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## Lifflander, Matt oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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## **Interview with Matt Lifflander by Andrea L'Hommedieu**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Lifflander, Matt

### **Interviewer**

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

### **Date**

September 2, 2005

### **Place**

Lewiston, Maine

### **ID Number**

MOH 442

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### **Biographical Note**

Matthew Lifflander was born in New York in 1932. He lived for the first fourteen years of his life in New York City and then moved to the Bronx. Lifflander developed an interest in politics and went to law school at Cornell. It was at Cornell that Lifflander was first exposed to Ed Muskie when the Young Democrats invited Governor Muskie to speak. Lifflander continued to keep a correspondence with Muskie after his visit and eventually went on to work for him during the 1968 and 1972 campaigns. Lifflander worked as the treasurer of the New York campaign committee for Muskie and his official title was the regional finance director for the northeast.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: family and educational background; Cornell Law School; meeting Ed Muskie; story involving Averell Harriman and Ed Muskie; coming to work for Muskie; Muskie's decision to run for president; fundraising; "Suit Story"; recollections about Muskie's character and personality; New Hampshire incident and William Loeb; Muskie's thoughts on fundraising; and final lasting stories and recollections about Muskie.

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## **Transcript**

**Andrea L'Hommedieu:** This is an oral history interview for the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project. Today, this is Andrea L'Hommedieu, and I'm interviewing, can you give me your -?

**Matthew Lifflander:** Matthew Lifflander, L-I-double F as in Frank-L-A-N-D-E-R, Lifflander.

**AL:** At the Muskie Archives at Bates College on September 2nd, the year 2005. And could you start just by telling me where and when you were born?

**ML:** I was born in New York in 1932.

**AL:** And is that where you grew up?

**ML:** I grew up in New York, yes.

**AL:** Right in the city, or on the suburbs?

**ML:** For the first fourteen years in the city, and first in the Bronx, then in Queens. And 1947

we moved to the town of Eastchester in Westchester County. And I was active in, as I got older, I took an interest in politics, and when I was eighteen I became a Democratic Committeeman, because my father was the committee man and needed a second committee person in an area that was all Republicans.

And so I became, I wasn't really active until I got to law school with Cornell. There I got very active in politics, became president of the Cornell Young Democrats, and as a result of supporting one of my buddies to become the class president, when he got elected I became the official greeter, the social chairman in law school, which is how I met Ed Muskie.

He had been elected governor of Maine, I believe in 1954, and I was the class of '57 at the law school. So he was sort of a hero, one of our alumnus got elected governor of Maine. He was Democrat. And we invited him to be a speaker at the law school and he came down with Dick Dubord, who was then the National Democratic Committeeman.

I remember I went to the airport to meet them, the little airport in Ithaca, New York, and they came in a Maine Air National Guard plane. I was very impressed with that. And they came, he was going to spend the weekend and visit a few of his old professors, and I was his guide.

And he, the first thing I remember is how he treated me as an adult. I was just a kid, as far as I was concerned. But we went to his hotel room, he and Dick and myself, and ten o'clock in the morning he opens a bottle of scotch and offers me a drink. Nobody had ever done that before.

And we hit it off just very, very well. And I had, I still have an exchange of correspondence from the governor. And the following year I graduated and went to work for Averell Harriman, who was governor of New York, on his staff. And that was the year Muskie got elected, well two years later Muskie got elected to the Senate, in '58. And Maine elections were in the summer time rather than in November. So I think he got elected in August and he was quite a sensation, a Democrat from Maine.

And the National Democratic Committee had arranged for him to come to campaign with Averell Harriman, who was running for reelection and had a large Polish constituency. And of course Ed was then the Polish national hero. And he was first sent to Buffalo to campaign for Harriman, and I was to meet him at the airport in Albany, and he didn't arrive until about one in the morning.

