I was born in Lincoln County Mississippi in 1912, about six miles west of Bogue Chitto, on a small 51-acre farm, being the fourth of four children of parents who were married in 1900. We lived there in a very rustic farmhouse, which except for one room, normally had one board between us and the weather and sometimes it had knot-holes in it. And this was customary for the bulk of the families that lived in that part of Mississippi at the time. The farm was an interesting place to a youngster, with cotton being the principal crop, with the other crops being for purposes of either forage for farm animals or food for the family. The family bought relatively little food from the outside -- some flour and some sugar -- although we made our own syrup -- and that provided a great deal of the family requirements.

I went to school for one year at King's School, which was a two-room, two-teacher elementary school, about a mile and a half from where I lived. And one year at Arlington Consolidated School, which was two or three miles away and to which I had the privilege of having a bus ride. I think that my father summed it up in some ways when I asked him on a much later occasion what prompted him to move from Mississippi to Texas -- our family had moved into Mississippi in 1811 -- and he said really it was too difficult to make a living. I asked him on that occasion what were the limits of his cash income in the twenty years that he had farmed from his marriage until our move to Texas in January of 1921. He said that the most he ever derived from his principal cash crop, cotton, was $600 and the least was the year I was born in which he had a cash income of $39.50 before taxes. This was a time when purchasing power was much different than now. And as I indicated we didn't have too many cash transactions. Most of our food was raised on the farm, but we did have to buy clothes and some other items of that type. Moreover, the public schools in my neighborhood ceased at the end of grade seven when I was a youngster, and my siblings, in order to have high school, had to go to boarding school and with that type of income it was pretty tough to arrange for any type of boarding school. Nevertheless, my father arranged it for my two oldest siblings who had reached high school age before we
moved to Texas and one had graduated. We moved to Port Arthur, Texas in January, 1921, with very small cash assets from the sale of the farm. I spent my youth up to high school graduation in that community. It had an unusually fine public school system run by a very distinguished superintendent who would be a credit to any public school system anywhere at any time in terms of his basic capacity, his foresight, and his planning. He bought up, for example, in 1915 in Port Arthur school sites sufficient to take care of a population as he estimated it 50 years downstream. At that time the town had a population of about 15,000 and he projected a population of 65,000 and bought up school sites for all the schools required in the future. This was his style of running a school system. Tremendously imaginative person and also I had the benefit of having a Sunday School teacher along the way and when I was about twelve years of age he asked me what I was going to do and I told him teach school and he said when I got to be 21 if I still was the same man and if he were still superintendent to call on him. So my 21st birthday I walked into his office and told him I was there to pick up that which he had promised me nine years previously.

(BF: Had you been to college in the meantime?)

I had been to school in the meantime. I finished high school when I was 16 and went to Southwest Texas State Teacher's College at San Marcos, Texas, 30 miles south of Austin. I finished San Marcos when I was 19 with my baccalaureate. In August 1932 -- the year in which the Depression was at its zenith -- and I had no opportunity for a job anywhere. So I went back to graduate school because someone offered me bed and board for four hours work a day and I spent '32 and '33 at Texas University.

(BF: What did you study in graduate school?)

In undergraduate school I had majored in mathematics and education and social science and science. As a matter of fact all of my undergraduate career except the last three weeks I was registered as a special student, which meant I could take whatever I had the prerequisite for but not leading toward a degree. And three weeks before I finished the Dean called me in and advised me that he had gone over my record and found out that I had enough credits to graduate and although they would be happy to have me back the next year I could not have the job that I then had at college, so I was graduated on three week's notice.
In graduate school I had majored in government and minored in education.

(BF: Why did you choose that major?)

Well, the Texas legislature had passed a law in 1930 which said you had to have two hours of government in order to graduate and I entered into a long controversy with the state over the subject and finally won my point but by that time I had taken the two hours and had become enamored with the professor and with the subject. So I went on and took quite a bit of government in undergraduate work and in graduate school.

Parenthetically, the small school to which I went and among my school mates, who were 250 men the first year I was in school, and one of the 250 was a chap named Lyndon B. Johnson.

(WMP: Were you friendly with him?)

Moderately. Our philosophies of life did not precisely coincide and he was a senior and I was a freshman so that put quite a gap between us.

(WMP: Did you have occasions when you saw him again when he was President?)

I knew him through the years until he became President. As a matter of fact, one of his confidential secretaries was a girl friend of mine in high school, but I never did follow up on the situation. She suggested that I come down to the White House on one occasion. I suggested that if Mr. Johnson wanted me to come he knew where I was. She did, and I didn't hear from him and so that was that. I did visit with him once or twice while he was in the Senate.

It really was the impact of the teaching of this professor at San Marcos that turned my interest to public affairs in a professional sort of way. Up until that time my interest had very largely been mathematics and history. I had some interest in physics and chemistry but had been driven away from it because of my asthmatic condition. The professor had happened to have been a Latin professor. Latin had gone out of style so he had to make a living so he changed over and started teaching government. He was extremely strict, very thorough, tough, and the kind of chap who challenged me and my interests and I ran into one of your subsequent associates, Walter, Roscoe Martin. He was teaching
municipal government and I had an interest in international government but Roscoe's personality kind of converted me from international to local government in one semester. So I picked up from there my concern with local government. I had been acquainted somewhat with the local politics of my residential community of Port Arthur. I had known some of the people who were of some importance in local politics in the community and weren't a political family -- some of us were involved in public office and public affairs, but Dad for some reason came to know the people and that added to the interest I had.

(BF: What led to your employment with the Bureau of Governmental Research in New Orleans? Was that the first job you had?)

No, I came out of college and didn't have anything to do and I sold telephones on a commission basis. Tried to get people to install residential telephones. I tried that for eight weeks and I made eight dollars and decided that really didn't have much future. I went to work with the Texas Company as a laboratory assistant and stayed there for a few months and turned 21 and called on the Superintendent of schools and he supplied a job teaching social studies, eight months at 80 dollars a month.

(WMP: What year would that have been?)

That was January 1934. I taught school for four years except for returning to the University in the Spring of '37 to finish up my master's thesis. I became interested in matrimony and I looked at the future in teaching and decided that it really wasn't that promising from a remunerative point of view and had an opportunity to go to the Bureau of Governmental Research in New Orleans, rising out of the thesis which I had prepared on manager government for Port Arthur, Texas. And after some negotiations I went to New Orleans to participate in a confidential study of public schools under a special committee in 1938. When that was completed I went to work for the Bureau and in 1942 became the Director of that organization.

(BF: In Philadelphia?)

No, in New Orleans. I stayed there until 1949, during which time I was on loan for a while as budget officer for the state of Louisiana in 1940, Personnel Director of the City of New Orleans in 1942, lecturer at Tulane from '42 to '49. As a matter of fact during the middle of the war I was the full political science department of Tulane University, teaching four courses. I spent two hours in the morning and then go downtown and carry on my job downtown and simultaneously being Personnel Director for the city so that I was reasonably busy.
That became a lifetime habit of working long hours and maintaining two, three, or four jobs at a time.

(WMP: It's a wonder you are alive, Len.)

Well, it kind of caught up with me last June, as you know.

(BF: How did you learn about the opening at the Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research?)

I had become active in the Governmental Research Association, which was a professional organization of people engaged in privately funded governmental research and one of my associates in New Orleans had moved to New York to become Director of the Governmental Research Association and

(WMP: Who was that?)

Louis Brown. When this job became vacant here he called it to my attention and in due course I was extended an invitation to come to Philadelphia to discuss the situation.

