

Thomas H.E. Quimby Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 6/12/1968
Administrative Information

Creator: Thomas H.E. Quimby
Interviewer: Larry J. Hackman
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Biographical Note

Thomas H.E. Quimby (1918-1998) was a member of the Democratic National Committee from Michigan from 1957 to 1961, a delegate at the Democratic National Convention in 1960, and worked at the Peace Corps at Director of Public Affairs from 1961 to 1962, Director of Liberia from 1961 to 1968, and Director of Kenya from 1964 to 1965. This interview focuses on the 1960 Democratic primary in Michigan, the 1960 Democratic National Convention, and Quimby's work campaigning for John F. Kennedy in the Midwest, among other topics.

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Thomas H.E. Quimby– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

THOMAS H.E. QUIMBY

June 12, 1968
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Can you recall, Mr. Quimby, when you first met John Kennedy or had any contact with his career?

QUIMBY: Well, I first met him in 1936 as a freshman at Harvard College; we were both freshmen at Harvard College. I remember he was chairman of the freshman smoker committee. I would say that we never had more than a kind of half nodding acquaintance in college. After that, I didn't see him probably until the National Convention in 1956 when Michigan played a major role in frustrating his ambitions to be a candidate for Vice President.

HACKMAN: You weren't a delegate to that Convention, at least on the list I have seen. What capacity were you in?

QUIMBY: No, I was not a delegate; I was a candidate for National Committeeman. And the election to the National Committee took place at a caucus at that Convention. So I attended the Convention as an observer.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of the Kennedys' efforts with the Michigan delegation? Did they work, or did they realize that [Estes] Kefauver had it?

QUIMBY: I think they did work, but I don't remember anything specifically on this score.

HACKMAN: What type of impression did people, the Michigan leadership, bring back with them of Senator Kennedy from that '56 Convention? Can you remember how things developed in the '56 to, say, '59 period in Michigan? His trips into Michigan?

QUIMBY: Oh golly, that's pretty vague in my mind. I remember that I was talking with Neil Staebler at the Convention and was kind of incredulous that Adlai Stevenson had thrown the Convention open to the selection of the Vice President in an obvious, what seemed to me to be an obvious, move to support Kennedy's candidacy for the vice president. We had been impressed by his nominating speech but, beyond that, did not think of him as a particularly potent candidate, and even, perhaps, as something of an upstart going after something that belonged to a fine old political knight like Kefauver.

HACKMAN: Were there particular stands that he'd taken on issues that were upsetting Michigan people in that period? Do you recall that?

QUIMBY: No, I don't recall that. That might be due to my ignorance rather than the absence of such reaction.

HACKMAN: Can you remember in any of his trips into the state in the period after '56 what kind of speaker he was or how good he was at establishing relationships with the political leaders in Michigan, how successful?

QUIMBY: I don't recall that he made an awful lot of trips into Michigan. His major connections, I think, I would say, with Michigan were through the United Automobile Workers, [Mildred] Millie Jeffrey, Jack Conway, Leonard Woodcock, who had had, I think, also special relationships with [Kenneth P.] Kenny O'Donnell. But Jack Kennedy always made a good and a pleasant, favorable impression. I have a very brief note from him referring to a time he came in before we had come out for him, when we still had [G. Mennen] Williams as a favorite son candidate. And he was thanking me for my role as a part host as National Committeeman. And it just had a nice humorous touch indicating that he understood that naturally I didn't want to see him get anyplace, but I'd been very nice to him just the same. And at some point in this letter, he also recalled how Michigan had given him the chance--maybe it was in his speech at this dinner--how Michigan had really given him the chance to run in 1960 by frustrating him in '56.

HACKMAN: Do you recall anything about Walter Reuther's views towards Senator Kennedy in this period, '56 to '59, let's say, any reaction to the Senator's role in the McClellan Committee or Landrum-Griffin bill, any of these labor matters?

QUIMBY: No. I do remember that I was traveling to see if there was any sort of support for Governor Williams between '58 and '60, and I remember being out on the west coast in Portland, Oregon. I met [James I.] Jim Loeb out there, and I guess we spent the evening with [C. Girard] Jebby Davidson. And Jim had an article, the thermofax of an article that came, I believe, in the February 13, 1956, New Republic. It was a reprint or a write-up of a Kennedy seminar with some Harvard students . . .

HACKMAN: It was a Selig Harrison, I believe.

QUIMBY: I think it was, a Selig Harrison article in which Kennedy appeared to come out to justify, as I recall, justify a pro-[Joseph R.] McCarthy stand on the basis of his constituency. And Loeb was using this as an anti-Kennedy piece in Oregon, and I immediately started using it--I got copies made and started using it as an anti-Kennedy piece in my travels showing that Jack Kennedy was no liberal.

HACKMAN: This was when Loeb was working for Hubert Humphrey?

QUIMBY: Yes, Loeb was working for Hubert Humphrey.

HACKMAN: Can you remember what the people in Oregon's reaction was to, well, to his efforts and to your own?

QUIMBY: Well, in terms of people, I don't know that we saw an awful lot of people. I think Jebby Davidson just sat on the sidelines and grinned. Oregon, at that point, was really becoming quite a mixed-up area with charges and counter-charges on teamster types and so on.

