

Albert H. Blumenthal Oral History Interview – RFK #4, 11/23/1976
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Biographical Note

Blumenthal, a State Assemblyman from New York and campaign worker for Robert F. Kennedy's (RFK) 1964 and 1968 campaigns, discusses the RFK's decision to run for president in 1968, the Eugene J. McCarthy campaign and Democratic Party leadership's reaction to that decision, and RFK's campaign in Indiana and New York State, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Albert H. Blumenthal

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Albert H. Blumenthal—RFK #4

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Fourth of Four Oral History Interviews

with

Albert H. Blumenthal

November 23, 1976
New York, New York

By Roberta W. Greene

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

GREENE: Why don't you begin by recollecting what you can about the evolution of his decision to run as you saw it—you know, conversations that you had over the years.

BLUMENTHAL: Well, time has made dates kind of fuzzy, but I sort of recall two or three, maybe as many as four conversations in the fall of '67. At least one I had alone with him that I'm trying to remember when, and several of which I had with Ronnie Eldridge [Ronnie M. Eldridge] with him—perhaps there were others present, I don't remember—and one I think when Jerry Kretchmer [Jerome Kretchmer] was present, in which we went back and forth over whether he should or should not, and his clear indecision and some, what seemed to be, inhibition, first not wanting to, or wanting to and being afraid, and then just totally indecisive, going back and forth in the same conversation.

GREENE: What was his reservation, that you can remember?

BLUMENTHAL: That Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] was unbeatable was a political

reservation; that it would be divisive of the party, that he would split it right down the middle; that the public would view him as a power-hungry person. At least one occasion—I don't remember whether that was when Ronnie was with me or whether I was talking to him alone, frankly—as to whether he was personally prepared for that kind of a gut fight. Real, like, “I don't know whether I want it badly enough,” kind of. One of the conversations came after McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] started, and I don't remember which one frankly at this point, in which he was angry, as I recall, because he felt that McCarthy had started too soon, but also angry because he seemed to feel that maybe McCarthy had deprived him of the ability to make a decision.

GREENE: Had made it harder for him?

BLUMENTHAL: Made it, yes. But I just at this point don't remember the sequence of the meetings, so I can't....

GREENE: Did he talk to you at all about Lowenstein's [Allard K. Lowenstein] efforts to get him to run?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, he talked to me about that, and he seemed unclear, as best as I can recall, as to whether Lowenstein's efforts were for Lowenstein, for him, or for McCarthy. My recollection of the one major conversation about Al was that he was unclear as to what role Al was playing—whether it was Al really pushing hard to get him to run or otherwise.

GREENE: Did he think it was partly a function of Lowenstein's personal ambitions?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, that's what I mean. That he wasn't clear whether Lowenstein was doing it for Lowenstein, for him, or for McCarthy. But as I recall, Lowenstein was not really a major factor.

GREENE: I just wondered if in that period when Lowenstein was pushing him there that he talked to you in a serious way about really thinking it through, or whether that was just something he...

BLUMENTHAL: Well, he was really trying to think it through, and I think he was using a lot of people including me as a sounding board.

GREENE: Did he give you any indication of how other people were advising him? You know, the people that he considered important? Was that a big hesitation, do you think, that there weren't too many of them, unfortunately?

- BLUMENTHAL: No. I don't remember him saying, So-and-so said such-and-such.
- GREENE: Was the war the major factor, you think, making him consider it at all? Or were there other things?
- BLUMENTHAL: I think there were other things besides the war. I think the war was a major factor, and it was a major factor both because he had come to the conclusion that he thought the war was wrong, and Johnson was wrong in pursuing it forward rather than trying to find a way out. But I think he—what did he say?—something about he felt that the Johnson administration was running out of steam, that it had no place to go, and that it was more than just the war.
- GREENE: At any point did he ask you to, you know, find out how people in New York felt?
- BLUMENTHAL: Take soundings. Yes he did. And I did, and I think others. And I got a very positive soundings about people very anxious for him to run and I reported those soundings back.
- GREENE: Among reformers?
- BLUMENTHAL: Among reformers. This was before McCarthy really got started.
- GREENE: Oh. Before McCarthy.
- BLUMENTHAL: Yes it was. Once McCarthy began, then all the soundings were anti among the people that I talked to. Among independents and regulars who did not like McCarthy or who felt Johnson should not run for re-election the soundings were very positive.
- GREENE: Okay, how much of a difference do you see.... Once McCarthy comes out a lot of people lose interest in Kennedy or...
- BLUMENTHAL: A lot of people were fearful that Kennedy would divide the so-called peace vote.
- GREENE: What about the coalition that really started out as a holding action for Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] that you and Ronnie and a few of the other of his close friends and reformers would get involved in? What happens with that? How early did he follow what you were doing and how much of what you did was with his encouragement, or at least without

his disapproval?

BLUMENTHAL: I think the latter is probably the most accurate. Was without his disapproval. I think I would be hard pressed to say that he ever said directly, “Go do that,” other than the taking of the soundings.

GREENE: And you clearly regarded it as a holding action for him? I mean, that was the purpose of it?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, absolutely. The sole motivation was a holding action.

GREENE: And then wasn't there a period when it starts to be taken over by anti-RFK forces and people who...

BLUMENTHAL: Well, there was clearly a period. We had a meeting in Gerry what's-his-name's, the NBC vice president, Gerry Rowe's [Gerald E. Rowe] apartment, on the West Side—I remember it because Freddy Ohrenstein [Manfred Ohrenstein] finked out—in which we tried to reorganize—what was it?—the Concerned Democrats or...

GREENE: New Democratic Coalition?

BLUMENTHAL: No, that wasn't the new... Reorganized the Concerned Democrats [Coalition for a Democratic Alternative], maybe? Ronnie would remember the name. It was a big meeting in Gerry's apartment. What we were trying to achieve was an organization of reasonably sophisticated Democrats, reformers, independents and even a couple of regulars to work along with the movements that were being established in California and the Midwest, but to make it clearly oriented as a Kennedy movement. It was a big meeting in Gerry Rowe's apartment, and the reason I remember it so well is because we had a whole slew of elected public officials, political people, peace group types, a whole variety of people. And the one person who wouldn't back us at that time to our sheer amazement was Ohrenstein.

GREENE: Why? What was his...

