

Louis E. Martin Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 04/07/1966
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Martin was a journalist; deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, 1960–1969; consultant for John F. Kennedy’s [JFK] 1960 presidential campaign; political advisor to Presidents JFK (1960–1963) and Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–1968); and special assistant to President Jimmy Carter, 1978–1981. In this interview Martin discusses African American voters in the 1960 presidential election; dealing with African American press during JFK’s 1960 presidential campaign; Johnson’s vice-presidential nomination and African American press; getting prominent African Americans to endorse JFK; the telephone call from JFK to Coretta Scott King, 1960; and mobilizing the African American vote for JFK in different American cities in 1960, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Louis E. Martin

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Second Oral History Interview

with

LOUIS E. MARTIN

Washington, D.C.
April 7, 1966

By Ronald J. Grele

For the John F. Kennedy Library

- GRELE: Mr. Martin, we left off discussing the meeting on constitutional rights in New York City. I have one more question on that meeting. At any time during that meeting did you recall John Kennedy asking Senator [Joseph S.] Clark and Congressman [Emanuel] Celler to draw up the civil rights legislation for him?
- MARTIN: I think he reported on the fact that he had asked them to do this earlier, at a meeting here in Washington. As I recall this was a part of his speech -- that they were going forward and among the things in the works was a legislative draft of civil rights proposals by these two gentlemen.
- GRELE: Was it then assumed during the campaign that legislation would be asked for after the election?
- MARTIN: That was the inference of all their remarks. There was time limit on it but during the Kennedy Administration progress in civil rights legislation was anticipated. In the campaign we stimulated

that expectation.

GRELE: After the meeting there was a rally in Harlem?

MARTIN: Yes, an outdoor rally in Harlem in front of the Hotel Theresa at 7th and 125th Streets was the windup meeting of the constitutional conference. This was a purely big Democratic political operation, presided over by Adam Clayton Powell. It's a favorite corner, you know, for political rallies in New York. Mr. Kennedy came out and brought along his wife and their appearance was quite a big highpoint in the campaign because it is traditional that the people who are after the Negro vote make a visit to Harlem, particularly in national elections. He brought along his wife and Adam Powell was in his glory prancing on that platform and introducing the new First Lady, the First Lady to be and the President himself. There was a little humor and a great bit of feeling obvious to everybody watching. Mr. Kennedy made some remark about Africa in the course of his talk and pointed out that the Africans named their children for heroes in America -- Washington and Lincoln and so forth. In an aside he said that some probably had been named for Adam Powell and I'm sure, since he's been over there, that's probably true. [laughter] Adam Powell and the crowd really enjoyed the joke. The implication that he included Africa among his playgrounds was, of course, understood by every-

body. He didn't have to spell it out; they caught it immediately.

GRELE: Did you rely on Adam Clayton Powell to mobilize the Negro vote in New York City?

MARTIN: Well, the Democratic organizational people. . . . Ray [Raymond J.] Jones was very active in this and I guess Raymond Jones was probably the person who did the key job of getting them together and organizing the rally itself. At that time most of the Negro leadership in Harlem -- everyone was together, united in this effort. There was a lot of factionalism and differences among them but on this particular occasion and for this campaign they were united. Ray Jones was probably number one in terms of organization of this particular rally. Adam Powell was, of course, the congressman and the king of the area, a presiding officer. Mrs. Roosevelt also came out to the meeting and she got a tremendous hand and a great many other political figures. It was remarked how greatly applauded Mrs. Roosevelt was when she was introduced.

GRELE: I've been told that the first request for a speaker for the Negro groups was invariably Mrs. Roosevelt. Is that true?

MARTIN: She was in demand. I don't quite know whether she was number one on this or not but I know that the reception she got at that particular rally indicated the great love they had for her -- the Negroes in New York.

One of the things I remember in his speech -- it was in this speech also that the President referred to the fact that not a single Negro had been appointed to a district judgeship in the United States. Of course, he recited those familiar statistics about the different levels of expectations of Negro youth and white youth which he used over and over in the campaign very effectively. I think this speech was a turning point in the election in a sense -- rather, the whole rally, the constitutional convention coupled with the outdoor speech. I think I referred earlier to the significance we attached to it -- that the constitutional meeting just about wrapped up the Negro leadership for us. This rally was, of course, the icing on the cake.