HACKMAN: Well, what about the response in general that you got in your efforts on behalf of Governor Williams? Can you talk about some of the people you talked to and whether you got any cooperation?

QUIMBY: Well, I went around seeing people that I had known--the National Committeemen, Committeewomen, state chairmen, state chairwomen--and they were all very pleasant, very supportive, they admired the Governor, but it was quite obvious that there was no real thought that he would be able to develop any kind of national following.

HACKMAN: Did he have other people in Michigan out for him like this, or were you primarily handling this?

QUIMBY: I probably was the only one. There's one story that I'm tempted to tell you. And I think I can tell it modestly; I hope I can. I mean it in all modesty, in any case. There was a very pleasant group that was traveling around at that point, [Theodore C.] Ted Sorensen, [James H., Jr.] Jim Rowe. And we were initially very suspicious of Jim Rowe. We thought Jim was a [Lyndon B.] Johnson man, and Jim convinced us that he wasn't at all; he was a Humphrey man. And Geri Joseph was out traveling for Hubert. We all, we would meet at various--oh, the meetings of the Democratic Midwest Council or someplace else. And I became very fond of Ted Sorensen, got to know him quite well. And we'd talk about life. I can remember, I think it was in Omaha, Nebraska, at the Cornhusker Hotel, going to bed very late one night . . .

HACKMAN: The Cornhusker's in Lincoln.

QUIMBY: Oh, then it would have been in Lincoln. I think it was the Cornhusker. And Ted Sorensen coming up to me just outside the elevator and kind of grinning and saying, "You know, the Senator told me that he knew you slightly in college, and if he had realized that you were going to be a National Committeeman, he would have spent much more time on you then than he did." [Laughter] I've always cherished that story.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about that Midwest Conference that year. I think I've heard that, I'm not sure where I heard, but that the Michigan people were impressed by-- I believe Senator Kennedy was there at that, if I recall. Am I right or wrong?

QUIMBY: Yes, yes, he would have been there.

HACKMAN: Was Governor Williams there?

QUIMBY: Yes. I'm sure he was. The great conference we had was the one in Detroit, and I think that this was in '60.

HACKMAN: Very early '60? Well, anyway, I could find out.

QUIMBY: Well, it would have been in--let's see, the. . . . I'm sure it was that one. The Convention was probably July 14, as I recall that, the National Convention. And I think this was in the early spring. It would have been before the state convention, our state convention, I'm sure, and we got the cooperation of the Democratic Advisory Council in putting on this meeting of the Midwest Conference, the thirteen states of the Midwest. And, really, we had the headlines in the Detroit newspapers solidly for four days with the speakers we had. And it was great. And Jack Kennedy was one of the main speakers, one of the main dinner speakers for that. I think we may have tied this in with the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner as well. And it was a very exciting and very successful meeting.

HACKMAN: Did Senator Kennedy and Governor Williams sit down and talk about the political situation at that point? Do you remember of any. . . .

QUIMBY: There wasn't. . . . Well, now wait a minute. I can't remember at what point there was a movement to Williams' June second declaration for Kennedy. As you may remember, Kennedy came to Mackinac Island, and at the end of that, Williams made a statement in support of him. And I think that this was a rather important point in the Kennedy campaign because his campaign had been slowing down a little bit, and this gave it a good liberal boost at this point. And for several weeks prior to that meeting, I had been coming down to Washington with a series of questions. There was a series of about twenty questions that the Williams people had put together that they wanted answers from the Kennedy people on. And I'd bring them down to Ted Sorensen and [Myer] Mike Feldman. And the questions were answered in volumes, very fully.

HACKMAN: When you say the Williams people, who are you including here?

QUIMBY: Oh, well, there'd be the Governor, of course, and Neil Staebler, and [Sidney H.] Sid Woolner, I am not sure where Margaret Price was at this point, but it very possibly included Margaret, and myself. And I'm not sure about Millie Jeffrey. Millie was already, I think, an out and out Kennedy supporter, and we were trying to maintain some Party discipline here so it's conceivable that she was not in on our inner councils until the Governor made his declaration on June second.

HACKMAN: After your swing--you were talking about the trip you took to Oregon--after your visits around the country, did Governor Williams at that point give up thinking about the presidency more or less, or were further efforts made?

QUIMBY: Well, I think that there were not clear decisions of giving things up here, as I can remember. It was a kind of an evolutionary thing that depended a little bit on available funds. And I don't think that we ever had a specific moment in which we said, "Well, it can't be done." I don't recall it, at least.

HACKMAN: How did the fund problem work out? What were the problems in this area for him?

QUIMBY: Well, of course, the main source of funds were the Governor's personal funds, and he had, I think, made some decision as to the amount of money that he would be able to put into this. And then we were able to get some funds outside of this. I think that one of our chief motivations all the way through this was to maintain the Governor's political prominence, both for it to be a force in writing of the platform and a force in the selection of candidate in the Convention. So that even though there was, I think, a recognition at some point that this was not a viable candidacy, that still there was a desire to maintain a presence.

HACKMAN: What were his thoughts on the vice presidency as they were developing through the winter? Was this something he was really interested in?