BLUMENTHAL: I don't know. I will never forget that as long as I live.

GREENE: Did he give any explanation?

BLUMENTHAL: He just said, “Too soon, too soon.” And Freddy came to the meeting and walked away too soon. To his credit my successor Jerry Nadler [Jerrold Lewis Nadler] did. He was at that point very involved.

GREENE: When would you say that was?

BLUMENTHAL: That was some time in the late fall or early winter of '67.

GREENE: But still before McCarthy?

BLUMENTHAL: I don't recall whether it was... Yes, it was before McCarthy, yes it was. But we wanted a formal vehicle, something around which people would rally. And we didn't want it to be solely, the whole thing under the control of the peace movement which we felt was nonpolitically oriented. We wanted a cadre that would be available, and we could convince Kennedy that there was a cadre available at least in New York and the Northeast that would be available to support that kind of a candidacy.

GREENE: And when it became obvious that they might—well, once McCarthy comes in—that it didn't appear that Kennedy was going to move on it, what did you do?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, for me personally, and I think for Ronnie and for others, I took the position that I wanted a candidacy and that if Kennedy didn't run, okay, it would be McCarthy, but I made clear to everybody that if Kennedy decided to run, that it was not okay McCarthy. And I don't recall the meetings I went to, but there were a number of meetings designed to endorse McCarthy, and my effort had been to endorse a candidacy such as McCarthy's without having to endorse McCarthy himself. I think Ronnie took the same position and I think there were others who took the same position.

GREENE: How did you feel about McCarthy personally?

BLUMENTHAL: Didn't like him.

GREENE: Was that partly because of the way Kennedy felt about him?

BLUMENTHAL: No, I had met McCarthy and I didn't like him. I found him very ethereal; I did not like his domestic policy views; I felt he was anything but an urban populist or that he.... To me he seemed to have no notion of what urban life was all about. And it was one thing to be against the war, and that was important, but the constant question we asked him was, "Okay, we get rid of the war, what do we do next? What do we do for an encore?" And I felt his answers were abominable.

GREENE: Do you think that feeling was widespread?

BLUMENTHAL: I think many of us had the same feeling of discomfort, that McCarthy had made himself sort of like Robespierre [Maximilien François Marie Isidore de Robespierre]. He looked out of the window to see where the people were going and he was going to lead them there. But having done that, had no notion of what he would do next.

GREENE: Okay, sort of going on at the same time, what about Lowenstein and the possibility of running him for Congress or his running for Congress? Do you remember conversations with Kennedy about that? Did Kennedy seem to connect those ambitions perhaps with....

BLUMENTHAL: That year there was a dual Lowenstein effort, one of which was Senate [United States Senate], and I think his primary goal was the Senate, not Congress, not the House [House of Representatives] I mean.

GREENE: Right. Okay, I think that when it appeared that the other wasn't going to work then he dropped back to the congressional....

BLUMENTHAL: That is correct.

GREENE: Do you remember conversations with Kennedy about Lowenstein and how he felt about his possible candidacy and what he wanted you to do on it?

BLUMENTHAL: I think he was concerned that Lowenstein would not be a good running mate in New York on the U.S. Senate level. I don't have any specific recollections where Kennedy ever said, "Derail Lowenstein at any cost." I don't recall it. But I have heard others say that that was on his mind.

GREENE: Okay, now Ronnie Eldridge and Newfield [Jack Newfield] spent the day with him, if you remember, on January 19—Newfield writes about it at great length in his book—in which they were totally convinced by a number of overt things he said that he was going to run, and began to proceed along those lines. Do you remember that period at all? And that was your impression, that it was clear he was going to run? So then on the thirtieth when he announces that he's not going to, that comes as...

BLUMENTHAL: ...a surprise.

GREENE: Then at what point do you remember it feeling like it was getting back on the track...

BLUMENTHAL: I don't ever remember feeling it was getting on the track until he called me.

GREENE: Which was just before....

BLUMENTHAL: ...just before he announced. He said, "Will you go to Indiana?" He called me. He said, you know, "Will you take a couple of months off?" I was sitting in the kitchen, so I don't get that call because my wife [Joel Marie Blumenthal] and I were having supper together. The call came in the middle of nowhere. At that point it had seemed to me that he was just not going to do it for whatever reasons had prevailed.

GREENE: Would this have been after the primary, do you think, which was the twelfth? And then he announced on the sixteenth. Would it have been in those couple of days, or before the primary?

BLUMENTHAL: God, I just don't remember. I don't remember. I honestly don't. I know it was a Sunday, so if you can figure the dates...

GREENE: It was a Sunday. Well, the election was the twelfth which was a Tuesday.

BLUMENTHAL: And he announced on what day?

GREENE: The sixteenth, which was a Saturday.

BLUMENTHAL: Okay, then it was before the primary.

GREENE: It must have been the tenth.

BLUMENTHAL: I know it was a Sunday evening. Jo and I were sitting at the kitchen table and the phone rang. I nearly dropped my teeth—it was Kennedy himself, it wasn't even an operator—and he said, "Can you take time off?"

GREENE: And it really came out of the blue at that point?

BLUMENTHAL: Out of the blue, because I had just about given up hope. I was one of the last holdouts on the West Side and among reformers in general who held public office—I think Kretchmer and I and Ronnie, a handful of people who had any kind of official role, who had not formally endorsed McCarthy or who had not formally sent troops up to New Hampshire to work with him.

GREENE: Did he want you to go to Indiana? I mean, was that the assignment?

BLUMENTHAL: I misstated the conversation. He said, "Will you take a couple of months off?" It came out of the blue because that was the first question out of

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his mouth. It wasn't, "I'm going to run." He said, "Can you take a couple of months off?" It was like a non sequitur. It came in the middle of a totally different conversation I was having with my wife at the time, and I didn't really know what he was talking about. And I said, "I guess, I don't know, I suppose. But for what?" It was that kind of conversation.

GREENE: That's what he wanted to hear. You say yes, and then ask.

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. And then he said, "I think McCarthy will do well in New Hampshire but I don't think he can win..."

GREENE: So it must have been...

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, now that I talk it out loud, that's exactly what happened. He said, "Can you take the time off and will you work?" And I think he said, "Steve [Stephen E. Smith] thinks Indiana is the first place you should go." I think that's how it came up.

