I think I should start with when Charlie Bowser became the logical candidate in 1975. As you undoubtedly know, he had been desirous of becoming a candidate for the party and -- the Democratic party -- and there had been obviously a decision not to make Charlie the candidate. And while I'm not able to give you the inner workings of that decision it obviously did hinge upon the fact that Charlie as a black candidate did not have a chance to win according to those persons who made those kinds of decisions. And there was a testimonial for Charlie at the time that he was retiring from the Urban Coalition, where just a large, large crowd assembled and it became at that time almost totally apparent that Charlie should become a candidate for the mayoralty whether or not the Democratic party slated him. Many of us who came there had not had a lot of working with Charlie but we had pretty strong knowledge of his background and of his capabilities.

(WMP: What is his background?)

He's a lawyer who has extensive law background, but much more than that he had had very very strong background with community groups throughout the city and not just black community groups but poor and black community groups helping in developing a program and proposals and securing money for various programs. He was head of the anti-poverty program for a few years and became very deeply connected with the groups in North Philadelphia, South Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, Germantown, with regard to distribution of those funds. As a consequence he had become known to people who were actively engaged in civic activity at the block and neighborhood level. That is, people who had organized block committees and community organizations which were broader than blocks. A whole number of various kinds of groups in poor and lower middle class communities in particular.

So Charlie had become well-known in areas which became very important later politically and his urban coalition work was both with the power structure of the city and with the kinds of organizations that needed funding so he had that link made which has been a very unusual kind of link especially for a black person in organizational activity
because organization activity is usually either all-black groups or nearly all-black groups or in all-white groups. But he had made that link between the two by virtue of his experience and know-how. So he was a logical and certainly by far the most qualified candidate for the campaign for mayor. In addition to that there had been, of course, a tremendous residue of bad feeling toward Rizzo, starting in 1967 when it kind of flowered because of the attack which he made on the high school students who had been demonstrating at the Board of Education for changes in schools, etc. Then when he was later designated as a mayoralty candidate for the Democratic party and became mayor in 1971 he had previous to this time made the declaration, some of which were public, that he was out to break the black power movement in the city. All of this had created a very very strong anti-Rizzo feeling among people in the black community. And while he had appointed a couple of persons at the level of the city administration that he, I'm sure, had hoped would mitigate that feeling, it hadn't happened and there is still a very strong anti-Rizzo feeling coming through in 1975.

(WMP: What had been his relationship with Jim Tate?)

Charlie's relationship with Jim Tate was excellent because he was a deputy mayor under him and had helped to get him elected and had been one of his chief lieutenants, which served him well while he was there but also didn't help him too much when he came back because it was well recognized that Tate had made Rizzo the mayor of the city and Rizzo in his own inimitable way had of course turned on Tate and Tate later turned on Rizzo. But it was irony that Tate had made Rizzo the mayor and then Rizzo had really in effect turned on Tate later on. But Charlie had become the principal candidate that we, in the black community -- those of us who had at least been in community leadership saw as a potential mayor. And at this testimonial at the urban coalition there was a real underlying feeling that this ought to be the place where Charlie should announce that he would become a candidate for mayor. Well, he did not. Many of us who were there had hoped he would, even though we hadn't been working with him or hadn't encouraged him to necessarily -- just that we had a feeling that this was the time. But it was for my own personal standpoint -- my wife and I -- that night as we went by the head table to congratulate Charlie -- we expressed our own personal support and encouragement for his becoming the candidate for mayor of the city. And it was really a beginning of a connection with Charlie's
candidacy that night because a little bit later -- after it had become clear that Charlie was going to have to launch his own campaign -- there was a group asked to come together to meet and strategize as to how this might happen and Sylvia and I were both a part of that working group that came together at 7:30 in the morning. There were 20 some odd people. There was Dick Gilmore, who was the Executive Vice President of Girard Bank; there were people like Henry Nicholas, who headed the Hospital Worker's Union; there was a man who was the head of the health program in the city; there was John White, Jr., who is now the legislator from -- I can't remember the number of the district; there was Milton Street, who at that time was not as notorious as he is now, but he was extremely active in housing in the North Philadelphia area; there was John Blum, who was with the Americans for Democratic Action; there was Joe Miller, with Greenfield real estate. In other words, what it was was a group of both white and black people who were involved in various pursuits in the city. It was kind of hard to pinpoint where the preponderance was. If there was a preponderance it would probably be in the realm of community organization and educators because Bill Miller was a part of that group and he was an educator, several other people who were in the group were educators and then of course we had a number of people who were heads of organizations and then we had others who were just actively engaged in organizational work in one way or the other. And then we had very few, but some, who were in business and in finance, such as Dick Gilmore and John Blum, and people of this sort. So that group used to come together in the morning at 7:30 and work at how we could make Charlie's candidacy become a potent factor in the city.