And he got off the plane, he was carrying a big kielbasa that the people in Buffalo gave, the Polish people, gave him. Averell Harriman had gone to sleep. And I brought him to the executive mansion, and I'll never forget the look on the butler's face when he opened the door, and there's this great big guy there, I think he was wearing a raincoat, and carrying this kielbasa. And the first thing he says to the butler is, "Here, take this and put it somewhere." Of course, I don't think the butler, Averell Harriman's butler, had ever seen a kielbasa.

The next day he came with us campaigning across the state. One of my favorite stories is that we had an appearance in Troy, New York, and the governor was going from Troy to Amsterdam on the state thruway, in his gubernatorial limousine. And we're half way there when a state trooper

stops us, hands the governor an envelope. The governor immediately, who could be rather rude and abrupt, takes the envelope and starts reading it.

And Ed is sitting next to him on the, and I'm in the jump seat in front, and Harriman's ignoring Muskie completely. And he leans forward to me, he says, "What's he doing?" I said, "Oh, he's reading his speech for Amsterdam, the next stop." "What do you mean his speech? Where did it come from?" And so his speaker writer sent it over, you know, with a trooper, because he was late getting it done and he knew we'd be on the thruway, you know.

So, you didn't have car phones in those days, but you had troopers if you were governor of New York. And he said to me, this is all in *soto voce* because the governor's busy reading his speech, and he said, he's got a speechwriter? I said, he's got three of them. Don't you have one, Governor? He said, "Oh, I don't have a speech writer. I write my own speeches."

I said, Governor, do you, and I was a member of the governor's legal staff of which there were seven lawyers. I said, "Do you have a legal counsel?" He said, "No," he said, "if a bill passes and I need advice I call one of my friends, have him look at it." I said, "Governor, tomorrow morning I want you to come over to the capital and let me show you what Gov. Harriman has." Because he, you know, he was totally unaware of this kind of thing. And I remember we then, we did that, and he was flabbergasted to see what the governor of New York had as compared to what the governor of Maine had.

And the next day we went to the, we went to the World Series game, and he had a great time. And I took him to the airport, again. I was great for taking him to the airport. And we sort of hit it off. He treated me as I was a contemporary, and I really wasn't, you know? But we hit it off, and he was sort of fascinated by the things I was telling about New York politics.

And we stayed in, there was a funny thing happened at the airport. Dick Dubord was with him again, so I felt I knew him a little bit, too. And Gov. Harriman had a guy who used to, he used to take with him wherever he went. He was just sort of a political flunkie. He was not of any importance, but he was a character, he was a Broadway character, and he would tell the governor jokes, and he was a lot of fun.

And nobody ever knew what Joe Tepper's role was, because he was such a character. I actually caught him the day we were in Amsterdam with a bunch of posed war veterans telling them he was the lieutenant governor and giving them autographs, while the governor was speaking.

And Ed and Dick were mystified by this, and I had to excuse myself to go to the men's room, I came back and the two of them said, "Matt, we have to ask you a question." "What is it?" "What is Joe Tepper?" And I said, I said, "What do you think he is? I'll tell you the truth," I said, "but you have to tell me what you think he is." So Muskie looks at me, he says, "He's a Ditto Boland, isn't he?" And I said, "You've got it exactly right." Now, Ditto Boland was a character in The Last Hurrah, the famous book about the Boston politics and Ditto Boland was a character who stood outside the governor's office and told everybody what the governor was saying and thinking, even though he had never been in the governor's office.

So anyway, we hit it off, and then the following, when he went to the Senate he invited me down for lunch one day, and I remember him being very upset with Lyndon Johnson, who was then the majority leader. He was sputtering under his breath and cursing him out. "You know what the son of a bitch did?" I said, "Well what did he do?" He said, he said, "I introduced a Polaski Day resolution and, "he said, "only last week he had cut me off some important committee I wanted to be on because I didn't support him on a certain cloture motion. And now he's punishing me for that, and yet he has the nerve to come up and ask to co-sponsor my resolution." Which is a very interesting story about the kind of guy Lyndon Johnson was and the kind of guy he was.