GREENE: And you said yes right away?

BLUMENTHAL: I said yes. I said, "Let's square a couple of things away with Travia," [Anthony J. Travia] who was the speaker, "so that I don't get killed for being absent." He said, "Well, we'll take care of that." And he said, "Do you think Kretchmer will be available?" And I said I thought he would be if he called him. And that's how that happened.

GREENE: You did do some things in New York before you went to Indiana, didn't you?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, we helped organize the New York office. It was agreed that it was going to be a holding operation; that New York coming as late as it did, it didn't make any sense to spend a lot of time early on in New York; but that we needed a holding operation so the whole thing didn't slip away to McCarthy. So we defined as many second and third-level people as we could.

GREENE: At that point, once you knew yourself that he was going to run, this being still before the primary, did you notify any people or put out any feelers to see what kind of response you could expect?

BLUMENTHAL: As I recall we agreed in a telephone conversation that it would be a

mistake to do anything that would hurt McCarthy in New Hampshire. So other than a handful of very close friends, I didn't do anything about

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gathering troops or telling people not to go to New Hampshire or any of that. I think, as I recall, we let that proceed. But I did start to call people who were very close to me to say, "Once New Hampshire is over, we're going to set up a Kennedy operation in New York."

GREENE: And what kind of response.... Well, if they were that close....

BLUMENTHAL: The people who I called in that very short interim period were very close, and we thought alike and they were all set to go. They were very excited about it.

GREENE: Okay, and then what happens after the primary when McCarthy does well and you start to notify...

BLUMENTHAL: Then there was a lot of dissension, a lot of division of opinion.

GREENE: More than you expected?

BLUMENTHAL: No, about what I expected, but I expected a lot of division of opinion. I remember Bob Ginsberg [Robert M. Ginsberg] was furious. Bob is now state committeeman and then was a district leader from the Riverside Club, was furious with me. I don't think he ever has forgiven me since then. Sarah Kovner [Sarah S. Kovner] nearly went up the wall. As a matter of fact, she reminded me of it after Kennedy's death when we were trying to straighten out the slates for the convention, and we had a meeting in somebody's apartment, and we wanted to secure a consolidated slate so that people like Bill Ryan [William Fitts Ryan] and others could go to Chicago. And Sarah, true to form, never forgot. She reminded me of the original conversation.

GREENE: And did you tell any of these people that you had known before the primary and that he had actually decided before, or that wouldn't have made any difference?

BLUMENTHAL: I really didn't. Other than the close friends I had spoken to just before, I really didn't get into that because it would be useless conversation. I just said that between the two on the merits he was the superior candidate.

GREENE: Did you have any conversations during that period before he announced or shortly afterwards with Steingut [Stanley Steingut] and Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.] and Travia?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, I did. I didn't speak to Wagner. I did speak to Steingut at great length. I spoke to Travia at great length. I talked to Esposito [Meade H. Esposito]. I talked to, I think, Rossetti [Frank G. Rossetti], and I talked to a number of the members...

GREENE: What kind of reactions were you getting from the leadership?

BLUMENTHAL: Enthusiastic.

GREENE: They were?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. The only reservation they had, some of them who were close to Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] like Marvin Rosenberg, was that, "Well, if anybody's going to run it should be Humphrey."

GREENE: That wasn't very realistic at that point when Johnson was still in it, was it?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, they kept saying that with this battle that Johnson.... The speculation began among the Humphrey supporters that Johnson maybe would not run and that Humphrey would be the choice, and to support Kennedy would be to deter any chance Humphrey would have. So the Marvin Rosenberg groupings were somewhat reluctant, and stayed reluctant, as a matter of fact

GREENE: Was there anybody else that would.... Esposito, would he have been?

BLUMENTHAL: Esposito was not yet county leader... [Interruption]... not yet county leader, but he was an important district leader in Brooklyn.

GREENE: And wasn't he in favor of Johnson and then Humphrey?

BLUMENTHAL: He felt that the fight would—I think that was he—he felt that the fight would lead to a Republican win, and he was one of those who, I cannot describe him as anti-Kennedy because he was not, nor necessarily pro-Humphrey. Meade's attitude was that if Johnson decided to run, and it was a three-way fight, that Johnson would win, but would lose the election because of the fight. I think that's fairly representative of what his attitude was. You might talk to him, but that's my recollection of his position. Billy McKeon [William H. McKeon] on the other hand was very pro-Kennedy.

GREENE: English [John F. English] was pro-Kennedy. Burns [John J. Burns],

of course.

BLUMENTHAL: Burns, Crangle [Joseph F. Crangle], Crangle's predecessor. What's his name?

GREENE: Crotty [Peter J. Crotty].

BLUMENTHAL: Crotty. They were all pro-Kennedy.

GREENE: Luddy [William F. Luddy]?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, Luddy, Bill Luddy, pro-Kennedy.

GREENE: O'Connell [Daniel P. O'Connell]? Did you talk to O'Connell?

BLUMENTHAL: No, I didn't. I have never, in all the years I've been in politics, never met O'Connell.

GREENE: I think he was, too.

BLUMENTHAL: Dan O'Connell's sole recollection of Blumenthal was abortion.

GREENE: You made your mark.

BLUMENTHAL: Oh, but did I ever.

GREENE: Did you get involved at all in the efforts to form coalitions with McCarthy's people, or were you out in Indiana by that time?

BLUMENTHAL: No, we tried to make the beginnings of efforts to get agreed-upon slates with candidates pledged to whomever in effect was ahead at the end of the California primary. As I was leaving for Indiana, and Ronnie and others were carrying on that effort, and we got reports back, we began to hear that the efforts really weren't working, that positions began to harden and even among some of my own friends. I remember Barbara Blake and Ginny Borak, two of my oldest friends politically, went to McCarthy camp and felt that, oh, we were just blowing the whole peace movement.

GREENE: How much movement do you think there was, well, in the interim let's say, when you were in Indiana? How much movement were they able to...

BLUMENTHAL: Very little. As I recall most of the coalition effort, although there was some recognition given to it by statement, was not in fact carried out. I

mean people really began to split and the divisions began to harden.