QUIMBY: Yes, I think that all of us had hopes that there was a possible slot here for him.

HACKMAN: How did this shape his attitude toward the other candidates? What were his thoughts about the other people, [Stuart] Symington and Humphrey, through that winter? I presume we don't have to talk about what his thoughts were about Johnson at that point.

QUIMBY: Well, we were close, close in all kinds of ways, to Humphrey and to Minnesota. Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota: the Parties kind of conferred together continuously. We had acted as a reform group in the Democratic Midwest Conference in taking it away from Jake More of Des Moines and. . . . You asked me what his thoughts were about these people:

We liked Humphrey; we liked Symington; I don't think we had any firm position as to how we would treat them or what we would do.

HACKMAN: What about Humphrey and Symington and Senator Kennedy as far as the state Party's attitude about people working on their behalf within the state? Were there any clear guidelines that you gave these people as to whether they could send people into the state through the winter? Or were there attempts just to keep them from coming in and creating. . . .

QUIMBY: I don't think we attempted to keep people out. The one thing we tried to do was to keep it aboveboard and fair basis of operation. And there's a great deal of respect nationally, particularly, I think, for Neil Staebler. And gee, I think, as I recall, people would check with Neil as the state chairman, and in the absence of any real conflicts, there was no objection to people coming in.

HACKMAN: Who came in on behalf of Kennedy that you can recall other than Sorensen?

QUIMBY: Sorensen's the only one I recall.

HACKMAN: You don't remember Robert Wallace, who was making some efforts around the Midwest, doing any work in Michigan?

QUIMBY: Yes. Well, I remember Bob Wallace. I don't remember specifically where I saw him. He might have come in. I might have gone down to Detroit to see him, or he might have come up to Lansing.

HACKMAN: As far as Governor Williams' announcement for Senator Kennedy, had any commitments been made to any of the other candidates that he would withhold announcing for Senator Kennedy until a certain point?

QUIMBY: No.

HACKMAN: The reason I ask is because someone had said that he had promised Humphrey, at least, that he wouldn't announce until a primary was over with, and I don't

know which one it was. I don't know if you recall anything about that or not.

QUIMBY: Well, I think there was--I have a feeling of familiarity as I hear you say that. I think that there was no question of our waiting until Wisconsin and West Virginia were over, which were the. . . . West Virginia was the definitive primary, of course.

HACKMAN: I had heard also that James MacGregor Burns was out.

QUIMBY: Yes, Burns was out. Sure he was. I remember having breakfast with him. He came to my house for breakfast; he might have even stayed with us in Lansing. Yes. Of course, he was a very attractive person to some of us. You may remember others.

HACKMAN: Okay. You had mentioned Millie Jeffrey possibly backing Senator Kennedy before some of the other people were ready to come out. Was this seen as evidence that Mr. [Walter P.] Reuther had made a decision? Was it apparent that the UAW [United Automobile Workers] was for Kennedy at this point?

QUIMBY: Well, I remember in the last month or so prior to Williams' coming out--maybe it was longer than the last month--that there were some problems, some strains here, and I think there's no question but what Millie would be pretty well guided by Reuther's feelings on this.

HACKMAN: Were the other UAW people moving in the same direction, or would you say. . . .

QUIMBY: Yes, I would think so. As I recall, yes.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of the specific contacts between Governor Williams and your group and the Reuther people before the announcement was made when the Senator took his trip up?

QUIMBY: No, no, this would all be pretty informal. And Neil might have done this on a very informal basis. I know that of one thing I also have a vague recollection: We wanted to retain, have the Democratic Party of Michigan retain, political initiative and not the United Automobile Workers of Michigan retain the political initiative. People outside of Michigan have seldom understood the nature of the organization of the Michigan Democratic Party. It was not run by the union. And it's a tribute, I think, both to Staebler and to Williams that it was really quite a remarkable citizens party.

HACKMAN: Do you think the Kennedy people had a good understanding of how it operated in Michigan, the way the Party functioned?

QUIMBY: I think that they had a supreme sensitivity to this, and it's a tribute to them that they were always careful to recognize nominal and elected Party leadership and not figure that, well, they had UAW in their pocket, therefore, they could start telling the Party what to do, which would be the temptation that some less sophisticated, less perceptive people might have had.

HACKMAN: Could you see this--well, this might not make sense--in the efforts of any of the other candidates to appeal strictly to the UAW leadership when they were having problems with the Party leadership?

QUIMBY: I was not aware of it myself.

HACKMAN: How did your own feelings develop toward the various candidates, your personal feelings about them as '59 and '60 developed?

QUIMBY: Well, initially, I couldn't take Jack Kennedy seriously because he had been a college classmate of mine, and somehow, while this is not as familiar as the boy next door, the boy next door never can really amount to an awful lot. And there's a chasm that has to be bridged here, a gap that has to be bridged somehow. And I don't quite know when or how, but I think that as I saw him in front of groups and listened to him speak and read his speeches, I became kind of used to the idea that

he was a leader of substance. And this was a matter of evolution. And I don't know that there was any particular point at which it became obvious to me; I know that it was prior to June second. It possibly was before the West Virginia primary.

HACKMAN: Were there specific issues, objections you had on issues that he had to satisfy in your own mind that you can recall?