Anyway, 1968 he gets picked to run for vice president with Hubert Humphrey, and I was like the only guy he knew in New York. And George Mitchell called me, he was then his AA, no, he was the legislative assistant, Don Nicoll was AA, and he said, "Look, Ed said you would be helpful" -I guess I had called him to tell him that,- "could you organize a bunch of lawyers to help write some research for us," and which we did. So during that campaign, I was his man in New York, and he would call me when the campaign was coming in.

I remember one time they changed plans and they decided to come to New York on a half a day's notice, and they asked me could I possibly get hotel rooms for ninety people, because he was, you know, the press. I never did this before, but I learned quickly. I called some hotel at the airport and I told them that I was calling on behalf of the next vice president of the United States, and they had to empty the hotel to make room for these people. And they did. I was amazed at my power.

After the campaign was over, I sort of stayed in touch. And many people involved in politics thought that Ed should have been on the top of the ticket. He made such a great impression, you know, with his Lincoln like stature and the way he spoke, and he was just great. And a bunch of people started urging him to run, and there was a small group of his friends, Cy Vance was one of them, Averell Harriman was another one, Berl Bernhard was one, and I was part of that group. There were seventeen people, I can't remember them all, and we had a meeting in Washington. I think it was at Berl's house, with Ed, and we all told him why he should run for president. He went around the room, asked everybody. I remember Averell Harriman saying, I don't, who was then probably in his seventies, "I don't want to die while Nixon's in office, and you're the only person who can do something about it."

And we thought we'd be the natural heirs to the Humphrey supporters. Of course at the time, the anti war movement was building up, Eugene McCarthy was running around New Hampshire. We were all people who were more conservative, supported the president, and anyway, we, Jack Valenti was part of the group. We started to analyze it and he said, "Well," he said, "I don't know if we can raise the money. Why don't you do a budget?"

So we did a budget in a period of two or three weeks. My recollection was the original budget was for seven million dollars, in today's terms. You know how silly that is, but it was realistic then. And we presented it to him, and he never answered the question. Weeks and weeks went by and he didn't, wouldn't tell us if he was going to run.

And I remember conversations with Don Nicoll and with Berl Bernhard, and I said, "Well, didn't you guys ask him?" "Oh, he just keeps avoiding it." And finally, he was going to take a trip to England, I was, I had business in England, and I was going to meet the plane again. I was always meeting planes, apparently. And it was agreed that Berl and Don would pin him down on that trip. He was going to have to give an answer. And I'm anxiously there, I meet the plane and grab Berl and Don and I said, "What happened? What did he say?" "We couldn't get him to give us an answer." "You have to fly back with him, and it's up to you to get the answer." I said, "Why me?" He says, "Because he doesn't treat you like staff. He treats the rest of us like staff; maybe he'll level with you."

We spent a delightful few days in England, he met with Mr. Heath, he met with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I accompanied him to that meeting, and we flew back together. Oh, I left out the funny story about the suits. Well, I'll come back to that.

We're on the plane, I'm sitting next to him on the plane, he's getting a little annoyed because I was flirting with one of the stewardesses, and he told me to behave myself. And then he, I said, "Ed, you've got to make a decision. We did what you said, we prepared a budget, it's a very proper one." I said, "Ed, you got to shit or get off the pot." I was one of the few people who could talk to him that way, apparently.

And he looked at me and he said, "Matt, they don't understand. You know how much my campaigns have cost." Over the years I was always curious about what are the costs of running for governor of Maine, and he told me it was forty thousand dollars, and he spent fifty thousand running for Senate. You know, in New York this would be unheard of, you see? You couldn't run a statewide campaign for less than a million dollars even then. Today it's fifty million.

