asked President Truman to put his name in nomination at that convention. Just what was the thinking at that time about James Byrnes?

ROACH: I don't know too much about the thinking on the part of the party leaders per se. I might tell you this little story about Jimmy Byrnes and his short-lived campaign for the vice-presidential nomination.

It was evident to me that he had been given some encouragement by somebody, and we had to assume that it was Roosevelt, because one day, about three or four days before the convention was to open, I went with the assistant manager of the Conrad Hilton Hotel, to look at what we then called the Royal Skyway Suite, which was on the 24th floor.

The reason I went to look at it was very simple. That suite had been reserved for the California delegation, meaning Ed Pauley, who was Democratic National Treasurer, and he was going to use that enormous suite as a hospitality room for his California leaders and delegates.

As we arrived at the entrance of that suite, there was a desk outside the door, an office desk, and a telephone man was installing a phone, and we went into what were the

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bedrooms and there was office furniture in there, same thing in the dining room, and what would have been the parlor, which was an enormous, oversized living room. Well, as a matter of fact, they had office furniture and phones being installed all over the place, and I ran into a gentleman who didn't look like he was a phone installer, and I said, "What's all this going on?"

And he said, "This is the Byrnes for Vice President headquarters."

And I said, "The heck you say."

He said, "Oh, yes." He told me who he was, I've forgotten his name at the time, and he was in charge of these headquarters.

I said, "Well, I really hate to tell you this, but you're going to have to move out."

He said, "What do you mean, move out?"

So I identified myself and told him that space had been reserved for weeks for the California delegation, and I said, "You'll be out of here by sundown. I'm awfully sorry you're faced with that problem, but the California delegation has made a substantial deposit on this suite and they have a letter, not only from me, but from the hotel, that the space is theirs, and they're due to arrive here in two days. I'll be happy to make space available

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for you across the street at the Blackstone Hotel."

Well, after a few heated words he agreed that this was the best that he could expect, so they did, in effect, move to the Blackstone Hotel but in a smaller space, and I believe that it was just two days after that they closed that down. That was about the only experience that I had with Jimmy Byrnes' campaign for Vice President.

HESS: In the business of managing conventions, all of the different conventions, who are a few of the people that you worked with?

ROACH: I can go way back, as far back as 1932 when I worked with John Raskob of course, who was chairman and Jouett Shouse who was chairman of the executive committee, and Charlie Michelson, publicity director, and in '36, of course, it was Jim Farley and Charlie Michelson again as publicity director.

In '40, I was assistant to Oliver Quayle, who was Democratic National Chairman and in charge of the convention. That was my first real experience in convention arrangements.

In '44 I worked primarily with Ed Pauley, the national treasurer, and he turned over to me all the physical arrangements, all that goes with it, and I worked with

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Paul Porter who also worked for Charlie Michelson who was semi-retired at that time.

In '48, as I said previously, I worked with Howard McGrath, who was Democratic National Chairman and the late Jack Redding, who was publicity director and a great one. At the time, we had Leonard Reinsch, who was assisting us on coordinating the radio and television arrangements, and he was a big help to us. We also had a full-time man at the Democratic National Committee who was a radio-TV man. He had been with the Office of War Information, and his name was Kenneth D. Fry, and he and Leonard Reinsch worked together on the radio and video.

HESS: With the advent of TV, what additional problems were presented to you?

ROACH: With the advent of TV in 1948, the problems that were presented were at first almost enormous, because before I opened our headquarters in Philadelphia, I must have made fifteen trips there for meetings with the television news media, but the meetings were predominately attended by television set manufacturers more than the news media people, because after all this

was a new field to everybody, and it was quite a problem deciding on how many television cameras would be required, or would be permitted.

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All of these meetings that we had with that particular media, were joint meetings with the Republican National Committee representatives, as well as our committee, and being such a new field, necessarily we had meetings which ended in a decision to have another meeting, so that we could finally resolve something.

But one of the big stumbling blocks there was that what they then called the theatre reels, or the so-called newsreels, were the predominate camera coverage of any event, and every time the TV experts would say that they had to have a camera stand here or there or where-have-you, the newsreel fellows would say well, by gosh, they had to have the same thing. We had to take ahold and set some ground rules before we opened the convention or we would probably have had 250 cameras in the convention hall in Philadelphia.

Everybody agreed that this was a problem that had to be surmounted, and everybody also agreed that it was something so new to all of us that we all had to be reasonable and avoid panic, and by all means keep our tempers down, but some of the newsreel fellows who had always covered the White House were inclined to be prima donnas, and I don't blame them. They had been the only film cameramen, or any kind of cameramen other than still photographers, that had been

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given any camera stands at a convention, so when this new monster TV came along I guess they saw what was coming and probably were a little jealous of their own position. You can't blame them for saying, you know, "If you are going to put a TV camera here, you're certainly going to have a film camera in the same location."

But we worked it out and as a matter of fact, I thought it worked out pretty well for that first go around. We did have a monstrous scaffolding right in the center of convention hall, and there was a lot of arguing about the location of that. Most of the argument about the location was the closeness to the speaker's platform. Naturally, the TV camera experts felt that it should be right smack up in front of the platform, and we finally moved it halfway back in the hall, which I think made it around fifty or sixty feet away from the nose of the speaker.

Of course, some of the problems that we thought we resolved there at Philadelphia became even greater in the succeeding conventions, because television was more nationwide in '52, and of course in '56, and '60 and '64 and '68. I remember in '64 in Atlantic City, there was a roar of protest about the location of the camera stands at that convention, because most of the delegates couldn't even see the speaker's platform because of where they put

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the TV camera stands and the construction of it was such that there was just a blank wall between the front row of delegates and the speaker's platform.

HESS: As convention manager, were you usually in on the decision as to where the convention would be held, in which city?

ROACH: In '48 and in '52 I had been named convention manager prior to the time that the site was selected, so I was in on the meetings that were held to discuss where the conventions would go.

In 1948, the Democratic National Committee held a meeting to entertain or to hear the proposal of the various cities who were interested, and the city of Philadelphia came up with a certified check, I think it was \$300,000. They were the only city with any so-called "cash-on-the-line," so they were selected on that basis.

I had objected privately with the national chairman That there just wasn't enough hotel space; the Republicans had objected on the same basis. They had already selected Philadelphia and we decided that in addition to the cash money that Philadelphia put up, we would be saving some expense by sharing construction costs with the Republicans, so that was why we decided on Philadelphia.

In 1952 I was in on several pre-convention site

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meetings with the Democratic and Republican national chairmen, and basically the reason for selecting Chicago that time was the. central location and that Chicago guaranteed enough money to pay all expenses -- they didn't come up with a round figure -- plus the fact that the central location was desirable to everybody, and really what actually happened was that both parties agreed that Chicago was it, and even though they later went through the motions of listening to proposals from various cities, they pretty much had decided in advance on Chicago.

In 1956, I was named as convention manager after the selection of Chicago, so I was not in on the decision.

In 1960, of course, I was not convention manager, I was assistant director of the Johnson for President pre-convention committee. In 1964 I had nothing to do with the convention. In 1968 I had nothing to do with the convention.

Actually, it boiled down to the fact that in 1944 and '48, rather I should say, '48 and '52 were the only two times, that I as convention manager was in on the decision as to where the convention would go.

HESS: Back in 1948, what do you recall about the efforts of Hubert Humphrey, and Andrew J. Biemiller in getting their civil rights plank passed that summer?

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ROACH: As convention manager about the only thing that I recall is the turmoil on the floor of the convention, and the walkout of some of the southern delegations, and particularly the Democratic National Committeeman from Louisiana, Eva Talbot, they called him "Little Eva,"

because he weighed about 400 pounds, walked out of convention hall saying "Goodbye Harry." In other words he was blaming President Truman for what he apparently felt was too strong a civil rights plank.

I personally was in favor of a strong, civil rights plank, and I had hoped that our convention would not act so violently against it. However, history shows that it turned out very, very well.

Touching on that point too, I was manager of the Truman-Barkley national headquarters in New York in the Biltmore Hotel, working with the late Louis Johnson, who later became Secretary of Defense. Louis was our national finance chairman. It's amazing how many of our old-line contributors walked away from us, and even more amazing how many of them contributed to Wallace.

Here we had Tom Dewey running as the Republican candidate, and Harry Truman as the Democrat, and with all that against him, Harry Truman still won because, I'll never forget his words, and I stood right there on the

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speaker's platform and he said, "Senator Barkley and I are going out and tell the people the truth." And that's exactly what he did, and that was why he was elected.

But the young mayor of Minneapolis who later became Senator, and later Vice President, and a great one, a great man, he still has a long way to go, he and the others who were fighting for this certainly desirable wording in the platform of the Democratic Party, which is really the party which looks out for all the people, they deserve a lot of the credit, and they got a lot of abuse. A lot of people who abused them then later realized that they were truly men of the future.

