

Jack T. Conway Oral History Interview – RFK#3, 12/29/1972

Administrative Information

Creator: Jack T. Conway

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Biographical Note

Conway was a labor official; the Executive Director of the Industrial Union Department in the AFL-CIO from 1963 through 1968; the Deputy Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency from 1961 to 1963; and the Deputy Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity from 1964 to 1965, during which time he headed the Community Action Program as part of the Lyndon B. Johnson Administration's War on Poverty and worked on several other programs of the same nature. In this interview Conway discusses getting Martin Luther King out of jail in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963; Robert F. Kennedy's [RFK] view of King and his actions; the March on Washington; working with RFK and the Justice Department on civil rights legislation; Walter Reuther; Conway's decision to leave John F. Kennedy's Administration and working on legislation from the outside; the Community Action Program; working with Senator RFK during the Johnson Administration; Senator RFK's involvement in the labor movement; Jesse M. Unruh, RFK, and the 1968 California presidential primary; Department of Urban Affairs legislation; getting accelerated public works legislation through Congress; Housing and Home Finance Agency staff members; and the attempt to pick up congressional seats in 1962 and 1964, among other issues.

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Jack T. Conway
JACK T. CONWAY
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Third Oral History Interview

with

JACK T. CONWAY

December 29, 1972
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the Robert F. Kennedy
Oral History Program
of the Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Okay, well I'm going to jump around a little bit just to finish up last time. I wanted to ask you a little bit about raising that bail when [Martin Luther] King and the other people were going to jail in Alabama in '63--that was a personal request from Robert Kennedy that you do that--and then maybe you could just explain how you went about getting the money and how publicity, if any, was handled on it?

CONWAY: Well, I was in my office in the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations] and got a telephone call from Robert Kennedy, who at that time was attorney general. He explained what was happening in Montgomery, Alabama. No, it was not Montgomery. It was--what's the other city?

HACKMAN: Birmingham.

CONWAY: Birmingham, Alabama. And he said that they were putting people in jail faster than they could be gotten out and that the local sheriff and the officials were attempting to herd people into a compound. They had something like a thousand people under arrest and Martin Luther King was taking a position that they would all stay in jail. Burke Marshall, according to Bob Kennedy

was in Birmingham working with the mayor who was a reasonably liberal southern political figure who felt that something had to be done before everything blew up. Bob said that the only thing that could turn the thing around was to get some money, some bail money working that would be able to reverse the process, which would mean that they could get people out faster than they were being arrested and put in. I had no idea what was involved as far as the amount was concerned and he said that he knew of no place to turn except to us, us being the labor unions, and asked me to go to work on it. And so I did. [Joseph L., Jr.] Joe Rauh was our attorney for the UAW [United Auto Workers]--he was not the attorney for the IUD [Industrial Union Department], but he was the attorney for the UAW--and he and I worked on it through the local attorney for the Steelworker's Union in Birmingham. It was finally ascertained that it would take \$160,000 in bail money for the people who were under arrest at that time.

Apparently Martin Luther King agreed that if they all could get out that he would stop whatever he was doing that was causing people to be arrested. So we went through a fairly intensive period of negotiations because we were bumping up against a weekend. I finally got commitments for the \$160,000: \$40,000 from the Industrial Union Department, \$40,000 from the UAW, \$40,000 from the Steelworkers, and the last \$40,000 was to come from the AFL-CIO who were pretty gingerly about the whole thing, concerned about it.

But once the commitments were obtained, then it was a question of how could the thing be put together. We attempted to negotiate with the traditional bail bond people in Alabama and the sheriff refused to accept this. He said that it had to be cash. We then tried to get a national bail bond company to handle it. That was turned down by the local officials. We finally said we would deposit the securities for \$160,000 some place that would be under the control of the court in Alabama. That was turned down. We finally agreed to put cash in a place that would be under the control of the court outside of Alabama. That was turned down. And finally we had to actually move \$160,000 in cash into Birmingham, Alabama. It was put in a savings and loan account in Birmingham and so far as I know it is still there.

HACKMAN: Were the people in Alabama that the local, what did you say, Steelworkers guy was dealing with, were those people aware that this was all labor money or was there any attempt to really keep this from being known?

CONWAY: I don't think there was any attempt to keep it from being known at the time. I think the sheriff must have known where it was coming from because he was pretty knowledgeable about the whole situation. I don't know whether it was known or not,

but I would think that it was.

It was deposited; all the people were released. We were to get the money back when the trials took place, but they never took place. At the point that I left the labor movement, the money was still in the savings and loan account; it was drawing interest. And each year the four organizations that were involved in the \$160,000 had to go through the process of getting a certification for their auditors respectively that this transaction had taken place, the money was in the account, and then they would be satisfied until the next year. I don't think there has been anything happen, at least there is nothing that I know of, that changes that. I think that it may probably still be there.

HACKMAN: In conversations at that time with Robert Kennedy, or earlier or later, what kind of feeling did you get for his feeling about Martin Luther King, both as a person and his actions?

CONWAY: Well, in that particular case I didn't get any reaction. I think that he was positive in his feelings about Martin Luther King, but this was a transaction that involved trying to resolve a very complicated situation that could get out of hand. So it was not tied to Martin Luther King personally in any way, it was a bargaining situation. Burke Marshall was on the scene in Birmingham and was handling that part of the negotiations and I'm sure he was in constant touch with Martin Luther King.

HACKMAN: Did you ever raise the question with Robert Kennedy later about the whole Martin Luther King wiretap situation. . .

CONWAY: No.

HACKMAN: . . . or is that a subject, the wiretap legislation, that you ever discussed with Robert Kennedy?

CONWAY: I never discussed with Robert Kennedy the Martin Luther King wiretapping. I did have discussions with [Nicholas deB.] Nick Katzenbach on the whole question of wiretapping. He was constantly trying to get us to agree to wiretapping legislation. We were opposed to it, told him we were, and that we would fight any effort to get wiretapping legislation passed.

HACKMAN: This was when?

CONWAY: This was during the time of the civil rights legislation when we were negotiating with the Justice Department.

HACKMAN: I had a few questions on the March on Washington. When you got involved in that, what do you remember about the administration and the Justice Department's attitude about the march? How it should be handled? What attitude to take toward it?

CONWAY: Well, I was involved in it extensively from the day it was announced. I was in New York at the time that it was announced by the leaders of the six civil rights organizations.

There was a national committee set up with ten people on it. Walter Reuther was one of the ten and I represented Walter Reuther in most of the meetings that took place in New York and in Washington. I represented Reuther on the national committee in New York and I was in direct participation in the Washington scene myself on the physical arrangements.