(BF: What year was that?)

1949.

(WMP: What role did Joe Clark play in that?)

I don't know what role he played in the invitation to my coming here. He was a member of a three-man committee consisting of Joe and Steve Sweeney and Ruhland Rebmann (?), who interviewed me when I came here. Of course I was interviewed by the executive committee and others.

(WMP: I have a memory that Joe had talked to his friends down in Louisiana and somehow he got information about you.)

I know that he had talked to them because when I was interviewed individually by Joe as is his custom he sought to throw me off balance a bit by saying that he had investigated me and I told him yes, I understood he had. And I left him the next move. And he said well, how did that arise? I said you called Mr. A and Mr. B and Mr. C and they called me to ask me what I wanted them to tell you about me. And so with that beginning Joe and I got along very well indeed. He was, as you know, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Bureau of Municipal Research at that time.
(BF: When you came to Philadelphia to be interviewed for that job what did you find out about the civic structure of the city and how did you then figure the role that would become yours if you accepted the job? And what appealed to you about taking that job?)

I made two trips to Philadelphia on that occasion. The first one I came a week before I was supposed to and spent going around the town to talk to various people on an incognito type of basis -- not identifying myself as to who I really was.

(WMP: What did you find out about the Economy League at that point?)

I had known quite a little about the Economy League by virtue of my activity in the Governmental Research Association and the Economy League had been quite active in that and I had come to know various people including Charlton Chute and others. I did not talk to Charlton in that first week when I was here meandering around. I went back to Washington and caught a plane up here and was met at the airport in the proper manner for my interview.

(WMP: What were the impressions that you gathered in that week?)

I had been intrigued by Philadelphia. I had first visited Philadelphia in 1934 and spent about ten days here as a tourist and was quite intrigued by the city. And Mrs. Moak and I had had opportunities from time to time about moving from New Orleans and while we went through the process of reviewing them we really had never been interested in other places and when this came along we were quite prepared to be interested very early. We had more or less made up our minds two or three years before that the only places that we really cared to move to were either Philadelphia or San Francisco.

(WMP: To what extent did you visage a renaissance in Philadelphia?)

At that juncture. I thought that it was reasonably ripe for a circumstance -- we had gone through a period of municipal scandals, we were down toward the end of a period of a long one-party rule of the town, which are kind of prerequisites to various things. Also, you were attempting to get legislation through to permit development of a home-rule charter, around which you can organize a great deal of civic reform efforts. Certainly the first time you go through the process of developing a home rule charter.
(WMP: Did you contact the Greater Philadelphia Movement?)

I had met Buck Sawyer -- he was just resigning from the Bureau of Municipal Research to go to GPM and GPM was not exactly a reality. As you remember, GPM was organized in the Spring of 1949 so that it had only been on paper about three months when I came here and Buck was still working in between the Bureau and GPM at the time that I came here in July for interview purposes in 1949.

(WMP: How did he receive you?)

Properly.

(WMP: You might have been a threat to his role in the city.)

No. Buck was very self-assured so that one does not have to worry about him in that connection. I think Charlton Chute who was with the Economy League -- I did spend an evening with him and his wife. There was I think some apprehension on Charlton's part over my coming here because I had a little more aggressive personality than he wanted to cope with after having coped with Buck who had still more an aggressive personality. I think he would have been more comfortable had the Bureau chosen one of the other candidates on that occasion.

(BF: Did you plan from the beginning that you would bring about a merger between the Economy League and the Bureau of Municipal Research?)

Not in the sense of planning, but those thoughts always cross your mind as to why two organizations that were doing essentially the same thing -- the field of endeavor was the same, but the technique was very different. One was very quiet. You were here long before and you can speak with greater authority on that than can I, but I did not perceive any real differences in philosophy. I did perceive a difference in technique. One sought to achieve its objectives through quiet cooperation with public officials with the minimum of publicity and the other sought to achieve its objectives through the public educational processes of issuance of reports and bulletins.

(BF: Which was which?)

The Bureau was the outspoken commentary. The Economy League was rarely referred to in the public press. It had for a while during the Committee of 15 days brought on a couple of people that resulted in some publicity for it but its general plan of action was let us cooperate with whoever is in public office and not be publicly critical of what they say -- let them take the credit for anything that we recommend that they adopt. That was their
basic technique of operation. But the objectives, I think, were really the same.

(WMP: Going back to the days of Bill Beyer and his predecessors, they looked upon it as a source of information and very rarely tried to actively direct public policy.)

You mean Bill Beyer and his group?

(WMP: That's right.)

I think the Bureau under Bill Beyer had been clearly adapted and rarely did they darken the halls in City Hall. Under Buck life changed and of course my orientation was one of something of being a publicist and a protagonist and simultaneously doing a job of research in that connection. This brought me into frequent contact with public officers as well as with the media.

(BF: And that was what year?)

'49 and then I came here and stayed on in that role until '52 when I went over to City Hall and then after I came back there came this merger with the Economy League in the summer of '54.

(BF: What was your role in the preparation of the 1951 city charter and your specific contributions that became a part of that charter?)

The Home Rule Act was adopted in the summer of 1949, about the same time that I was negotiating about coming here. And by the time I came here in August of '49 the Act had been approved and the Commission was being appointed. Obviously, the city charter movement would become the focal point of the effort at improvement of government in the city so that in my own mind I marked that as the number one activity to be pursued in the Bureau program in the years that the Commission was active.

and

(WMP: What was the origin and the idea of the promotion of the idea that there should be a new city charter?)

I was not here at the time, Walter, you were, but I think that -- you go back to 1919 -- at the time of the adoption of the charter at that time there was an effort to secure a home rule charter. Home rule from 1900 forward in American municipal circles, especially among municipal reform circles, citizen groups, -- the concept of home rule was viewed as a method of freeing a local government from
the toils of the legislative process in the state capitols, where frequently the local representatives were the controlling entity as far as what happened so that the delegation from Philadelphia would be in control of the situation so far as what happened in Philadelphia but it was a polite method of avoiding responsibility because they could always claim that they tried hard and they couldn't prevail. Well, this was largely malarky, both here and in any other state. Not always — in Louisiana for example, Huey Long did control New Orleans in a lot of ways from the state house. But the municipal reform people — especially Municipal League sought very hard to get home rule. In 1919 the state constitution -- 1921 I guess it was -- the state constitution was amended which permitted the legislature to authorize home rule for Philadelphia, but it did not. And it wasn't until 1949, following the war, the various things which Walter Phillips was primarily instrumental in stirring up here more than any other individual in town, got people interested in the potentialities. And you happened to bring Buck Sawyer into town. And Buck became an advocate of that point of view and became Director of the Bureau of Municipal Research in '47 -- you brought him on as staff engineer in '45 or '46. And the press took it up. Clarence Shenton, who had been with the Bureau of Municipal Research, the editorial writer of the Bulletin, was very interested in home rule. And even more interested in city-county consolidation. And despite many differences between him and me in a number of ways which we need not go into here nevertheless the publicists were favorable to the concept of bringing responsibility back locally. (WMP: One little thing I would like to add if I may -- it was the Bureau that kept alive from the 1919 charter on to the period that you came on -- they kept, with their Citizen's Business and their resources of information, the whole idea of city-county consolidation and home rule.)

Yes. That was very strong and despite our differences with Clarence, as the member of the staff and as his relationships with the Harrison foundation, which supplied a substantial portion of the funds for the Bureau of Municipal Research -- all of that worked together to help keep us alive over a 30-year period. (WMP: the Bureau had a sort of revival just before you came...)