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GREENE: Was it largely McCarthy's people, do you think, that were really harder nosed than the Kennedy people?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. Kennedy's attitude—and his instructions, as a matter of fact, but his attitude, too—was, McCarthy was not the enemy, that he had to beat McCarthy, but he needed his people afterwards, and that if we got too rough that there would be no way to heal the wounds afterwards. So that as I recall, the standing instruction, right from Kennedy was, win every district but try to win it without taking on McCarthy frontally.

GREENE: And they were the ones that were.... Is it normally Sarah Kovner and Harold Ickes [Harold M. Ickes] and those people that you remember?

BLUMENTHAL: Sarah mostly. Harold, you could always talk to, even though he violently disagreed with you. Sarah, you couldn't talk to at all.

GREENE: Was she always that way?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. That's been Sarah in politics.

GREENE: Okay. I've overlooked a couple of things I wanted to ask you, going back to the Senate race. I had forgotten that meeting in Albany where Lowenstein was going to make an effort to try to get the Senate nomination. I have heard, and I can no longer even remember, if I wanted to tell you, who told me this, that Kennedy had asked them to go up—now he's at this point already in the race himself—and make sure to the extent possible that Lowenstein doesn't get the nomination. Does that ring a bell at all?

BLUMENTHAL: It does, but it wasn't me he asked to go up because already I was in Indiana.

GREENE: Okay.

BLUMENTHAL: But I did hear that...

GREENE: So you don't know anything about the search for another candidate, Sutton [Percy E. Sutton] and Nickerson [Eugene H. Nickerson] and that whole...

BLUMENTHAL: Only that Kennedy had asked for names, suggested names, of people who would run, who would be strong candidates. I don't know, I think

everybody penciled out, you know, ninety-nine names, everybody

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they could think of who might be a potential candidate. But at that point I was already in Indiana, and I really didn't play any role in that other than giving a list and I don't even remember who was on the list frankly.

GREENE: I think the effort was made to get Sutton, on Sutton's behalf, and then the polls came back very bad from upstate.

BLUMENTHAL: The polls came back bad, and Sutton also had a money problem, as I recall.

GREENE: Not enough?

BLUMENTHAL: No money. Because I do remember a conversation with Percy.... I'm trying to remember at what point that conversation took place. It may well have been after the fact, in which he told me that he had been asked, and I think some people verified. But he had mentioned that, one, the polls were tough, but that he had been willing to run if money was put up; but he didn't have any money of his own. And he was telling me the conversation. Now I remember it, because it was at that time that he decided, as much as he loved public life, he was going to make money. And shortly after that he went into the communications business. Yes, so it was after the fact that I had that conversation with him. He said the need for dollars had never been so clear to him as his inability to raise any money for that race.

GREENE: And there were no offers?

BLUMENTHAL: And there were no offers.

GREENE: Now, you indicated that Kennedy said you'd go to Indiana even before the New Hampshire primary.

BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, my recollection of that first conversation was something like, "I think Steve wants you to go to Indiana. Is that okay?" And I said, "Any place you want me to go, but I've got to clear it with Travia."

GREENE: Okay. Then you didn't go out there until after the King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] funeral, is that correct?

BLUMENTHAL: I couldn't remember.

GREENE: You don't remember? It was after Johnson dropped out.

BLUMENTHAL: You know if I looked, I could find. I just don't remember.

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GREENE: Okay. Anyway, well...

BLUMENTHAL: I made two separate trips to Indiana. I was there for three or four weeks. I came back and I went back for the primary.

GREENE: I guess it really isn't that important when it was. But what was the situation when you got there? What was the state of the organization?

BLUMENTHAL: Totally nonexistent. Jerry and I went out together, we went to Indianapolis first. That's when I first met Jerry Doherty [Gerald F. Doherty]. Ted Kennedy [Edward Moore Kennedy] was in Indianapolis at that time. We met with...

GREENE: ...John Douglas [John W. Douglas].

BLUMENTHAL: John Douglas, right. As a matter of fact Douglas and we flew up together to Gary [Indiana]. I don't remember what Douglas was doing, but that's when I first met Dick Wade [Richard C. Wade], and Judy Weiss and Singer, Billy Singer. It was all in the Gary campaign, and our basic responsibility was Lake County.

GREENE: Was that of your own choice or...

BLUMENTHAL: We asked Doherty what he wanted us to do.

GREENE: Okay. Because Jerry had given me the impression that you went to Indianapolis and he didn't really think you—I don't mean you, but you and he—and you didn't really feel you were needed there, and so you sort of on your own went out to Lake County.

BLUMENTHAL: No.

GREENE: That's not the way you remember it?

BLUMENTHAL: No. Well, maybe he's... You know, he may be right, because Doherty said "Would you take a look at what we've got in Indianapolis," because I remember I had expertise on telephones. I had gotten that in the Silverman [Samuel Joshua Silverman] surrogate's primary with Jerry Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] we had run the telephone bank. And so Jerry Doherty asked me to take a look at the telephone operation. I don't remember what he asked Jerry to do, but I think I spent the next day going over the telephone bank and the whole thing. And Jerry may be right, we may

have come to the conclusion that they were pretty well organized in Indianapolis. And maybe we did go back to Doherty and say, "Hey isn't there some place where

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you need somebody more than you need people in Indianapolis?" That could be right.

GREENE: And so you went out to Lake County?

BLUMENTHAL: And I guess he said, "Yeah, we need people up in Lake County." And I said, "Where's Lake County?" Because we flew on Lake County Airlines [Lake Central Airlines] or something or other and I got deathly ill. I hate planes.

GREENE: And that's how...

BLUMENTHAL: And I said, "Only for Bobby Kennedy," right.

GREENE: What kind of direction did you get at that point in terms of Hatcher [Richard G. Hatcher] and the whole situation there?

BLUMENTHAL: That Hatcher was of key importance, and we were to do everything to harness the Hatcher organization. And that Hatcher was sort of holding back a little bit.

GREENE: That maybe he couldn't be trusted completely?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. That he wasn't doing much.

GREENE: Did they have any reason...

BLUMENTHAL: Just that he had...

GREENE: ...why they thought that?

BLUMENTHAL: No I don't recall it being that he couldn't be trusted, but just that he hadn't gotten himself organized and gotten started, and that the turnout of the black vote in Gary was critical but that we also had to work Hammond and East Chicago [Indiana] which were the ethnic areas, and the two were at war with one another, and so part of the problem was to get both factions working, even though they couldn't stand one another. That was a critical problem. To get a telephone bank going so as to get the black vote out on primary day and to get a watcher organization going so they didn't steal the vote from us at the polls—those were the things we talked about.