The Justice Department was concerned about the march only in the sense that they wanted to be sure that the negative potential was minimized and that it would be turned to peaceful positive aims. The biggest concern was that the announced objective of the March on Washington was the Capitol and the Congress was, I think, quite frightened by this. I was called over to the Justice Department by Robert Kennedy and asked if I could use my good offices or whatever the proper term is to turn the march away from the Capitol and to get it directed at some other part of the city where it would be possible to assemble peacefully and not end up in a direct confrontation with the Congress and the Capitol police and so on. This took quite a bit of doing. It was not achievable in a single meeting. We talked at length--in our planning session--about the size of the march, how to handle it, and at a certain point it was turned away from the Capitol. The Washington Monument grounds was the second choice for the assembly and then it was ultimately turned to the Lincoln Memorial. I think the thing that was persuasive in getting it turned to the Lincoln Memorial was the arguments that I kept making that it was necessary to plan for a far larger turnout to the rally than anybody had thought of, and that they had to plan for at least a quarter of a million people.

The key to the whole thing and the success of it was the public address system. A. Philip Randolph who was the national chairman of the march and Walter Reuther and I met during the AFL-CIO executive council in the Ladies Garment Workers' [International Ladies Garment Workers] place in Pennsylvania in early August and we talked about it. Randolph agreed that it made sense to turn the focus of the march to the Lincoln Memorial. His concern was that with the reflecting pool and so on that it was going to be very difficult to handle the crowd. The clincher was that Walter Reuther and I agreed that we would raise the money or pay for from the UAW and the IUD for the public address system, but we had to know where it was to be installed and what it was to entail and so on. Once we got the commitment from Randolph that it would be at the Lincoln Memorial, we then negotiated with the Schrader Sound System for the public address system. It cost us \$16,000 to get it installed.

HACKMAN: Is that the major expense of the march picked up by the UAW or IUD?

CONWAY: No, that is the major expense that was picked up by the IUD. I think that the UAW put a substantial amount of money into the movement of people from various UAW centers around the country into the city. They had buses and trains and so on that they paid for along with the local unions. I don't know how much the UAW laid out in that kind of cost. It was a touch and go thing for a while.

The other thing that was involved in that march is that Archbishop [Patrick C.] O'Boyle was scheduled to be one of the speakers and he had given to him a copy of the speech that John Lewis of the SNCC [Student National (formerly, Nonviolent) Coordinating Committee] organization was to make. He found it offensive because it made a number of references to [William T.] Sherman's march through Georgia and the burning of the towns and villages and the fact that what was needed was a black march through the South that was comparable to it. He threatened to just not speak and to boycott it. And so what we did is we turned it back on Bobby Kennedy and said, in effect, you got us to go to the Lincoln Memorial, you get this guy to come and speak.

And there was a lot of negotiations that went on right up actually to 2 o'clock when the thing started. I think it was 2 o'clock the time of the, whatever the time was. We had to get a few concessions from John Lewis so that he was at least bending a little bit to the archbishop's objections. Those negotiations took place in the office really behind the statue of Abraham Lincoln. And when the agreement was reached and so on, well then the archbishop went out, and made his speech along with the others and everything went off all right.

HACKMAN: Yes. How much of a problem was there. . . .

CONWAY: The guy I dealt with during that period was actually John Douglas. The handoff from Bob Kennedy to John Douglas was made the first day we met and from that point on I dealt directly with John Douglas. He in turn had John Reilly working for him. John was a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission and John worked with Douglas on it. I saw Reilly a few times during the course of that, but mostly I dealt with Douglas, a very fine man.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem was there for you in getting as much labor participation as you wanted?

CONWAY: Well, we of course got flatly turned down by the AFL-CIO executive council in that same meeting in August that I spoke of earlier when we were talking to A. Philip Randolph. Randolph raised with the council the possibility of AFL-CIO support

for the March on Washington and the only support that he got from the whole council was Walter Reuther and [James B.] Jimmy Carey. Actually Jimmy Carey was out of the room at the time when the vote took place so it was Randolph and Reuther and everybody else voted with George Meany against AFL-CIO participation. It was a very bitter debate and all of the executive council members collapsed under Meany's objections. They felt pretty shabby about it and as was their wont they all individually, not all of them, but most of them individually came to Reuther and said they agreed with him but they had to vote with Meany. So the AFL-CIO was out.

What we then did was to talk to individual unions and we got fairly substantial participation from maybe eight or ten of the major unions. So there was a strong labor representation in the march: the UAW; the IUE [International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers]; the Garment Workers; state, county and municipal workers, to name a few. There were a number of others.

HACKMAN: Skipping ahead from that. At the time that a Poor People's March was being planned or executed, did you ever talk to Robert Kennedy about his feelings about that that you can remember?

CONWAY: No. This came much later. He was then a senator, I think. That is the Resurrection City?

HACKMAN: Right. '68.

CONWAY: Yes. That was a disaster. No. By then Bob was a candidate for president, was a senator, he was campaigning around the country. Martin Luther King had been killed. It was a bad period. I met with Ralph Abernathy after the King assassination in the IUD headquarters and had, you know, a press conference, gave him an audience, got some union support for the Resurrection City thing. There was a march that was planned in connection with that that everybody thought was going to be a pretty feeble thing, but actually it turned out to be a very impressive march and it was heavily supported by the same unions that had been involved in the earlier one in 1963.

HACKMAN: Any discussion at that point with Abernathy about politics in '68, do you remember?

CONWAY: No, no. He's not a very impressive man and I really didn't have any kind of a depth conversation with him.

HACKMAN: You mentioned your problems with Katzenbach and the Justice Department on the civil rights legislation and getting them to go along with what you thought was needed in the bill.

What kind of problems were there within the Leadership Conference [on Civil Rights] group in holding that together and getting that organized to operate on the Hill?

CONWAY: Well, that turned out to be a very positive thing. We got all of the organizations that were prepared to work for the legislation kind of bound in the Leadership Conference. And the Leadership Conference had regular meetings every week of the representatives, top representatives, or their Washington officials on the strategy of the legislation. We put, the IUD put, on its payroll Marvin Caplin as a full-time staff member and assigned him to the Leadership Conference as the staff person in Washington. And we put a secretary from the IUD there to help him. So we supplied the two full-time people who were in the office. We rented an office and paid for that, too. I forgot about that. That was all IUD money.

We got agreement very early on what the bill should contain. We got the AFL-CIO's commitment to work with us on it provided we would agree to hang tight on the feature of the legislation which covered equal employment rights. And once we said we would do that, [Andrew J.] Andy Biemiller agreed to participate. We had a five-member steering committee, emergency kind of steering committee that was to be able to meet every day as many times as necessary to make decisions on tactics. That steering committee was Clarence Mitchell, Andy Biemiller, Joe Rauh, [James] Jim Hamilton of the National Council of Churches, and me. The probem had always been in the past that Clarence Mitchell would work with people up to a certain point and then he would turn on them. Lots of people thought that he was a front for the Republicans. He was particularly friendly to Richard Nixon and was a hard man to work with. That was his reputation as explained to me. Once we had our five-member committee set up, I met with Clarence Mitchell privately and I said to him, "Do you have any troubles with Joe Rauh?" And he said, "No, Joe Rauh and I always can reach agreement." And I said, "Okay, you've got two members of this steering committee that you can count on, yourself and Joe Rauh; so I am making a commitment to you that there will never be a decision made against you, because I will cast my vote with you and Joe Rauh even though I might disagree with you." And he never had anybody deal with him that way. What actually happened is that we never had a disagreement because it was clearly known by Mitchell that he had the majority of the five-member committee so we were always able to work out our differences. I took Andy Biemiller on as a special assignment and I kept him very closely informed and involved and we just simply worked through every problem that we had.