(BF: Where did you used to meet?)

Well, we actually went ahead and got a headquarters at 1426 Walnut.

(BF: Did you have a name for your group at that point?)

Citizens for Bowser. We were Citizens for Bowser at that time and we were not designated as the Philadelphia Party. That took place later. We finally had obviously persuaded Charlie that he should run and he had become persuaded by his own desire to run. We then began the hard nitty-gritty task of raising money and beginning the organizing of people outside our own group who would become supporters
of Charlie and decided to launch a convention for the purpose of deciding whether or not we should have a political party because that was the key political question -- should Charlie run as an independent Democrat or should Charlie actually develop a party structure for purposes of launching his campaign and developing it afterwards. And that's the way that decision was made. It was made to actually provide a political underpinning for Charlie's candidacy, but also perhaps to form a viable third party in the city of Philadelphia.

(BF: What were the considerations for and against that?)

The major one is always can you raise the money to support such a structure. It turned out, of course, later that that was one of the major obstacles. Because there had been some illusions, I call them, and I'm being somewhat sarcastic about this, that John Bunting and some of the people who had money in the city were going to back Charlie and I think that Charlie carried that illusion much stronger than some of us who were not going to carry it. But he did have very strong beliefs that some of the money that he was going to need was going to come from people like John Bunting -- in fact it had a figure attached to it -- that John Bunting was going to raise $300,000 for his campaign.

(WMP: What had John Bunting done to make Charlie think that he was going to raise that?)

What he did to Charlie I can't tell you, but there had obviously been their relationship that had created this feeling and also some discussions, I presume. They had had a very close working relationship with the Urban Coalition and John being on the board of the Urban Coalition and that kind of relationship, I suppose, had been primarily responsible for that illusion. And I call it an illusion because it didn't really turn out to be any fund-raising whatever for Charlie. And a small contribution -- for John it was small -- to Charlie's campaign.

But our organizing of that convention was designed to actually launch the party and to become totally independent of the Democrats and the Republicans with regard to Charlie's candidacy and develop that campaign and determine whether or not that party could stay in existence by the strength of the campaign. Because we had thought about the Liberal party in New York and some of its history and said if a party is really strong enough it can sustain itself and continue to be a potent force in politics.
(BF: So you were looking beyond just organizing for one particular person. You didn't want to just be a Bowser party.)

No. The Citizens for Bowser really had to make that decision because it became necessary to get on the ballot. And when you do that you form a political party. And we really had to decide is that what we want and we decided to do just that. We had in mind reforms in city government, which would be far beyond that which the Democratic party or the Republican party at that point was willing to consider.

(BF: What were some of those reforms?)

What they rested on was the manner which, for instance, services would be provided for people in the community. The establishment of what were called mini-city halls in various parts of the city where citizen's groups that were organized in those areas would really have a very strong voice in the transmission of and response to those things which city council and the mayor would be considering for running the city. That was a major piece of change that we thought should be made. There would be various programs brought in especially for the purposes of dealing with the problems that the youth had in Philadelphia. The black youth in Philadelphia have an absolutely phenomenal unemployment rate. It's in the 40% area. It leads definitely to crime, to disillusionment, to drugs, to all the things which drag down a community and drag down a city. So there was an entire program developed just for that purpose of dealing with the problems of youth unemployment and youth education which was part of the platform which we developed. And then another thing we felt which was critically important was the manner in which the party would develop its platform. So we had meetings at various parts of the city and had testimony from groups and individuals in various parts of the city which fed into the platform. And then the platform convention itself was called for purposes of developing those ideas and the positions into a total platform which would reflect Charlie's position of course, with Charlie having input and the last word on some of the provisions. But the convention was really an exciting convention because it was developed in that way and it was held at the Benjamin Franklin for a couple of days. And day and night work actually resulted in a platform being hammered out which was what I would call a truly progressive approach to city government without
all of the total ramifications of city government -- rather having the basic political positions in areas of health, education, economics.