QUIMBY: Well, I can remember having a number of discussions-- I can't remember the content of any of them now--with Ted Sorensen over was Kennedy a liberal or wasn't he. And I remember Ted wanted to kind of get rid of the word liberal; he thought it was a fuzzy concept and better to talk about specific things.

HACKMAN: You were talking about your own image of Senator Kennedy. What can you recall about seeing him at Harvard or observing him or knowing him by reputation that would've made this somewhat more of a problem? Can you remember having any particular opinion of him?

QUIMBY: No, it's just that, I think it's just the idea that a contemporary of yours should become a great person. It's an idea that takes getting used to. That's all. There was just. . . . I remember I was back at Harvard as an assistant dean after the war, actually working on veteran admissions, and we pulled--I don't know whether I pulled Kennedy's file or someone else I was working with when he was running for congress, '46?--to see if there was anything here that indicated anything unusual, whether it was a particularly exciting phenomenon or not. And the feeling at that point was no, nothing particularly exciting.

HACKMAN: Why did Governor Williams decide not to run for governor that time around? That was somewhat of a surprise to some people, I believe, when he announced in March.

QUIMBY: Do you mean for a seventh term?

HACKMAN: Yes.

QUIMBY: Gee, I don't know. I think just the feeling that he had really fulfilled that part of his life and that it was time for someone else. The problems that were facing him were problems at that time with that political makeup of the state that were pretty insoluble. As a matter of fact, [George] Romney has just finally solved them this last year with the passage of an income tax. He had a Democratic legislature, which Williams never had, then finally got an income tax.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything particular about Scrensen's trip out to the state convention that year? I believe it was May seventh, his efforts on behalf of Senator Kennedy. I know he met with some of the leaders of the state party, and he had a meeting the next morning with Governor and Mrs. Williams.

QUIMBY: No, I have a very vague recollection of that. I think that that very conceivably was the beginning of the June second declaration; the seeds for it were laid at that point. But that's all.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about Senator [Philip A.] Hart's and Senator [Patrick V.] McNamara's attitude toward Senator Kennedy and what impact, if any, this had on the state Party leadership? Were you getting any soundings from these people?

QUIMBY: No, I'm drawing pretty much of a blank on that. I'm going to say my impression is that McNamara was not particularly enthusiastic; I think that Phil Hart was, in a quiet way, as I recall. But, gee, I'm amazed at how vague this is in my memory. Neither one of them, I think, would have attempted to sway the delegates according to their way of thinking without a policy decision by the leadership, primarily Williams and Staebler.

HACKMAN: One other thing that came up and hit the news in that period was when Governor Williams went to the governors' conference out at Glacier National Park in Montana, there were articles in the paper about pressure being put on by representatives of then Senator, Majority Leader Johnson. Can you remember how this developed? Did you go along to that meeting?

QUIMBY: No, John Sweeney went to that meeting with him, I'm quite sure. And I have no knowledge of that.

HACKMAN: Also in that period Mr. Staebler and Governor Williams came down to Senator Kennedy's Georgetown home for a conference. I know they were there; I don't know if anyone else was; I don't know if you were there or not or if you can recall that. This was some . . .

QUIMBY: I remember coming down twice: once bringing a group of the leadership of Detroit Negroes down on the Caroline, but I can't remember when it was; and the other one--that was the second time I'd been in the Kennedy house in Georgetown, and I can't tell you now what the first occasion was.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about the development of the Senator's trip up to Mackinac Island, how this was worked out, the arrangements for it, or anything important about the timing in this?

QUIMBY: No, I can't. I can remember there was discussion about time; it had to do with, of course, working in a time that was possible, given an already developed schedule. And I think it was on an either east--I think it was on an east to west schedule because I joined Kennedy after that and went on to Wisconsin (I'm not sure whether I went to Minnesota with him or not) on the Caroline. And I remember going to Wisconsin and telling the uncommitted delegates there about Williams' endorsement. Other than that, I think the time was selected on the basis of its being a strategically empty spot, a spot when there was a need for some excitement.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of the discussion that took place at that point? Was it strictly just a formality, the trip, or was there substantive discussion of commitments from Senator Kennedy or issues or anything of that nature?

QUIMBY: Williams had a session alone with Kennedy, and then we sat as a group. There were no commitments made. I know this was. . . . We were the first participatory democracy in the United States--contrary to what the students think now--in Michigan; we did not seek commitments in return for action.

HACKMAN: Were there any people in the Michigan leadership who had opposed Governor Williams' coming out, or who were very reluctant to this point? What were Margaret Price's attitude toward Senator Kennedy as it developed, and Mrs. Staebler's?

QUIMBY: Both very pro, very supportive.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any discussion about whether Senator Kennedy would attempt to be nominated without the support of the South? This was being discussed at the time, and I believe this was one of the points that Governor Williams was making to some people in seeking support for Kennedy.

QUIMBY: This was among the twenty or thirty points: how far was he going, or did he have to go, or would he go, in order to get Southern support.

HACKMAN: One of the things that upset people was this breakfast he had with Governor [John] Patterson, I believe. Can you remember . . .