HACKMAN: At the time that Robert Kennedy went up and testified before the Cellar committee urging them in fact to discard the subcommittee reported bill because it was too liberal and couldn't pass, had you talked with him about that and were the three of you

clearly opposed to that?

CONWAY: We were opposed to what he did, that's right. This was the problem that we had. This was the Katzenbach position and Bob Kennedy reinforced it. We just had to oppose it and we did. It didn't change anything as far as his testimony. It did change things eventually because we got a better bill than they were prepared to fight for.

HACKMAN: In the meetings that you had with him, you mentioned several in his office or phone calls with him in that period, was the case he was making against some of the features that you wanted basically a political case or was it always a political case or were there any things that stick out in your mind that he just said he was either philosophically opposed to or opposed because the Justice Department could not administer them?

CONWAY: I think that it was a political case that he would make and he always tried to put it on the basis that you couldn't get Everett Dirksen or you couldn't get [William M.] McCulloch or you couldn't get the Republicans to agree to certain things. And we kept turning it around saying that we would take care of that side, you do what you should do. Our first job was to get the president committed and then our job was to get the Justice Department committed and then our job was to get the Hill committed. And I must say that there was one hell of a lot of foot dragging all away along the line. And I think it was political. I don't think there were any philosophical differences. I never really felt there was.

HACKMAN: When you say it was political, do you mean to say that he in truth thought that the legislation could not pass with these added features or was it political in a sense that the administration would lose some friends if they went too far?

CONWAY: Well, I think it was both.

HACKMAN: Yes.

CONWAY: I think it was both.

HACKMAN: Okay. Did you ever . . .

CONWAY: Typical is that we couldn't get the White House to do anything with Lyndon Johnson on the Rule 22 ruling. Lyndon Johnson ruled against us on the Rule 22 thing. We talked to the president, we talked to Bobby, we talked to [Kenneth P.] O'Donnell, we talked to [Lawrence F.] O'Brien and they simply would not do anything with Lyndon Johnson. We said it was a shabby thing to have Johnson come along as the successor vice president to Richard Nixon who had made

the right rulings on the Rule 22 thing; it was bad business and so on. But they wouldn't do anything about it.

HACKMAN: Do you remember any particular discussion of [Charles A.] Charlie Halleck at that point with Robert Kennedy and what kind of a commitment they thought they might have with him?

CONWAY: No. No. I think as far as we were concerned Halleck was somebody you had to run over so we weren't using. . . .

HACKMAN: Okay. In talking about President Kennedy and Reuther, you talked about their conversations in the White House and the time that Kennedy gave Reuther. . . . Ever get any feelings for how John Kennedy responded to Reuther's ideas on party reform, party realignment, the role that the national committee might play? How would he handle that, do you remember?

CONWAY: Well, I think that John Kennedy had a high regard for Walter Reuther's ideas about party reform, particularly on the way to finance campaigns and so on. I don't think he felt in a position to do very much about it during his first term, but I think that he planned on trying to do something about it afterwards. The other thing is, I think, that despite the fact that he behaved as any president does and pulled politics into the White House, we did have a very strong operation going in the Democratic National Committee under a benign John Bailey and strong involvement through guys like Ken O'Donnell and others of us in the administration who were in a position to move and work through the Democratic National Committee. So I think that Kennedy was moving in the direction of a stronger party apparatus and a broader base of support for the party, but I don't think he was in a position to do very much about it.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have many dealings with Paul Corbin at the Democratic National Committee?

CONWAY: Well, I knew Paul personally because he is a UAW guy from Wisconsin and an absolute devotee of Robert Kennedy, blindly so. He had come from the left wing of the UAW and in a sense was a convert in more ways than one.

HACKMAN: Right.

CONWAY: It was, you know, real love affair between Corbin and Bob Kennedy.

HACKMAN: Also any [Interruption] recollections of either John Kennedy or Robert Kennedy's reaction to what I understand was

some Reuther idea to challenge the activities of the radical right; there was sort of a famous memo or infamous memo floating around, wasn't there at one point? Does that ring a bell?

CONWAY: Well, the biggest challenge to the radical right, of course, came in 1958 before Jack Kennedy was president. And that is when Senator [William F.] Knowland resigned or rather went out and ran for governor and Gerald L. K. Smith and the whole raft of right-wing organizations were making a concerted effort to get right to work legislation passed around the country and there were lots of anti-union efforts most of which were defeated. As a result of that election, I think we set the stage for a 1960 victory.

Walter was concerned about the radical right and did put together something for Jack Kennedy and we formed an organization that was to monitor the radical right. I forget the name of it--Group Research, or something like that. And [Wesley] Wes McCune was. . . .

HACKMAN: This was the thing that is still around, right?

CONWAY: Right. Still around. Wes was sprung loose and put in charge of it. He's a pack-rat type and loves to gather stuff. The IUD again and the UAW put up the seed money to organize it and we got all kinds of other groups to contribute to it. It is still in existence, although it no longer has any labor support. It gets its funds from individuals, I guess, now.

We put together for Jack Kennedy and the AFL-CIO some kind of a proposal that I think was circulated before the 1962 election, but I don't recall the details of it. We wanted to get, I guess, some Democratic party money to help bear the cost of this. I don't think we ever got any.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

HACKMAN: I wanted to follow up a little more on your decision to leave the administration. At the time you left, did you have discussions with the president, Robert Kennedy, O'Donnell, or O'Brien on what you might be able to do politically for the administration at IUD or is that. . . . How. . . .

CONWAY: I had a fairly extensive discussion with Ken O'Donnell and told him I was leaving and why. I had reached the point where I felt I could do more for the cause outside of the administration than I could inside. I was disturbed by a number of things that were happening inside the administration. No one thing of which was important enough to tip the scales, but there were a

number of things taken together that bothered me. One other thing that bothered me the most was the deterioration that taking place in the AFL-CIO and Walter Reuther's painting himself in a corner. He was losing ground fast, badly, and he came to me--I forget the occasion--and said that the IUD had never developed into what he had hoped it would and that things in the AFL-CIO were disintegrating very badly, that he had had a meeting with Jack Kennedy in which he told him that he was going to leave the AFL-CIO, pull the UAW out. Kennedy asked him not to do that, said that it would be damaging to the whole cause and asked him to stay on at least until after the 1964 election. Reuther then talked to me about taking on the directorship of the IUD and it just happened to come along at a time when I was going to leave the administration anyway. So I said I would do it and I moved out. I told Kenny I was going to do it. I told him why, too, which was largely I felt that I could do more outside than I could inside and that I just was getting kind of tired of the government stuff and the things that had to be done to be a government type and that really wasn't my cup of tea anyway.