(BF: Would it have required any change in the charter?)

There would not have had to be a change in the charter. We have a good charter. We really do.

(WMP: What role did Jim Tate play in supporting you?)

Jim Tate did not play any role in active support of Charlie. I have never had any relationship with Jim Tate except adversary and that was because I was running the Model Cities program citizen's group and we sued the city for the way in which they were using the funds. So I had never had anything but an adversary position with Jim Tate and I didn't have anywhere near the same feeling about Jim that Charlie had. Charlie really respects and likes Jim Tate. I have no reason to feel that way. I have no reason to feel otherwise, it's just that I have never had anything but an adversary position from the standpoint of politics. And my politics before I got involved with Charlie Bowser and the Philadelphia Party -- my politics was community politics and supporting a candidate that I believed in and working on their behalf. I was not ever involved in the development of a political party ever before because I was an independent so many years that it was ridiculous until I decided that I must vote in the primaries and then I changed from non-partisan to Democrat in the '60's so I could vote in the primaries.

(WMP: When I changed I changed from Republican to Democrat.)

So that's the way the party actually got launched -- through a political convention which came out of community meetings for the purposes of getting input from the community and then the development into a platform which formed the base for Charlie's campaign. And we actually launched the candidacy officially from that convention.

(BF: What year was that?)

1975.
(BF: Once you got the party formed, then what was your biggest job? I guess fund-raising.)

The biggest job from that point on was two-fold. One was the organization of a political campaign structure, which is no mean task. Organizing divisions, wards, and coordination of the wards. So we had our structure arranged from division to the ward as ward leaders and then coordinators of the wards.

(BF: Where did you find all these people?)

They were everywhere.

(WMP: Did you manage to cover the whole city?)

No. Not the whole city. There were approximately 40 strategic wards which were needed and which we really went after. And we got them all, in terms of having someone designated as ward leader, someone designated as ward coordinator of several wards, and the divisions, which was probably where we had the strongest support, frankly, we had someone for every division in those places where there was Charlie Bowser support. Now they were not all organizers, they were supporters. We attempted to get everyone to organize, but the reality was that didn't happen. And then we had classes for purposes of people who were in these positions learning how to do what had to be done politically. And Wilson Good, who is now the public utilities chairman, was the person who did a lot of that for us in terms of teaching and instructions on how to organize at the division and ward level. He wasn't the PUC chairman then.

(BF: How did you go about getting exposure in the media?)

Charlie is one of the most astute what I call handlers of the media that I've seen in many a day. Charlie was actually trained in journalism before he became a lawyer and he has the skill to write his own releases and everything else that is necessary. We had, however, very good sound skillful help. There was a young man who -- well, first of all, Esther Bissell ran the office and then we managed to get a young man who had been very very active in Muskie's campaign to come in and handle our press. He was a young white guy who was absolutely tremendous. I'll never forget how he walked in -- he was wearing sneakers and jeans -- and
I thought I wonder what he's going to know about the press.

(BF: Where was he from?)

He was from New England. He came in actually through Esther Bissell. Esther has a summer home up in New England and she had made the contacts to get him here. And he was working for nothing but expenses. He didn't ask for a salary. All of us were working for nothing. He just came in and took over and he had a tremendous know-how of how to get the press in, releases out, and timing, and the kinds of things that are just absolutely essential. He had secretarial help, but he was the person -- he did a lot of his own typing and a lot of his own phone calling and so forth, and that's the way that happened.