QUIMBY: Yes. I think Sorensen managed to sell us on the fact that Patterson was one of the greatest guys that they had down there, and he was so much better than the rest of the group that we should give him credit for making that much headway. I just have a vague recollection of it.

HACKMAN: When you talked about your trip down with the Negro leaders in the delegation, what do you remember about that? What were they particularly interested in and how did it work out?

QUIMBY: The Negro leadership in the country was a big question mark at that point in the Kennedy campaign. I think Humphrey's credentials were good with them. As a matter of fact, I think they were better than Kennedy's. And there was a real question of how sympathetic he was to the civil rights causes and this was a move in which we cooperated with Kennedy, being convinced that if he could get in touch with the Negro leadership of Detroit himself, he would convince them that he did have the kind of approach that they wanted. All I can say, it was a very successful trip. I can't tell you substantively on what issues they questioned him and what his replies were, but that they were sold on the return trip.

HACKMAN: Was Governor Williams worried at this point, or were you worried, about the possible trouble this could have created within the Party of Michigan, if these people would not have, you know, in an attempt to get a more solid delegation for Senator Kennedy?

QUIMBY: Yes, this was an effort to get a solid delegation for him. And, as it was, I think when we finally came to vote, we were about nine votes shy, weren't we, of producing . . .

HACKMAN: Forty-two out of fifty-one.

QUIMBY: Forty-two out of fifty-one.

HACKMAN: Who were the people you were having a particular problem with? Any particular groups represented or supporters of candidates?

QUIMBY: No, I think that by and large they were outstate people who were holding out.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about, or can you recall any conversations with Senator Kennedy about the ideas that some of you people had put into effect in Michigan and his whole concept of the Party, the Party development, or the people around him?

QUIMBY: Well, I remember one of the things that bothered us a great deal, and that was that we had the idea that charity begins at home, that you ought to have a decent and clean political base from which to operate before you go out to conquer the nation. We didn't think that Massachusetts was a good political origin at all, and we had some long discussions about this. And he had and Sorensen had some real respect for the work that Williams and Staebler had done and real sympathy for it. I'm not sure. I think that some of the Michigan emphases and techniques were probably borrowed and put into the national campaign. An emphasis on registration, I think, might have been one of the contributions. I don't think of anything else.

HACKMAN: Do you remember any conversations with him about what he might do after he became President in terms of the Party, keeping the National Advisory Council or anything on this side?

QUIMBY: Nothing specific except that voter education was something that we were very concerned with that I think we got sympathetic sounds that we did have some discussions about the future of the Party.

HACKMAN: Someone has said that during the period before the Convention he seemed to be very anxious to go along with some of these ideas, but after the Convention, during the campaign, he seemed much more reluctant to do so.

QUIMBY: Well, of course, I was just trying to think through what had happened here. Paul Butler, who had really been through a major battle, and we had--it was the Democratic Midwest Conference and the young radicals (we were young at that point, more or less young) who had preserved Paul in office, and then [John M.] Bailey came in. We, the people who preserved Butler in office, had also had a caucus that they

wouldn't let [Carmin G.] DeSapio or [Jacob M.] Arvey or even [Paul] Ziffren into. We organized a caucus to counteract the South.

HACKMAN: This was when?

QUIMBY: Oh hell, we got this started and going in 1957.

HACKMAN: And what, kept it all the way through at National Committee meetings? Or how did you operate?

QUIMBY: Yes, yes. I think this was attractive, ideally, to Sorensen and Kennedy, but in terms of practical strength, why, I don't know how much practical strength it would have in national operations. DeSapio at that time and Arvey had a good deal of clout.

HACKMAN: What were you primarily interested in accomplishing during your years at the Democratic National Committee with it by setting up this caucus and the other things you were working for? Did you and Staebler see eye to eye on . . .

QUIMBY: Oh, yes, very much so. I suppose I'm kind of a philosophical political animal if I'm a political animal at all. I can remember Neil encouraged my being active in politics, and he also is the one who sold me on the idea of being National Committeeman and then sold my candidacy to the caucus. And my initial conversation with him when he came out talking politics in 1952 when I had just become a precinct delegate on my own hook was whether or not democracy can be preserved with modern means of influence and communication; specifically, in the environment of 1984, can you keep an individual, maintain the activity of individuals so that they will look out for their own welfare against the intrusion of monolithic dictatorial power? And I suppose you could say that that, at that point, was one of my major interests. Then there was the sheer joy of the game along with this, plus the reform ideas, civil rights, and so on.

HACKMAN: What was your relationship with Paul Butler as it developed through these years?

QUIMBY: Good and supportive. He knew that Michigan was one of the states that was preserving him in that position.

HACKMAN: The Michigan leadership was united in their support; there was no problem.

QUIMBY: No, no problem whatsoever, no question.

HACKMAN: One thing that I'm just curious about, I don't know if you have anything on this: in view of what happened later, what was Mrs. [Katie] Louchheim's relationship with Paul Butler? Did they have basically the same approach to politics in this period? Was the appointment of Margaret Price a philosophical shift on this half of the operation, or this side?

QUIMBY: Well, I think it's reasonable for both your national chairmen and your national vice chairwoman to change with administrations. I think Katie and Butler were probably in basic agreement. Katie was perhaps more of a big dealer type than Paul was. I don't know that Katie would have the philosophical basis that Butler had for it.