But he said, "Matt, you know what my campaigns cost. They don't understand this. Where am I going to get the kind of money you guys are talking about?" I said, "Ed, the people I've been introducing you to in New York for the last two years," whenever he came to New York I would bring him to some political things, he'd be invited to speak, and I would see to it that he met some of the real movers and doers. I said, "They will give you the money." He says, "How do you know that?" I said, "I know it because I know what they've done in the past for other people." And I mentioned certain names to him. I said, "These guys are, you know, big givers." I said, "If you would give me permission to speak to them and tell them why I'm doing this, and get their commitments, I will be able to prove this to you." He says, "How much do you think you could raise?" I said, "I could raise a hundred thousand dollars in two weeks." I'd never raised any money before. So he said, "Really? You think?" "Yes." He said, "All right, you have my permission." Which is all I achieved on that plane ride.

Within two weeks I had raised commitments of a hundred and twenty five thousand dollars. Very easily. Abe Feinberg, who was a major contributor to Harry Truman, to Hubert Humphrey. I knew liked him, he had met him. I went to Abe and he said to me, you have eighty thousand dollars, but I can't give it to you until October, next October. This was November. That's another funny story.

I went to the Tishes, Bob Tish and Larry Tish. They committed to twenty-five thousand. I went to a banker I knew who committed to fifteen, I went to Arnold Picker, who later became his major, I don't know whether you've spoken to Arnold but, no, I guess Arnold's passed on, but Arnold was a major Hollywood figure, one of the founders of United Artists, he agreed to give twenty-five thousand. So we had the money, and I went and reported back to him.

He had promised me, he said, "If you can do this I'll call a meeting and we'll make the decision." Which he did, and he called a meeting of the group again, he had somebody else do something similar in Washington who came back with the same report, so he now realized he could raise the money. I spent most of the campaign as his chief fundraiser in the northeast, doing this, and we raised lots of money. It wasn't any trouble raising money.

Funny story on that, and I'll come back and tell you about the suits. The, getting cash in those days was totally legal. There was no reporting. And I had forgotten about the eighty thousand that Abe Feinberg had promised me, and he was a very reliable guy and it comes October, the following year, he calls me up. This was October '71. "Matt, I have something for you. Would you come down to my office?" His office is in the forties on Fifth Avenue. I get down to his office and he hands me an envelope with eighty thousand dollars in cash. I had never seen anything like that in my life.

And it just so happened, Muskie was in New York that day for a speech. Don Nicoll was with him, Don may deny this, but it's true. It was perfectly, incidentally. And I remember walking up Fifth Avenue with the envelope in my inside coat pocket, holding my chest all the way up to the Hotel Pierre. And I said, Don, I'm going to give you something. It's your problem what you do with it. And I gave him the envelope. I don't think he had ever seen that before either.

The suits are a funny story. Gayle Cory, who was the governor's long time secretary and a really solid lady from Maine, called me one day, after the campaign had gotten underway and was getting these television-. Well actually before it really heated up, when he was getting looked at, you know, he had made the great speech in 1970 for the Democrats which captured everybody's heart, and he was getting television invitations. And she says, "Matt, you got to do something for us." I said, "What?" "You got to talk to Ed about his suits." I said, "What do you mean, talk to him about his suits?" "Well, you know how he dresses." He'd wear brown suits and green suits, and he goes on television and he doesn't have a vest on.

I saw the picture, the portrait there, that's one of the suits I eventually got him. And he says, "You're always so well dressed." I was then a practicing lawyer, traveling the world, international lawyer and so everybody thought I was a pretty smooth character, I guess. And I said, "Okay, let me see what I can do."

So next time I saw him I said, "Ed, you know, I saw you on television, you were great," I said, "but you don't look like a president's supposed to look. You got to start wearing a vest." "I hate vests." "You got to start wearing a vest, believe me." He said, "Well where am I going to get a vest?" I said, "I have this wonderful tailor in London who comes, and you see this suit, and he measures you in New York and then comes back twice, and he sends you the suit." "Well, let's give it a try."

So when the tailor came to New York, Ed came up and got measured for the suits. And he was grumbling all the time, "My father's a tailor. I know how to dress." And he dressed like, you know, as far as the world was concerned, he looked like a country bumpkin from Maine. You can see some, that picture up there, that sport jacket he's wearing was so typical. And it was part of his charm.