Out of that convention, I think, came something that really solidified the Democratic Party more than it divided it, what followed later, what President Truman did, President Kennedy, President Johnson, incidentally, it has been the Democrats who have been the only ones who backed up what was said in that platform in '48, and carried it forward. I was proud to have been right in the middle of that.

HESS: During that convention, there were a number of pigeons that were let loose. What do you recall about that?

ROACH: I recall it as if it were happening right now. Prior

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to that, I don't know that I mentioned it to you, but after President Truman was nominated, of course, we had a break in the session and a recess to clear the hall and tight security was put on the hall until we could bring the President and his party in, and while the hall was empty and the delegates and guests were outside getting something to eat or had gone back to their hotels and what have you, a rather violent electrical storm came up.

Hundreds of delegates and guests who were out in the street crowded into the lobby of the Philadelphia convention hall, and were jammed up against the glass doors, which of course were locked, and covered by Secret Service agents, and I was told by one of my staff people to rush out to the front and see what was going on, and when I did I was really frightened because it looked to me as though somebody was going to be really hurt. People were just beating on the doors and actually beating on each other in that they were trying to push their way in from the street and crushing those on the inside right up against the doors.

So, I dashed back to the other end of the hall to get Jim Rowley, who was chief of the White House detail, and pleaded with him to relieve the situation now that we had the President in, and to open those doors. He finally

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agreed to open a couple of doors and let the people trickle in, but there were a few bloodied heads. It really wasn't anybody's fault. It was a case of panic. I noticed one bloody nose, I think, and that was the fault of a guy who felt that one guy had stepped on his wife's feet intentionally, but there was such a mob there that nobody could have stepped on anybody's feet intentionally. I think everybody else was standing on each other's feet to begin with.

So we relieved that situation, thank God, and then when I went back into the hall, I found out that during this electrical storm, a fuse had blown, and the only two air-conditioned rooms that we had in the entire hall were being occupied by the presidential party, and we had to move chairs out onto a ramp and open one of the back doors slightly to let a little breeze through so that the presidential party would be a little more comfortable.

After that I went out into the main arena, and I saw these six men with a liberty bell, or rather flowers shaped as a liberty bell, carrying this thing on their shoulders down the center aisle. And I stopped them and I said, "Where are you going with that thing?" "Up on the platform."

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I said, "Well, who told you to?"

"The Democratic leaders told us to bring this thing up to the platform."

I said, "Will you hold it right there." So I found Howard McGrath, the chairman, and he didn't know anything about it; I found Mrs. Emma Guffey Miller, and she said she told them to bring it in. I said, "What in the world?"

She said, "Oh, we're going to present this to the President."

I had recalled that at the Republican convention, which preceded ours by one week, the Pennsylvania Florists' Association presented Tom Dewey with a liberty bell made of flowers, but I had seen in the paper that they had presented it to him outside convention hall, they got pictures taken, and got all the publicity that they wanted. But I guess our dear friend, Emma Guffey Miller, the beloved national committeewoman from Pennsylvania, wanted to go one better than the Republicans and present it right in the hall, so I didn't argue too much with that. So I let the

men take it up and put it as far back on the speaker's platform as we could get it. And then I told the men, "O.K., you will have to leave."

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They said, "No, we got to stay here."

I said, "You've got to leave here. We've got security on and nobody's on this platform but the security people."

"Oh, we've got to stay here."

I said, "What for?"

He said, "To let the pigeons out."

"What pigeons?"

He lifted up the apron at the bottom of this platform that was holding the liberty bell, and by gosh underneath there were a bunch of white pigeons -- they were supposed to be doves, but they turned out to be city hall pigeons. And the idea was that these fellows were to release them at a certain time. I said, "Don't you touch that thing. You wait right here."

So I went backstage and got Matt Connelly and I told him what happened. And he said, "Neale, there isn't a thing you can do about it. Dear old Emma has already talked to the Chief [meaning, of course, President Truman] and he said 'Fine.'"

I said, "Do you know they have pigeons in that thing?"

He said, "Oh, let them have their pigeons."

Well, as you know, convention hall was not air-conditioned, and we had four of these great big thirty-six inch pedestal fans up there blowing, hopefully circulating some cool,

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fresh air, and I could just visualize one of these pigeons landing on one of those fans.

Anyway, we got to the point where dear old Emma Guffey Miller was to present this liberty bell to the President, and inside the liberty bell were these doves of peace, and at the right signal the working men had broomsticks and they just poked these pigeons until they flew out, and they were lazy.

One of them landed right on the rostrum in front of Sam Rayburn. And I remember vividly all over the nationwide radio and part of nationwide TV, you could hear the Speaker say, "Shoo, shoo, shoo." And the bird wouldn't shoo. Somebody went up and flipped it with his hand.

And sure enough, one of them landed on top of that fan that was right over Mrs. Truman. And I slipped around behind Mrs. Truman and pulled the switch to stop the blades. I chased the bird, because all I could visualize was a bunch of blood and feathers being sprayed all over everybody on that platform. As it turned out, some droppings were left on some of the ladies' clothing, and we had to get that cleaned off.

I went back to convention hall about a week after our convention was over, I had already moved to New York to set up the Truman-Barkley headquarters, but I had to

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go back to Philadelphia to take care of some bills and check on a few matters, and because the Wallace people were moving into convention hall for their convention, and I went out to make sure that our security people had gotten all of our equipment out and they had. But don't you know, those pigeons were still flying around convention hall, and might even still be there to this day, I don't know. But God bless Emma Guffey Miller and her "doves of peace," as she called them.

HESS: One other point on that convention: Mr. Truman's acceptance speech was given rather late at night, I believe, after two o'clock in the morning. Was there something that delayed the proceedings, that delayed that speech until that early in the morning?

ROACH: We just had too long a program prior to that, too many speeches and I've forgotten the actual details. I do recall the lateness of the speech, but as a matter of fact from the comments that I recall hearing at the time, it was so well received it could just as well have been two in the afternoon. People didn't mind the lateness of the hour.

That was a real fired up convention. People went away from there with a determination that Harry Truman gave them, and it was almost hard to imagine the grassroots

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enthusiasm that he instilled at that convention? It paid off after he made his two trips around the country. It was still there when he made his trips.

HESS: Did you ever visit the Republican conventions to see how things were being done?

ROACH: Oh, yes, yes. As a matter of fact, in 1952 in Chicago -- of course, when we had our conventions in the same city, I would always, with the assistance of those who worked with me, and the national chairman, we would change the format, the speaker's rostrum and everything so it wouldn't look the same. But in 1952 I went out to the amphitheater in Chicago when the Republicans were having their dress rehearsal for their keynote speaker, this is something they used to always do, you know, they had the keynote speaker up there in those days. I don't know whether they still do that or not now, but the newsreel people used to insist on getting a shot of the keynote speaker in advance, so they could get it developed in time and have it in the theaters at an early hour.

So I went out to this dress rehearsal, and they had made a mistake in their plans. Their pounding block, that's the big block about a foot square made of heavy oak that goes all the way from the flat bed of the

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speaker's rostrum itself where the speeches are laid out and all that, right down to the floor of the hall, and that's what you rap the gavel on so that you don't hit the rostrum itself or shatter the mikes. So they have what they called the "pounding block."

I noticed that this pounding block stood about six inches above the rostrum. I don't think anybody else noticed it at the time. I walked up to the rostrum and talked to Jim Jaffe who was in charge of the arrangements for the Republican convention, and told them how nice the hall looked and all that, and I kept looking at this pounding block which stood, as I say, six inches above where it should be. It should have been level with the speaker's rostrum and I didn't say a word about it, and they didn't discover it until the day the convention opened, which was the next day. Then, of course, they had to get workmen in there in a hurry and saw it off. I wasn't going to tip them off to that.

HESS: After the convention was over in 1948 did you move on to the headquarters in New York?

ROACH: Yes, about a week later I moved into New York and started setting up that headquarters.

HESS: Any particular problems that come to mind?

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ROACH: The biggest problem was money. We couldn't get contributors. People walked away from us. The newspapers were all for Dewey, and saying that Truman couldn't win. That scared away a lot of our usual contributors.

HESS: Could you tell me about the events of election night, 1948? Where were you at that time?

ROACH: I was at the Biltmore Hotel. As I say, up until 1952, we always ran the presidential campaigns in New York. The reason for that being that your advertising agencies were all located there, and you had better printing facilities and all the services that you needed at that time were in New York. So, I moved, as I say, from Philadelphia to New York, I guess just a week after the '48 convention.

As I say, we always had our headquarters in New York and we always had an election night party. One party, well, we had two really, one was on the nineteenth floor ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel. To that party we invited the VIPs and contributors and national committee members, from around the country, knowing that they couldn't attend, but we just extended the courtesy to them. We used the ground floor ballroom for the general public, and there we just had a blackboard where we posted the returns. I

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talked to Howard McGrath about our party and told him we ought to start getting out invitations for it, and he said, "My gosh, how much does that party cost?"