GRELE: In the press it's oftentimes stated that the turning point in terms of the Negro vote came with the call to Mrs. Martin Luther King.

MARTIN: Well, I don't quite agree with that because at this rally all of the leadership types in civil rights participated -- most of them participated. There's no question that Kennedy made a great impression on them. Now it is true that the kind phone call was that dramatic last minute touch that did help electrify the electorate -- the Negro voters -- but I think we would have gotten most of those votes had we not had

the King call. This is one of those hypothetical things. Nobody will ever know. We never took any chances anyway. We went for everything.

GRELE: What was the next project with which you were involved in the election?

MARTIN: Well, we had a basic communication problem arising out of this convention and rally in Harlem and so forth. That was to be sure that the Negro media carried full accounts of it -- pictures, stories. We did our part through the channels of the committee but we also called upon our friends in the business throughout the country to pay special attention to it and how -- like the fact that this thing transcended partisan politics, that here was a meeting in New York concerned with substantive problems of Negroes in America, and that we had invited Republicans and Democrats and we didn't ask any questions. We were after a total involvement of all the types and all Negro leadership in this great struggle to do something about this great problem of Negroes in America. I think that the level at which this thing was pitched was as high as you could get it and we were successful in beating back any of those critics who would say that it was just another political partisan gimmick.

GRELE: How did this compare to the earlier effort of the Democratic party in 44, 48, 52, 56?

MARTIN: Well, I was more familiar with the campaign of '44 than any of the others. I worked with the committee for three months on the press side. I don't think we had ever done anything to touch the total Negro leadership in the same degree that we did in this one. In the past what we were accustomed to doing was making certain that our Democratic wheels did their part in having their rallies there but we never went beyond. . . . As I recall -- now I may be wrong in this -- but I don't recall any one event which moved beyond partisan and party concerns to the total problem of Negro civil rights problems in America. I think it was a high point in electioneering in this issue. As you may recall, a great many so-called intellectuals in Negro life have always complained that civil rights is a political football and kicked around by both parties. There was a question of the sincerity of the candidates on all sides on the issue. It seems to me that the motivation, ~~sincerity~~, et cetera of Kennedy came through at this rally and that's why I regard it as the high point. I felt the opinion makers in Negro life, the influential types, were caught up in the admiration for this young, vigorous man who gave full commitment to the cause and publicly did all the things that they might expect from someone ~~having~~ this. . . . There are different points of view on this. This is just my point of view. I don't know whether all the

people who have studied these elections would agree but I must say that the Negro press, the Negro leadership, they were touched and affected by this. It was all positive; nothing negative about it.

GRLEE: Moving on now, did you find any problem when dealing with the Negro press about the fact that the vice presidential candidate was a southerner?

MARTIN: Well, we have to go back a little on that. Early in the game, before I officially became a part of the operation, I think I told you Adam Powell and some of the fellows there talked to me about the coming campaign. Did I tell you about that?

GRLEE: No.

MARTIN: I thought I might have. Well, the problem arose because [Lyndon B.] Johnson in seeking the nomination had made some pitch to the Negro leaders and among them was Adam Powell and some of the others. I was called on the telephone and talked to by several of these on the position of the Negro press. The reason I was called was, in the minds of a lot of these people I was identified with the Negro press having been president of the Publishers' Association and editor of the Chicago Defender and I have a newspaper in Detroit. The concern most of the people with whom I talked at that time was that they didn't want a repeat performance of the [John J.] Sparkman candidacy when he was