GREENE: But keeping an eye on Hatcher, that kind of thing...

BLUMENTHAL: It wasn't keeping an eye on Hatcher, it was getting Hatcher to work. I don't recall anybody

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saying Hatcher couldn't be trusted. What I do recall was that Hatcher was involved in a lot of things, and he just wasn't organized, and one of the things we had to do was to get him organized.

GREENE: Was there any talk at that point about money?

BLUMENTHAL: You mean financing the campaign?

GREENE: Well, you know, money for use in the community. I guess it's better if I tell you a little bit of what I have in mind. I've heard conflicting stories. On the one hand you get this idea that there were just bags of money for Hatcher to be delivered, for him to use as he sees fit in the black community. And I guess you can stretch your imagination on what that might mean—I'm not sure that's why, you know, I'd like to find out. And on the other hand, you get the feeling that, no, it was all very legitimate, and there was money to be used for specific purposes but it was tightly controlled.

BLUMENTHAL: My recollection is the latter, that there was money to serve purposes but it was to be tightly controlled, that the instructions were that money was not to be given out...

GREENE: Where does the money come from, as far as you know?

BLUMENTHAL: I haven't the slightest idea.

GREENE: It didn't come through you? It was direct...

BLUMENTHAL: Other than giving input as to where it should go, it didn't come from me.

GREENE: You wouldn't have had any authorization over expenditures?

BLUMENTHAL: No, I think that was Wade, in Lake County.

GREENE: Were you sort of autonomous or were you answering to Doherty or Douglas or Ted Kennedy? Was there any kind of organizational structure of that kind?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, there was. Wade was the Lake County director; he was in charge

of Lake County. Jerry and I did not do the same thing, we did separate things. In a sense I was an outside man and an inside man. Inside, my primary responsibility was finding out where the McCarthy people were and trying to organize groups in the McCarthy areas who would be sympathetic to Kennedy.

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GREENE: And how did that go?

BLUMENTHAL: I'll get to that. And the second responsibility was to get the telephone operation under way. Jerry had other responsibilities. We were not doing the same things. The first one was very tough, because we found particularly in the Jewish community that McCarthy had had a heavy impact. So I began to develop lists of names of people, and I would travel from home to home for meetings, setting up meetings, where I'd make a pitch, get the names of the favorables, have them set up meetings. I worked all the suburban areas, predominantly the Jewish and something of the Protestant communities. The second thing I was a fill-in speaker, so that I went to a lot of the churches, the bingo nights, to make a pitch for Kennedy, and daytime my main job was getting the banks organized. They had hired a guy who didn't know what he was doing—I forget his name, a well-known guy—to set up the bank, and he just didn't know what he was doing.

GREENE: Was it Matt Reese [Matthew A. Reese, Jr.]?

BLUMENTHAL: That was it. So we took it away from Reese and set it up. And then my primary day responsibility was to make sure the banks worked and to set up the war room where everything would be controlled.

GREENE: How much contact in this time did you have with Hatcher?

BLUMENTHAL: Very little. Other than knowing him, very little.

GREENE: Couldn't get too much of an impression of him, how effective he was and how hard he was working?

BLUMENTHAL: He wasn't, he wasn't. It's been reinforced since then. I like Andy, he's a lovely man. He's not a very effective campaign organizer.

GREENE: Did you see any movement in the course of these efforts to work with the McCarthy people in the other...

BLUMENTHAL: It got very bitter. I remember Newman—what's the actor's name, Newman?—Paul Newman came out and...

GREENE: Competition.

BLUMENTHAL: He was not only tough competition, but he was a very bitter antagonist. Very anti-Kennedy.

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GREENE: And he was working the same kinds of areas?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, and that's very tough competition. We brought some of the Kennedy family out. We began to organize meetings around the various sisters and sisters-in-law. We brought Mrs. Kennedy, Senior out, Rose Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy]. She was a big help, particularly in the ethnic area, very big help. And I'm trying to remember her name—she came from Wagner, and she became liaison with Hatcher—she's in the public relations business, she's done some radio and television. I can see her face and I can't remember her name. Maybe Jerry would remember her name. Neither one of us liked her really. She was a pain in the neck.

GREENE: How did you think Wade was?

BLUMENTHAL: Dick was good, he was very low keyed, working very hard. He is not a professional political organizer; he's not a Doherty, but he was good because he was able to get the various people to sit around the table every day and to get the information shared, and to kind of encourage people to get moving and not worry about whether they liked one another or not.

GREENE: He was working a lot with young people especially those...

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, yes, he was. He organized all the universities. Jerry did some of that, as did I. We went to Chicago, to the university [University of Chicago] to get students out, but Jerry did more of that than I did. Dick set up a lot of those meetings.

GREENE: How effective was that?

BLUMENTHAL: Pretty good. We got volunteers in, yes, but there too the splits were pretty rough. I also did some advance work.

GREENE: When Kennedy came in?

BLUMENTHAL: When Kennedy came in. He did the Wabash thing [Wabash Cannonball]. I did the advance work on that, and then he was going to do another one on the other line—I forget, what's the name of it?—I had to ride through a pig farm in Indiana and it died. And he did just the Wabash, he didn't do the second railroad, no. And I remember showing up in Indianapolis after doing the

second run. As I walked in the office Doherty and Bruno laughed because, really, I looked like I'd just come off the Bowery, and they said, "We've got news for you."

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GREENE: That the trip was cancelled?

BLUMENTHAL: That the trip was cancelled, so I said, "You couldn't find a way to tell me before I started?"

GREENE: Then there was the last motorcade, that famous motorcade.

BLUMENTHAL: Fantastic. Well, there were two fantastic moments in my opinion. One was at the very beginning. I think it was almost on the day we got there. When Kennedy spoke in the municipal auditorium [Indiana University Medical School] which was at the very inception of the primary. And the blacks were in the balcony and the white ethnics were on the floor of the municipal auditorium. It was one of the best speeches I've ever heard him give, where he walked out of there and Jerry and I shook our heads because we couldn't believe it. Both sides heard this man say totally different things.

GREENE: Each hearing what he wanted to hear.