HACKMAN: Other than the civil rights legislation are there other pieces of legislation--for instance test ban treaty or whatever, or that tax cut--that you really brought your forces into play on in '63 after you left the administration?

CONWAY: Well, the tax cut thing would probably be the only other one. I worked as a part of the administration team on most of the legislation that came through in those two years that I was there, but other than the housing legislation which I worked on directly and the Area Development Act and things of that kind, the tax legislation was really the only thing we really directly intervened on. I intervened directly with Reuther in the AFL-CIO and tried to get agreement on an approach that would be acceptable. Stanley Ruttenberg and I worked on that. We did get an agreement and we got the AFL-CIO executive council to support it. We got the legislation through. It was a lousy bill, shouldn't have done it. That's the way I felt. That was one of the things that I was upset about.

HACKMAN: You mean the cut aspect or . . .

CONWAY: The way it was put together.

HACKMAN: Trying to put the reform with the cut?

CONWAY: Yes. The whole thing, it was a lousy tax bill. In retrospect I looked back and said, in fact, what the hell am I doing--divided loyalties and so on. So that among other things, as I said, led me to the conclusion that I was in the wrong place.

HACKMAN: At the time that legislation was being put together in late fall of '62 and then over Christmas into '63, do you remember having any opportunity to feed a viewpoint in at that point on the tax legislation?

CONWAY: No. That's the problem, you see it was all one way. It was from the treasury and the White House out and there was no two-way communication.

HACKMAN: Okay. A couple questions on planning a poverty program in OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity]. You talked a little about being involved in discussions on the domestic peace corps idea.

CONWAY: Well, this was one of Bobby Kennedy's personal desires. National Service Corps I think it was called. And he was working to try to get some legislation like that, and he was getting nowhere. He was getting strong opposition in Congress and the Gross amendment finally really killed that whole thing. Bobby had assembled a staff of six or seven people in Washington and they were suddenly cut off, no way to pay them and so on. And again I was asked if I would do something about it and I did. I got everybody but [William R.] Anderson, who was the head of it, temporary jobs, got them stashed away until they could locate other things.

HACKMAN: You sort of implied though that, in the discussions of that, you were sitting on the opposite side of the table from Robert Kennedy on some of the ideas on putting that together. Am I correct in reading that?

CONWAY: No. No. I thought it was a good idea. I supported it, but Bobby would get a bug in his bonnet like this and he would pursue it aggressively and assemble people and commit people and then. . . . Oh, his brother was the same way. When they couldn't deliver, they would fall back on people and institutions like us and hand us the baggage, in effect; and we always responded.

HACKMAN: Yes. Had you gotten involved in the overall, this would have been after you would have left the administration, but in any discussions of the overall planning of a poverty program, a Kennedy poverty program for summer of '64 or for a second administration?

CONWAY: Well, I knew quite a bit about what was going on in the Bureau of the Budget, the Council of Economic Advisers. We had quite a bit of input in that--economic memoranda, things of this kind. We pushed very hard on the "shelf of public works projects" idea and the whole question of employment programs, youth employment programs. All of the traditional notions

which eventually ended up in the OEO legislation we were working to get considered in one way or another. When Kennedy was assassinated the big problem was what to do with Lyndon Johnson. I think I probably mentioned this, that during the funeral when Jack Kennedy's body was lying in state, lying in the White House before it was moved to the Capitol, we had a meeting in Walter Reuther's room in the Statler Hotel with the Texas AFL-CIO president. Didn't I mention this?

HACKMAN: No, I don't think so.

CONWAY: I was saying and he was confirming--the Texas AFL-CIO president, the former one, not the one that was there now, the pipe fitter--that Lyndon Johnson was a different breed, that there was just no way that I could work with him, that Walter had to work with him directly, and that I was going to get completely out of the line of communication. It was right while we were talking that Jack Ruby killed . . .

HACKMAN: [Lee Harvey] Oswald.

CONWAY: . . . Oswald on television. It was just the craziest discussion you can imagine. It was so bizarre, as a matter of fact, that I just kind of withdrew from everything: Reuther and the funeral and everything.

I got a call in the IUD office from Walter Reuther a couple of days later and he said that he had talked to the president, being Lyndon Johnson, and that he had talked to a number of Lyndon Johnson's advisers. I forget who they were--Elliot Janeway and a number of others that Walter knew. Walter was asked to pass in his ideas about what Lyndon Johnson should say when he spoke to the joint session of Congress. So I pulled myself together enough to think about that and worked with Walter Reuther. We put together a memorandum which was delivered on plain white paper with no identification--you know, that sort of bullshit--to Lyndon Johnson. It was really on the whole poverty program.

I talked to Arthur Schlesinger and I think [Charles L.] Charlie Schultze and two or three other guys who had been working on the stuff inside the government for Kennedy. And we put together about a six-page speech--mostly just elements of a speech--and it was in this that we coined the whole series of phrases about economic opportunity. We turned the whole thing around; all the rhetoric was positive and no poverty stuff at all. Because even then I was concerned about the fact that if you just devoted too much direct attention to non-working people that you would lose the working people. So we put all of the rhetoric together around the opportunity, the economic opportunities and all this sort of stuff. About 90 percent of the stuff that we wrote was incorporated almost verbatim in his speech to the Congress.

Then I had nothing further to do with it until the UAW convention which was the day that Lyndon Johnson sent his message and the legislation up to the Hill and that's when I got involved. I was asked to get involved at that point.

HACKMAN: Had you been in touch with [David L.] Hackett and [Richard W.] Dick Boone and Lloyd Ohlin and these people at all in the Kennedy administration period?

CONWAY: Well, the first time I ever saw Dick Boone was at a meeting in Bob Kennedy's office on the National Service Corps. Dick Boone was on leave of absence from the Ford Foundation and he was doing a chart talk to a bunch of people who had been pulled in from around the. . . . I think I was still with the government at that time because I took Nate, Nathan Glazer, over with me who was in our program policy office in the Housing and Home Finance Agency and I assigned him to be our guy with the attorney general on this. That is also the first time I ever met Hackett, the first time I ever met Don Ellinger, that whole crew of guys that was assigned to the juvenile delinquency program. There was a kind of a merge of the Ford Foundation staff and this team of people that had been put together. They all eventually ended up over in HEW (Department of Health, Education and Welfare) as part of the JD program and staff. Hackett was the director of that on the Justice Department side. I saw him maybe once or twice, had no strong personal relationship with him. I really had none with any of those guys until I was asked to go on the task force and set up the Community Action Program, and I got a telephone call from Hackett, I believe it was, suggesting that Dick Boone would be a good guy to work with and that he would be in a sense the spokesman for this whole group of guys. So I got hold of Dick Boone and we struck up a good working relationship. From that point on I let him handle all that. I didn't have anything much to do with that staff or the juvenile delinquency program because [R. Sargent, Jr.] Shriver was very hostile to it.