running for vice president. In that campaign, if you recall, the Pittsburgh Courier put out a special supplement, I'm sure paid for by the Republicans. I don't know whether I should say that/^{or not} but that's my feeling. But they just roasted, they verbally lynched Sparkman. This was repeated in a number of publications in Negro journalism. I've forgotten now who but I do remember that special supplement in the Courier. A great many of the orators, preachers, et cetera decried the candidacy of John Sparkman on account of it. Johnson had been in Washington so much longer and probably better known to some of the civil rights people because of the fight on the civil rights in '60 so I was asked about this business of the Negro press's attitude toward Johnson. Without thinking of any participation in the campaign at all, we took the position, with publisher friends in the business, that we would not lynch, that they should not lynch this guy simply on the grounds of his southern birth and Texas origin, to at least give him an objective play. This was reinforced, of course, after the Convention. I wasn't at the Convention but one day passing through. I think I told you that I had an African chief that I was taking around the country and I just went in there one day, showed him everything and went on to San Francisco. He was from Nigeria, just went back. Most of the editors were fed up with the Eisenhower operation and they

weren't sold particularly on Nixon although Nixon had a lot of friends he had attracted late but they weren't quite sure where Nixon stood. Being Democrats, we were concerned that somehow whatever happened that we wouldn't get this southerner Texan in the position that Sparkman was in so this was how the thing arose originally. Adam Powell was the guy who spoke to me first about it and several others, Ray Jones. But I remember Adam talking about it. Most of the publishers were in a good mood and they weren't particularly malicious. With two of them campaigning Johnson began making the kind of statements that Sparkman never made so I didn't have any real trouble. The fact that Johnson had shown courage and some interest in the '57 and '60 thing of course reinforced him. I guess that was the reason Adam spoke to me about it earlier--because of the '57 and '60 thing. He must have known a lot of inside business that I didn't know. Now remember I came out of Africa. I didn't know a thing of what was going on so all these conversations and stuff were simply because I had been identified so long with the press that the guys would talk to me about it. But anyhow the type of campaign that you saw with Sparkman did not develop and of course we did our best to see that it didn't develop.

GRILE: Were you at all involved in attempting to get Negroes prominent in public life to endorse John Kennedy?

MARTIN: Oh yes. In fact that was a major part of the campaign. As a matter of fact we used these little testimonial endorsements. I ran fifty thousand dollars worth of small endorsements in the various states. Any influential guy -- an artist and heroes -- he'd say why he was for Kennedy-Johnson. This was a standard operating procedure. I think that was helpful for two reasons. One, you flatter the guy, in some instances, that you chose and secondly, the manner in which we did it, it was a dignified testimonial type presentation. We ran the picture of the individual and a statement that sounded good. It was as dignified as you can make that kind of copy. In several newspapers -- the major newspapers -- we ran sometimes four and five in the same paper, one on page 2, page 3, page 4, page 5. We negotiated with the guys to give us the right placement, you see.

GRELE: Did you have any trouble with any of them?

MARTIN: No, this is why I think that convention in New York was helpful because our whole approach was not narrow partisan, party approach, but a civil rights approach. The people we contacted in these areas, of course we had known them. I don't recall a single rejection. The only well known Negro in American life that we had trouble with was Jackie Robinson.

GRELE: Did that stem from the Wisconsin primary or his Republicanism?

MARTIN: Well, Jackie was originally with Humphrey as you recall and he switched to Nixon. He claimed. . . . I clocked him in certain places. I sat in the back of the auditorium and got his pitch at least on one occasion that I recall. He seems to have had a dinner meeting or something with Kennedy which I didn't arrange. I didn't know anything about it. It was an unsatisfactory encounter from Jackie's point of view. In his speeches he made a statement which he repeated time and time again, that he was not satisfied with Kennedy's knowledge and information of the race problem and that Kennedy had refused to look him in the eye. He kept talking about Kennedy refusing to look him in the eye. In one speech he said, "My mother always told me that if they don't look you in the eye they aren't really sincere." He belabored that simple line and to the unsophisticated maybe it had some appeal. He knocked that in their heads. Of course, you must remember that all during this period that Nixon was not doing anything either. I mean, I must say over and over again that you credit us with all that ability. We had a situation where Nixon refused to take advantage of his own background and experience in this area.

GRELE: Have you ever tried to analyze for yourself why Nixon should have acted as he did?

MARTIN: I'm certain that he was going on the advice of those who felt

that he needed to break that solid South and that Kennedy, being a Yankee from Boston, he had a good chance of slipping a fast one over on the minorities by not going too far with the Southerners and yet keeping the South by not going too far with the Negroes. Well, he was walking a tightrope that Negroes are sophisticated enough not to buy these days. And, of course, every time he made a pitch to the Southerners this gave us an opening and we made sure that the Negro press got the whole story.