And as I say Charlie was a journalist. Our campaign gained momentum fast and as a consequence the media began to tune in on us pretty quickly. Except for Channel 10, which I think was unfortunate, but Cottie Martin's encounter with us was a very bad one. She had begun her interview with this comment which turns Charlie into a maniac -- do you think Philadelphia is ready for a black mayor? And of course that question first and foremost right off the top of the head is the thing that can set him off because he makes his comments in retaliation to those kinds of remarks. Would you ask that of a white candidate?

(WMP: I'm interested in whether Phil Kalodoner helped you?)

No. Phil Kalodoner wasn't involved with us at all. He had no hand in our campaign. Joe Clark was. Joe Clark was very very supportive. In fact, Joe was probably one of the people who convinced Charlie to run. Joe Clark was very involved.

(WMP: How about Dilworth?)

Dick was dead then, wasn't he? We had a very interesting thing happen. George Packard, who used to be at the Bulletin, and he was a Republican -- extraordinaire. He was at that time walking across the state in order to dramatize something -- I can't remember now what it was! He stopped in on the beginning of his walk and dropped off a thousand dollars for a campaign contribution. Stopped in the office and said he was a friend of Charlie's and he thought Charlie was by far the best person and just left a thousand dollar contribution. In cash.
So — where we? The second problem concurrent with that of developing the organization structure — and remember now, we did not have money. We started this on the strength of — first of all, I guess Charlie started on the strength of his mistaken belief that he was going to get financial support from some people who didn't come through. We started it — those of us who met and decided to work in his campaign — we started it because we felt that Charlie should be the mayor of this city. So when it became patently obvious that Charlie was not going to get money from places where he thought he was going to get it we simply decided that we were just going to have to move on and raise money. So we began several different ways of raising money. One by the direct solicitation. Another by what we called a Bucks for Bowser campaign, which was geared at the average person in the community. A dollar, two dollars, three dollars. And then we had larger fund-raising affairs which a number of people had decided to do — held at the Bellevue downtown or some other places. Cocktail parties for the purpose of raising a thousand plus at a single gathering. And we just launched this kind of campaign. Dick Gilmore was the coordinator of the finance activities.

(WMP: Was he very effective?)

Very effective. Dick is a very competent and committed person and of course you know he's got a lot of history, too, in terms of community activities way before he became the Executive Vice President of the bank. So he did a tremendous job of coordinating that financing. So what we did, with all of the activities — every place Charlie went I would go with him or someone would go with him to make a pitch. Charlie doesn't like to collect money. He would get through speaking and then he wouldn't want to ask for money so I'd give my pitch and let them know that you can't win elections without money. And we raised money at every gathering that he went to. We did it through the solicitation directly of sending out requests for money to quite a number of people, just taking from lists what you can gather from various parts of the city. And the Bucks for Bowser campaign was another good piece of work. That was coordinated by one person who took that on. Then the other was the holding of cocktail parties and we had one big dinner which I had the privilege of organizing with Marion Tascoe, who is now the administrative assistant for Bill Grey in the Philadelphia office. And we organized a
testimonial for Charlie at the Franklin Institute. These fundraising activities, at the various levels, ended up with about $135,000, which was nowhere near what we really needed because we were going after $300,000 plus. But considering the way in which it was raised it was really almost the equivalent of $1 a vote, because we got 138,000 votes. And if you can run a campaign and get votes at the rate of $1 a vote, you are doing very well. A million bucks, we would have gotten a million votes!

This was my learning, by the way. Sylvia and I had been involved in a lot of things and have always dealt with issues rather than money. I can safely say that our political education was enhanced to realize that you must have enough money to do a real heavy and effective campaign. And the money runs up into the amounts which we just hadn't conceived as being necessary. And that is particularly true where advertising is concerned, if you are going to do effective advertising. It has become imperative that you have advertising money as a large part of your budget.