I said, "Oh, it might run two or three thousand dollars." We set up a full bar and a buffet and had a press room and gave them all the facilities they needed, and all the food and drink they wanted.

And he said, "My gosh, do you think we ought to go ahead with it this time?"

I said, "Well, it's something we do every four years and if we don't do it, people are going to assume we're going to lose, or that we've given up. Certainly we ought to do it."

"Can we afford it?"

"Have we been able to afford anything during this campaign?"

He said, "Neale you've been through this, use your own judgment."

So, I got out the usual invitations and the party was to start at eight o'clock. Of course, at eight o'clock it was a ghost town, and it didn't start picking up until about eleven or twelve. As a matter of fact, Jim Farley and I were the only ones there at eight o'clock and quite a number of our party leaders didn't start arriving until

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ten or so. Then I sent one of my agents over to the Roosevelt Hotel, to the Dewey headquarters, and he came back and reported to me that a lot of our old-time contributors were over there. And low and behold, some of these same people showed up at our party, I checked them off as they came in. We let them in, but I let each one of them know that we hadn't seen them for a long time.

Of course, as everybody knows, Dewey didn't concede until pretty late along the next day, but we were celebrating all night long, and as we all found out later, raising money to pay for that party was a minor item.

HESS: Did you think Mr. Truman was going to win that election?

ROACH: I sure did. I won money on him.

HESS: Did you feel that there were some of the members of the Democratic National Committee, or other people high in the Democratic Party who did not think that Mr. Truman was going to win?

ROACH: There were any number of them, but I'm not going to name them. They later came back in the fold, helped us out on our 1948 deficit. I don't feel that any of the top party leaders -- I'm talking about the national chairman

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and others -- felt that he wouldn't win.

We didn't have the zing in our national committee headquarters in New York that we should have had. We didn't have as many staff meetings. As a matter of fact, there was only one staff meeting and I called that one in the name of the chairman who was out of town at the time. The only officer of the committee who was there was Joe [Joseph L.] Blythe from North Carolina, who was then national treasurer, rest his soul. I think he died during the 1949 inaugural.

But the reason that I decided that we had to have a staff meeting was that we had two entrances to our headquarters, and of course two reception desks, and every morning when I would go into the office, I would notice that these girls on the reception desk looked like they didn't even have as much pep as somebody you would meet at a morgue. I got worried about it, because the impression was just one of defeat all the way through. So at this staff meeting, I just told everybody that President Truman was going to win this election, and they better doggone sight reflect it in their expressions and their attitudes in greeting the public, or we would find somebody to take their place. One of the little receptionists said, "But Mr. Roach, people come up, there are not very many

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of them, but when they do come up they want Truman buttons, and we don't even have any Truman buttons."

I said, "Tell them to help us raise money so we can get some Truman buttons. Say it with a smile. We're going to win this thing in spite of buttons." This was the way things went. Every day, on the part of the staff, they just didn't have the feeling of enthusiastic campaigners, or the feeling that we were going to win. But they did towards the end. They started sparking up.

One of the things that helped was that Matt Connelly would call in as often as he could from the presidential train and give us a report. If he couldn't get Louie Johnson, he would give it to me, and let us know about the enthusiastic crowds that were turning out to hear Mr. Truman speak, and big crowds. Of course, the papers we were reading in New York didn't reflect this at all. So the only way we were getting the true story, actually, was from the calls that we had from the President's train. In a way that helped me go ahead and make my bets, helped me win some money on the President's election.

HESS: How astute a politician and a political adviser would you say Matthew Connelly was?

ROACH: I can't answer the question as to political adviser,

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because I just wasn't in on any sessions where he advised the President politically, but the reports that I had from people who had been to the White House and visited with Matt Connelly, and with Matt Connelly and the President together, their reports of him were just absolutely perfect

that he was the greatest guy that the President could have around. I never heard anything derogatory about Matt.

HESS: Did you hear who the President took most of his political advice from during this period of time in the White House? Who was the main political adviser in the White House?

ROACH: I had heard that Charlie Murphy and John Steelman -- and Clark Clifford, of course, naturally I would put him in that category -- there was a Judge [Samuel I.] Rosenman who was one that I had heard was pretty much of a good adviser to the President.

HESS: Who on the Hill did Mr. Truman seek the most political advice from, which Senators and Congressmen?

ROACH: They used to call him, how many Senators did we have in those days, he was the ninety-seventh Senator, Les Biffle. Actually, Les was the only one I knew of on the Hill that gave good political advice to the President. I don't know of any individual Senators or Congressmen that he talked with.

HESS: Would you name a few of the men who have held the post as Democratic National Committee chairman, since you began your association with the committee and give me just a little evaluation of those gentlemen.

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ROACH: Of course, I've got to say that Jim Farley was the greatest. I worked with Jim Farley for eight years.

I'll go back to my first chairman, that was John Raskob. I think he probably was as devoted a chairman as any man could be. He was made chairman in 1928, I think it was after Al Smith was defeated by Hoover, and he spent a lot of his own money, a considerable amount of money in those days, and time in trying to rebuild the party from 1928 to 1932. And I do believe that a lot of the work that he did during that four years period was a great help to Jim Farley and to Roosevelt during the 1932 campaign, not taking anything away from Jim Farley but certainly giving the late John Raskob credit. As we all know, Raskob walked out of the '32 convention after Roosevelt was nominated, walked out in a huff, and never came back to the party.

Frank Walker was a good chairman. Ed Flynn was. Both of those gentlemen just served a brief time.

Howard McGrath, next to Jim Farley probably had more practical political experience than any of the more recent national chairmen. I haven't worked closely with Larry [Lawrence F.] O'Brien. Of course, I've known John Bailey for a long time. I believe John was sort of hampered in whatever he could do, serving a double role as state

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chairman in Connecticut. Frankly, I don't think they permitted him to call the shots as national chairman. You've certainly read a lot about that.

But going back to the work of building a party, you've got to lay it right at the doorstep of Jim Farley, because he took a party that had been completely shattered in '28 , capitalized on what John Raskob had done for four years, from '28 to '32, and carried it forward to where he built up the greatest political organization in the world, and kept it that way for eight years. So, I would have to put Jim Farley naturally as the greatest. I worked with every one, every national chairman right up until John Bailey.

HESS: How effective were William Boyle and Stephen Mitchell, Frank McKinney, Paul Butler?

ROACH: Taking the late Bill Boyle first: Bill was a good, practical politician. He told me himself that he did not like to make public appearances, speeches, and that, I think, is a handicap, and a drawback. While it's fine to have a good organizational man in the background, if that organizational man is the national chairman at the same time, he's just got to get out and be a good front man, present a good image, and speak. I loved Bill Boyle, and I think a great deal of his wife, Gen [Genevieve],

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his widow. But Bill just wouldn't get out and push.

You mentioned Steve Mitchell. Steve, of course, was new at this game. He had never been in politics prior to the time that he got in with the, I think they called it the Independent Citizens for Stevenson in 1948 when Stevenson was running for Governor, and Steve Mitchell was a practicing attorney. Incidentally, he was a student of my father's at Georgetown Law School, so I should speak highly of him, and I do as a person, but Steve just didn't have the grasp, I don't think, a grasp of the scope of national grassroots planning. That was his drawback. He was a good speaker. He could get out in front with no hesitation at all.

HESS: I understand that Stevenson's principal headquarters were in Springfield, Illinois. I believe Wilson Wyatt was in charge there, and the headquarters here in town was what Stephen Mitchell was in charge of. Is that correct?

ROACH: I was assistant to Wilson Wyatt in those days in Springfield. As I told you, I had resigned from the national committee effective after the 1952 convention but I agreed to go down to Springfield and work on the campaign.

As I said, I had resigned from the Democratic National Committee, effective after the 1952 convention, and a

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couple of days after the convention, I had a call from Wilson Wyatt and he was in Louisville, and he said India Edwards had told him that I had resigned from the national committee and I told him that was correct, that I had spent a lifetime in this game and I had to get out and earn a living, there was no money in politics, as he well knew. He said, "Well, my gosh, Adlai Stevenson has asked me to be his campaign manager and I agreed to take it on only if you would assist me."

And I said, "Wilson, I've been around too long to listen to that sort of conversation, or to take it in."

He said, "Well, you just can't do this."

I said, "I've got to think of my family."

And he said, "Well, will you at least meet me in Springfield and help us set up the headquarters? We're going to run the campaign from there."

I said, "Oh, my gosh." And I said, "All right." It was only a fifty minute flight. So my secretary was packing things up, files and everything to be shipped back to Washington, a lot of bills that still had to be paid or satisfied. So I just told her that I was going to fly to Springfield for one day, meet with the Governor and Wilson Wyatt, which I did. Bear in mind that Frank McKinney was still the national chairman at that time.