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the Belafonte film?

MARTIN: As I told you, we got Belafonte to come to that convention and in the meeting we had to convince him to come there we also sold him on the idea of the "short", the film. Frank Montero went up there and he dealt with him more directly than I did but we persuaded him to cooperate, including the film and everything else.

GRELE: Was the conscious decision made not to use the film in the South or to prevent its use in the South?

MARTIN: We made the thing available to a party of wheels who felt that the thing would be of value. Now I really did not control the distribution of the film. As a matter of fact, most of my concern was purely Negro media -- newspaper, magazines and the Negro radio. I didn't know how much of it. . . . I think the

national T.V. carried stuff about Belafonte and the other Negroes that were lining up. I really can't recall now where the thing was shown.

GREER: That leads to my next question. In dealing with the Negro press and Negro radio did you treat them differently than you would have the normal mass media?

MARTIN: Oh yes. Well, the first thing I was pretty much a part of it having known everybody in this business personally over a long period. One of the greatest strokes of luck was to get the Norfolk Journal and Guide over. They'd been Republican up until 1960. I talked with the owner whom I knew and finally got him in a position where he sent his son up here to talk. We were pointing out to them that here was a vigorous new face on the horizon who would pursue the goals that they had been fighting for for all of their lives with more diligence and vigor than anybody else. We finally persuaded [Thomas] Tommy Young to come over. I also pointed out that, being in the state of Virginia with the biggest single newspaper in the South, he was overlooking big bet by not having more influence in his own state which was always Democratic and that in his own interest he ought to become a factor, political factor, in his own state. With all these arguments I think we made a little impression. Finally he came through and supported him.

This was another thing. You see, we got the editorial support -- although we didn't necessarily approach it from that point of view -- from all of the major papers. Then those who like the Jet and Ebony people who refused to do any editorializing we brought some space in the right places and used the lengthy kind of advertising that, you know, would do the job.

GRELE: Was advertising substantially different from the advertising that you placed in, say, Life or Look?

MARTIN: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, we wrote a column. They have in the Jet magazine, not a gossip column, but one of those inside report type columns which we deliberately imitated in writing our political ads. Of course, they carried the ADV on it but when you read it... . [laughter] We used every legitimate approach we could. Of course, every one of them ... The only money that was every given to any of those papers was given for profit, on a line rate base. Of course we bought copy but they all carried ADV's if you wanted to look carefully.

GRELE: Since the majority of the Negroes in the United States are Protestants was John Fitzgerald Kennedy's Catholicism every a problem with the Negro electorate or the Negro leadership?

MARTIN: Well, we weren't sure. Mrs. Majorie Lawson did an excellent job of working with a number of clergymen. We set up conferences

of Negro clergymen. We had people represented at these inter-denominational alliance meetings, everywhere and we pursued that problem not knowing really what the impact was. We had no way of telling at that time. But save for three or four bishops of the AME [American Methodist Episcopal] Church we found no real opposition. Of course, Kennedy's own efforts in this direction -- the Houston deal that was in the general press and the campaign to overcome this that was in the general press -- had its impact in Negro life. You must remember that the so-called Negro media is a supplement to the general press; a lot of those who read the Negro weeklies also read the daily paper. So the approach that the Kennedys made to overcome whatever liabilities might accrue from his Catholicism they were influenced by that too.

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the campaign project to fly prominent Negroes around the country to organize Negro voters?

MARTIN: Yes, we were called by Bobby Kennedy one day and asked about the possibility of ^a flying caravan. I went over to the office. His idea was to send a group of athletes, well known Negroes, to what we might call secondary cities -- cities in which we did not have a major campaign operation going. The difficulty was that we had to find some individual who knew enough to manage this operation and, as we did everything else, he wanted

it done yesterday. Luckily we remembered a friend in New York, Frank Montero, who was a great operator in New York politics at a secondary level but he had managed some campaigns locally for the New York politicians. He was well known among the "go go set" at that period. I called Frank and got him down the next day. He hit it off very well with Bobby. Then the problem arose -- how do we get our team together and get planes and all this business. Seigenthaler, of course, was in it up to his neck because he was Bobby's assistant in this game. The only thing about it -- they asked me not to tell anybody in the Civil Rights Division what we were doing. I couldn't understand why the secrecy but this is the way they operated.