So that was the way in which we raised money and I think it was a successful fund-raising effort judging by the fact that we didn't actually begin our drive toward the election until July of 1975 and that was moving to the November election and the beginnings were not directed at money. The beginnings were directed at getting people informed and aware and committed to Charlie. So the actual money-raising didn't take place till the very late part of the summer and into the fall. So we did very well considering our youth as an organization and with the resources that we were tapping because the largest single contribution in Charlie's campaign was $2500 and -- the largest -- the one contribution was $5000, two contributions of $2500 each. Then the next level was $2500, and there were two people who gave $2500. There were a few thousand dollar contributions, but very few, you could count them on one hand. And the rest of it was at the level of $400 and below and a whole lot of $25's and $50's. The dinner, for instance, was a $50 a plate dinner. And those kinds of things were what brought in the money.

(WMP: What role did you play in the dinner?)

My own role in the dinner was first of all being the person who was responsible for the planning and organizing of it. Marion Tascoe, who worked with me on it, had a lot of experience with dinner arrangements through her sorority and her fund-raising activities for Bennett College. And she and I just made a great
team. We just went to town and got it together in short order. It probably cleared about $7,000 - $8,000, which is not a lot of money but it is a small place and we had about 300 people there so it worked out well.

The other role which I played in the campaign was that I organized the convention for the Philadelphia party. Chaired it. My wife wrote the platform and she also was a key person in the education discussions. And that's more or less what I did. And then up to the very time of the election I was working in the capacity of trying to be a kind of right hand and helping to keep the organizational structure on balance. My principal experience had been in community organization and I used that skill and experience in helping to develop the structure of the organization for Charlie's campaign as well as special projects like the dinner and the convention.

(BF: When you analyzed the election results, why did you feel he didn't get a bigger vote? Money?)

No. I don't think that's the only reason. I think that's part of the reason. I think more money would have helped. I think that the time span between the launching of the party and the collecting the signatures and getting Charlie out there to the public -- the time span is very short. Five months is not enough time to go campaigning in.

(WMP: Were there some sections of the city that were strongly for Charlie and then others that just didn't come out for him?)

Yes. Northwest was strongest as usual in terms of voting. North Philadelphia was mixed because there were quite a number of black politicians then who did not leave Rizzo and that was primarily because of Goldie Watson's influence. West Philadelphia had a big turnout for Charlie. Parts of lower Germantown had a good turn-out for Charlie but other parts of Germantown that should have had didn't have because of the lack of a total commitment on the part of the Northwest Black Political Action group and I guess that's probably the major reason -- because they didn't get involved in Charlie's campaign and Dave Richardson at that time was not a strong Charlie supporter.

(WMP: Why was that so?)

There hadn't been as much contact, I guess, that Charlie had with those groups that he had with North Philadelphia,
West Philadelphia, and South Philadelphia. That's my guess. And then there was a reluctance to get involved in it because of -- in the first place, those groups were not as deeply involved in political campaigns beyond their own as they are today. The development of the coalitions to support candidates came actually with the Bill Gray candidacy. That's where that actually came -- with John White, Bill Gray, Dave Richardson, and so forth, working for the election of Bill Gray. And that's where that coalition really got developed. And now it is pretty much there but it has also been shaken now by things which are happening with Bill and John White as compared to the rest of the group which is continuing their support of Charlie.

(WMP: Charlie is going to carry on, then?)

Yes. I don't know if he's going to continue to want to be mayor. I don't know about that. He's continuing, there's no doubt. Charlie was not aspiring to any political office but the mayoralty.

(BF: What did the Philadelphia Party do then after the election until this one? How did it keep going?)

There had to be first the decision to keep on going. That was made. We formed the Executive Committee. During the campaign we became the Executive Committee of the campaign. And following the campaign and the election results we then decided we would continue to build the Philadelphia Party. Let me back-track just a minute because you asked me a question I didn't finish answering. You asked me about the reason Charlie didn't get a larger vote. I want to make clear first of all I think that is a very very respectable vote for a $135,000 campaign and running against Frank Rizzo at his strongest. He had had four years to build his organization. He had been in the media totally. Rizzo in '75 had become a — probably the strongest possible point of his career because he had four years to build from '71, when he was swept in, to the point where he had really just tightened his hold on everything there was politically in the city. We found that people -- especially business people -- were just actually afraid to do anything but support Rizzo. Some of them were honest enough to say that.