BLUMENTHAL: What he wanted to hear, a classic case. And they were roaring, and then they started to look at one another because both sides were applauding, and they couldn't understand why they were both applauding. And I remember coming out of there with both sides as they came out, even though they had given him a roaring reception, saying in effect, "Why was the other side clapping?" And Jerry and I realized we had our work cut out for us. Then, of course, the motorcade was absolutely fantastic. I have never seen anything like that in my entire life.

GREENE: Did you work on that one?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, everybody worked on that. No matter what else you were doing you worked on that. Absolutely fantastic.

GREENE: I thought Witcover [Jules Joseph Witcover, *85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy*] did a pretty good job on that. I don't know if you ever read that?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, I did.

GREENE: I don't know how accurate it was but...

BLUMENTHAL: It was close enough.

GREENE: It was colorful.

BLUMENTHAL: Nobody ever remembers things like that accurately

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anyway.

GREENE: Well, and everybody can only see a small portion of what was going on.

BLUMENTHAL: And you get overwhelmed by it and it takes on an aura that...

GREENE: How do you think the operation that you had going in Lake County compared with McCarthy's and Branigin's [Roger D. Branigin]?

BLUMENTHAL: Branigin didn't have an operation in that sense. He had the organization; he felt he controlled the voting booths, and so it wasn't an operation per se. The McCarthy people had many more volunteers than we did, of course, part of our problem. And what we had going for us was the black community. We won it basically on the telephones and the black community. We drove the people out of their homes; we called them so many times. I remember the operators screaming at me that, "I can't call that man again." And we had a block organization...

GREENE: You mean your own operators?

BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we had that...

GREENE: Your own volunteers?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes.

GREENE: Saying they couldn't call.

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. I mean we had literally every block organized, we had a block captain for every block. The block captains knew to mark their lists, the lists came back to the bank...

GREENE: And that would be Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. And if people hadn't been out to vote, they got called again, and it was a system set up where reporting in, I think, was every two hours or something like that.

GREENE: And did you have cars and babysitters and that whole thing?

BLUMENTHAL: We had the whole operation going. I didn't do the outside part of it. I was in charge of the bank and the block captains, because the block captains were my eyes. They would tell me who voted and who didn't.

And

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I had a map, and I had every ward marked with the block captains, block by block. I had a calling list strictly based upon who went out to vote. If a vote was low in an E.D. [election district], the block captain was sent in to find out who did vote and who did not vote, and the phones started all over again. And I remember, I almost had a revolt because people wanted to stop calling an hour before the polls closed, and I said, "You can't leave," and they almost walked out on me. And I said, "You can't leave. We're going to call until quarter of nine." I think it was quarter of nine, or quarter of whatever the voting time was. Absolutely drove them out of their homes.

GREENE: You won Lake County, didn't you?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, we sure did.

GREENE: Do you remember, in general, the feeling about the results as compared to what you'd hoped for or expected?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, on paper I think our original analysis showed that Lake County was going to be very tough, but that it was winnable, that it depended solely on identifying the favorable voters and getting them out to vote, and that's why after the first few weeks I'd been there I made the recommendation that Reese be dumped because I had no faith in his telephone operation. And since it was...

GREENE: Who did that, do you know? Who took care of getting ride of Reese?

BLUMENTHAL: Doherty. As a matter of fact, as I recall, I think we threw Reese out, Reese's people out, just threw them out and then told Doherty about it afterwards. I think we did that, with Wade. You'd have to double check with Dick. My recollection is that I came in to do a check and they just were not doing what they were supposed to be doing, they were just frittering away their time.

GREENE: These were local people that were hired by the Reese organization?

BLUMENTHAL: Right. To run the banks.

GREENE: Rather than volunteers?

BLUMENTHAL: Right. And we kept on a lot of the paid people. I wasn't going to talk to him about going through it all. Maybe half to two-thirds of the bank was paid. And they were not bad people, they were just badly directed. They were being told to do the wrong thing, rather than the right thing.

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GREENE: What kind of people were they for the most part?

BLUMENTHAL: Everything from college kids to housewives to unemployed people. You look for somebody who can follow instructions, who is reasonably articulate and who can accurately report back. And anybody who wants to debate the issues is not eligible for a telephone because—not with the phones full. So anytime you find somebody who wanted to spend an extended period of time with a voter on the phone got a different assignment.

GREENE: Is that a common problem?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. If you have enough money, you take a person like that and you put them in what is called a secondary bank...

GREENE: To call undecideds?

BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, to call undecideds, as far as you can; to call people you think may be opinion leaders in a particular community and to talk to them over the phone, that kind of thing.

GREENE: Did you do that?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. We had a secondary bank. Money allocation for the phones was paramount, and money was not a problem.

GREENE: In general?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, I don't know about in general. I'm talking about the bank.

GREENE: Oh, just the bank.

BLUMENTHAL: In terms of the telephone bank I was told, "Spend what you have to spend."

GREENE: And in terms of accounting procedures, you took charge of that and...

BLUMENTHAL: We had a bookkeeper, and my recollection is that it was Judy Weiss and one other person took care of all of the accounts.

GREENE: And they dealt with Doherty?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. We were on expenses; we had to voucher everything that we spent. We didn't get paid,

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but they took care of our expenses, but I remember I had to voucher everything I spent.

GREENE: So your impression is that things were fairly tightly controlled, at least from what you could see?

BLUMENTHAL: From what I could see, yes.

GREENE: And you never heard this whole business of bags of money and just handing it out, particularly in the black community?

BLUMENTHAL: No, the only thing that I heard that I did not.... is the normal primary day captain's money, but that was normal up there. As a matter of fact, it was normal all over the country—I don't think they do it much any more—but that wasn't bags of money, that was like giving captains ten dollars or twenty dollars to do their work that day and make their phone calls and so forth.

GREENE: But it would have been for legitimate activities?

BLUMENTHAL: For legitimate campaign activities. I don't know of any instance where somebody carried a black bag and handed it over to somebody else.