GEELE: Did you ever figure out why?

MARTIN: No, I never have but he didn't want me to say anything to Harry Woffard or anybody else. He wanted this to be a separate deal unknown to the people in the office. I never understood it but apparently that's the strategy that the Kennedys used. They had forty balls in the air and different people designated to catch them and one not know what the other's doing. This was one little project that I was supposed to keep under wraps until it got off the ground. I remember receiving calls at all times of the day and night. One call says, "My name is

so and so. I'm a pilot and I've got a call to report to you. Is your name Louis Martin?" I say, "Yes." Then another call would come in, "This is -- I think it's -- Butler Aviation. We've got a twin engine airplane and so forth and so on. Is your name Louis Martin?" I say, "Yes, it is." "We're supposed to report to Louis Martin." Somebody called up and said he had twenty-eight thousand gallons of aviation gas and what shall we do with it. [laughter] Things were coming out of the woodwork, out of all over. To mobilize this little junket was quite an undertaking. Well, fortunately Frank Montero is a very able, flexible type and accustomed to all these wild operations in New York so we got it together. Then the difficulty arose on the people who we'd put on the plane. We tried to get Willy Mays and Willy Mays agreed for five minutes; then he changed his mind. We finally got his wife. We tried to get Lena Horne. We couldn't get Lena Horne and we finally got her daughter. We decided that we ought to launch the thing from New York with a press conference. We had a problem -- should we make this all Negro? We ought to have some white person involved so it wouldn't look like a Jim Crow flying unit. Frank knew Chester Bowles' wife and he said, "She wants to do something so let's get her." We got Chester Bowles' wife to go to New York to help launch this thing. She was to integrate the unit. I couldn't go to New York at the moment because I had some other

project so I asked a lady working with Roger Tubby in the press office to go with Frank to New York to set up the press conference and launch the thing there. Finally it got off the ground and we thought we had Joe. . . . We had several prize fighters. I've forgotten now but Henry Armstrong we finally wound up with. They flew off loaded with buttons and all kinds of literature and et cetera. None of these people were experienced in politics. They all had to be briefed. You had to mesh the meetings in with the weather and the time of arrival. It was one absolutely impossible junket. But, strangely enough, they made some impact in Baltimore and Louisville and some of these places and the thing got off the ground. I think on balance it was a success. But, among the difficulties, Henry Armstrong seemed to not quite keep on the political thing. He had been preaching for a while. Armstrong had been preaching and I gather in the middle of some of these political rallies he got off the electioneering and started preaching. They had some difficulty with him. Anyhow, it reached a point where they had to get rid of him because he was not always coherent and some fellows said that he's just slap happy. We needed a change so frantically I called a whole lot of wheels to get another prize fighter of note. I finally got Joe [Jersey] Wolcott. Joe joined them, I think, in New York or somewhere. Anyhow the thing worked out but it was one great adventure that never received much publicity in the

recounting of what happened in the campaign but apparently had some little value in the cities that they visited. The whole caravan wound up in Detroit. I learned later that it was the most successful of all because they were good crowd gatherers. They were given this advance notice that all these heroes and public figures would show up at a certain time and of course they'd build up a crowd for the local candidate. It was quite a hair raising experience.

GRELE: What was the genesis of the telephone call to Mrs. Martin Luther King? Whose idea was it?