So we were in London on that trip I told you about, and he went to the tailor to pick up the suits. And I remember picking up a suit of my own and coming back with it on the plane. And because I was with him, instead of just wearing the suit I declared it, because I didn't want any trouble for the next president of the United States, you know. I remember he was very annoyed at that. But, and of course he had Congressional privilege. He didn't have to go through customs. But, so he wore those suits all through the campaign, and I guess later when he became secretary of state he started wearing them again.

But when the campaign was over, weeks after, I remember seeing him in, at a party in Washington, and he called me over across the room, and he's standing there in his brown suit and he says, "Look, I don't have to wear those things any more," you know, he was very proud of his brown suit. But that was the kind of thing that I remember about him.

**AL:** What were some of the impressions or lasting recollections you have of his character and personality?

**ML:** Well, he was extremely cautious, thoughtful. He always saw both sides of an issue. He once told me, "Nothing's black and white, it's all grey," you know. And as a candidate, while those who appreciated it felt very comfortable with it, because they felt this was a man who thought things through, in trying to get headlines when the race became competitive, and Hubert Humphrey, who was a, you know, always emoting and would say almost anything, it was hurting us. So that was one of the things.

I remember, and this is an interesting story about the famous crying incident. We were concerned that he wasn't, he didn't appear to be emotional enough. He was a very cool character in some ways. Which was inspiring for those who really cared, but the public wanted to see, especially remember the Vietnam, anti-Vietnam movement was starting, and there was lots of bellicosity. And I remember him once saying to a reporter from the *Boston Globe*, who said, he said, "Senator, you don't seem to cry about anything." And he said to that reporter, I was sitting in on this interview, "I cry on the inside, you just don't see it."

But this was sort of a problem, because Hubert Humphrey would shed tears in public. And that was his rival, because we thought Humphrey was not going to run and we were, we were the natural heirs to his constituency, but when he started to run he was dividing our support.

When the, the day the famous crying incident happened, when he was campaigning in New Hampshire, you know, where he -?

**AL:** At the *Union Leader*?

**ML:** At the *Union Leader*. I was home sick that day with a virus, and I remember Berl Bernhard calling me at home and saying, "Matt, the greatest thing happened." "What?" "Ed cried in public." I said, "Oh, that's great." We thought that was wonderful, you see, because that would show he had some emotions, and it had to do with the *Union Leader* picking on Jane.

For the first couple days we thought it was pretty great. About two days later, the press started to turn it into a sign of some weakness or emotional instability. And I saw Ed in New York three days later at a fundraiser, and I went up to him, I said, "Ed, what happened?" And I must say that we still didn't know that it was good or bad. We, Berl and I and everybody else around him thought it was good. And he said to me, and I have every reason to believe him, he said, "Matt, I did not cry," he said. "I was upset, and the snow was coming down and hit my face, and what they saw as tears was just snowflakes dripping down my face." He told me this. I can't believe he would lie to me and not tell me the truth, because we had been through lots of things in this campaign.

And I think it's important that people know that story. I don't know if you ever heard it before from anybody else, but that was his explanation for it. That, to this day, whenever you hear about the Muskie campaign, that's the first thing you hear about. Which shows you how ridiculous the American public can be, and how ridiculous politics can be, and the media and, you know, it's -

*(Telephone interruption.)*

**AL:** Keep going. We were talking -

**ML:** We were talking about the crying incident, and how that was so distorted and became so important in the history of the campaign that was so unfair, I thought. And the fact that it still persists, you know. I don't know whether, I'm sure other people must have discussed it with you who were there at the, I don't know -

**AL:** Yeah, it was one of those things where, you know, it, even if you look at the tape, you can look at the tape today, and it's very hard to tell. And so you either take his word for it, or, you know, it's very hard to know.