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So I got down to Springfield and I went right over to the Governor's mansion, and as you may know, Governor Stevenson used an office in the Governor's mansion rather than the one that he had over at the state house -- the state office building. We met there and chatted a while and then the Governor asked me if I would please join in and help out, and I told the Governor the position I was in, I had this job lined up in New York, and I just had to take it for the sake of my family, and he said, "Well, will you spend a little time to help us set up the organization?"

So he asked Wilson Wyatt, and I think it was Bill [William McCormick, Jr.] Blair, who was his assistant, to show me the space they had.

Right down the street and across the street from the Governor's mansion, they had rented a nine room house and this was going to be the headquarters of the presidential candidate. They had six telephones on Wilson Wyatt's desk and none of them were connected with each other, and they were all ringing independently. They had two men sorting out about twenty sacks of mail, they had one receptionist, she had six phones, none of them were connected with Wilson Wyatt's desk. So I asked Wilson where was the rest of the space, and he said, "Well, this is it."

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I said, "You must be completely out of your mind."

He said, "Oh, no, this is all we need."

I said, "Well, Wilson, you can't run a presidential campaign here."

He said, "Oh, but the national committee is going to run things from Washington. This will just be a policy group..."

I said, "Well, we better go back over and talk with the Governor, because you've got to make some changes."

So we went back to the Governor's office and I told him, "Now, let me tell you something. You are the Democratic presidential candidate. Whether you like it or not, you're going to have a minimum of a hundred and twenty members of the news media living with you all the time. They are going to want to see you all the time, talk to you all the time, and you're not going to be able to do it. You need a buffer. You need a press man; he's going to need a staff, he's going to need facilities for cranking out statements and speeches, and that house alone wouldn't take care of what he needs. You're going to have research people, you're going to have people who are going to be handling mail, and you just can't operate this way."

"But Neale, this is only going to be a policymaking

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group."

Incidentally, the Governor insisted that he was going to stay in Springfield because he was Governor, by that I mean not stay in Springfield, but operate out of Springfield, and nowhere else.

Anyway, I sat down with Wilson Wyatt, Carl McGowan, Bill Blair and told them what they were going to be faced with. I wound up. I called Frank McKinney, who was still national chairman, and I said, "Will you continue me on the national committee payroll?" Because after all I needed a payroll with a family of four children, and I said, "I've decided I'm going to have to stay down here. Somebody's got to help pull this thing together." So he agreed that I would remain on the national committee payroll.

I went back to Chicago and told my poor secretary that she was going to move to Springfield, unless she wanted to quit.

I went back and rented two floors of the Leland Hotel. I rented a floor in the Elks Club for the writers, although we were not permitted to call them writers, the Governor wrote all of his own speeches so we didn't refer to them as writers, and that team was headed up by Arthur Schlesinger [Jr.], and he had some mighty fine men with

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him. So, the way it wound up was we had a full-fledged, although rather flimsy operating national presidential headquarters in Springfield.

That was bad enough. I had to send to Chicago when I needed things like just a county outline map of the United States, you couldn't even buy them in Springfield. Western Union was flabbergasted at the demands that the wire services and others were putting on them for cable. There just wasn't enough cable in Springfield. Printers you couldn't get. Oh, sure, there was a company there that did printing for the state, but you couldn't get the kind of printing service that

you needed -- things of that sort just mounted up one on top of the other. The poor Illinois Bell Telephone Company nearly went crazy trying to run enough cables in there to handle it.

I wound up being Wilson Wyatt's assistant and in charge, it seemed like, of just about everything, but one of the biggest jobs was setting up itineraries for the Governor, preliminary itineraries, and then sitting down in meetings with Wilson Wyatt and others, firming it up or tearing it apart, finalizing it as to where he would go, and when.

HESS: How is an itinerary established?

ROACH: Well, of course, you get it basically from the demands

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of the states. It depends on where he's needed the most and where your votes are, where the greatest vote is, the greatest appeal, and the greatest chance of picking up votes, taking votes away from Republicans. Naturally you try to minimize the sure states, stay away from them if you can, cover the important states, that's the big thing, where the big vote is. But, of course, you can't ignore the appeal of the prominent Democratic leaders. You've got to at least touch down at an airport, and have what we called a "prop stop."

But in addition to working out the itineraries, and then after they were approved by everybody, finalized, then I had to not only draw them up in an exact timetable form, and I did this working with airline people.

I had to rent the planes. We had three planes all the time on each trip, and we had two planes for the press and one for the Governor. And of course, the Governor's plane had to be set up with an office, mimeograph machines and so on on each trip. In other words you had to strip a plane and then put it back into commercial passenger service immediately after each trip. So I had airline representatives working with me all the time.

It was amazing that we were able to sit there in Springfield and work out ETAs, or estimated time of

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arrivals, and departures on each trip, and we were not one minute off on any flight that Governor Stevenson made on any one of his trips. And we did it with a slide rule, and using a map on my desk and figuring it out, we knew the cruising speed of the -- we were using DC6's in those days. But that was one of the roughest jobs I ever had in my life, because there were days on end when I actually didn't even leave that office. My office was in the Leland Hotel, and my so-called bedroom was in the Abe Lincoln Hotel, and I sure didn't see much of that.

One of our major problems was getting advance men out ahead of the Governor. We never did have enough, we never did have enough of them out well enough in advance to organize motorcades and things of that sort, rallies, the way they should be done.

When I look at this past election, this recent election and think how Nixon already had a built-in organization, the Republican National Committee was already geared up, and with knowledgeable people, plus plenty of money. He had people weeks ahead of him on every trip, where they just planned every route, and saw to it that the routes were planned where there would be crowds out and have confetti and so on. This is what it takes, time

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and money and experience. And we just didn't have it in '52.

HESS: There are some historians who say that Mr. Stevenson kept his headquarters in Springfield to disassociate himself from the so-called "mess" in Washington. What would be your evaluation of that?

ROACH: My answer to that is that it's absolutely untrue. Stevenson said he was Governor of Illinois, he was going to stay in Springfield except when he made political trips as candidate for President. I don't believe at any time that he felt that he wanted to avoid Washington for any reason other than that, or avoid headquartering in New York or Chicago.

Actually it would have been much more sensible for us to have set up the headquarters in Chicago and he could still have started his trips from Springfield. Because we just did not have the facilities in Springfield. It's a typical capital city of a state. They're not used to this deluge of newspaper people and all the others that show up, the campaign workers that you have to have.

HESS: Did you think you had a workable relationship between the group in Springfield and the group here in town under Stephen Mitchell?

ROACH: No, there was dissension. Quite frankly, there was

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friction between Steve Mitchell and Wilson Wyatt, and I was in the middle of it sometimes because Steve Mitchell would call me and say, "Will you, for God's sake, get Wilson Wyatt to take my phone call." I don't think it was anything personal on Wilson Wyatt's part. Of course, I was closer to Wilson in those days. I think it was just the fact that Wilson was at the elbow of the Governor, and he was his campaign manager and was the logical one to be, you might say, the majordomo, and the national chairman should have been the backup man.

It's not good to have a two-headed monster. I have never thought it was good. I think the national chairman ought to be the campaign manager, and let him call the shots, because anytime you've got a two-headed monster, you've got trouble.

HESS: Do you think it was a mistake on Stevenson's part to have it set up like that?

ROACH: I sure do. I think it was a mistake on Stevenson's part to appoint Steve Mitchell without talking to Jack [Jacob M.] Arvey first. You know that Jack Arvey is a political leader. Arvey told me that he read about it in the paper. I don't know how true that is. He told me that he read that Steve Mitchell...

HESS: How effective was Steve Mitchell as chairman?

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ROACH: It wouldn't be right to try to even evaluate that. We lost that election, and quite frankly, I don't think that anybody could have beaten Eisenhower in '52.

You must remember that in 1944 and again in 1948, Tom Dewey was the candidate both times. He and all the Republicans, and all the Republican press were stressing, "It's time for a change, it's time for a change, it's time for a change." And then in '52 they tried to imply that all of us Democrats, that there was something wrong with us, they tried to imply that the White House people had accepted gifts. Today, it makes me almost want to throw up when I think of it.

And the things that friends of Eisenhower did for him after he got in the White House, and not one newspaper or newspaperman has ever written about the gifts that he got -- maybe his own farm was a gift -- I shouldn't say this, President Eisenhower is a sick man, but I'm speaking politically now, from the standpoint of the partisan press, I think a great disservice was rendered in this country by implying that the people around Truman were accepting payoffs and gifts, which was completely untrue, but it helped to defeat Stevenson in '52. Just the press saying that we were all crooked in Washington. And then to come along with a so-called great general as

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a candidate on the Republican ticket. That combination was just something that nobody could beat. Under other circumstances Steve Mitchell may have been a great chairman, who knows. I don't think he had a chance to be effective, just by the way we were set up.