Largely brought on by you.
The point is there was a resurgence there and I've observed in community after community that this opportunity afforded by developing a charter -- for example, as you may remember or may not, I served as consultant on charters here in New Orleans after I came here and I commuted weekends. I spent weekends in New Orleans and weekdays here.

Later, in Omaha and Syracuse, and still later in Newcastle County, Delaware and Cecil County, Maryland. But all during that period the concept of home rule charter was still a very viable concept. Now different things which have happened since then have greatly muted home rule because the old urban core areas have become less virile fiscally, they have to depend on the state legislature and on the Congress and so you cannot yell too loudly about home rule. There are times that you have to be up there day after day in the state capital and the Congress negotiating for money in order to run the show, so home rule is muted.

But at that time -- for example, in 1954 -- only about 3% of Philadelphia's city budget was derived from state and federal grants. Today probably 1/3. That changes the equation very materially. I think that pretty well covers -- but at that time the emphasis in the community was one of great outreach, great interest, and that bane of all of our existence, the conglomerate, had not been invented and we still had tremendous sinews of economic and civic leadership. We had not been taken over by non-resident ownership of our economic sinews.

(WMP: Who were some of the big wise members of the business community that kept an interest in the city government and helped to improve it?)

I'm very poor on names and I did not come prepared to try to recite those, but I will call your attention on this point because I think this is very critical in our review of what happened in American local government and to some extent American state government. As we allowed the conglomerates to operate -- whereas we stood out strong nationally against trusts in the original legislation of the 1880's and the trade and anti-trust act of the Wilson administration, we allowed conglomerates to come along after World War II -- both national and international in scope. And to take over all kinds of local business. And it was in that process the local business -- the management of it -- become birds of passage. This is not to suggest they are any different from people who were here before, but the people who were here before were willing to stay here. Their future was here. Not elsewhere. The future of the typical plant -- the typical corporate executive where the ownership is elsewhere, his future is elsewhere and he knows it and while he tips his hat on the
way through, he is a bird of passage.

(WMP: the federal government has an agency that tries to prevent that kind of conglomerate — the Federal Trade Commission)

No. They don't make any strong effort. If they are, they are certainly very unsuccessful.

I wish we had a roll-back in corporate structure so that we can stop this process and to roll it back. It is very detrimental to civic life in America wherever you run into it.

(BF: What was your specific role in preparing the 1951 city charter? Did you have a personal role?)

I concluded that the charter activity when I came here was the most important thing going on, so that I set aside most of my energies in connection with the charter and set aside most of the Bureau's staff time in connection with the charter — from the period from September 1949 until December 1951. One way or another. Of course the charter had been adopted in April of 1951 so that the period after was on another aspect of it that I will touch on in a little while. But the -- I attended every meeting of the charter commission -- public meetings and a good many private meetings -- and down toward the end I was an informal member of the drafting committee. I met --

(WMP: Who dominated the commission the most?)

The leaders. I don't think anybody dominated. The leadership was Schnader, Stevens, Freedman, and McCracken. Others were active but I think that they were -- Thomas was also a very significant force in the charter commission. I don't want to derogate the role of the others, but inevitably some people tend to take a more prominent role.

(WMP: The ones who were the most active were the ones on the drafting committee --)

There were three of them -- McCracken, Schnader, and Freedman. They were on the drafting committee.

My activities on the charter commission were several-fold. One, I attended all the meetings. Two, we prepared a considerable amount of material for them -- some at their request. Much of it at our initiative. Material which in our judgment they needed to have available to them. Thirdly, we participated by appearances in a formal sense before the commission. Fourthly, when draft two of the charter became available to its members -- it was not available to the public -- these
five members that I mentioned each came to me with their copy of the draft and asked me to give the comments. I called them together and told them there was no way I could write five such comments but I would be willing to meet with the five of them and talk to them as a group.

(WMP: How did you get to that position that they knew to come to you?)

I cultivated them. I identified them as people that -- as well as others, Freddy Mann was not that active but I came to know Freddy in that period. The labor leader -- Joe Burke -- I came to know Joe very well. Bob Callahan, who was on the Bureau board at the time. And others. I would take them to lunch and meet them here there and yonder and engage in discussions with them. They concluded I guess that I knew something about the subject.

(WMP: How valuable was your experience in Louisiana when you came to work on the charter in Pennsylvania?)

I had not worked on the charter in New Orleans at that time. I had been very active in civic affairs but life was a lot different. Politics is much more earnest in Louisiana -- it was and still is. It is all day, every day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner in a huge number of households in Louisiana. And the role of natural resources -- the state's participation in the whole oil and gas scheme -- just brings you every day -- and the press is somehow much more intimately involved and it seems to bring the human side to public life which is not quite so evident in the Philadelphia press. But be that as it may, I had learned a fair amount in Louisiana and elsewhere by consultation with leaders in the municipal research field all over the United States. I was tremendously intrigued with that operation and was very active in it wherever I had an opportunity. I was involved in the affairs of the National Municipal League and way back there I helped Luther set up the American Society for Public Administration and a few other things of that type.

The things that I focused on were very largely finance. This was a personal focus. Tina Weintraub and other members of the staff had other interests, but I had special interest in the field of financial administration. Among other things you can't run a government without money and if you organize your finances reasonably it calls for a high degree of centralization. If you recall, Walter, under the prior charter there was no financial organization. The budget was a part-time function of the mayor's press secretary.
Procurement was under a man appointed by the mayor. Collection of taxes was the responsibility of the Receiver of taxes, who was an elected official and lived up to the title of receiving and not collecting. The accounting function was lodged with an elected City Controller and central thought processes for finance didn't exist.

(WMP: Your recounting this really makes one realize how drastically the charter of 1951 did change the set-up.)

Early on, in my first appearance before the Charter Commission in the Fall of 1949, I went there with a plan for financial administration and I proceeded to sell it and I did sell it. I sold all aspects of it save one -- they gave the City Controller both pre-audit and post-audit and we have suffered from that decision ever since. I'm going to appear before Council a week from Tuesday in which I am once again going to suggest that we separate out the function of pre-audit and post-audit because you cannot expect a man to come back and do a post-audit of a function in which he has participated in the decisions while it is going on. It is just unreasonable. We are suffering some in our posture in national financial circles at this point because we have no arrangement for a genuine independent post-audit. My suggestion next week will be that independent CPA's be chosen for the role of post-audit. The City Controller be limited to the role of pre-audit.

(BF: Who would choose the CPAs?)

City Council.

(BF: Are there any other changes that you would suggest for the charter?)

I think that on the municipal side it has worked remarkably well. There needs to be a rationalization now that we have effectively dismantled the Redevelopment Authority and perhaps wisely so under the new arrangements that Congress has put through for this Block grant program. We need special powers that are granted to the Redevelopment Authority and retain its legal existence, because those powers are not municipal powers. They are special powers to Redevelopment agencies granted by legislature. We need to do something about public housing -- bringing it under as a department of city government and do away with the Housing Authority concept. The Housing Authority concept was developed by a New Orleans attorney named William Gust in 1935 for the purpose of circumventing constitutional prohibitions against debt and we have long since passed the necessity for that almost all over America.
So the time is at hand to rationalize that type of structural situation. We tried the Rafsky office under Tate -- the present office that we have -- John Gallery's office. We've groped for some effort here and we haven't done very well.