**ML:** Did he say what I told you, elsewhere?

**AL:** I do not recall if we have that on tape in his interviews, if we asked that specifically. But, yeah, I mean I know from talking to others who were close to him, as you were, that they said that he said he didn't cry. So it's an interesting -

**ML:** And we were wishing that he would, you know, that was the funny part of it. But that's one of those things. I don't attribute his loss to that. I attribute his loss of the nomination to the fact that Hubert Humphrey got into the race when nobody expected he would, and he stayed in and we were splitting the constituency with the far left wing of the party, and unfortunately

George McGovern got the nomination.

**AL:** Did you have a sense of that primary, in terms of Muskie was having to run against other Democrats, and in terms of fundraising? Did you get a feeling for how, what his feelings were about fundraising? Did he like fund raising?

**ML:** Oh, he hated it. He hated fundraising. He wouldn't make the phone, you know. I did a lot of work the following election cycle for Scoop Jackson who was, we also became very close. He loved, and he didn't love fundraising but he had no problem doing it. He would call anybody you asked him to call, you'd say, "Scoop, here's a guy who might give you money, or will give it, call, he'd call him up and he chat him up and he'd do very well." And most successful fundraising candidates are willing to do that, but many candidates, like Ed, hate fundraising. And unfortunately, in today's world, candidates must spend an awful lot of time. Senator Schumer, he'll call anybody for fundraising. Ed was not comfortable doing that. He was reticent, he was shy, if you will, and it was painful to get him. We would give him a list of ten people to call today, because that was part of it. And he might call two of them.

I remember one day saying to him, we were in a hotel room in New York, and I was so frustrated because I had all these people kind of expecting his call. And I said, "Ed, look," I said, "I've known you well enough now, I can imitate you pretty well." I says, "Why don't you let me call these people" -- I would never do anything without his permission -- "let me call people and say it's you and at least (*unintelligible phrase*)." And he thought about it seriously for about two minutes, and he said, he said, "No, I don't think that would work because what if I meet them somewhere else and they say something about a telephone conversation, and I don't remember what I said." So we scratched that idea, but I only, I tell you that story because it was so frustrating to try to get him, he hated to do it.

**AL:** Do you know what it was about it that he didn't like? Did he ever express that to you?

**ML:** I think that he did not like being a supplicant. No, he didn't, I mean I, though I'm surmising that, it was so obvious to me that it was painful for him, I understood that. I think he just didn't like being a supplicant, and I'm not sure he liked all the people that he had to ask. I'll tell you a great story.

I did recruit Arnold Picker to (*unintelligible phrase*), Arnold was a very wealthy man and was able to devote almost all of his time to fundraising for us, and they became very close. And one day Arnold said to me, "I met a guy," I forget his name, "just sold his business, likes Muskie, and if we introduce him he'll give us twenty-five thousand dollars, and maybe we can even get him to work in the campaign." He said, "Would you be willing to have Muskie meet him?" I said, "Yeah, sure." So, I says, "You've checked him out?" "Yeah, he's a good guy. He sold his business, legitimate guy."

So we set, Ed was in town to make a speech at a Democratic dinner, and we had this guy come up to Arnold's apartment on 72nd Street while Ed was getting ready, about to get ready for dinner. And he, this guy makes a pitch to him, he said, "Senator, I," incidentally, I frequently

call him governor even though he was senator because he once. I was at the airport with him once and, right after he was elected, and one of the airline ticket guys said, called him governor, and he said, "Oh, I guess I should call you senator." And Ed said, "No, you can continue calling me governor." And he said, "You know, there's only fifty of them and there's a hundred senators". So I always called him governor because I thought he liked it better.

But anyway, this guy says to him, "Senator, I really like you, I like everything I read about you, and I want you to know that I just sold my business, I have a non-compete covenant, I can't do any work, I'm willing to make a major contribution to you, which he had already told us would be twenty-five thousand which was a huge contribution in those days, and I'm willing to spend my time working for you." Ed said, "Well that's wonderful, I'm so delighted to hear it, it's a pleasure meeting you." And then, and the guy said, "But there's only one thing, there's a quid pro quo."