It was a cumbersome thing to have the presidential candidate in Springfield all the time with the campaign manager right there with him, and the campaign manager's own staff, including me, and then Mitchell to be in Washington as national chairman, certainly getting demands from different states, "You've got to bring the candidate here, there, or what-have-you." And he couldn't get Wyatt on the phone, and he wasn't brought in to consultations on where the Governor was going to go to speak, and all the other facets that go into a campaign weren't laid on his desk, because there wasn't enough time. I mean, here we are seven or eight hundred miles away in Springfield and he was here in the national headquarters. Just by its nature it was a divided setup.

HESS: And in Stevenson's next campaign in '56, Paul Butler was the chairman. What kind of a man was Paul Butler?

ROACH: Paul, rest his soul. First, before saying anything about that, in 1954, I was not with the national

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committee at that time, but Steve Mitchell asked me to go down to New Orleans to put on a victory dinner.

Now, you might remember that this was just two years after Eisenhower was elected. And it appeared that we were going to take the Republican Congress away from Eisenhower, and it appeared that we were going to pick up some state houses. So Steve wanted to set up a -- I really don't know who was the prompter of the idea, whether it was Steve's idea, or the leaders in Louisiana, the idea of having a victory dinner in New Orleans. So, Steve contracted with me to go down and put it on. And at the same time he was going to have a national committee meeting down there, and at the same time he was going to resign as national chairman, and let the national committee pick a new man.

So, I went down and spent five weeks. I went into every parish in Louisiana, with the help of a lot of good friends like Hale Boggs, Russell Long, the late Congressman, Overton Brooks, former Governor, Earl Long, he was a big help, and I thought they were going to run me out of Louisiana on a rail, because when I went down promoting a hundred-dollar-a-plate dinner, and all the money to go to the national committee, they had

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never had one down there on that basis, plus the fact that the principal speakers were Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. We had fifteen hundred people down there finally.

Now, getting to Paul Butler, he was elected chairman at that meeting that preceded the dinner. I thought Paul was going to make a great chairman. I had met him in Chicago when I was convention manager in '52. And he was national committeeman-elect from Indiana. He had defeated the Frank McHale-Frank McKinney machine, although he had no rights at the '52 convention because he didn't take his seat until after the convention was over. He came to me as convention manager and cried on my shoulder, so to speak, because Frank McHale wouldn't give him a darned thing, and he wouldn't give him any hotel rooms out of his block for his so-called followers, and wouldn't give him any tickets. So I took care of Paul.

I liked him the first time I met him. I liked the way he talked, and was much impressed, and still am, I still would be, were he alive. And when he was elected in New Orleans, I thought he would be a great chairman. Of course, I finished up my job in New Orleans and came on back to Washington. That was in October, 1954. And

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it wasn't until, I think it was in March of '55, Paul called me and asked me if I would put on a dinner for the national committee, they wanted to call it the Sam Rayburn Testimonial Dinner, and I found out that they had already reserved the ballroom of the Willard Hotel. If you're familiar with that place, it's on the top floor of the Willard, and it will hold about a thousand people. I said, "Paul, you can't do this to Mr. Democrat. Sam Rayburn is Mr. Democrat. If you're going to honor him, you can't do it in such a small space."

He said, "Do you think we can get more than a thousand people?"

I said, "Sure, you can fill up the armory." I told Paul that the armory would seat better than five thousand people, and quite frankly he was flabbergasted at the idea and just didn't want to risk it. I said, "Now, Paul, we're going to have a meeting of the dinner committee," I think in the next

couple of days, and I said, "Some of these people are going to object to using the small ballroom, I'm not saying anything critical of the Willard Hotel, but they're going to want you to have the biggest space possible."

He said, "Well, I just don't want to risk it, and

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I'm afraid we might have empty seats..."

I said, "I'm confident. If you'll just give me the go signal, we can fill the armory with just the people who will come from Texas."

Apparently my words fell on deaf ears, so I had to do a little skulduggery, and I called Mike [Michael J.] Kirwan, who is chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, told him of my conversation, so to make it short, Mike attended that meeting of the dinner committee, and at the proper time, announced that if the dinner was held in that small ballroom at the Willard Hotel, and not in the armory, then he would have absolutely nothing to do with it, and he insisted that the dinner be held in the armory or nowhere.

That fractured the meeting. I know that Paul suspected that I had prompted this little action, and he talked with me after the meeting, and I said, "Paul, will you do this: When I assure you that we have more than a thousand reservations in, will you let me go ahead and quickly reserve the armory and go ahead." And he agreed to go ahead.

So I had to pad my figures. I don't ever like to lie, but this wasn't a case of lying and cheating, but just a case of expediency. So I did pad the figures

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and the reservation cards, and showed Paul that we had twelve hundred reservations and that we better immediately move the dinner and move the date, which we did, we reserved the armory, we didn't quite fill it, but we had forty-five hundred people.

Paul was a stubborn man. At times he was inclined to be a loner, and it was awfully hard to give Paul advice.

As an example, in 1956, he asked me to put on another dinner. Incidentally, that really has no reference to anything other than he wanted to call it the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Dinner, which I thought was pretty difficult to sell as a political dinner with that title, but we did, and once again we had a successful dinner. But after that was over, that was in 1956, Paul asked me to be convention manager in '56, and I felt that he did it reluctantly. Anyway, he did ask me to be convention manager. So, I moved to Chicago to start setting up that convention, and immediately got to be the man in between Paul Butler and Mayor Richard Daley, who happened to be a good friend of mine, and I thought Paul Butler was a friend of mine.

Daley had a company he wanted to handle the convention ad book, Paul Butler wanted to shop around, and he shopped

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for weeks and weeks. The Republicans in the meantime, who were holding their convention in San Francisco that year, had been working on their ad book since October of '55. As we got up to the month of May of '56, Paul Butler still hadn't made his decision on who was going to sell ads in the 1956 convention book, and Mayor Daley was screaming at me every day and then screaming at me because he couldn't get Paul Butler on the phone.

I finally went down to Washington to talk to Paul, only on the basis that Mayor Daley was not only our host at the convention, he was a very important person insofar as the campaign was concerned. This fell on deaf ears.

Finally in frustration and realizing that I think Paul wanted me to get to this point of frustration and resignation, I did resign, and shortly after that, Paul put Leonard Reinsch, who is a good friend of mine, and a good man, in the position of convention manager.

Second Oral History Interview with Neale Roach, Washington, D.C., October 2, 1969. By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Roach, beginning this morning, could you tell me something about the difficulties of getting someone to take the position as chairman of the finance committee of the Democratic Party in 1948?

ROACH: As you will remember, just about every newspaper in the nation, immediately after the two conventions were over, practically conceded the election to Governor Dewey. With that kind of an outlook, with the editorials and the news stories indicating that that particular year would be a Republican landslide, it made it that much more difficult to induce any prominent businessman or prominent attorney or other professional people to jump on the Truman bandwagon.

HESS: And they finally got Mr. Johnson to take that, did they not?

ROACH: Yes, Louie [Louis] Johnson, who turned out to be a real fireball, and I worked very closely with him after the Philadelphia convention was over. As a matter of fact, Louie Johnson didn't accept the chairmanship of the finance committee until, as I recall, it was about two weeks after the convention. I came down from New York

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for a meeting at the Democratic National Committee, and there were only two people in the room in that meeting that would have been likely chairmen, and both of those were reluctant for their own reasons, I'm sure. Publicity may have had something to do with it.

HESS: Who were they?

ROACH: One was George Killion, who had been chairman of the finance committee in 1944, and in 1948 was president of the American President Steamship Lines based in San Francisco, a position to which he had been appointed by President Truman, because you will recall at that time the Government owned the American President Lines, which used to be known as the Dollar Lines. Killion had also served as treasurer of the Democratic National Committee in 1945 to 1946, in addition to having been finance chairman during the Roosevelt campaign of '44. I really don't recall George's reasons for being reluctant.

However, everyone in the room pointed to Louie Johnson, and he said that he had an appointment with the President at the White House, and would come back into the meeting after lunch, sometime in the afternoon, and give his decision, which he did.

We reconvened after lunch and Louie Johnson announced that he would be chairman of the finance committee, and being the tough type that he was he said that he would run the finance committee in his own way and expected full cooperation from all concerned. I personally was delighted that Louie took the job, because, well, first of all, he had a lot of connections.

Louie Johnson in his younger day was very active in the American Legion, and as a very successful and competent attorney had not only very substantial clients, he also had a great number of good contacts all over the nation. I was further delighted that he asked me to work with him.

At that time, after having been convention manager, I was appointed assistant to the chairman and assistant treasurer of the national committee, and I was in charge of the Truman-Barkley headquarters, the national headquarters in New York.

So we set up shop there, and Louie Johnson and I, almost every day, even before Labor Day, we got started earlier, had probably four thousand three by five cards with the names of previous contributors of the Democratic National Committee. I imagine that Louie and I together would complete possibly thirty or forty phone calls in a day -- when

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I say complete, we would actually reach the party we were calling. And out of the thirty or forty contacts that we would make in a day, we would get anywhere from twenty to twenty-five complete turndowns, flat turndowns, and two or three maybes, and a couple of firm contributors, but not in the amount that you would suspect.