I think the combination of City Representative and Director of Commerce function, which you held in the Clark administration, was a mistake. I thought it was a mistake then and I still think it is. It doesn't belong in that context. I'm not quite sure what I would do with it. Maybe we should move the transportation functions into a regional agency and get the whole transportation function out of city government. Of course we did not have SEPTA at the time -- and I'll talk about that later -- so we had to do something within the confines of city government. But I think the time is at hand to move some of that out.

I think that we should clear out the prohibitions we have against people running for public office other than that which they now hold. I think that was an unwise step that we took in the charter and I think that the limitation on terms was an unwise step, although at the time I thought it was wise. We were all influenced, I think, we were reacting to Mr. Roosevelt's four terms of office when we wrote those things into the federal constitution and city charters and what have you. My own conviction is that the harm that they do in terms of providing lame ducks, wherever they occur in state government and city government -- I think the harm that they do is infinitely more than the benefit derived supposedly of forestalling the development of a strong succession rights to office like the mayor of Chicago developed. So what? Pittsburgh had Lawrence for 25 years and prospered greatly. Then he ran for Governor while mayor and they prospered further by the fact that he could run for Governor. We have denied ourselves both things and ....

(WMP: Who was responsible for that provision of the charter?)

I don't recall who was responsible. I went along with both of them. I thought it sounded good. But it just sounded good. It didn't work out to be good. We lost Dilworth as Mayor of Philadelphia at a critical time in the history of our community because of one of them. I don't know what we thought we were doing.

(WMP: Len, how do you feel about the use of non-profit corporations as a device for a partnership with business and the city, like the Food Distribution Center and the
Port Corporation and so on?)

They have a place but they are not all -- none of these things are panaceas. They perhaps had more of a place at a time before conglomerates than they have now.

(WMP: Do you know who started the idea of the non-profit corporation?)

Perhaps you did. I don't know.

(WMP: Yes.)

At least you think you did. But you didn't. No, you didn't. I don't know who did -- maybe Ben Franklin. Maybe before him. But we've used non-profit corporations in one way or the other. I know the context you are thinking of, Walter, but I'm trying to rib you a little bit. The art museum, for example, has been run by a non-profit corporation. And the library. But for the more commercial aspects of our governmental operations, you are quite correct that your work with the original one in the Food Distribution Center...

(WMP: Harry Batten stole my idea. He got there ahead of me.)

Then I came on and worked with the same concept in development of the PIDC and then Peter Schauffler came along with the same thought in connection with the Port Corporation and it has a place. On the other hand,

(WMP: It could be dangerous because there could be areas of corruption, don't you think?)

I'm not sure of corruption so much as there could be an area in which nobody is in full charge and nobody is therefore in full responsibility and when you begin to divide responsibility -- when you begin to divide power, you begin to divide responsibility and as you divide responsibility it is very difficult to peg anybody. For example, I do not think that our port is developing the way it should. Who can you nail? Sure, I was a member and a Director of Finance of the Port Corporation and I took a quick view of it and I decided that the amount of energy that it would take me to move in there and assert power was more energy than I could afford to spend on that subject at that time. Therefore, I never went to the meetings. The theory of the partnership so far as the Finance Office was a farce. I sent somebody but I never went and they never had a priority position of any consequence in the order of things. So it has its advantages, and particularly it has advantages if you have strong corporate leadership in the community. But so much of our corporation
leadership has been -- has gone elsewhere.

(BF: Let's get back to some of the questions. At what point did Joe Clark indicate to you that he wanted you to be Finance Director if he was elected mayor?)

When Joe was elected City Controller about four or five months after I came here he asked me to go over as Deputy City Controller and I turned him down but I maintained a relationship -- a close relationship -- with him. We did some studies of the Controller's office for him and I did various chores that I could consistently do with the role of an independent organization. Actually he was very much a candidate for Mayor. As the charter began to take shape it was obvious that Joe was going to try to run and there was a tiny squabble between him and Dilworth and the City Committee as to whose turn came up first, but nonetheless that was their problem. I guess it was in the early summer of '51 that Joe took me home one night -- I was living in Andorra at the time -- and at that time Joe asked me to be Managing Director if he were elected. I turned him down.

(WMP: What was that date again?)

Late spring or early summer of '51. I turned him down on the basis that I was a White Southerner and that the emerging importance of the Black was such that a White Southerner would not make a good Managing Director because the Managing Director had responsibility for the police department and the police department problems involved Black people. This was no place for a White from Mississippi and I didn't want to take on those headaches and I didn't want him to take them on.

(BF: He hadn't considered that aspect?)

If he did -- anyway, I just said no. He countered that there was a place that he wanted me to come in. The next week the Rev. Poling called on me and said if he became Mayor he'd like for me to be the Director of Finance. So I told him -- I told each of them that I would consider it if they were still of the same mind after the election and if a leave of absence could be worked out with the Bureau of Municipal Research so that I had a place to which to return.

(WMP: Who was running the Bureau while you were in City Hall?)

Henry Beerits did it on a part-time basis. That was -- the sequence was in the early fall -- the fact that whichever one was elected they wanted me to take on the office.
BF: What were the conditions in the area of city finance when you became the Finance Director and what things were your priorities?)

I don't believe in a hard and fast set of "conditions". In the first place I don't believe in employment contracts -- I've never had a contract with anybody in employment. No agreement of salary in advance except when I went back to City Hall each time I did have a sidebar arrangement, which was publicly understood. But I talked to Joe at some length after the election was over -- but we had covered most of those things over the two and a half years before that because when he made an appearance before the Charter Commission ordinarily he would talk to me in advance as to what he was going to say on finance and we had worked closely on examination of pensions. So we were fairly well in harmony concerning our views as to what needed to be done. One thing on which we never did agree was taxation of business, which over my strong objection he introduced a mercantile license tax which was an unfortunate thing to have done. And your neighbor across the street, George Forde, was the one that put him up to it. It had the effect of driving out the very low profit margin businesses and then Dick Dilworth came along later on and put in that corporate net income tax, which had the effect of driving out some of the higher margin business. It is difficult for a self-made economist to understand why people do that, but they do.

BF: What were your major problems in setting up the Finance Department of the city?)

Staying alive. The day I took office I walked in there and my staff consisted of my secretary that I had met two weeks before and myself. And that was it. I tried to take over some staff -- I did take over some staff -- from the City Council's Budget Research Board -- about a dozen people. I tried to take over some staff from the City Controller's office, but they were all hunting for nicer jobs in the new administration so I got two or three people.

WMP: How come you didn't take Frank Short, who had been Budget Director under the old set up?)

I didn't think he would fit into the scheme that I wanted to develop. He was too fixed in his views and I knew his views did not coincide with that which I wanted to do so I thought the best thing to do was -- I liked Frank. I enjoyed Frank. I enjoyed having a drink with him and I enjoyed visiting with him and I visited with him frequently up until his death.
(BF: Was it your idea that the Director of Finance should be directly under the Mayor rather than under the Managing Director?)

Definitely. For two reasons. I didn't design the office for me personally. That was not my intent. And I rather preferred not to go to City Hall either time when I went. I preferred to stay where I was. But a mayor needs structured friction. He needs the task to be divided up in a manner in which different people have different roles and when those roles come into conflict with one another that he has the benefit of two well-stated views. At least two. So that it has been a continuing principle under which I worked in all the charters that I have developed that there be one. Except in New Orleans. And I think government has to be structured in part in relation to the early actors who are going to be on the scene. There was a personality I was working with in New Orleans, whose Morris, who was going to be mayor for at least the first eight years under the charter and I admit that I tailored it somewhat to his personality because it was foolish to draw an instrument that the man might not know how to work.

(WMP: When did you make that charter for New Orleans?)