HACKMAN: Was Michigan generally satisfied with the development of the National Advisory Council in that period, of which Governor Williams was a member?

QUIMBY: As a matter of fact, not only satisfied but a great promoter of it. And I'm thinking, I think this Midwest Conference meeting that I was talking about earlier as being in '60 was actually in '59.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about the plan to change the number and mix of the delegates at the '60 Convention as it developed? Can you recall this in '59?

QUIMBY: I presented the plan to the National Convention for their approval?

HACKMAN: Bernard Boutin from New Hampshire had originally proposed this at a Democratic National Committee meeting in September of '59. Butler had sent out a proposal, called "Proposal G," and a lot of the committee people complained when they got to the meeting because they had that morning been given a revised resolution G which changed the way the bonus system operated. I don't know if you can remember how this plan originated or what your role or Michigan's role was.

QUIMBY: Well, I know I was chairman of the committee that had to consider the thing for two hours and then come back and report on it and ask for its adoption.

HACKMAN: Denmark Groover was making a big protest, presenting alternate amendments to this at this point, and Jack Arvey was very upset about it at the time.

QUIMBY: This was a bonus system for having additional . . .

HACKMAN: Well, it was a change. It would have upped the number of delegates to the National Convention, which, eventually, it did by quite a lot, to fifteen hundred and something. The original plan, as it had been sent out by Butler, would not have taken any bonus factor into consideration. But then the amended version, as it was presented the morning of the meeting, took the '48 and '52 bonus factor into consideration up to '56. There was some change.

QUIMBY: I'm sorry, I. . . . The only thing I can say is that if Denmark Groover was for it, it probably was on the basis of some kind of a . . .

HACKMAN: Well, he was opposed to it as Butler presented it.

QUIMBY: Yes. Well, this would have been a question of the South getting more votes or fewer votes. That's about all I can figure.

HACKMAN: Can you remember where the idea of giving delegate votes to Democratic National Committee members came from?

QUIMBY: Yes. I think one of the members of our caucus was Camille Gravel. And there was a good question of whether Camille could get to the National Convention if he hadn't been made a member by the National Convention. So, I think the National Convention itself did this to protect the liberals from conservative states.

HACKMAN: There were a lot of complaints as 1960 developed that Chairman Butler was showing favoritism toward the Kennedy camp in arrangements for the Convention. Can you recall this, and did you feel this was justified?

QUIMBY: I can recall the complaints, but I don't know whether there was any substance to them or not. Actually, the Kennedy people were so darn well organized that I would think they would have gotten what they were after with or without.

HACKMAN: You can't remember ever discussing with Mr. Butler this feeling about . . .

QUIMBY: I can remember discussions going on, but that's all.

HACKMAN: What was the Michigan leadership's opinion of the selection of Los Angeles as the Convention site? Was this satisfactory to you people?

QUIMBY: I don't think that we were particularly pleased with it, but primarily on the basis of facilities. It was not a good convention hall; facilities were not adequate. I think we were, golly, I think we were glad to see it outside of Chicago.

HACKMAN: Well, one of the complaints that a lot of people were making during the Convention was the way Mr. Butler assigned facilities. I would assume from Michigan's relationship with him that this was no particular problem for you people compared to others.

QUIMBY: Well, the alternates were mad from all over, and I had a bunch of alternates on my neck. And the alternate facilities--it really was a bad convention hall, and I think Paul probably did the best he could.

HACKMAN: What were you primarily involved in at the Convention itself? What did you spend most of your time doing?

QUIMBY: Well, I manned the telephone during Convention sessions for--who was the floor manager for Kennedy? Connecticut.

HACKMAN: Bailey?

QUIMBY: No, [Abraham A.] Ribicoff. Michigan was right behind Connecticut. He was staying with the Connecticut delegation, he was floor manager, and I manned the phone. I don't remember any terribly crucial telephone calls, but that was it.

HACKMAN: Was there any vote change within the Michigan delegation after you got to the Convention? Any chance of breaking any of the people who weren't supporting Senator Kennedy or. . . .

QUIMBY: It seems to me that we might have picked up a few votes. I remember, initially, before the--well, at the opening of the Convention, I covered certain states getting the up-to-date tallies (but I can't tell you which ones they were) for the Kennedy people.

HACKMAN: Was there ever any possibility during the Convention of any of the Michigan delegates bolting from Senator Kennedy? Any threats that had to be put down within the delegation?

QUIMBY: Not to my knowledge. I don't think so.

HACKMAN: Can you recall any discussions with either Senator Kennedy or Robert Kennedy at the Convention?

QUIMBY: No. I attended meetings which Robert Kennedy was running on picking up the daily tally of how the votes were going to come.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about the Michigan delegation's reaction to the selection of Mr. Johnson as the vice presidential candidate?

QUIMBY: Oh, that we'd been sold down the river; that we'd been betrayed; that we couldn't believe it; that it was impossible; I guess we had all those reactions.

HACKMAN: What kind of approach had the Kennedy people through the spring and early summer taken when this possibility had been discussed? Or had this ever been discussed with them?

QUIMBY: To the best of my knowledge, this had never been discussed. It was inconceivable to us.