Muskie just sat up in his chair, I mean he was like, he was shocked at this. And he said, "Well what is it?" And he said, "Well I would expect that if you're successful, I will be named a United States ambassador. Not to any big country, just to a small country like Holland or Belgium." Muskie looked at this guy and he said, "Mr. So-and-so," I really can't remember his name, "I have been told this would happen to me, but it never has until now. And I can't make you that promise. I hope you will support me because you approve of what I'm doing, but I can't make you that promise." And now, he said, "If you'll excuse me, I have to get dressed for dinner." And he grabs my arm and he says, "Get him out of here, get him out of here."

I mean, he was so turned off and disgusted by this guy, which was kind of, I mean, the reason I adored him so, having been around politics and seen so few people with his real standard of quality, and knowing he would always stand up to do the right thing. That was part of his attitude toward fundraising, you asked me about it. No, he did not like doing it. I don't think he particularly liked some of the people he met. I know I took the view myself, I would not take money from or bring people to him who I thought was in any way unsavory.

I had one guy who offered to, took me aside at a fundraising party and said, "I'll raise all the money he needs." I said, "How?" He said, "You come and see me." So I came and see him the next week, and I said, he said, he repeated his promise, and I said, "How are you going to do it?" He said, "Same way I did for Nixon," he said, "foreign governments." "Oh really?" "Yeah," he said, "I can raise seven or eight million dollars, all you need, I did it for Nixon, I'll do it for him. All I require is that you set up a meeting with me." I said, "I'll let you know."

And of course I never got back. I wouldn't expose Ed Muskie to this guy, he would have, he'd have been pretty mad. So you do meet people like that. As a matter of fact, when it was all over, the State Democratic chairman asked me to become the finance chairman of the New York State Democratic Party, and I said, "Joe, I'll do it on one condition." Having seen what Ed Muskie went through, and the agony, I said, "I will only do it if you'll, if the State Democrats will support a campaign finance reform bill, so that everything becomes transparent." And he said, "I couldn't agree with you more," and we actually wound up writing the law for New York as a result of that. But that was his view of it, and no, he did not like fundraising at all.

**AL:** Now, your official title during the campaign was?

**ML:** I was the treasurer of the New York campaign committee, and I was the, my official title, I was the regional finance director for the northeast. I was supposed to get people working on other fund raising efforts.

**AL:** And with a legal background as well?

**ML:** Well, I'm a lawyer, I'm a lawyer. I actually took a year off. I had gone into a business which I had sold the year before and I had a little bit of money left, and I decided I would take a year off and work full time at this, which I did until the convention. And I had a, I actually had a staff of four people working on fundraising out of the New York office.

Of course at the end of the campaign we had nothing, and I was the treasurer and I had to file all the reports, and that led to a major almost scandal because the Watergate committee, trying to balance the record were looking for something on Muskie and on Humphrey, and there were some questionable contributions that were made by my former employer, the Hertz Corporation, and all this was written up, and they investigated our reports, and they were confused by them.

And, you know, this was the first time anybody had to report under the new laws. And if you read the Watergate committee report, the final report, you'll see something called "The Muskie Campaign" and it's very confusing. And it's a very confusing report. You can't tell exactly what they're accusing us of or how it came out, because we succeeded in blocking it. It had nothing to do with me, but I was a source of information, and it was a disaster.

But we had run a very legitimate campaign, with great people. And, you know, I think if it had, I personally think if it hadn't been for the fact that Hubert Humphrey tried to get the nomination again, we probably would have succeeded. Maybe, maybe not. I mean the anti-war movement was growing from '70 to '72 as this was going on, and Muskie was a, kind of a middle-of-the-roader, and he tried to be supportive of the Johnson administration. And the, you know, there were the famous incidents where the kids had challenged him, and he invited them up to speak, during the campaign. It was very exciting.

It was the kind of thing he did. He was wise, he was smarter than most. And sometimes he suffered from being too thoughtful, you know, politically so.