Chep (.) became mayor in 1946. And I came up here in '49. In '51 the Louisiana legislature adopted a Home Rule act for New Orleans and I was brought back to New Orleans on weekends in '51 and '52. Even after I went to City Hall I was going there on weekends in order to write the charter for New Orleans, but it was perfectly obvious that was going to be mayor for eight more years. I just had to write a charter that he could live with, and to write one that he couldn't live with would have been irresponsible. So there I put the Managing Director in New Orleans -- the Managing Director also had finance. In New Orleans I yielded to the reality of personalities and allowed the mayor to remove as of the moment that he is sworn in everything on the Chief Administrative officer but he can, in writing, then remove and accept personal responsibility for such functions as he wants to other than budgeting and finance. And the mayor has exercised that power. Each mayor has removed recreation and police from under his responsibility and put them under the equivalent of our Managing Director. Special reasons in New Orleans.

But nevertheless -- government is made to function -- charters are made to try to cause things to happen, not to just be pieces of paper. And as I've moved around writing charters I've tried to take into account prevailing political realities.
(BF: when you were Finance Director did you have a structured conflict with the Managing Director's office?)

Oh yes. And there will always be and that is a good thing.

(WMP: Would you like to say a few words about Buck Sawyer?)

Buck was a good operator. Smart. Able. I was in fairly frequent conflict with Buck and sometimes Buck would get unhappy about it and I would say look, this is role playing. This is the name of the game. Don't get that way. Tina used to get up real tight. (Tina Weintraub). I'd say simmer down.

(WMP: Why do you think Buck died in office? Did he take it all too seriously?)

I don't know what precipitated it. I wouldn't pretend to know what precipitated a heart attack. Certainly pushing and tension can do it. Buck was very young for that to happen. He was 43 or 44.

(BF: did you resign as Finance Director before Clark's term was up?)

Yes. I only went with the agreement that I would stay for two years. I went on leave of absence from the Bureau of Municipal Research. I couldn't afford to go for a longer period because they didn't pay enough and I had very heavy domestic financial responsibilities. I thought I could last it out for two years and make somewhat of a national reputation for myself and off of that I could make some money with which to pay back what I went in debt.

(BF: Was two years enough time to achieve what you wanted to do in that job?)

No. It's never enough time. But nevertheless that is what I agreed to do so I stayed two years and went back to the Bureau of Municipal Research and after that we worked out the consolidation with the Economy League.

(BF: It occurs to me that anybody listening to this tape perhaps wouldn't know exactly what the Bureau did and what the Economy League does.)

Beginning in 1907 in New York a social worker named Allen concluded that the recurring process of throwing the rascals out didn't accomplish very much in municipal reform. And he set up something called the Bureau of Municipal Research --
got some important people at the time to put up some money with which to do it and they got great national publicity. Came out with studies of how to do things better. Within a couple of years the Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research was established and was originally staffed out of the New York bureau. And some of the staff was local but most of it was out of New York. Over time it became primarily locally staffed. These organizations were reform outfits. Do-good outfits. Trying to improve the quality of government. It came at a time when local government in the United States had almost no professionals in it in the sense of professionals in public administration. I don't mean that they didn't have professional engineers and professional doctors and that type of thing. But in the scheme of public administration this was barely recognized as a profession in the United States and actually the old Bureau of Municipal Research became a kind of movement. It was often referred to as a movement. And as such it gave force to the establishment of bureaus in some 50 major cities of the United States. Minneapolis had one. St. Paul had one. Milwaukee. Pittsburgh. L.A. San Francisco. All had developed over time bureaus of municipal research. Some rather small cities. And these people began to preach the gospel of professional administration and public administration and it was a vehicle by which a lot of industrialists and men of means helped to improve their communities.

There was developed in Pennsylvania also the Pennsylvania Economy League in 1933, which was more an epitomization of a parallel and even older movement of taxpayer's associations. The fundamental difference originally between the two groups was that the taxpayer's organization was primarily to hold down taxes without much thought of the social consequences of that but very tuned to the economic consequences. They harped on economy for the sake of economy very frequently and sometimes very narrowly. The Pennsylvania Economy League I think was never an old-fashioned taxpayer's outfit. It never did go out with a meat axe to chop down the tax rate. It did seek to secure more economical performance of functions. Once the decision had been made as to what the level of performance was to be, they sought to introduce the most economical way of bringing off that objective. This differentiated both the Bureaus of Municipal Research, which kind of touched on that field and the taxpayer's associations, which were so really parsimonious.

(WMR: Did the Economy League staff participate in the Governmental Research Association?)

Yes. All the way. From way back. And especially after Bob Murray came in. Bob became President of it about three or four years after he came in. I remember we had a meeting in Bedford in '49 in which the Economy League hosted the whole operation. So that these movements have probably
long since peaked in their importance partially because they caused the universities to see the opportunities involved in professionalization. A good many of them went to universities and did part-time teaching as I did. Dr. Leonard Upson, who was out of the old New York bureau and established the Bureau in Detroit became professor of public administration at Wayne State University at an early age and an early time and they made a tremendous contribution in their day. Today a variety of things -- money availability, etc. -- has pulled down their total staffing and perhaps their total effectiveness.

(BF: what do you consider some of the accomplishments of the Pennsylvania Economy League?)

Well, I think in terms of -- well, the Economy League and the Bureau were eventually consolidated -- so that my role -- I cannot easily distinguish between when I was working for the one or the other even in the early years. I think the charter was a joint effort in which both of them made great contributions. Charlton Chute was loaned by the Economy League as part-time consultant for the Charter Commission. It was a formal arrangement in which he was paid partially by the Charter Commission. So far as my years with the whole operation are concerned, I would say that aside from the Home Rule Charter the work in developing the PIDC, the Port Corporation, SEPTA, the broader field of transportation, a great deal of work in the field of education and more recently the focus on the necessity for bringing the totality of cost within something that the community can afford.

(BF: How long did you stay with the Economy League?)

From '54 to '72.

(WMP: did you go very deeply in the home rule charter for the Board of Education?)

Yes. Very much so. And very disappointed at the outcome of the whole operation. I thought it failed in so many ways. It was one of those things which happen often in which a community of otherwise sensible people get scared of a ghost and the ghost in this case was Ed B. Anderson. He was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Philadelphia Board of Education from 1938 till 1961, and Ed had only a high school education and I'm not sure he finished high school. I know he had no college education. Over time he became -- he became into the Board of Education as a clerk at age 17 and over time he worked himself up to Secretary, Business Manager and within a short time of that happening -- this was about 1938 -- somebody tried to undermine him and get him fired. And that somebody was the Superintendent of Schools and he decided
as how that would never happen again.

(WMP: Who was it?)

I don't remember which one it was. It was before my time there. But Ed proceeded to establish himself as the Philadelphia School District -- for all practical purposes he was the Philadelphia School District -- he hired board members and fired board members and he hired superintendents and fired superintendents.

(WMP: Wasn't that when the Board of Judges appointed the members of the Board?)

The Board of Judges appointed them, but Ed told them who to appoint. In later years Ed offered me a job one day on the board as a member of the Board of Education and I told him no way was he going to get me on that. The fact that he could ask me would like to be on it suggested where the power lay. He elected judges too. He was a political force of real consequence in the community. Maintained the most effective relationships anyone in Philadelphia has ever maintained with the legislature, had one of the special schools here make special license plates for every member of the legislature so that wherever they went with their cars they were easy to distinguish and he played it well. He kept the city on coal burning furnaces and kept up his relationships in the coal country in Pennsylvania thereby while everybody else was going to oil and gas. Of course for different reasons we wish we were back to coal maybe now. But Ed was strong and stubborn. Not very systematic and his budget consisted of three printed pages and that was all.