MARTIN: As you recall, I think I told you earlier that all during the campaign we were trying to figure out ways and means to involve the top people -- particularly King; he was the number one guy -- on our side or as close to us as possible. As I recall it now the hour after King was jailed in Atlanta Frank Reeves was in Atlanta and learned about it and called the office to talk with Harris Woffard and spoke about the importance of something happening here because King, we had been discussing him every meeting we had for weeks. Harris talked to all of us but we didn't know exactly what form our action should take at that moment. Harris finally got a hold of Sarge Shriver in Chicago at one of those inns near the airport. He was with

Kennedy. He was in a discussion between Sarge and Harris and of course we had several ideas -- one, send him a wire, call him up. I don't know who made what suggestion but in the discussions with Sarge and his brother-in-law it was finally decided there that they would take some action but they didn't tell us exactly what they would do at this point. This all happened very fast, yousee. But the call was made. That same day I was asked to go over to 1101 and inform Bobby about the deal and get him active in it but when I went over there -- he had not heard about it -- he was en route to New York, I think. So we had two operations going. I was asked by Harris to talk to Bobby and I told Bobby the story that we had heard -- that Jackie Robinson and Nixon were going to do something, were going to hold a press conference and blame the Democrats. This is the line that we gave Bobby and Bobby was quite excited about it. I must say his first reaction was very vigorous -- the fact that a guy be jailed for having the wrong license, drivers license. I don't think he got the civil rights impact until the second thought. He was more outraged by the kind of justice and I think the political impact of the colored problem was a second thought. He made no promises when he flew away. Early the next morning... . In the interim

of course the call had gone in from Jack Kennedy. We weren't sure what was happening, whether it was going to be a wise call or not. At least, I wasn't. Then I got a call early in the morning from Bobby and he said, "Well, I talked to that judge down there" and so forth. "We're going to spring him" or something like this. I remember my reply was, "We now make you an honorary brother." Well, that was our term for Negroes. We called him honorary brother. I ran over to 1101 the next morning. I remember Bill [William F.] Haddad and somebody else, Roger Tubby, had something on the ticker, the inquiry being made about Bobby calling the judge. Of course, they were ready to deny that Bobby was doing it but I knew he had. I had to say, "Listen, don't put out any denial yet because the facts are he's made the call." [laughter] Once the thing happened of course luckily Nixon and then did nothing. The next day nothing happened and very little notice was taken of the fact that the Kennedys had done this thing, made the call. Then the problem was communicating to Negroes that the candidate for president had made this call. We had of course a call made to Mrs. King to find out exactly what he said and what she said in reply. So we got all that stuff down. Then began the big process -- the last seven days, -- of getting that thing out all over America. We ran millions and millions of pieces of literature on it recouting the whole sequence -- the

call, what the candidate said, what Mrs. King said, and so forth. Then I got on the telephone with the information and called editors all over the United States and read them the whole bit at my expense so the papers would get it fast. We were working up against deadlines you see. It's a weekly press so you've got to be a week ahead. We did not pay any attention at all to the general press. We sent none of it to the general press. In the only daily that carried anything about it was the New York Post, as I recall, at that moment. We had plants going here [Washington], Chicago, and the West Coast printing these little leaflets we cooked up which were just a pure account of what happened. "A man was in trouble. . . . The President called and expressed his concern and sympathy. Mrs. King's reply. . . . her gratitude for all of ^{his} concern. . . ." et cetera. In addition to that we did another thing. While the dailies carried the story of his being in jail they carried very little about this -- the political aspect. So we got on the phone and called a few key leaders and told them to pass the word through the ghettos and the bars that Kennedy was going to spring him. I remember I called Ray [Raymond Jones]; Ray in New York, and Ray said, "I'll get the boys out in the streets." [laughter]; When King got out of jail, everybody had heard that Kennedy had sprung him. [laughter]

OWELE: Was any resentment ever expressed because Martin Luther King did not endorse the candidate despite . . .

MARTIN: Well, he really didn't endorse the candidate. He thanked the candidate for it but that was enough.

OWELE: He didn't endorse him?

MARTIN: If you read it very carefully, he didn't say he'd vote for him. He was very grateful for his concern and so forth and so on. As a matter of fact, it was in Atlanta and we lost Atlanta because the Atlanta Negro

that here in the midst of this campaign, he dropped everything and called the man's wife. We did everything we knew to dramatize. We talked to every influential person or organization we could find. In fact, we sent about three or four hundred telegrams, in addition to phone calls, in addition to press releases, in addition to leaflets. I got a letter the day after the election. Some woman in Texas, she was on our leadership list or something and she was thanking us. Apparently I signed the wire. She said, "Thank you for that wire about the call" because she said she read this wire at that meeting. I didn't know they were doing that. See, we found out what was happening and there was a lot of stuff we sent out later. They were holding rallies all

over the country, so she got some of these wires and read them to the meeting. There's no question in my mind of how dramatic And Martin Luther King was at the height of his popularity. So it was the icing on the cake. I don't feel however that that alone could have done it. I think doving with these other things that we had done before this was the dramatic thing and it was the strong.