HACKMAN: To what extent did Governor Williams and you people feel that he still had a good chance at the vice presidential nomination at the Convention? Did you remain hopeful up to the last . . .

QUIMBY: Yes, I would think that we did remain hopeful, yes.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of Governor Williams' own reactions after his visits with the people around Senator Kennedy? Particularly, I know he went to the meeting where the Southern governors were meeting and were suggesting that Senator Johnson be picked. He came back, I believe, and reported to the delegation. Do you remember anything at all about that? Well, can you remember a discussion on what should be done after this pick was made in terms of what the Michigan leadership was, what action they should take?

QUIMBY: Yes, we had a trailer out in back. And the first thing we wanted to do--and I guess this was more or less my operation--was to get in touch with our friends who had really been in the caucus, the pro-Butler caucus, in the National Committee and see what the prospects were of stopping this, of voting it down. And I remember I lost my telephone and they passed out--when the voting came around, Michigan didn't get its telephone. They'd been turned in the night before, and ours wasn't passed back. I think we canvassed around to see how much strength we could organize against it. It was a losing battle.

HACKMAN: Well, what about the decision as to what the response of the Michigan delegation itself would be if there was a roll call vote? I had heard that there was a decision made that there would be five votes cast against and the rest would go for it.

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HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about that?

QUIMBY: Your suggestion was that there would be five votes against . . .

HACKMAN: If there was a roll call vote, Michigan would cast five votes against the nomination, and the rest would be cast for. I don't know whether this was just in the sense of being a protest vote without appearing to be an open revolt, or . . .

QUIMBY: No, I don't think. . . . There was no question of our willingness to go into open revolt. We were in open revolt. I think that we were playing around with some constitutional ploy of abstaining or doing something. But I'm gee, I'm sorry, I can't remember what . . .

HACKMAN: Maybe it would have been an abstention by everyone except five people who--I think it was the opposite--who were going to vote for it. I don't know. I don't, you know, I've read this and . . .

QUIMBY: I can't tell you what the ploy was on that, but it might have been that we would've demanded a poll of the delegation and, in order to prove the necessity for a poll, might have some pro-votes, I don't know, in order to stall things.

HACKMAN: Who within the delegation--was everyone upset, or were there particular groups who . . .

QUIMBY: I think it was pretty universal. Labor closed ranks. I think Leonard Woodcock came in and gave a strong pro-Johnson speech shortly after, but this was a manifestation of discipline rather than sentiment.

HACKMAN: Did any of the Kennedy people then come around and attempt to mend fences?

QUIMBY: Yes. And, of course, there was another thing. It had been intimated to me--and of course, this seems to me to be completely wild now--that I would be national chairman. As a matter of fact, Earl Mazo broke a story in the Herald Tribune, in the Paris edition of the Herald Tribune, that I was going to be, and I started getting letters of congratulationss from friends in France. And I had a wild idea that I could do this; it was a completely wild idea. And I was kind of sore that that hadn't come through, and Sorensen called me to mend that up. I forget what other moves there were.

HACKMAN: I think the possibility of Mr. Staebler had also been mentioned.

QUIMBY: Yes, yes.

HACKMAN: What was the reaction then to the selection, or the replacement of Mr. Butler by Senator [Henry M.] Jackson at that point on the part of the Michigan delegation and Margaret Price's appointment?

QUIMBY: That's right. I was trying to remember. Bailey didn't go in until later. Jackson went in for the campaign. Well, we closed ranks on that, delighted to have Margaret in, and Jackson we liked. This was fine. Yes, by God, I'd forgotten that. It's awful how much one forgets.

HACKMAN: Can you remember what Mr. Butler's reaction was? Was this a surprise to you people or was it obvious that Butler was going to be replaced at this point?

QUIMBY: I think that we were ready for this; I don't think this surprised us.

HACKMAN: Well, let's go on to the campaign for a couple of minutes then. Can you recall what did you do after the Convention was over then?

QUIMBY: I rode back to Boston--this was part of the fence mending--on the Kennedy plane. Sorensen got me on, and I'm ever so grateful. That was an historic ride in history. And I'm glad to have done that. I remember very vividly the way Kennedy looked out of the window on arrival and then got out of the plane and spoke in a very moving way about this was the place where his ancestors had come a hundred years before, a hundred and ten years before.

And next after that was a visit to Hyannis Port with the Governor and the nationalities division of the National Committee. I think [Michael] Mich Cieplinski may have been with us. And at this point I discussed--I had my assignment from the National Committee. I became an employee of the National Committee to be a kind of a special projects person and canvasser for the thirteen states of the Midwest. And I think probably the most effective thing that I did, and about the only thing that I really remember at this point, was working with [James W.] Jim Wine on a kind of a religious conference that we had in Oklahoma City. Oklahoma City? or Tulsa? It

was Oklahoma City.

HACKMAN: I'm not sure. I was thinking it was Tulsa, but possibly . . .

QUIMBY: Well, it might have been Tulsa.

HACKMAN: Well, I've read about it, so I can check that out.