(WMP: He is deceased now?)

Yes. Ed died in '63. But the Charter Commission lived under the ghost of Ed Anderson and they were absolutely determined that they were going to forestall -- if they achieved nothing else they would never have another Ed Anderson in the school system. And they achieved their purpose. They put all their eggs in one basket. The superintendent became the lord high master of everything and literally on the organization chart nobody on the staff can ethically speak to the board. Except through the superintendent. You are breaking the line of command when you go around. That's just no way to structure any organization. But nevertheless that's what they did.
(BF: What would you recommend?)

At this point I think that the thing has changed a lot since that happened. I wouldn't have recommended this at that time. But now I would suggest that we have a rather full integration of educational activities with the basic form of government here.

(BF: It should be a department of the city government?)

I would say that the Board should perhaps be similar in status to that of the Library Board. The Board of the Library is appointed by the mayor. It happens that he usually appoints the same people who are on the private corporation board. But that's a matter of persuasion rather than a matter of law. I think that the financial and a lot of other functions associated with school health, libraries and what not should be integrated with the health department and the library system and probably a lot of its recreational functions should be integrated with the Department of Recreation. And its educational functions and maybe its building functions ought to be be with a special city department of buildings. I'm not sure.

(BF: How about budgeting?)

I think it ought to be a part of the regular budget of the city and get rid of this fiscal crisis game. Its debt has to be separate and there are certain things that still have to be separated in some ways that are different in the way in which you would integrate another function and this is because of state law.

(WMP: Did you ever tackle from your post at the Economy League and Bureau of Municipal Research the reorganization of the Board of Education set-up?)

The only thing that happened through the years was in that process of the Educational Home Rule Charter commission and we worked with that as closely as we were permitted to. We never got as close to it partially because the members of it were running from the ghost of Ed Anderson and because I was a friend of Ed Anderson they tended to run from me until the very last minute when they came in with the draft of the charter and I sat down with them and told them how the damn thing wouldn't work the way they had it. It couldn't. It just had a jillion conflicts with state law and what not and it couldn't function. And they did pay some attention toward the end but they were in a time bind of such dimensions that they could not continue to do the things they really knew they ought to do and as a consequence they buttoned the thing up on an inadequate basis. That's the only opportunity that has ever been afforded to do anything with the Board of Education.
(WMP: The behavior of some of the board members -- with them having their own limousines is scandalous.)

I don't know, Walter. If you were not independently wealthy and you were prepared to give twenty hours a week on the average -- it is a half of a work week -- if you were prepared to give that much time I think that you might conclude sooner or later and having been vilified by everybody and their dog in town that the use of an automobile was pretty lousy compensation and not a rip-off.

(WMP: Why not pay them cash instead of going around in big automobiles?)

I would do both. I would do both.

(WMP: If you've got good people, I'd go along with you. But I think they've got a bunch of hacks in there.)

I don't think you want to go on the record and say these aren't good people. I think some of these people that I know on the board are very fine people and if you get down to a dispassionate analysis of what people do -- public officers -- you find out that much of the media impressions given -- when they are building you up they oversell you and when they are tearing you down, they over tear you down. Now I happen to be on the side in which they have built me up -- I understand the process real well. They made me a financial genius -- Moak's Magic and all that kind of malarky -- and it was straight malarky. I'm no genius and I've never had any magic. I hope that I'm good at my trade and I think I am. I think I'm better than the average. On the other side of the picture, there wasn't any magic in it. The trouble with that game is that having built you up then you are that much easier to be cut down. The bigger you are, the harder you fall.

(WMP: I didn't realize how deeply you had gotten into the Board of Education?)

I've gotten into everything in this town. Nothing has happened here in the 28 years that I've been here that I wasn't involved in one way or the other if I had time.

I'll tell you a little tale. Ed's budget consisted of three printed pages most of the time he was running that place. I went to him in 1959 -- I called him and said Ed I want to meet you on Saturday morning. I want you to set aside Saturday morning. He said you must have something awful important if you want the whole morning. I said well set it aside so we don't have anybody else coming in and I don't have any pressure of time. So I went out to see him and I said
Add, you are not as young as you used to be and the grim reaper can call upon any of us beginning tomorrow and I would like for you to reflect on the question of what the situation would be out here if tomorrow morning you couldn't come to work. As far as the finances of this place are concerned. I know this has been your lifetime and you are greatly devoted to it and so on and I want you to think about that. And he said when? And I said now! Thereupon, I changed the subject and I talked for two hours on other subjects just as hard as I could think up other things to keep a conversation going. But I knew he was thinking about what I had said. So finally just before noon he said you win. He said that would be a lousy testimony to my memory if I died and nothing here except this stuff I keep in my center drawer. And I said you're damn right.

(WMR: You're a psychiatrist, aren't you?)

Add

I just have my way of approaching things. So Ed invited me to come in and develop the budget and that's the first budget the Board of Education ever really had. Two years later, unfortunately Ed did have a stoke and was unable to do anything for two years and then he went back into the office but in a very truncated role. He was kind enough before he died to thank me for having precipitated the proposition and then he had something that somebody else could run in his absence. But it was because of that association that it was well known to some of the members of the school board, including Mrs. Albert M. Greenfield -- not the school board, the School Charter Commission -- who held me way off. This guy is friendly with Ed Anderson, you've got to be careful of him. He'll sell you an old bill of goods. Jane Freedman had the same set of blocks. She was messing around with the Citizen's Committee on Public Education in which they thought that the salvation of education lay in spending more money. They couldn't understand that once you spent your money and spent it unwisely and you didn't have anymore, then what would you do? And that's where we are now. They don't even want to remember that.

(BF: Let's go on to SEPTA.)

When I came here in 1949 I was absolutely astounded at the network of transportation in the city. I'd never seen anything like it. And yet, with the fact that it was tremendously extensive I had the misfortune of living up in Andorra and in order to get from home to work I had to take two buses, a train, and a streetcar. As an asthmatic I resented that and so in 1951 after we got the charter adopted I wrote a piece in Citizen's Business, the old publication of the Bureau of Municipal Research. I wrote a piece calling for the creation of a special commission to look into transportation organization for the city and the region. And I went to a cocktail party
one night and Ed Bacon and Charlie Fraser were there and
I told them I had written this and was releasing it the next
morning and they raised holy hell about it and I went back
and cancelled the release that night. We put it up to the
various people, including the City Planning Commission.
I told Ed that if -- would he stand behind whatever his
commission ruled on the subject? He was saying this was
an intervention of the City Planning Commission function,
especially the incipient commission. This was in September
of '51. I convinced his Commission and finally I issued a
publication. You and I went in with Joe Clark in '52 and
I tried to get Joe to create such a commission and I wanted
a comprehensive commission to look at transportation
comprehensively. And Joe said he had a commitment to Buck
to create a master-- Buck said he had a commitment to Arthur
Binns to make Binns chairman of a mayor's master traffic
committee and I argued against it and Buck said we got
the commitment and we are going to live up to it. I said
well, if you are going to create the committee can I at
least have four appointments on it. So he gave me the
four appointments and I put people on there with the purpose
of seeing to it that that committee committed hari-kari.
It took me nine months to get to hari-kari but I got it
finally to write a report saying it shouldn't exist. And
it went out of existence and we then got the Urban Traffic
and Transportation Board created.

(WMP: You know something? Machiavelli didn't have anything
on you!)