I should say that four years later, when Jimmy Carter got the nomination, I went, I was, the convention was in New York City, and I went around to see him. He was staying in New York at the Gotham Hotel. And much to my surprise, he thought that he was being considered for the vice presidential nomination, and he was very disappointed when, he had been led to believe by Carter that he would have a very good chance of being selected.

And I remember spending a few hours with him at the Gotham, and waiting for Jimmy to announce his choice. And I then went three blocks away to see Senator Jackson, who I was also very close with. And he, too, was under the impression that he was being considered. He had

actually been sent to Bethesda, Maryland by the presidential campaign to get a physical to make sure he was up to the job.

So here are these two guys who I know, and admire both of them, both thinking they're about to be selected and of course it was a treacherous thing that Carter had done to try to, at the last minute he was concerned there'd be some last minute effort for Muskie or for Jackson who had their own followings, you know, so he let them both think that they were being considered. And of course he selected Walter Mondale.

I don't, that wasn't the last time I saw Ed. I saw him, he came to New York for Averell Harriman's funeral and called me, and I went to the funeral with him and we had dinner, we had lunch afterwards at the University Club. And, oh, I remember telling him I had voted for Ronald Reagan. I was so angry. See, I didn't forgive Carter for what he did to my friends Muskie or Jackson, and I also thought that Carter had screwed up the Democratic party terribly by being so ineffective, and I was really angry at him and I voted for Ronald Reagan.

I remember Ed bawled me out. "How could you vote for that man? Don't you realize he's just an actor? He doesn't have a brain in his head. You were fooled by him." Oh, he really lectured me on that. And I think that was the last time I saw him. I never, I just don't remember anything after that.

I think those stories I've told you are a good insight into what he was like, and I'm sure that other people who knew him must have said similar things. Because he was a very, he was consistent, you know, he wasn't one thing to one person, one thing to another.

**AL:** Did you over time and working on the campaigns with him ever get a sense that he was frustrated with his lack of personal time to himself? Was that an issue that came up?

**ML:** Oh, he was always mumbling about that. You know, I mean, I didn't have much sympathy for it because I had been in enough campaigns and I knew that once you get into this thing you got to go all the way. Now, some people would say, and have said, that he was lazy. He wasn't lazy. It was his style, it was his pace. I think it was a difference of being from Maine and being from New York, or some other places, you know, or Texas. But he was constantly grumbling about that, yeah, he would grumble. And I never took it seriously because he always wound up doing the right thing. But he didn't, he felt, and all candidates feel they're over scheduled.

The ideal candidate is the one who says to his campaign team, "I'll just do whatever you tell me." That's the ideal candidate as far as the campaign professionals are concerned. But Muskie wasn't that kind of guy, and he was very much his own man and he would like to live his own life, and his bacon better be very crisp in the morning, otherwise he would be carrying on about his bacon, you know, and his bourbon at night and all this stuff.

But I think that he did grumble about the time we were all imposing on him, and I thought, you want to run for president, that's the deal. Yeah, I don't think it was a, I suspect that some people who got into the campaign just as professionals without really knowing him, or because of their

admiration for him, probably complained about that inordinately. That's what I suspect.

**AL:** Are there things that I haven't asked you about Muskie that you feel is important to add before we end?

**ML:** No, I mean this is a subject I've given lots of thought to, and I've had lots of occasions to tell people about and, you know, I think I've had the opportunity to, in terms of my small knowledge of him, in the sense of many other people who were with him much more than I was and much closer to him. I had the unusual opportunity to observe him from a perspective of having seen other public men and candidates, and really respect almost everything I saw about him. I guess everything I saw about him.

He wasn't the ideal candidate, you know, he wasn't somebody who would say things because they would get him votes. But that was what made him so attractive to me. You really felt he had a standard, and you could rely on him.

I think I've been able to get out everything I hoped to contribute to your effort here.

**AL:** Great, thank you very much.

**ML:** Thank you, thanks for the opportunity. I didn't expect that.

*End of Interview*