What we found out in a very short time after a very few days of canvassing, possibly two hundred potential contributors, was that a great many of the larger contributors, people of means, suddenly had become conservative Republicans, and were giving us comments like, "Well, we'll sit this one out," or "It looks like Dewey's going to win it," "Truman's gone," "We're going to go the other way." But on the other hand, an amazing number of so-called liberal contributors, who had always been with us, went with Henry Wallace that year.

There was one woman (I won't at the moment mention her name), in Chicago, a very wealthy widow, who as we later found, gave \$150,000 to Henry Wallace for his campaign. Then, of

course, this showed that she was a true liberal since Wallace was using the liberal-type platform with his running mate, Glen Taylor that year. So he drained off a good bit of that source of money.

HESS: Did Strom Thurmond hurt in the South?

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ROACH: Not so much on money. Most of the contributors of the South of any consequence stayed with Harry Truman, the newspapers, and of course, a great many of the county chairmen, I'm speaking now of the vote support rather than money support. This was where we really felt it, the States Rights appeal, that Strom Thurmond and his followers were promoting, drained away a good many votes. It really didn't dry up much of our normal source of money from the South.

Where we lost a lot of ground financially was in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, because of a combination of things that I've already stated: The apathy toward the Truman campaign and the liberal money that went to Wallace, and the conservative money that was going by carloads, apparently, to Tom Dewey.

We were really not successful at all in our fund-raising. Louie Johnson went so far even as to call every one of our ambassadors and consuls all over the world.

HESS: What was his success there?

ROACH: Not very much. I'd say he batted probably about 200, when we should have batted at least 800. We were turned down by the Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Mr. Lewis Douglas, and this is really the only

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one I can recall. He personally was or is a wealthy man, but he said he was going to sit this one out. After the election we got a \$5,000 check from him which Louis Johnson promptly returned to him. This was typical of a lot of potential contributors who turned us down during the campaign. It wasn't so amazing but after the election, as a matter of fact, checks were dated prior to the November election, but postmarked a week or so after election.

HESS: Did you keep most of them?

ROACH: Oh, yes. We had quite a deficit, because we operated on nothing but a rather shaky credit situation all during the '48 campaign.

It was nothing unusual for companies like the Bell System, the airlines, railroads, printers, to be expected to carry campaign paper, that is, national campaign paper for four years or more. I don't recall just what year it was we paid off the 1948 deficit, but on a comparative basis it was paid off in a much shorter time than campaigns are paid off in these days.

We had several successful fundraising events after the Truman victory, and we set up a national finance committee, a new one. Of course, Louie Johnson became Secretary of Defense sometime after Truman's election, and we set up

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a nationwide finance committee that helped clean up the 1948 deficit.

That was an experience I'll never forget, going through the throes of trying to raise money from people who had always been with us.

To mention one particular industry, the distillers, who you might say -- well, it's a fact. The Democrats are the ones that brought about the repeal of the Volstead Act, and made it once again legal to distill and sell and import, export, transport, alcoholic beverages. So the Democratic Party really is the party that put that industry back on its feet and got rid of a very bad situation with our Prohibition Act, which fostered nothing but crime, and in a good many cases, death and illness from bootleg whiskey, and made the distillers a respectable industry again, and of course, made a great deal of revenue for our Government. But the distillers all turned against us. They all went with Tom Dewey. Not a one of them stayed with us.

HESS: Before Louis Johnson accepted the position, I understand that Mr. Truman had asked Bernard Baruch to take the same post, is that correct?

ROACH: I've heard that. I don't know it for a fact. I had heard that Bernard Baruch had been asked and Ed Pauley

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had been asked, who was a previous treasurer, but he turned it down. I assumed that in Pauley's case, he figured that Truman wasn't going to make it.

HESS: Some historians have said that Louis Johnson's success in this matter was the main reason that he was later appointed as Secretary of Defense. Have you heard anything on that?

ROACH: Not specifically. I certainly wouldn't be surprised. Everybody knows how a good many of these appointments are made.

Certainly an incumbent administration is going to reward those and not -- reward really isn't the word. Certainly, they're going to select capable people, first of all, to fill Cabinet posts or any other top administrative positions, but in addition to the capabilities of the prospective appointee, they're certainly going to appoint people who have been helpful in putting that administration in office. President Truman knew better than anybody what Louis Johnson had done to help him win. He never lost faith.

There were quite a number of people who were involved in the '48 campaign, while they were actively working on the campaign in support of Mr. Truman were convinced he couldn't make it.

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HESS: Who do you have in mind?

ROACH: Actually, our late publicity director, Jack Redding, a very capable man in his field. He was not convinced.

Our advertising agency at that time was Warwick and Legler, I don't think that that firm is still in existence, but several of their representatives told me that they didn't think Truman could win it. This is how I won money on Truman's election, betting not with those people, but with people with similar attitudes.

HESS: Looking back on those days, what do you see as the major mistakes and campaign strategy on the part of the Republicans that year?

ROACH: My personal feeling was that in the first place Tom Dewey wasn't the most attractive candidate they could have had, and I don't say that unkindly, because, personally, I think Tom Dewey was one of the greatest orators that either party has had, not the greatest, but one of the greatest. His voice was very appealing and clear; his enunciation was good, but his personal stature detracted from that.

A lot of the people -- we all heard these remarks -- that Dewey gave the impression that he was looking down his nose at everyone. We all remember the remark about the "damn fool train engineer" who started the train when

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he shouldn't have and backed it up when he shouldn't have, and a lot of people figured this cost Dewey a lot of labor votes, and maybe it did. It indicated that he had a short fuse. I think that was my reaction.

The newspapers helped to destroy Tom Dewey in creating so darn much confidence within the framework of the whole Republican campaign organization. Everybody was laughing at Truman. And as I've said before, as soon as the conventions were over, everybody assumed that Truman couldn't possibly make it.

I'll never forget the night that Truman accepted the nomination. When he told that convention and the whole country that he and Mr. Barkley were going to go out and tell the people the truth, this is exactly what they did. I think the Dewey weakness was in phony strength, to begin with. The newspapers and magazines and radio and what TV commentators we had in those days were just talking Dewey.

Truman didn't get any press at all really in the metropolitan dailies, and what press he got was incorrectly written. For instance, we would get a call from the train when Mr. Truman would be out campaigning, and the reports we would get from the train, not only to the size of the crowd and the enthusiasm, didn't coincide at

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all with what we were reading in the *New York Times*, and the *Tribune* and other papers.

HESS: Were there any mistakes on the part of the Democrats? Even though, Mr. Truman won that year, did they make any campaign strategy mistakes?

ROACH: Actually, I don't think so. When you come right down to it, Mr. Truman probably was the top strategist in the whole thing. I think that he, together with Bill Boyle and Howard McGrath, planned most of the strategy of where they were going to go and what they were going to say, and how they were going to say it. Any flaws that may have developed would be so minor in view of the tremendous victory that Mr. Truman had, I wouldn't even recount them if I could remember.

We spent money on printed matter that turned out to be a waste because some of it, I should say the bulk of it, wasn't even distributed. It was shipped out and we paid a lot of money on credit -- most people refer to it as a comic book.. It was about Mr. Truman and his life, and I thought it was an insult to the President of the United States to publish such a thing. It was very poorly done. The pictures weren't clear, and it looked just like a comic book. And they ordered hundreds of thousands of that particular item, and on election day bundles of this

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material was still in the state headquarters, and in the national headquarters in New York, unopened. They weren't even distributed.

The mistakes were primarily in poor planning of spending what credit we had. We had no cash, so we had to spend credit. I think we could have had a little more intelligence along those lines. The deficit wouldn't have been as great, and our credit would have been better used, borrowing money here and there to pay for more and more radio time for the President.

HESS: What is your definition of politics and what is your definition of a politician?

ROACH: It isn't mine. I've always been taught that politics -- this may sound trite to you -- but politics is the science of good government.

I'll have to borrow one of Mr. Truman's definitions of a politician, which I have adopted. I'll put it this way, because the question was put to Mr. Truman, "What is the main ingredient of a good politician?" And Mr. Truman's answer, and I've adopted it, is "The knowledge and practice of human relations," and I really think that about sums up the good politician, because a good politician is a political scientist, he's a master of good government, and in practicing politics, you certainly

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have to practice human relations to be successful. Mr. Truman proved this more than anybody.

HESS: I'd like to ask your evaluation of a few of the ladies that were prominent in politics at that time? What is your evaluation of India Edwards as a politician?

ROACH: India should have been fifty women and five men at the minimum. She has more knowledge of topics that would appeal to more people. She was well-liked by women, and by men, and she was a female leader. Women would follow her. She knew how to activate them and get them interested in the causes of the Democratic Party.