HACKMAN: Get any feeling for why that's so?

CONWAY: I don't know and I didn't care. At one point he made some kind of a point to talk to me about not getting saddled with the juvenile delinquency program and all of its handicaps. He wanted me to go up and talk to Edith Green, so I went up and talked to Edith Green. And she had her nose out of joint about that whole thing. But I did actually take on a number of that staff. They were all good people.

HACKMAN: Any feeling or any conversations with Robert Kennedy in that period as to what he thought of that group and his ideas as he . . .

CONWAY: No, he was in a despondent period and, as I said earlier, I had very little contact with him during that period. There was nothing to talk about.

HACKMAN: Yes. Is there a period when he makes his views known to you on the whole, you know, any conceptual approach to Community Action . . .

CONWAY: On the OEO or Community Action? No, we never talked about it. I don't think we had any difference. I don't think he ever felt any need to. As I said earlier, we didn't waste each other's time just for the sake of talking about things.

HACKMAN: Yes. You said you played a role on the original design work on Bedford-Stuyvesant. Were there ever any disagreements on any real problems between you and Robert Kennedy or his staff people on how you put that together?

CONWAY: Yes. I was asked by Bob Kennedy for some help on it and I did meet with . . .

HACKMAN: [Adam] Walinsky. [Peter] Edelman.

CONWAY: . . . Adam Walinsky and Dick Boone, I think, in my office at the IUD. Actually I was impressed with Walinsky's facility with language and ideas, but I was equally impressed with his lack of realism. So it turned out to be a session; I left it thinking in effect that if he's going to be the responsible guy here, this thing is going to fail; and he probably leaving thinking, What the hell did I ever come over and talk to this square for?--you know, because I was locked into old ways of doing things, or something like that. And I never really met or talked with Walinsky again until the UAW convention when Kennedy was running for president.

But I did get, I think, an indirect request from Bob. I don't think Bob ever asked me himself to do anything about Bedford-Stuyvesant, but I got it from several sources: Tom Johnston, Dick Boone, and others. So we did put together some people to work on it. I sent Brendon Sexton, Dick Boone who was with the CCAP [Citizens Crusade Against Poverty] at the time, and a couple of other people. I went up myself. But then they made a couple of moves that I thought were ridiculous, like getting [Edward] Ed Logue to come down and there was one other guy that they brought in that just didn't make any sense to me. I disagreed with the concept of the blue ribbon committee, the two corporations, the blue ribbon committee and so on, so finally I just completed what we had agreed to do and got the hell out of it. I pointed out to Tom Johnston all the problems that they were going to run in to, which they did. They straightened them out eventually, but it took John Doar full time really, finally, to do it, after Bob's death.

HACKMAN: I have found a note from you to Robert Kennedy in the fall of '65. You sent Robert Kennedy a set of quotes by Chief [William H.] Parker of Los Angeles. I believe Robert Kennedy was getting ready to go to Los Angeles. Apparently there had been a meeting at Hickory Hill and you said, "When you get back from California, I'd like to talk to you about where we go in New York." I assume that means Bedford-Stuyvesant; I'm not sure.

CONWAY: Yes.

HACKMAN: Why? Do you remember? Was there a discussion of what he should do in California or was . . .

CONWAY: Well, I was concerned about the fact that he was infatuated with Chief Parker and Ethel [Skakel Kennedy] was.

HACKMAN: Really, I never heard that.

CONWAY: Bob Kennedy thought that Chief Parker ran the best police force in the country and Ethel, reflecting Cardinal [James F.] McIntyre . . .

HACKMAN: Oh.

CONWAY:

That meeting, that day out at Hickory Hill, was the day we met with him, Walter Reuther and I, to try to get Bob to. . . . No, no, '65 was it?

HACKMAN: Yes, this was '65.

CONWAY: I think I mentioned earlier the meeting that we had with Arthur Goldberg and Walter Reuther and Bobby Kennedy about Italy.

HACKMAN: Yes, right.

CONWAY: The political parties in Italy. I thought it was that meeting, but it wasn't; it was later. It was '65.

HACKMAN: So you don't remember what this one was about?

CONWAY: No. I don't remember what that would have been about.

HACKMAN: When you were at OEO did you ever have any contacts with Robert Kennedy about the CDGM [Child Development Group of Mississippi] operation in Mississippi? The whole dispute on . . .

CONWAY: No.

HACKMAN: No. Okay.

CONWAY: No. That dispute developed after I left OEO as the community action director. When I came back as the deputy director, I settled it. With all of the complexities of [William F.] Bill Haddad and Sargent Shriver and that whole crazy operation that had been created while I was gone, I got it settled the first time and then it flared up again every year after that. But Bob Kennedy never was involved as far as I was concerned. He was probably involved later after I was gone.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have anything to do with his decision to hold hearings on migrant worker problems? Somehow, someone told me that you did, I think.

CONWAY: Yes. Yes. Actually we got [Harrison A., Jr.] Pete Williams to hold the hearings. It was his subcommittee. And then I did have a great deal to do to get Bob Kennedy to go to the hearings. As a matter of fact, I leaned on him to get him to do it. He didn't want to do it. Not because he didn't want to do it. I mean there was something else that he had planned and so on. I really leaned on him. I just said, in effect, well, I've done things for you and I'm calling in chips on this one. And he did it. He was mad at me, but he did it. Once he was involved, he was really totally hooked and did a beautiful job in the hearings. He joined us in Visalia on the second day and then we went to Delano and we really put on quite an operation there.

HACKMAN: Ever any conversations with him about the direction of the labor movement in the sixties after he's in the Senate? Does he get at all involved in trying to again prevent some kind of Reuther-Meany split or Reuther leaving the AFL-CIO?

CONWAY: Well, he got involved in the . . . Yes. And I guess it was when the UAW had its convention in May of 1966; that would be the year I think Victor Reuther gave an interview to Harry Bernstein in which he laid out the whole AFL-CIO involvement through the AIFLD [American Institute for Free Labor Development] with the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and, you know, kind of blew the whole thing wide open. The convention was over. I read the stories in the paper when I was still in California and my reaction was the fat's in the fire. The boomerang, of course, back on Walter Reuther came when [Thomas W.] Tom Braden did his Saturday Evening Post article as an old CIA guy. He apparently was the guy who was given the hatchet job to counteract Reuther and pointed out that Reuther had accepted money from the CIA, too. It was a bad scene and it was all going to come to a head in the AFL-CIO executive council meeting in August in Chicago.