QUIMBY: And this really, I think, was quite good. The major benefit that came out of this, I think, was the reporting of the opinions of the other religions on this candidacy. We got awfully good people to participate in the panel. I don't know of anything else that I did that was terribly significant at this point. I was not really integrated into the Kennedy operation. I reported to [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien. But I didn't feel that I really was terribly productive most of the time.

HACKMAN: Do you think the appointment was more, again, a fence mending thing than it was a substantive . . .

QUIMBY: Yes. I'd been working directly with Williams. And there was. . . . Although it could be a combination of things. I had been program chairman for the Democratic Midwest Conference for quite a while. I could have been Conference chairman, but we, by design, avoided that, got Frank Theis of Kansas to be Conference chairman. We thought it would be a mistake to have it in Michigan, and we were more interested, in any case, in the development of the ideas that were going to be worked on.

HACKMAN: Who were some of the other people in that group other than Theis and yourself that you looked to for support or being of like mind with the Michigan leadership in that Midwestern Conference.

QUIMBY: Oh, oh golly.

HACKMAN: Fred Betz from Colorado? Do you remember him?

QUIMBY: Not well. Colorado would have been on the far west anyway, I think. But there were two people from Minnesota: Ray Hemenway was one, and before him a guy in Duluth, whose name I can't remember.

HACKMAN: It's not [Gerald] Gerry Heaney?

QUIMBY: Yes, Gerry Heaney from Duluth, sure. We operated very closely together. The Wisconsin people, moderately close; we were very close with Frank Theis; fairly close with Ohio.

HACKMAN: Anyone in Missouri? [Mark R.] Holloran was their Democratic National Committeeman for a while.

QUIMBY: He would have been what we call the long cigar.

HACKMAN: Yes, I thought so.

QUIMBY: And then, as we spread out from this group, we included Jebby Davidson of Oregon. . . .

HACKMAN: Gravel?

QUIMBY: Oh, very definitely, Camile Gravel. And Frankie Randolph of Texas.

HACKMAN: How did [Paul] Ziffren fit into this whole crew?

QUIMBY: Well, we talked to Ziffren. He didn't come to our meetings because he was Jake Arvey's nephew, and he also was a big power from a big power state, and we thought that that. . . . I think Ziffren would have been happy to be with us, frankly, but we decided we were a small state group. Oh, the guy from Washington, he was a diamond merchant, a little fellow, an older person. He's dead now.

HACKMAN: In your job for the Democratic National Committee during the campaign, what exactly did this special projects thing involve that you were working on?

QUIMBY: Primarily voter education, the development of display materials. I actually didn't do a hell of a lot of work on that on the headquarters end of it. Neil did, and Drexel Sprecher did.

HACKMAN: You were traveling most of the time?

QUIMBY: I was traveling. And I'd take some of the exhibits out, I think, and try them. I remember developing some flip charts. Actually, of course, the religious thing qualified as a special project operation.

HACKMAN: Did they have people like you in the other regions other than the Midwest, or were you pretty unique?

QUIMBY: I'd say fairly unique. I think it was probably a tailored arrangement.

HACKMAN: What could you see of the headquarters operation as far as the Democratic National Committee and of the operation that was functioning with O'Brien over that relationship between O'Brien and Jackson and Margaret Price? Were there any problems in this relationship that you could see?

QUIMBY: No, I wouldn't say so. But I would say that O'Brien would really be the effective controller of the operation.

HACKMAN: Can you remember what Margaret Price's opinion was of the way she was used in the campaign, how her role developed?

QUIMBY: Well, she probably would have been busy as a right hand and would have been in energizing women and developing women's activities.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about Mr. Butler's attitude during this period? Did he get involved to any great

extent? Did you have any contacts with him in this period?

QUIMBY: I can't remember what Paul was doing. This is ancient history.

HACKMAN: It is. This is hard, hard work. How much time did you spend in Michigan during the campaign? Were you involved totally in the campaign in Michigan?

QUIMBY: I had an office in Michigan, but I was outside of the state, oh golly, two-thirds or three-quarters of the time. I covered all thirteen states quite thoroughly.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about the Kennedy approach to Michigan during the campaign, how effective it was? Did they send their own people in or did they more or less leave it up to the state people to run?

QUIMBY: Pretty much left it to the state. I think somebody did come in at one point, which was highly offensive to the local people, but I think he may have been pulled out immediately or may have been folded into our organization immediately. It didn't last.

HACKMAN: I know that type of problem existed in a lot of states. I had thought possibly, as you went around, you might have seen some of this. Did you ever get involved in trying to straighten out any of the organizational disputes?

QUIMBY: No, I don't recall this.

HACKMAN: Were you in Michigan on any of the trips that the candidate took, came through?

QUIMBY: Yes, I was. I was just trying to remember. I remember his coming in from Alaska. Oh, this was the time at 2 o'clock in the morning on the steps of the Michigan Union that he made his Peace Corps idea. I can't think of anything besides that.

HACKMAN: Was there any problem in getting Michigan people to campaign vigorously for the ticket because of the Johnson selection or any other factors that you know of?

QUIMBY: I think initially there was a negative reaction to it, but I think this, in the excitement of the campaign, was pretty well taken care of.

HACKMAN: Well, that's all I have on the campaign. If you have an appointment at 4 o'clock . . .

QUIMBY: Let me have a look at my calendar.