So '75 was Rizzo's strong position in the city -- there's no question about that. So running against that and running
without benefit of more than five months of organizing time. Running with a budget of $135,000, which should have been almost three times that much -- or two and a half times that much -- which is what we had actually calculated. Running without paid staff. None of us were paid. We were just all working there for purposes of having Charlie elected. We didn't have any paid staff except an assistant office manager who was getting fifty dollars a week for purposes of car fare and lunch, that's all.

(WMP: Was ADA supporting you, and if so, was its support any good?)

ADA as an organization didn't support us but, yes, there were ADA people who were supporting us that were very strong supporters - John Blum, Shelley, -- Mercer Tate gave us tremendous help. Of course, Mercer never commits his ward because the ward is not committable. But he personally helped a good deal in the campaign. And his thinking helped a lot too because Mercer has had a lot of experience in the political scene in Philadelphia.

(BF: After you decided to continue the party, what were your activities to keep it going?)

The kinds of activities we carried on from that point on -- one, we established a sustaining program. People who would commit themselves for a certain amount per month to pay regularly to keep the office open, the phones on, and to keep that little expense budget for the person who was running the office, Herman Travers, who was our most faithful constituent, who worked full-time for nothing more than car fare. And his assistant, Jan Cornish, who also helped with secretarial functions around the office. So first was sustaining. Then events -- a small variety of events in homes. From time to time a raffle, a cocktail party in some public facility -- things of that sort. The same kinds of things you generally do for campaigning except on a much lesser scale. But the sustaining was the big thing. We wanted to have sustainers and we also had membership. Ten dollars a year for membership. And since we started out with somewhere over 400 or 500 members, so about four or five thousand dollars came in that way. And we were running a low budget. We were renting a place in town. The rent was $200 a month. And we watched our phone bills and so forth. So we kept our organization going on that basis and in that way.
The idea was to keep going and then determine what we were going to do. We really didn't know at that time that we were going to run Charlie. I had in the back of my mind very definitely -- I had done an awful lot of reading and study of black politics and it is extremely important for us to know that in every single case except one in the large urban areas where a black candidate has run for mayor, they had to run twice and they had to have an overwhelming black vote and that with the minimal white vote that you can expect is what makes them the mayor. Tom Bradley is the exception, who didn't get the small white vote -- he got a big white vote and almost unanimous black vote his second time around. But he had to run twice.

Los Angeles, Gary, Newark, Atlanta, Detroit -- those are the major cities -- New Orleans, Richmond, Raleigh, Fredericksberg. And there is Compton, California. There are a whole lot of other places now that have black mayors. In fact, many small places in the south have black mayors. But the major urban areas that have had candidates for mayor, who were black, and that candidate had to run twice, was what I just emphasized. You have to realize that the first time around is breaking ground. And so that was my own background feeling about it, but that wasn't necessarily what everybody else felt.

What we did feel was important -- all of us felt that it was important to keep the Philadelphia Party as a viable, active component in the political scene in Philadelphia. So that's why we did decide to move ahead and in 1976 we had our second convention and I did organize that one and we elected our officials and proceeded to keep on going. And it got closer and closer to the 1979 campaign and we began to really look toward the possibilities for a second candidacy for Charlie. Charlie was not convinced at all that he should run again. It's a terrible drain on a person, number one, but he's a tough campaigner and a hard campaigner and as a consequence he puts all he has into it and it means that he has to step aside from his law practice in order to do that. Obviously he has a great relationship with his partners because he is able to do that. But you can only do that so many times until you begin to damage that relationship.
(BF: When you were in the interim between the two
elections did the party take positions -- did you watch
Rizzo and put out statements?)

Yes. We had a whole number of critical positions on
Rizzo's programs. And there were a whole lot of other
things which Charlie had taken official positions on
and he had testified at times before Council. Fairly
recently, the hearings which were being held here on
police brutality -- he testified there. I testified
on behalf of ACLU and Charlie testified on behalf of
himself.