There were several efforts to intervene and to get Reuther to call the whole thing off. I was called directly on it by Bob Kennedy and asked to see if I could get Reuther to accommodate the situation. I was called by Hubert Humphrey. Again I did it, and I probably shouldn't have. I probably should have let the damn thing blow open then. I probably should have poured some kerosene on the fire rather than to try to calm it down, but I did. I really just conveyed to Reuther the concern of Kennedy and Humphrey. Humphrey had also called Reuther directly. And we worked out a. . . . I, in effect, said the only way this could be done--Walter was agreeable to it--was for Walter to do it himself. And so Lane Kirkland and I talked about it at length. He was getting the same kind of pressure. We arranged for a meeting with Walter Reuther and George Meany, and they talked about this among other things and came to a meeting of the minds that it would be taken off the agenda.

Walter came down and reported to me what he and Meany had agreed to and I said, "Well, you better let me check to find out if that is the correct interpretation." So I went up and sat down with Lane Kirkland and said, "This is what Walter Reuther tells me was agreed to by George Meany and Walter Reuther, and I would like you to check with George Meany and find out is this his interpretation of what they agreed to and let me know." Lane did check with Meany and came back to me and said, "That's correct." And I then told Walter that my checking with the Meany side of it was that his interpretation of what Meany and he had agreed to was the same as Meany's interpretation and that I thought he could proceed with confidence.

But when he got to the meeting in Chicago, the first order of business was this issue and that racked Walter up. He came out of that meeting and came to the room where I was with Irving Bluestone and said, "That's it. It's over. If you can't trust a man, there is no basis of working with him."

And so we agreed right then and there that before the UAW would withdraw from the AFL-CIO that we'd have some time to do a few other things in the IUD. So this is when I really put together the thing with Cesar Chavez and the community unions around the country and went to work on it. It took a year or so before the UAW actually did withdraw from the AFL-CIO but the decision was made that day by Walter Reuther. It was just a matter of time.

HACKMAN: At the time Robert Kennedy called you on that, how did he voice his concern? Do you remember?

CONWAY: Well, he said that it was bad for the country. That was essentially what his concern was.

HACKMAN: Okay. Let me just flip this over before we. . . .

BEGIN SIDE I TAPE II

HACKMAN: You talked about putting together the California delegation. What were the problems there with. . . . You said you, Unruh, Paul Schrade . . .

CONWAY: Well, the key to Bob's campaign, of course, was the California primary. He had to win that, and in order to win it he had to have a formidable slate of delegates. And he had very little time once he cast his decision to go, because the filing date for the delegation was much earlier. So he was really bumping up against an immediate deadline. He talked to me about it, and I said, "Well you have to talk to Paul Schrade directly and get him involved." So he did talk to Paul. Paul agreed to work on it. Jesse Unruh and Paul then started talking to each other.

The big problem was that the traditional UAW position was not to get involved in the direct support of a presidential candidate in the primary. There was a UAW board meeting and Paul couldn't proceed really ethically without raising it at the board. And he did. He raised it at the board and he did it at this own peril, really, because Walter Reuther was opposed to this. Walter fought Paul on it. It became very divisive and finally became one of the principal subjects of what we called our "good and welfare session" of the board which was really a caucus session not a business session. And finally about 9 o'clock at night, the board voted that Paul had the right as an individual to do what he was going to do, which was to personally become a member of the Robert Kennedy delegation in California.

Actually the tipping point was when [Leonard] Woodcock, who had been fighting Paul on everything else, suddenly flipped and came around to Paul's side on this thing against Walter. So the understanding was that Paul had the right to do this. This was 9 o'clock at night.

We went then to somebody's house for a party afterwards, and I think over the next four hours we must have been on the phone with Bob Kennedy at Hickory Hill and Jesse Unruh and others in just constant discussion about who would go on the slate. And we put together a very broad labor support.

HACKMAN: Right. Is this at a time when John Nolan is out--do you remember this at all--actually taking the names and working with Frank Burns to put the. . . .

CONWAY: I don't know whether John was involved with it. I assume somebody was. But all of our discussions were directly with Bob at Hickory Hill and with Jesse Unruh in California. The important thing about Unruh was that he and Schrade had never worked together either. As a matter of fact, they had been at opposite sides

of almost everything and there was a great distaste on the part of each for the other. But they were the two guys that Bob was working through.

We got the guy from the carpenters; we got a guy from the teamsters with Einar Mohn's approval. We got a whole across-the-board kind of labor representation. The clincher finally was Cesar Chavez who had never done this before. He always refrained from getting involved. Bob wanted to get him and he said, you know, to me, "You got me to go out there. Now god damn it, see if you can get him to go on the slate."

HACKMAN: Yes.

CONWAY: So I said, "Well, he doesn't do this sort of thing, but I'll see what I can do." And so we talked to him. Paul and I both got on the phone and talked to him and he said, okay, he'd do it. So the slate was filed the next morning and holy christ everything broke loose in the UAW board room because both Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey called Walter Reuther and really read the riot act to him. Walter tried to turn it all around. He injected the whole thing into the board meeting again during the day, but this time in the official board meeting and tried to get the board to order a reversal. Paul really hung tight. I suppose that's one of the reasons he's not a board member now; he was eventually defeated. But he hung in there--that was a powerful slate and that's the way it was put together.

HACKMAN: Now later in the campaign you went out and spent a certain amount of time in California, didn't you?

CONWAY: Yes. That's right.

HACKMAN: How would you describe what you did? Working with Unruh, for Unruh?

CONWAY: No. No. I probably have sat down with Jesse Unruh four or five times in my life. I did not work with Unruh. As a matter of fact, what Bob was concerned about was what Jack [John F. Kennedy] had been concerned about in previous elections and that is that Unruh is so damned heavy-handed that he drives people away. So we really ran two campaigns: the official campaign and a parallel one which was outside the one that Unruh was responsible for. I worked primarily in the minority communities, in the black and Chicano communities where I had spent a lot of time, and among the labor unions. But I never campaigned in the sense that I made public speeches and so on. I'm not that kind of a campaigner. But I worked pretty hard at it.

HACKMAN: What could you see of the Unruh organization and what was your reading of his abilities and motives, I suppose, in that campaign?

CONWAY: Well, he was very pro-Bob. There was no problem at all as far

as his work or his loyalties or anything. It just happened in this particular campaign there was a complete convergence of Unruh's choices of black leadership both in the north and in Los Angeles with my own judgments after I had checked them out. So we just put that together; that was no problem. As far as the Chicano operations, those we did completely outside through the [United] Farm Workers and the people in East Los Angeles and other parts of the state that we had worked with. They really worked. Just did a magnificent job.

HACKMAN: Was there a problem with too many. . . . Some people have said that you know, O'Donnell's position or whatever would be that there were too many outsiders coming in.

CONWAY: O'Donnell and I usually agreed on campaigns in most states. We never agreed on California from the very beginning. So what we did always was that we would agree each to do what we thought was the right thing to do in California. So O'Donnell and I never worked together on California; it was always separate. There were certain states where this was the case. In other words I had them stay out of Michigan, California, those two in particular. There were a few other places that, you know, we didn't see eye-to-eye, but worked in parallel tracks rather than together.