She's the greatest, and I've been exposed to a lot of women, including Mrs. Roosevelt, who was a very knowledgeable and intelligent woman. But Mrs. Roosevelt didn't have the knack. Naturally, as the first lady of the land, you have a lot going for you in asking people to pitch in and help, not just political action, but on things for the Government, programs that the Government is sponsoring.

But I think India Edwards had, and still has, more political appeal for women and for men combined than any other woman I've ever met in politics.

HESS: What other women were active in Democratic politics about that time?

ROACH: Dorothy McAllister [Mrs. Thomas F.] of Michigan, who

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was indefatigable; she was a tireless worker. She didn't quite have the grasp of the national scene as India Edwards did, but she was very effective.

Molly Dewson, who really was more in the Roosevelt era, although she worked on some of the Truman campaigns. Molly Dewson was of an "older school" (if I might use that expression), than India Edwards was. India had a background in the newspaper field and politics, and a love for the Democratic Party. Of course, they all had that, love and loyalty, but India had a way of expressing it and putting it over.

Margaret Price, who came along the latter part of the Truman administration, the late Margaret Price, who was state vice-chairman from Michigan when Mr. Truman was in the White House, and she later became vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, she succeeded India Edwards, and she, Margaret Price, would be the closest copy of India Edwards insofar as attracting other women into the party and activating them in campaigns and registration drives, publicity stunts in promoting the Democratic Party.

There was one other woman who had a great deal of energy and knowledge, and I probably would put her about third in her effectiveness, and that was Katie Louchheim,

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who was a very good worker and a good vice-chairman of the national committee and Director of the Women's Division. I may have my sequence wrong in that it may be that Katie Louchheim succeeded India Edwards and Margaret Price succeeded Katie Louchheim. I think I've got that out of order.

But those are some of the women I've worked with.

HESS: Was Mrs. Woodhouse active about that time?

ROACH: Margaret Woodhouse was. She was a lady from Connecticut. At the time she was at the Democratic National Committee, I did not have very many dealings with her. While she was there I was working primarily on fundraising and just did not work with the Women's Division in that connection.

HESS: As to their political ability, how would you rate the Presidents since Mr. Roosevelt, and including FDR?

ROACH: I would rather put Harry Truman ahead of all of them. I think actually Harry Truman knew more as to how to apply politics to his everyday life than Franklin Roosevelt.

Franklin Roosevelt played more of a personal game of politics than he did on the national scale, with regard to the party itself. President Truman utilized the framework of the Democratic National Committee, the state

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organizations and state vice-chairmen, and brought them in to political action more than any other Democratic President. Roosevelt, while he certainly was close to Jim Farley and admired him, in the second term, Roosevelt started bypassing the Democratic National Committee and Jim Farley, political appointments and political policies, and from that time on until Mr. Truman came into office, the Democratic National Committee was nothing more than a figurehead.

I'm speaking now from late 1940 until Mr. Truman came in, ascended to the White House in 1945. The Democratic National Committee was completely revitalized after Mr. Truman took office, and it remained that way, right until 1953.

President Kennedy did not utilize the framework of the Democratic National Committee and state chairmen anywhere near as much as President Truman did. Political action was directed right out of the White House, and once again the national committee became a figurehead and even more so under President Johnson.

I've often heard this complaint ever since 1965 that the national committee members and the state chairmen around the country felt as though the lines of communication with their national party had been completely

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cut off. It was common talk, both in the press and privately that the national chairman at that time, John Bailey was a figurehead and couldn't speak for the party on policy matters; couldn't speak for the administration on what its political policies were, so the national committee members who normally are in touch with the national chairmen felt cut off right at that source. And of course, they had what they felt was no communication with the White House. A great many people feel that this disintegration of lines of communication between the Democratic leadership in Washington and the leaders out in the hustings was the beginning of the disintegration of the party.

Of course, you can't blame the defeat in 1968 entirely on that, but I believe it had some bearing. The Vietnam war and the split in the ranks in the Democratic Party at Chicago in '68 added to this breakdown between the communications and grassroots.

HESS: What can be done to rebuild the party?

ROACH: Elect a Democratic President. I don't think we are going to pull everybody together and of course they've got to be pulled together to accomplish that, and we're a long ways from 1972, and none of us know yet who the nominee will be. But if the Democrats don't

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get together at their next convention in '72, and completely, without any equivocation, support the nominee in that convention, we're not going to win in '72, and might not even win in '76, if the Democrats don't get together.

There are more Democrats in the nation than there are Republicans. It's just simple arithmetic. If they're all pulling together a Democrat can be elected. And I think it's possible in '72.

HESS: Even though they are members of the party of the opposition how would you rate President Eisenhower and President Nixon on their political abilities?

ROACH: Nixon hasn't had time to prove any political astuteness. When he was a Senator from California, I should say when he was a Congressman and ran for the Senate, I was in California during a portion of that campaign trying to assist the Democratic candidate, who was Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas, and it was a rather dirty campaign.

This is a matter of history. Everybody knows the charges against Mrs. Douglas made by the Nixon people that she was a commie, had a lot of "pink" followers, and the press picked this up, and it was just a campaign of lies that elected Mr. Nixon in 1950. I don't think this demonstrated a political astuteness. It probably demonstrated an astuteness for scare tactics, publicity-wise and

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through the media of television and the printed word. Although Nixon was very careful not to personally accuse Mrs. Douglas of being a commie, but all his followers did.

HESS: How can charges like that be fought during a campaign?

ROACH: They can't be. People will believe the worst, and when scandalous publicity is put out, the person using the scandal's publicity certainly thinks of the timing element, so they're going to use it at a time when there isn't much room left for refutation on the part of the accused. To say "I'm going to sue you," and go ahead and file a 50 million dollar libel suit, doesn't offset the damage that is already done. And Mrs. Douglas certainly had grounds for suits.

Now, who she would have sued during or after that campaign is hard to say. But you can never bring about a lawsuit during a campaign; the judicial procedures just don't operate that fast. You can go through a lot of delays and appeals and so on, and in a case like that could never come to trial.

I don't say that the charges that Mrs. Douglas was pinkish or commie were the only thing that defeated her. Nixon had a lot of money behind him during that campaign, and Mrs. Douglas had very little.

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Money isn't everything, as Mr. Truman proved in '48. But the statewide campaign is different from the nationwide campaign, and if you have got plenty of money that you can pour into the precincts on election day to get people to the polls, spend a lot of money getting all your voters in, where you know your party has the predominate registration, this is where money is effectively spent in the state or congressional district.

To rate Mr. Nixon and Mr. Eisenhower, I don't believe that Mr. Eisenhower was a politician in any sense of the word, as a matter of fact, by his own admission. I was told in 1952 by some of the Republican leadership, Mr. Walter Hallanan, who was chairman of the Republican convention arrangements, he and I worked very closely on previous conventions when we held them in the same city in '44 and '48 and again in '52. Mr. Hallanan told me that when Henry Cabot Lodge and others convinced General Eisenhower that he should be a candidate and save the world and keep our country on the up and up, and the Democrats were all crooked and should be driven out of office, and he, Mr. Eisenhower, was clean and he was a great crusader in Europe and the country needed this type of leadership, they, convinced him of this and assured him that he would not have to be involved in

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any political controversies, that all political controversies would be handled by the Republican national chairman, and the legislative controversies would be handled by the Republican leadership in the Congress.

And they really sold him a bill of goods (from what I'm told), that he would not have to be involved in anything; that he would be a figurehead, a crusader for political cleanliness.

Somewhere along the line I saw or heard a quote from Mr. Eisenhower himself, that he was no politician. He proved this because he just did not play political partisan politics, when he was in the White House. He stayed out of most controversies, although right after he was inaugurated the Republican national chairman was involved in a scandal in Kansas, which was front page news, and Mr. Eisenhower was much upset because it was laid right at his doorstep. He thought these political things wouldn't be put around his shoulders. He soon found out that when you're the President of the United States, anything that happens in your party can be either directly or indirectly blamed on the President.

He was much irritated that the Republican national chairman had become involved in a land sale in Kansas which hit the headlines. The Republican national

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chairman resigned very shortly after that. But Eisenhower had eight years of what everybody called a "real good honeymoon."

Nixon's actions, since he's been in the White House indicate that he hopes to be another Eisenhower and stay out of all controversy. It's not going to work that way, because time is running out on him. He's got programs and actions that he promised the electorate, and he really has done nothing but still give a lot of words about what he's going to do. He's not fighting for any legislation on the Hill. It's evident he wants next year to be able to go out in these marginal congressional districts in these Democratic senatorial states with the hue and cry that this has been a "do-nothing Congress" and try to blame the Democratic majority. That isn't going to hold water because he'll be hurting some of his own Republican members of the Congress. I think this is the position that he's trying to place himself in in getting ready for 1970, because he knows like everyone else that what happens in 1970 will have a very decided affect on what happens in 1972.