(WMP: What is the condition of the political organization
that Charlie has had?)

It has shifted totally now. That would take a whole
interview, also. It has changed now because with the
campaign behind us and the kinds of developments that
took place in the campaign itself -- including the
development of the Black United Front -- there have
just been a whole lot of different alignments now that
are taking place. The one major shift, I think, in
terms of black politics, at least in the city, has been
that of coalition politics becoming the focal point.
When Bill Gray ran, for instance, I said before he had
not only the people who were supporting him from his
own efforts, but there were people who were John White's
supporters who were supporting him. There were people
who Charlie Bowser supported that were supporting him.
There were people from the Baptist Minister's Conference
that were supporting him. And all of this was coalition
politics. And it also says something to the leader if
the leader has good judgment and good foresight -- is
that there is no single leader of the Black movement today.
There is none. This entire development that we are coming
through here I would have to elaborate on because there
have been shifts and changes which have taken place which
are identifiable and which say something completely different
about both the present and the future of black politics
in the city. In fact, the very term "black politics" has
a different meaning than it did just a mere ten or twelve
years ago. There is no such thing now as the white
politician who can say I'll go out and get the black vote.
That just can't happen anymore.
(WMP: What will happen -- how will Bill Green make out, do you think, in the black community?)

It depends on what happens. I don't know.

(WMP: On how he handles himself -- )

No, I don't think that's it. Bill Green has always been identified clearly as being what he is.

(WMP: What is he?)

Those of us who have been out here a while in organization and who work from a point of commitment feel that Bill Green has been a person who will move from one place to the next to his own advantage. Who would have run for the Senate if he had had the opportunity. Instead he ran for mayor. He has obviously formed and continued to form new connections with those of his father. He has really -- we don't think he has the ability to run this city successfully and to take the steps that have to be taken in the city -- and that means both from the standpoint of race relations and what has to be done from that end of it as well as the new, imaginative policy steps that have to be taken in the city. We don't think he has it. That's my own judgment and I know it's that of a lot of other people who are not necessarily mad at Bill Green.

(WMP: Do you have any people that you see who will come forward as new political leaders in the city?)

No. Charlie is the political leader right now. There is no question about that. He is the political leader. The point I'm driving at, however, is that Charlie's tenure as a political leader is contingent upon a whole number of coalitions remaining. He is not the leader who can do anything he wants to do and people will stay there. He has to keep that grouping of politicians that he has with him. He has to be cognizant of those persons who are not tied in with those politicians. There's a whole host of people who don't get tied into politicians. I said we're a good example because we never got tied in with a politician until we got tied in with Charlie's candidacy. And we represent, I think, a whole lot of people who feel that same way -- who will support politics and support political movements but they don't want to be considered as part of a political organization and go anywhere that political leader wants to go. That's not really the way most of us at this point think.
So I think Charlie, without question, has emerged from this candidacy for the mayor as the political leader in the black community who has the most influence personally. That doesn't mean that he is going to be there forever. So I think that if he is wise and uses good political judgement he can stay at that point for a while. If it becomes a problem of holding it on track or holding it together he will be forced to retreat and make some decisions as to whether he wants to return to law practice and give this up or stay with it. Now Charlie's going to be in politics, I'm sure, because Charlie's been in politics, but the position he presently occupies is a most hazardous one because he is now the focal point of all major political activity in the black community. And he gets it from blacks and from whites. I happen to know that there are white people who have expressed themselves who are in powerful positions in the city who are really angry at Charlie and if there is any way they can hurt him they will. Because of his position that he presently occupies. He is in a very hazardous position.

(WMP: Because he has too much power?)

Well, he's got power in the community, yes. See this is not the kind of thing that was going on before now where there was a little thrust at something and everybody knew how to handle it. This is really a new development. This has been a powerful move to take the reins of political power in the city. And it has been the same way in every city where it takes twice around because after a black man becomes mayor and has been there a term or so and they see that he is competent and knows his job, then it is a different scene, but that thrust for taking that power is what creates all kinds of ripples, and waves and floods and everything else.