HACKMAN: What was the difference on Michigan?

CONWAY: Well, they just didn't know how to work Michigan. They worked with the wrong people; they did the wrong things; they didn't know how to handle the labor unions and so on, the UAW in particular. We did all that. They agreed that they would do some things in Michigan--the things that they had to do: working with [G. Mennen] Williams and [Neil] Staebler and guys like that. But by and large they left it all to us.

HACKMAN: Yes. But that's a difference with O'Donnell and also with a . . .

CONWAY: No. No. We had agreement that they would do nothing in Michigan even though they thought that maybe things should have been done that weren't done.

HACKMAN: Yes. [Joseph F.] Joe Crangle was out there for a while in '68.

CONWAY: That was his first. He was like a little kid with a lollipop . . .

HACKMAN: Yes. Right.

CONWAY: . . . at that point. He was a nice guy, but he probably learned more than he contributed. No, '68 is different. I was talking about earlier. In '68 Joe Crangle was very helpful because there we had to figure out a strategy where we could take the delegation. So [Douglas A.] Doug Fraser and I worked a strategy out. Crangle was a part of it and we cut congressional district delegations up on a 50/50 basis with Humphrey and Kennedy supporters. But half of the Humphrey people were for Kennedy, so that when we got to the convention we would have a clear 2/3 of the delegation--of course we never came to that. . . . But Crangle by then was very much involved and was very helpful. It was the earlier campaign that I was talking about.

HACKMAN: Were there any labor endorsements around the country that you know of that could have been had in '68 that were intentionally not taken because Robert Kennedy's number of endorsements would have looked so paltry next to Humphrey's that it would have almost been embarrassing?

CONWAY: Well, there may have been a few. But he had a very little top leadership support and he knew it. He was in bad shape, there, but not with the rank and file. He was a strong candidate with the rank and file.

HACKMAN: Unless there are things in the '68 campaign that specifically stand out in your mind, I am not going to go into details on a lot of states.

CONWAY: No.

HACKMAN: Okay. Okay, so all that's left then are a few questions that were hanging over from the Housing [Agency] thing. One of the things that you mentioned was that you could get a lot of work done by stopping by the DNC working with Louis Martin or whoever. What kinds of things have you got in mind there?

CONWAY: Well, politically you are talking about. The reason I went to the Housing Agency was because it gave me the best working base to work in the cities in the metropolitan areas, and a natural ally in this was Louis Martin because we were working with problems in housing and the Black community and so on. And so I just had a very strong, almost daily, working relationship with Louis. We worked on finding leadership and getting people into the government and doing things that made sense politically. And it was just down the street so that most of the political stuff I did I did out of the DNC office rather than the Housing Agency office.

HACKMAN: On the Department of Urban Affairs legislation, I'm a little confused by your statement last time. Did you mean to say that you did not expect that legislation to pass? And are

you talking about the '61 legislation the first time or are you talking about '62, too?

CONWAY: The first time. Well . . .

HACKMAN: Because it went up in '62 again and that's when the discharge petition failed from the McClellan committee.

CONWAY: Yes. Well, I'm talking about the '62 effort. Didn't expect to be able to get the discharge petition. Looked at it . . .

HACKMAN: Okay. Do you remember whose strategy that was?

CONWAY: Oh, I think it was probably ours, you know, to get it over with.

HACKMAN: Can you remember between '61. . . . It failed the first time in '61 and then in '62 when it went up there was a change made so that the FHA [Federal Housing Administration]. . . .

CONWAY: That was the concession to the homebuilders and the traditional types who wanted to be sure that the FHA was going to have an independent commissioner to deal with. That was one concession we made, but it didn't make that much difference.

HACKMAN: But the concession was made directly with you and [Robert C.] Weaver and the representatives of the homebuilders.

CONWAY: Yes. Right. It didn't make that much difference. It was an idea whose time hadn't come yet. Even when it did come it didn't make any difference.

HACKMAN: Remember any problems in working out what should be included in the bill in terms of what programs should be picked up possibly from other agencies? Whether there should be . . .

CONWAY: Well, actually I think the '62 version was a simple conversion of HHFA to a department. But there was no effort in the legislation to take anything that was in other departments or other independent agencies. That was largely left to future developments.

HACKMAN: Was that a decision made within Housing?

CONWAY: Well, it was made largely internally in the Housing Agency and with the key people in the White House that we worked with. Mostly this would be Lee White. Lee White was the guy that tracked all these things on the White House staff. A very able guy.

HACKMAN: How did White relate to O'Brien and O'Donnell? Are there frequently times when his feeling is different than theirs?

CONWAY: No. I don't think so. There were times when maybe there were political differences between O'Donnell and O'Brien. You know, what was achievable legislatively and what was desirable politically. Lee White was in the chain from [Theodore C.] Sorensen, [Meyer] Feldman, Lee White, and it was a fairly loose organization. We dealt directly with Lee White on all the stuff, rarely with Sorensen, occasionally with Feldman. But Lee White was a, you know, very realistic kind of a guy.

HACKMAN: At one time there was a proposal floating around for a White House conference on housing and community development; it never took place. Can you remember?

CONWAY: Well, this was a part of the build-up for a department and also for some of the ideas that we were developing about how you tackle inner-city problems. Never came about. I don't know why. We proposed it, but we never really pressed for it.

HACKMAN: A couple of questions left over on the accelerated public works program. Do you have details in your mind on handling that legislation on the Hill or is that anything we could go through?

CONWAY: No, I know exactly how that happened. We had a high unemployment problem. We'd done the tax cut, the tax reform bill, and we pressed hard for some kind of an employment program. Got George Meany to send in a letter to the president--I think I covered that--proposing a two-billion-dollar accelerated public works bill. I participated in the drafting of the legislation. I participated in the discussions with Hermit Gordon and Walter Heller and others on the size of the program; how it would work; what kinds of criteria would be used to get labor intensive work and not just, you know, construction trades kind of thing; and how do you get minority employment; and all of this sort of stuff.

So the legislation finally came out as roughly a billion-dollar program. It was divided into several parts in order to be able to deal with the farm types and the Commerce Department types and so on, but there was roughly \$400 million of accelerated works money. They couldn't give it to the Housing Agency they felt because they couldn't get it through the Congress. So it was agreed that the whole thing would reside in the Commerce Department and there would be a delegation of the accelerated public works to HHFA. The legislation was passed. I worked on the legislation on the Hill with the White House staff.

Once it was passed the delegation took place. The program was administered directly out of my office, and we got the whole thing rolling, we got it fast. We got commitments out. [Sidney H.] Sid Wollner was the community facilities director, was the actual person in charge under the delegation of authority, but it was run out of my office.

HACKMAN: Yes. Well, a couple of questions on the Hill. First, the thing went up and then it was reworked. [Robert S.] Kerr offered two amendments as part of an administration-approved substitute. Do you remember how that was worked out? Were you dealing directly with Kerr?