GREENE: Is there anything else specific about Indiana that you can think of? I guess one thing I haven't asked you which was sort of obvious is, how much contact did you have with Kennedy when he came through, and what was your impression of how he was feeling about anything?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, every time he came through we saw him. My impression was, he was tired but he had amazing ability, like, somebody would push a button, that you'd talk to him, a few people in a room while he was resting, and he'd go out in the streets, and we would push the button and he was alive again. He could be dragging his tail and hardly able to move while you were in the room, and then held go outside and his eyes would light up, as somebody would say, "the steely blues" would suddenly light up, and the whole world would answer. He had that capacity for self-revitalization.

GREENE: Was there anything significant in the conversations that you can

remember?

BLUMENTHAL: Very perceptive. He wanted accurate reports as to what was happening. He was full of questions. And he was not a, you know, sit down, pull up a chair and have a beer and we'll just relax. He wanted to know detail by detail what was happening. And if he'd had a contrary

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report from somebody else on the same subject he'd say, "I had a report that said..." whatever, "How come you're saying this?" He seemed very much...

GREENE: Did there seem to be a lot of that, where you had different people seeing the same situation differently?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. There did seem to be a lot. I remember at one point he had a very optimistic report from some other people about what was happening in the non-black and white areas, and our report was exactly the opposite. I think Jerry was with me on that swing. Maybe not. No, I had the local guy. I had just done a swing through Hammond and East Chicago. I had done all with bingo nights or with the men's auxiliary, women's auxiliary nights...

[END OF TAPE ONE]

BLUMENTHAL: My impressions was, the responses were very negative, extremely negative.

GREENE: What were the objections? These were ethnic voters, right?

BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. "Kennedy likes the blacks too much. He likes the Jews too much." I remember the organization had people at every meeting, feeling us down, and the McCarthy people were particularly nasty.

GREENE: The McCarthy people were effective in these areas?

BLUMENTHAL: In certain portions of these areas, yes. In the Jewish community, unbelievably effective.

GREENE: But among the other ethnics, the blue-collar workers...

BLUMENTHAL: Sufficiently so that they were raising a lot of questions about Kennedy. The McCarthy people played a very peculiar game. They painted Kennedy as more liberal than McCarthy. They were very good at that.

GREENE: Because of his association with the blacks?

BLUMENTHAL: Blacks, the Mexicans. The McCarthy people were painting McCarthy not as a liberal but as kind of a Midwesterner who understood their problems and.... They were carrying a very different kind of campaign. And the Wallace [George C. Wallace] vote was a very tricky vote there, too; very tricky.

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GREENE: He won it.

BLUMENTHAL: And that's where the McCarthy.... No, he didn't. Kennedy won it.

GREENE: No, I know, but he...

BLUMENTHAL: He scored very well, but he didn't win. McCarthy people were telling the Wallace people.... That was where the problem was—you know, the more you talk, the more you remember. Kennedy was making a very strong appeal to the working group, and there was this strange admixture in the Wallace-type communities, like in Hammond where Kennedy was having an effect. And that was where the McCarthy people were telling the undecideds between Wallace and Kennedy, “You don't want to vote for Kennedy 'cause he's too liberal.” That's where the problem was, and that's where the stress was.

GREENE: I think it was '72, I was thinking, he won Indiana very big.

BLUMENTHAL: He won very big, not '68.

GREENE: Well, Wallace was not in the Democratic primary because it was just those three, by Branigin...

BLUMENTHAL: But there were Wallace people in the primary, that is, very active Wallace groups in the primary...

GREENE: And known as Wallace groups?

BLUMENTHAL: ...trying to decide what to do, and they were the ones where the McCarthy people were doing us great damage.

GREENE: Well, is there anything else on Indiana?

BLUMENTHAL: That's really the most exciting time I ever had. I can't recall anything else to equal it, anything.

GREENE: That's great. But you ended up having to go back to New York, I think

you told me last time.

BLUMENTHAL: 'Cause Travia started to raise Cain. Kennedy had asked me to go on to Oregon and to take over Oregon, and I called Travia and Travia said no dice, he would not cover for me any more at all.

GREENE: Now that wasn't in any way an anti-Kennedy move on his part, was it?

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BLUMENTHAL: Well, Travia had not very much use for me. I had supported Steingut in '65, and while we had sort of patched things up a bit, I was still not his favorite person. And so I suppose the more rational explanation is, he shouldn't be giving me enough time. For whatever reason he didn't want to work it out for an additional period of time.

GREENE: And there was no effort on your part to get Kennedy to...

BLUMENTHAL: Well, I explained it to Kennedy. I said, "If you can get Travia to change his mind I'll go to Oregon."

GREENE: Do you know if an effort was made?

BLUMENTHAL: I don't know. I went back to New York. I got one more call from Kennedy, could I fly out to Oregon because vanden Heuvel [William J. vanden Heuvel] was in trouble? That was the problem. He had had a fight with Edith Green [Edith S. Green]. Could I fly out to Oregon for a week, just to see if I could mend some fences with Edith Green and the organization? And I said yes, I could go the next week. There were a few days, like, in between. And then I got a call from vanden Heuvel saying that it wasn't necessary for me to come. So I got confused and I tried to find Kennedy and I couldn't locate him, and I think I spoke maybe to Steve Smith, and I said I couldn't locate Kennedy and I didn't know what to do, whether to go or not to go; that I was prepared not to go because a few days had passed, and I think Steve probably told me no, not to go. And then we lost Oregon, you remember.

GREENE: You remember getting the impression even then that they realized Oregon was going to be a real problem?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes.

GREENE: Okay, so you come back to New York.

BLUMENTHAL: Yes.

GREENE: And how much do...

BLUMENTHAL: I started to work out of 38th Street.

GREENE: Okay, what was the situation by the time you returned?

BLUMENTHAL: Not very good.

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GREENE: You mean in terms of organization?

BLUMENTHAL: In terms of organization and in terms of volunteers and in terms of accuracy. The liberal community was really floored, and literally so, as I recall. And the headquarters was badly split. There were too many personalities.

GREENE: Who, particularly?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, everybody was going six ways to Sunday. When Steve was there and paying attention he kind of forced everybody into line, but as soon as he went off to do something else, the old backbiting started and you had ninety-nine generals and no soldiers.

GREENE: Who are you thinking of mostly?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, I don't know. Adam was here, and vanden Heuvel had come back from Oregon, as I recall...

GREENE: Adam?

BLUMENTHAL: Walinsky [Adam Walinsky].

GREENE: In New York?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, he was back in New York.