We got our Urban Traffic and Transportation Board created
and got Tom Ringe on it and Clifford Math(?) and several
other people and we got Bob Mitchell from the University
as Chief Staff for it. So we then created a task force
within that with Tom Ringe and Frazier and Mitchell and myself
to create an organization and we developed the outlines of
SEPTA. That was in '55. I wrote the report in '55. But
no opportunity afforded itself to create SEPTA at that point.
And we worked along other avenues of transportation and
finally got Dilworth — under Dilworth — got the Chestnut
Hill Local subsidy and ordered some equipment up here in
'59. It's the first appropriation in the United States
by a municipality to a railroad following the
debacles after the Civil War. This was the first commuter
railroad subsidy in the United States.

And in '63 we had a big strike of the PTC and finally Governor
Scranton had to settle it. And in settling it I read his
statement very carefully and there were some words in there
that suggested he might be amenable to doing something and
I worked through Austin Lee, who was a member of the legislature
at the time and we set up an appointment with Scranton and
he said I really don't want to talk about this subject and
I said ok, we won't talk about it but I want that to be the
subject on the published agenda. So we went up there and we
talked about something else and then by prearrangement
he sent me across the hall to see Walter Allisandroni, who was Attorney General, and that was on his agenda also. We didn't talk about it. We talked about other things. They didn't want to talk about it. But the press picked up what I wanted them to pick up -- that I was up there talking about this subject with the Governor. And this caused Jim Tate just to rise right up -- he had been opposed to any cooperation with the surrounding areas. And it caused him to think that the Governor was about to invade his territory and so working in cahoots with a couple of reporters, especially at the Bulletin, we created some other

And at that point I called up Elkie Wetherill, who was Chairman of the Montgomery County Commission and told Elkie I thought he ought to call Jim Tate and suggest that this was a local government matter and that the five counties ought to get together. And Jim accepted the call and swallowed the bait, hook, line, and sinker.

(BF: And takes great credit for all of SEPTA.)

Fine. Fine. We got them together and the drafting committee was the four county solicitors, the city solicitor, and myself.

I enjoyed that exercise and we got it together and I worked with SEPTA off and on in the years since. It wasn't the best device that the mind could create, but it was right along the lines of what we had written in '55.

(WMP: Did Jim have any part in selecting John Bayley?)

John and I worked together very closely along the way. Matter of fact I almost -- John came to me and wanted to be Deputy Director of Finance in '52 and I turned him down because he didn't have the financial background I wished he had. That was a bad decision on my part. I ought to have had better sense. But I stuck with somebody else who was not as good as John. And he became Deputy Commissioner of Streets (Bayley). And I tried to get John named as premier director of SEPTA at the time that the PTC was required but the combination of the politics of the situation and the fact that he had no operating experience -- so we ended up by going out and recruiting another person.

(BF: Is there anything else you want to say about SEPTA.)

Another thing I would say prospectively on the SEPTA situation is that something has to be done to improve the composition of the Board of SEPTA in the sense that the suburban members have a veto going in and the city has a veto coming out. And the veto going in is more important than the veto going out. That arrangement was the best we could negotiate in '63 when we did this work. I think that we could negotiate a better arrangement today if we could get back into a negotiating session. The other thing is that unfortunately SEPTA has never been what I conceived it to be. I wanted a regional transportation system and I still want a regional transportation
system. We have a conglomerate. We have taken over a number of segments and they still operate as a city transit division, the Red Arrow division, this, that, and the other. They do not operate as an integrated transportation system. They don't have even an integrated fare structure. The Red Arrow division operates quite independently of the others and in some respects, such as the shopper's special, foolishly on Saturday mornings we run a bus through here that underpasses the Pennsylvania railroad on the way town two or three times stealing passengers from each other. This is nuts. Somebody who has a vision of this being a system and who has the youth and the energy needs to take it over and make it a system. One system. An integrated system. So that the surface lines are feeders to rapid transit and railroad lines have one consistent fare structure throughout the whole blooming thing. A big factor in the picture are the dad-blasted human relation political problems on the one side and the very difficult labor relations problems on the other. As the late Bill Bodine, Sr. said you are put here to solve problems and we were given a task so we wouldn't go crazy. We still have the best layout in America and if we got it as an integrated system it would be one of the best calling cards for economic and industrial promotion that we have. We are just blessed with a private avarice of the last century and laid out all these lines. Here we've got them and other places trying to build them --

(WMP: Len, when you were associated with Rizzo did you have any chance to move along in the direction you've been talking about now?)

Not as much as I would have liked to have. This was not particularly his cup of tea and one of his assistants, Mr. Carroll, really had a totally different view -- he doesn't think in regional terms. He thinks in city line terms and this is not a subject that can be handled in city line terms.

(WMP: Which Carroll was that?)

Phillip Carroll.

(WMP: Oh God, he started in my department I think.)

Right. You should have trained him better in some ways.

(BF: How did it come about that you were asked by Frank Rizzo to be his Finance Director?)
Oh, I unfortunately forgot about giving a speech one day. I had been invited to give a talk to the Philadelphia chapter of the Harvard Business School and I forgot about it and I was sitting at my desk eating lunch and the person who had invited me called me up and asked me where was I and fortunately I hadn't gone off somewhere else and so I grabbed a cab and went over to the Racquet Club where they were meeting and that was as much time as I had in which to prepare my talk. So I got up and I talked totally extemporaneously and very much from the heart on the problems which confronted the community. That was on a Friday. And on Monday morning the telephone rang and Frank Rizzo was on the line and he said this is Frank Rizzo. Yes sir. He said I'm going to be elected mayor. Yes sir. This was in May or June of '71. He said I want you to be my Director of Finance. I said that is not a subject that I discuss on the telephone. He said well come to see me. I said I don't go to see candidates during the election. He said I'll be there in ten minutes. And he was. I had not spent not more than three minutes in the man's presence in my life before. I would have known him if he walked in the door and that's all. I turned him down. I turned him down eight times between then and December.

(BF: Why? )

I didn't want to go back to City Hall. First because of the fact that I have a brain-damaged child -- very expensive to maintain -- and I've always worked two, three, or four jobs in order to have money to take care of that obligation and live as I want to live and I knew that any salary the city could pay me would not be sufficient. So I had lost everything I had to serve there two years before -- I gave up the equity in my house and borrowed on my life insurance. And I didn't want to repeat that process. I could do it at age 39 but I couldn't do it at age 59. So I thought it was all settled. I had gone out and beat the bushes and gotten a good group of potentials for Rizzo's Finance Director. And on Dec. 8, 1971 I was up in Hartford on a consulting assignment -- Bob Sessions and I worked on an assignment together -- and Dick Bond got on the phone and called the roll of the people who were in the room and I knew the jig was up. Too many of my contributors at the Economy League were telling me I should go to City Hall. What do you do? You listen to the voice of reason. It was Mr. Johnson's type of reasoning. Anyway, I came back down -- and you ask about an agreement of some sort with Joe Clark. I did not have a specific thing laid out with Joe. But Rizzo -- Despite the fact that we had met several times during that eight months and he had spent many hours in my office seeking to understand some aspects of public finance. He didn't pretend to master finance and still doesn't pretend to. Publicly he might make a statement but nevertheless privately he
will tell you real quick that he can't add two and two and get the right answer so don't bother him with that finance business. By the end of the term I had developed a very interesting type of insight concerning the man. I did at that juncture sit down with a list of things on which I thought he and I should have an understanding. They weren't conditions but they were things there that I thought we should have an understanding beforehand so that we didn't have a misunderstanding later. And we went through the list and after that discussion on those points in reaching basic accommodations I agreed to take it.