CONWAY: We had to deal with Kerr because, if I recall, he was the chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee and was a very shrewd old codger. We had to make some concessions. We had to make some concessions in the House, too, but we got the bill through relatively intact from what was proposed originally. It came out a good bill, we thought.

HACKMAN: You don't remember any . . .

CONWAY: Don't remember the details.

HACKMAN: Particularly with [John A.] Blatnik.

CONWAY: No.

HACKMAN: Okay.

CONWAY: Blatnik, I knew personally, worked with him. You know, this was an easy operation.

HACKMAN: So there was no great concern then when it went from stand-by to immediate, which is one of the basic changes in the legislation.

CONWAY: We had to get the guy from Alabama . . .

HACKMAN: [John J.] Sparkman.

CONWAY: No, no. In the House--on the line.

HACKMAN: It's not [Robert E.] Bob Jones is it?

CONWAY: Jones, yes. He was the chairman. Blatnik was the chairman of the subcommittee. We had to get him on the line, so we pulled a few strings on that. We got NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] people in Huntsville, Alabama, to lay it on him and he turned around. Once we got him we were all right in the House. I think we might have even had Wernher von Braun calling. I don't know who it was we finally got but it was somebody.

HACKMAN: You said last time you were Wollner's protector. Someone I've heard say that Wollner had a lot of trouble administering this program and at one point some people went to the White House and made the plea with O'Donnell that Wollner be. . . .

CONWAY: You can't hand out \$400 million without getting in trouble. I thought he did very well, but he did need protection and back-up. So I had to take the flack from the White House when they were getting it from the various cities that weren't getting the grants they wanted and so on. So I was the buffer and Wollner was the actual guy who signed the grants. He took the heat from the other way and I took it from the White House.

HACKMAN: But there's no resistance from the White House?

CONWAY: There were no problems between Wollner and me, and Weaver just let it run completely without any interference. Oh, you'd have arguments with people in the White House, but that's normal for the course.

HACKMAN: But Wollner's leaving HHFA is directly from this program or are there general problems . . .

CONWAY: No, I think as soon as I was gone Wollner and [Milton P.] Milt Semer didn't get on very well. I think Milt Semer wanted to get Wollner out of there and get his own guy in and that's what happened.

HACKMAN: On equal opportunity in housing when you were named then to the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing did you have anything to do with other appointments on that or was there anything really that takes place within that committee that's worth talking about?

CONWAY: No. It was a stacked deck. The two guys on the committee that really worked at it were [Herbert J.] Ferd Kramer (of Chicago - a real estate developer) and me and all of the rest of them were . . .

HACKMAN: Nothing from [David L.] Lawrence?

CONWAY: . . . people who were referred to David Lawrence and David Lawrence did what the White House wanted which was relatively little and it was a bust as far as I was concerned.

HACKMAN: Yes. What kind of problems were there when you came into HHFA in sort of getting hold of the career people? Either the legislative process, budget process? Are there any particular moves that you made there?

CONWAY: The legislative process was well along before I came, so I didn't do much to shape that the first time around. The Omnibus Housing Act of 1961 was 90 percent complete by the

time I got there. This was Weaver and Milt Semer, Neal Hardy and others who did that; [Hortense] Harty [W.] Gabel. My job when I came on was, in effect, to take charge of the bureaucracy and to try to reshape it. I worked very hard at it and, I think, had some impact. I had some good people to work with who were there already. I found them quickly and found the ones that weren't so good, and I was able to make switches and moves and so on and build a fairly competent loyal team of people.

HACKMAN: Yes. There seem, just from looking at the Government Organization Manual not to be many changes among the upper level.

CONWAY: No. We layered on some changes but we had a top civil service group to deal with that were pretty good.

HACKMAN: Can you remember struggles with the Commerce Department on mass transit proposals? [Daniel T.] Dan Martin and. . . .

CONWAY: Yes. But he didn't last very long. He wasn't very. . . . The Commerce Department wasn't. . . . Most of our relationships with them are through [Area Redevelopment Administration] the ARA. I had a lot of activities with [William L.] Bill Batt and that whole team of guys. Luther Hodges was a nice old man. He didn't do very much.

HACKMAN: Yes. How helpful was [Joseph S.] Joe Clark on housing matters with the Senate committee? Are there things that he is really useful on or is it . . .

CONWAY: No. Joe Clark was a loner and not very influential. In the Senate, Sparkman had a lot of clout and we had very little difficulty in the Senate. Pete Williams was a major ally, was the sponsor actually of the mass transit legislation, the open spaces, and a number of other innovative things that we were able to get into the legislation.

HACKMAN: One question on mass transit. Do you remember a lot of resistance from the White House on mass transit with things you wanted to get over?

CONWAY: Yes. But what we did was to, we worked our own will in the Senate with a lot of cooperation from the key senators and got these things in the Senate bill. I think it was the White House's feeling that these things would all be dealt out in conference, but we got them all in. We got the best of both bills.

HACKMAN: Would O'Brien frequently come back at you or with anyone over there for sort of working on your own on something that the White House was . . .

CONWAY: Well, I suppose that there was some of that, but I didn't really let it bother me very much.

HACKMAN: Yes. Okay. Last question. You talked last time about the main problem on the Hill being with the House. And that that's where you were going to concentrate in preparations for the '62 election. Now what do you mean by preparations for the '62 election?

CONWAY: Well, we had we figured 168 congressman that we could count on on domestic legislation--like the housing bill and so on. You need 218 for a majority and we just had to figure out some way of closing that distance. So in 1962 we did concentrate in trying to pick up congressional seats around the country particularly with the kinds of candidates who would be what we would call Democrats. Not Democrats in the "southern Democrat" or "conservative Democrat" sense. And we did pick up some.

HACKMAN: How do you do that from where you sit? From where you sat?

CONWAY: Well, we put together an operation in the Democratic National Committee which was made up of guys like [Richard M.] Dick Scammon and me and Bill Batt and Ken O'Donnell and [Richard] Dick Maguire and Louis Martin and. . . .

HACKMAN: Ever hear of a guy named Paul Southwick, does that. . . .

CONWAY: Yes. He was the ARA staff.

HACKMAN: Right, yes.

CONWAY: There were a number of guys. He maybe sat in for Bill Batt, but actually it was Bill Batt. . . . Milt Semer sat in for me when I wasn't there. And we had, in effect, a kind of a floating crap game where we took all of the intelligence that we could put together about congressional districts around the country that were marginal that we could influence and we worked well ahead of time with candidates and helped them prepare their campaigns and some of them got elected. So in that sense. . . . That same operation was together in the '64 election too and its payoff was there because of the Lyndon Johnson sweep. We pulled in a hell of a lot of people in that election. And then Lyndon Johnson dismantled the whole thing, just didn't want that there, was electing the wrong kind of Democrats as far as he was concerned.

HACKMAN: That's all I've got.

CONWAY: Okay. Well, that's fine.