GREENE: I didn't think so. You're sure you're not thinking of Carter Burden maybe?

BLUMENTHAL: That's it. You're absolutely right. It was Carter Burden and Bartle Bull.

GREENE: Bartle Bull?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes.

GREENE: That's not a name I know at all.

BLUMENTHAL: Yes. Bartle Bull. I'm pretty sure it was Bartle. It was Carter, Peter Fishbein?

GREENE: It might have been.

BLUMENTHAL: Peter Fishbein.

GREENE: Peter Fishbein. Peter spent some time in Washington, and then I think he did come into New

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York for a while.

BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, Peter Fishbein. And I don't remember who else. It's all a maze now.

GREENE: What about English and the chairman, Burns? Did you see much of them?

BLUMENTHAL: I saw a lot of John Burns, some of English. All I remember about 38th Street was that nobody knew what anybody else was doing, and that I got tired of going to meetings that went nowhere.

GREENE: Did you detach yourself at that point?

BLUMENTHAL: No, I went back to doing what I felt I did best at that point. I got on the speakers thing and started to make speeches.

GREENE: Again in the liberal community?

BLUMENTHAL: Anywhere they sent me. All over the state. What I do remember was that when I came back—we had a break in the session, and I went to 38th Street—all I remember is going to a series of meetings and decided that I didn't have the patience for the backbiting in the meetings, and I finally said, "I'm of no use here. Put me back on the speakers road." And I started to make speeches every night. We were still in session part of the time. I made speeches upstate and when I came back to New York I made speeches in the city and out on the Island [Long Island].

GREENE: And what kind of feeling did you get for movement?

BLUMENTHAL: I began to get a feeling in the public as against in the political area that

there was more willingness of the public irrespective of whether they were McCarthy people or Kennedy people to say, "Whoever comes out of California." Because that was the message we were selling, and I got a good response to that message, that whoever came out of California ahead, that was the candidate to support.

GREENE: In terms of leadership, were you taking names at that point of people you talked to, would go back to immediately after?

BLUMENTHAL: Of opinion people, yes. When I would go to a meeting at a synagogue or a church or a civic group and people—there was always a question-and-answer period—we would have local people at those meetings. As soon as the meeting was over I would try to meet with the handful of people who seemed to be the opinion makers of

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that group, and who were at least either pro-Kennedy or not anti-Kennedy. And I would stay for a half hour after the meeting and chat with them, and we would take their names as people who would be committed to this posture, okay, whoever came out of California had this person's vote of support.

GREENE: Okay. Could you see movement after let's say, Nebraska...

BLUMENTHAL: Yes.

GREENE: It did help?

BLUMENTHAL: It helped a great deal.

GREENE: What was the effect of Oregon?

BLUMENTHAL: Disastrous.

GREENE: Not much sympathy? It wasn't that kind of a reaction?

BLUMENTHAL: No. Disastrous. It was very dark, that period between Oregon and California.

GREENE: What was your impression of the chances in New York, let's say, towards the end of California? What did you think was going to happen here?

BLUMENTHAL: Very close. Everybody kept saying, "If Kennedy doesn't win California, New York is lost."

GREENE: But even assuming he won California, you thought it would be tough?

BLUMENTHAL: We thought it would be close, but we thought we would win. That's when the Kovner group began to harden their position saying, "It's no compromise. You know we're not agreeing to anything like that."

GREENE: Were there others among the McCarthy leadership particularly in the city who were not so hardnosed, who said, "Come back and see me"?

BLUMENTHAL: Yes, but don't ask me to name people, 'cause I just don't recall. There were some people who were rational and who kept saying, "Yes, we agree with that philosophy, and whoever takes California we'll unite behind in New York."

GREENE: How much of a factor was Humphrey at that point?

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BLUMENTHAL: [Signifies negative]

GREENE: Not in groups you were dealing with?

BLUMENTHAL: No.

GREENE: But in New York it certainly, definitely, would have been between Kennedy and McCarthy?

BLUMENTHAL: That's my recollection. It would have been a head-to-head fight, but having won California I think Kennedy would have won in New York.

GREENE: Is there anything else on the campaign?

BLUMENTHAL: Not that I can think of.

GREENE: Is there anything in general that you can think of? Particularly if there are things that have sort of always annoyed you about the way Kennedy was perceived, and things you've always sort of felt like you might want to say to correct false impressions, or what you see as false impressions. Anything like that?

BLUMENTHAL: Well, I don't know that they're false impressions per se. There are various people who have tried to assess Kennedy, some who have assessed him from total lack of knowledge on their own part, so I tend to discount that kind of.... There are others who have attempted to assess him based upon

specific experiences they've had, and I suppose it's natural that your assessment comes—is colored by your own experience.

My strong impression is that the one quality that Kennedy had above and beyond every other quality which is the sign, at least in my opinion, of hopefully a great leader is the ability to grow. And that impression never changed. That he had made a lot of mistakes, did things, some of which he admitted to, and others of which he denied vehemently, but he had this unique capacity to grow and grow for the better. And I don't know too many other people in public life that had a similar capacity, and that was what in my opinion made him great.

GREENE: What do you think was the overall impact, if you could evaluate it, on New York in the four years he was here? Did it have any lasting effects?

BLUMENTHAL: It may not have had lasting effect, unfortunately. It never reached a peak, or a level. He just never had time to make his mark. I think for a lot of people, individually, he had an impact, both in New York and elsewhere. And I think it was that capacity for growth and

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for excitement that he left that mark. But if you ask me to say that he had an effect on this state per se that is everlasting, I don't think I could say honestly that he did. It's a shame, but I just don't think I.... I think he had effect on the lives of a lot of people, but on the state.... It would be hard for me to put my finger on it. He'll be a hard guy to follow as a political actor.

GREENE: Has been, to now.

BLUMENTHAL: Nobody around that I know who has come even close.

GREENE: Is there anything else that you can think of?

BLUMENTHAL: Not really. Just sadness that there's nobody else, and I don't know when there ever will be. Just a very unique man, very complicated. And I'm not even sure he really knew himself who he was. He spent a great deal of time trying to find out. I'm not sure he was ever able to ask the question. I'm not saying he was a confused man, because he was not confused...

GREENE: Complicated.

BLUMENTHAL: ...just complicated.

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[END OF TAPE ; END OF INTERVIEWS]

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