(WMP: Have we covered everything?)

(BF: Just about. This sounds like a long question, I know -- what were the major problems you dealt with as Finance Director under Rizzo and how did your term as Finance Director under Rizzo compare to the time under Clark?)

They were totally different in the sense that the city was at a different place in its history. Forgetting about the men. Of course there is rarely as much difference as those two men to work for. And I won't go into that. I'll just stop at that. If you can think of broad contrast -- sharp contrast -- well, there they are. And there were good things and bad things in both situations by my system of values so I'm not plussing one over the other. I'm just saying they came out with very different perspectives.

(WMP: I don't think the two men like each other very much.)

I have suspicion that that point of view would not be disputed by either of them.

It was a very fascinating thing to be able to work with Frank Rizzo having been as close to Joe as I had been. And it is a testimony to him in a lot of ways that he was willing to permit me to. Many a person wouldn't allow somebody who had been close his political enemy to be close to him. That's rare in public administration. My relationships with both men were very fine. I couldn't ask for better relationships. In both cases they were professional relationships -- we never visited socially either with the Clark's or with the Rizzo's. Joe was in my house once and Frank Rizzo has been at the front door once. And I've been to their houses a few times on business.

(BF: Did you have more authority under one than the other?)

I don't know whether you can really say that. They both were good delegators. At least my experience with both of them was that they did not try to run your office from their office. Which I think is a very important tribute to both the men.
Coming back to — now I said all that about Rizzo in response to your question and I will not take much of your time because we are running out of time but in terms of the problems — in Joe's time we did not perceive that Philadelphia was on the threshold of a tremendous loss of business. A tremendous loss of middle and upper income by population and a tremendous accretion of the Black population. We had some signs — as I said to you before, Walter, when I stood on the levy south of Vicksburg in 1942 and watched the first successful demonstration of the mechanical cotton picker it was obvious what the future held because up to that point the Blacks had been held on the farms because of the necessity for cotton culture and a lot of the Whites had been able to stay on the farm because they could compete with the cotton culture that was not mechanized. They could not compete with the cotton culture that was mechanized. So that once all the cotton culture had been mechanized except picking and once that that machine rolled down that row and pulled that cotton off then it was only a question of waiting till the war was over and they could produce the machinery and the Blacks would be driven off the plantation farms and the Whites would be driven off by economic forces from the uplands, they had to go somewhere and they had to go to town. I don't think any of us expected in 1952 — at least I did not expect it — that we would get as much as we got from that migration. Because we were 15% Black in the 1950 census and now it is about 40%.

(WMP: You attribute it all to the cotton situation?)

No. There were a lot of other things. But the Black and the White had been held on the farm because of that and I've done a lot of genealogical work on my own family and I've watched the migrational patterns and in the county in which I was born I would say that 75% of the houses that stood when I was there are gone. And the land has gone back to timber. Once this competition hit it they couldn't make a living and they had to leave. And so it went back to timber. A tremendous economic impact. But I still didn't see it — maybe other people did -- but I didn't see it in '51. Blacks were still such a small portion of Philadelphia's population I did not see it. Our big migration came from '52 to '57.

At that time Philadelphia still had a rosy future — we had 23,000 municipal employees and during the Clark, Dilworth and Tate administration this increased to 35,000. It was obvious that we had to stop that rise and start pulling it down some. And we did stop it as far as the local finance part of it. We stopped it. And people don't like this. They say you're not expanding service, you're not being socially responsible. But you've got to pay some attention to the economy of the town. The economy is not strong.
None. The city government has been most fortunate. One of the things that Clark and Dilworth achieved to a degree which has rarely been achieved in America was a union contract in which the basic concept of continued employment has never come up. It's never been on the bargaining table. The staffing level has never been a subject of bargaining. Even lay-off procedures have been only once seriously on the table. They got seriously on the table in the summer of '76.

(WMP: So the power to dismiss -- well, civil service prevents you from dismissing --)

No, it doesn't prevent you from dismissing. It defines how you shall lay-off. Not whether you shall. The decision -- the whole work rules proposition is still in Philadelphia we have a freer hand from a management point of view in this town than most any other town in the United States. Contrast the city and the school district. One of the nasty problems involved in my earlier comment about running a school district there is a totally different set of rules. The school district contract runs on for pages after pages after pages and the city contract -- when we sat down to negotiate -- I sat down one night and typed up after we agreed -- personally typed -- it ran for less than two pages. That was '73 when I sat there and wrote one one night. For crying out loud you can't even get a preface of the school board contract on two pages.

(WMP: How do you account for the city's success in dealing with the labor unions then as compared to the Board of Education?)

I'm not sure. I don't know. I think partially it was that the process of labor unionization in Philadelphia city government started about 1938 and it moved on at a very slow-moving process all through the years. And the school district just came all at once like a jolt.

(WMP: In addition to that I think Eli Rock was an extremely competent labor negotiator.)

I think Eli had a lot of capacity in that direction but more than him being a good labor negotiator I think he was a good advisor to us. That's different. He helped advise us early on to avoid some of these pitfalls and if Dick Dilworth had
had that kind of good advice when he sat down at the Board of Education to write that first contract the community wouldn't be in the mess it is in today and I begged Dick on bended knee, damned near, to please go get somebody who understood the Eli Rock approach to things and Dick had somebody else and we've got this mess now.

(WMP: I must say I've been interested in Eli Rock because I was the one who brought him into the city.)

But it's now our economic circumstances with the private employment within the community with a change in the requirements of governmental services -- with a lot of segments of the economy having moved out and others plainly on the edge of moving out and may be -- with the decision-making process having left us and gone elsewhere in which we are a branch office town and a branch factory town. It's a different ballgame.

(WMP: Has most of that industry that has gone out gone to the suburbs of Philadelphia or gone to other parts of the United States?)

Neither.

(WMP: Little of both.)

Neither. Just gone. Went to Formosa. Went to Taipai. Went to Hong Kong. Went to Japan. Went to East Germany. West Germany. You name it. They have it.

(WMP: was this principally textiles and clothing?)

I haven't made a study, Walter. I should have. But I haven't made it yet. But I have a suspicion that if we analyze carefully our losses in the textile and garment industry, our losses in the electronic industry that we would have found that we lost much more internationally than we did to the combined forces of our suburban and the rest of the U.S. We have been especially hit by these forces -- much more so than some other places. We weren't petrochemical. They stayed. We weren't a lot of other things which stayed. We're really struggling now -- not struggling for our lives, that's too strong, but we are struggling for the proposition of a readjustment to a lower population in a total. We're struggling for time in which the Blacks can make the adjustment which arose out of circumstances that weren't their fault and wasn't necessarily the White community's fault in the South -- it's just the nature of the ballgame.
As I said earlier the public schools went as far as the seventh grade when I was eight years old in Mississippi. So everybody -- white, black, green, and yellow -- got a very short shrift. Blacks got a shorter one than the Whites did -- don't misunderstand -- but there wasn't very much -- and this has -- it's going to take a long time.

On the other hand, on the rosy side of the picture if you have a group of people who are making substantially below their proportion of the total in the economy and if you can look forward to a day when they will be assimilated economically into the economy as more or less full partners then the rate of growth for that group is colossal in relation to the rate of growth for the other part. So if you want to find out where America is going to grow the most in the next 25 years find out where the Blacks live.

(BF: We are almost out of tape --)

So should we button this up?

(WMP: We thank you very much.)