ORLE: One last question before we cut it off for today, could we go through the various cities and could you tell me who you worked with to mobilize the Negro vote in these various cities. We've already discussed New York and Chicago. What about Detroit? Who was the man you worked with in Detroit, in Cleveland?

MARTIN: Well, you must understand my role was more limited to press and media. It happens that I'm a part owner of a newspaper in Detroit. I still am. Of course, I took care of that situation. That's the Michigan Chronicle and it has about 45,000 ABC at that time. We dominated that. It's a weekly but I think it's just about the most effective weekly/^{Negro} newspaper in America. It covers completely that community. So we had that. We had some radio stations there. Mr. Langworth Quinn who was manager of the paper worked with me. He runs the show. Organizational leaders -- we had the VAW crowd because the Chronicle was close

to them and I was close to them. You see I was ten years in Detroit. We started the thing in '36; we started the whole thing from scratch. I was very close to a lot of people there. So that was very easy in Detroit. All the leaders like Harold Eledstone (?), Horace Sheffield, Bill [William] Oliver, the labor movement, and the candidates themselves -- those who were Negro candidates and were running -- did their part. You recall that in these states and cities they have their own Democratic machinery and Negro leadership. Charlie [Charles C.] Diggs of course was active. He's the congressman and his organization was all active. So it was a fairly simple thing to get action. We just had to be sure we had the right pitch and we had something we wished to say. That was most of our responsibility.

GREENE: What about the Baltimore Afro-American?

MARTIN: The Americans went with us. They had gone for Eisenhower and that was a problem but . . .

GREENE: Had they historically been Republican?

MARTIN: Most of their years they were Republican. Occasionally they went for a Democratic candidate. At one time they were for Roosevelt but switched. But anyhow they're for us now. We sat down with Mr. Carl and Mr. Arnett Murphy.--I must say this. You've got to remember I did this with every newspaper, every chain -- and worked out the program of advertising. We

did not ask them for editorial support but we did everything we could to persuade them that this was the guy they should support. They did not make a commitment to us but in the last round they came out for us. It was the same with the Amersterdam News in New York.

GRELE: Which has been Republican?

MARTIN: No, it supported [Thomas E.] Dewey in the run for governor and the publisher

so we had problems . That was the big job -- to make sure that we had these boys in our corner because Nixon had developed a good relationship with a great many of them. You see, we were able to drive a wedge in there because Nixon turned his back in the campaign, particularly that instance when [Henry Cabot] Lodge came out saying that he would go for a Negro for cabinet and Nixon didn't follow it up at all and cold watered the deal. You must remember that most of our job was proving that our guy was a better guy than Nixon. When Nixon did this other stupid thing of going to South Carolina appearing on the steps of the state house, with Jimmy [James F.] Byrnes and [William P.] Rogers, his attorney general, hiding in the plane afraid to show his face, boy did we run that stuff. We not only sent press releases, you see. We called the editors up and told them about it. We argued

on this basis — that these people can't be trusted. Here is a guy who has been making overtures to the Negroes and come in in the middle of a campaign and turns his back on them and all this pompously expecting to get the Negro support. As I said, the Republicans gave us the campaign to some degree because of those stupid things that Nixon did.

GREILE: Did the Lodge statement cause you any immediate concern when he first made it?

MARTIN: Well, strangely enough the statement was published the night that we opened the constitutional convention in New York — that night. It hit like a bomb but the fact of this meeting with all the leaders there who cared to show obscured this statement. Of course, everybody said, "That's just cheap politics." This was the line that we put over. Then Nixon followed up the next day by saying, you know, the hell with it.

GREILE: As the meeting was going on.

MARTIN: Yes. [Laughter]

GREILE: That's about all I have on the campaign. Do you want to cut it off?