HESS: Just how great is the danger that the Democrats might lose control of the Congress in the next election?

ROACH: I don't think there's any danger of losing the

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House. You noticed just yesterday, rather on Tuesday, we won that Republican seat in Massachusetts, and that is four out of five special congressional elections since 1968, and three of those seats were solid Republican seats and all three were won by Democrats, which proves what I've always believed, that there are more Democrats who can be activated than there are Republicans.

Republicans are inclined to be complacent when they are in the White House, I mean, complacent about the situation in various congressional districts and states, and they are going to go after the Senate seats tooth and nail, and of course, they are going to go after as many congressional seats as they can get. Their goal is to win the majority in both Houses, naturally, and Mr. Nixon will go around the country, and his congressional leaders and other spokesmen will go around the country saying, "This has been a do-nothing Congress. Give Mr. Nixon a Republican majority in the Congress and he will carry out all these blah-blah-blah programs," and they'll give you a lot of pie in the sky; and this is politics, and he hopes to appeal to the electorate that this is the thing to do, give him a majority in both houses.

Mathematically, I don't think he can do it in the

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House, although they are going to spend -- you'll see more money spent this coming year, maybe not more -- but it will come close to the amount of money the Republicans spent in '68, because as I understand it, they have already set aside their goal, have established a goal of a million dollars for each of ten Senate seats. We could enumerate those goals. Of course, they naturally

didn't count on the senior Senator from Illinois passing away. There's a good possibility that the Democrats could win that one next year, so that will be for four remaining years of the term.

There is a slim possibility that the Democrats could win John Williams' seat in Delaware. He's resigning or retiring.

But prior to Senator Dirksen's passing the Republicans had ten Democratic incumbent seats in the Senate and they're going to spend a million dollars on that. They still have that goal. They may have increased it some, and that will just be the Senate race. Of course, some of that money will help the congressional candidates in those respective states. On top of that, as I understand, they are going to have at least five million dollars for congressional races -- there is a total of fifteen million dollars which they have already, in effect, earmarked for

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next year.

HESS: Have they been fairly successful lately in their fundraising?

ROACH: Very successful.

In the spring of 1968 they had a \$500 dinner and they grossed two and a half million, and in the spring of '69, they had \$1000 a plate dinner, and I understand they grossed 2 million dollars on that one. And they are planning another one for March 11 of 1970.

But in addition to that, the Republicans have a permanent national finance committee made up of businessmen selected from around the country. It is their job to raise all the money needed for the normal housekeeping day-to-day operations of the Republican National Committee and the House and Senate Republican campaign committees.

In addition to raising what we'll say is the operating nut for the party for the year, they go out and raise -- they even post quotas on themselves -- and they raise additional money that can be spent on the campaign. That's all in addition to the \$1000 a plate dinner. They have no worry about money. I understand that after the '68 election, they still had money left in both the House and Senate campaign committees, which is very rare.

HESS: What are the added difficulties of raising money when

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your man is not in the White House, such as the Democrats face at this present time?

ROACH: The main difficulty is that you don't have a man in the White House. This is a normal reaction.

A great many contributors feel that the party is on the rocks because they lost the election, and any contribution that they make to the national committee just helping to pay off the deficit, not helping to elect somebody, and that has a very cold approach to it, there's not much sex appeal in

asking a man to contribute \$1000, \$500, any amount, to help wipe out a deficit that's ancient history now. There's just no romance there.

The House and Senate campaign committees, naturally, have got more of an appeal. They've got something real to sell, and they've got actual candidates who need help in their re-election campaigns.

Of course, this is something meaty; you can sell that, although the dinner that we had for the House and Senate campaign committees in June of this year, the gross was slightly over \$800,000, which was the biggest joint venture that the Democrats have ever had for those two committees. It should have been more. They didn't allow enough time. However, with the little bit of money that they've had to spend and as I've pointed out, they've

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picked out four out of five special elections in the House.

Money is not always the answer, once again, as Mr. Truman proved. The difficulty for the Democrats, as I've pointed out, in trying to raise money for the presidential deficit, when you don't have the President in the White House, it makes it next to impossible. I think it will take them probably seven or eight years to clean up the 1968 deficit.

HESS: What do you see as the basic differences in the philosophies between the Democratic and Republican Parties?

ROACH: You can't spell that out on an individual President or House or Senate member basis. All the years I've been around, my reaction to the Republican philosophy, taking it on a general basis, is that they just don't have the concern for the so-called middle income groups, the working man, they still are the party of the rich. The big power interests have a great affect on their thinking, and they've always been, whether they like to admit it or not, an anti-labor party. They've fought any advances by the labor movement. And again, I say, there are individual members of the House and Senate

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of the Republican Party that are liberal, if I can use that word -- I'd rather say "progressive" -- and have helped the labor movement; they've helped on progressive legislation by voting in favor of it. Generally speaking, they still give the impression, the aura is still around, that it is the party of the rich.

HESS: Did you go out to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago last year?

ROACH: Yes, I was there. I was in charge of the hospitality suite of the American Trucking Association. I had done this same thing in 1964 at Atlantic City. I had a large suite on the lake front in the Conrad Hilton Hotel overlooking Grant Park. It was an unpleasant experience. Our suite, which was supposed to be air-conditioned, wasn't, when we arrived on the Friday before the convention. And so naturally, we had to open all the windows, and it was hot and muggy and

we heard constant rumblings and noise from the unruly crowd that was gathered in Grant Park, which was practically right under our window.

We saw all the disturbance that was created there by these youthful protesters of the Vietnam war and the protesters of the fact that they couldn't get into the national convention in the hall to protest more, the fact

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that the police were keeping them contained in the park and keeping them from gathering right in front of the hotel -- they kept them across the street.

Those of us -- we were not the only ones, naturally -- the Conrad Hilton Hotel has 24 floors, and a great number of their rooms and suites overlook Grant Park, so there are a great many people who saw the abuse that the police and later the National Guardsmen took, with the patience of Job.

To this day, I don't know how they kept from breaking as long as they did. They stood shoulder to shoulder with their hands behind their backs; they were spat upon; they had dirt thrown in their faces, even human waste, and the most vile, profane language was used, not just through the normal mouthing of the obscene words, but they were using bullhorns. They wanted everybody to hear what they were saying, the filthiest words that I wouldn't even repeat.

The ladies who were occupying rooms, my wife and the wife of a partner of mine who was there in the suite. They had to leave the window. They didn't want to hear this. They were just disgusting obscenities that they would have had to listen to.

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Then, of course, when the tear gas was used it permeated our suite. As a matter of fact, it was so depressing that we left Chicago Thursday of the convention before it was all over.

HESS: Did you see any actions that were taken by the police that might have been classified as a little over-active?

ROACH: No, I didn't. Of course, we all know what the news media claimed, that some of their photographers and reporters were unmercifully beaten. This may be, I don't know, but I'll say this, we saw enough of the abuse that was thrown in the faces of these law enforcement officers to know that their human reaction was just that. There had to be a breaking point. Had the situation been reversed the protesters would have broken down and resorted to violence long before.

HESS: What in your opinion were Mr. Truman's major contributions during his career?

ROACH: Ending the war in Japan, ending World War II, I think was the greatest contribution.

Strengthening the Marshall plan was a big help.

His active, more than active, support of bringing about the United Nations, which of course, had been conceived prior to his ascendancy to the White House but he gave it such support that it really strengthened that

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organization. I think he activated it more than anybody else.

HESS: What is your estimation of Mr. Truman's place in history? How do you think he will be seen by historians and the general public one or two hundred years from now?

ROACH: As you well know, I'm deeply prejudiced. I'd rather repeat what I've heard other people say, that in all probability he'll go down in history as the greatest President we've ever had. And I've had this said to me by people who actually expressed hatred for him, not only when he ascended to the White House after Roosevelt's death, but when he was elected in '48.

This is common knowledge. A lot of people said they hated the little man from Missouri, he was miscast, he didn't belong there, he wasn't big enough for the job. Some of those same people have said to me that he will go down in history as the greatest President we ever had, and, of course, I feel strongly that he will, personally. But I prefer hearing it from those who had damned him previously.

HESS: Do you have anything else to add on Mr. Truman, the Truman administration, or your duties with the Democratic National Committee during Mr. Truman's days?

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ROACH: No, other than to say that I have given you a comparison of the effectiveness and the shape of the Democratic National Committee, or the Democratic Party under various Democratic Presidents, and my tour of duty with the national committee in various capacities during the seven years of Mr. Truman's term in the White House was the most pleasant experience I ever had. There was the feeling of cooperation all the way along the line that the national committee was in step with the White House and vice versa. We had excellent rapport with our party leaders around the country. And there again, it proves that Mr. Truman in my opinion was the ablest politician that we've had in the White House in all my days anyway.

HESS: Anything else?

ROACH: As soon as you leave I'll remember a thousand more words.

HESS: Well, thank you very much.

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