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Interview with Lee Enfield Lockwood by Don Nicoll

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Lockwood, Lee Enfield

Interviewer

Nicoll, Don

Date

June 21, 2001

Place

Washington, DC

ID Number

MOH 300

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Biographical Note

Lee Enfield Lockwood was born February 17, 1946 in Cumberland, Maryland, to Sarah and Sam Enfield. She grew up in Houston, Texas, attending a local public elementary school and a private high school. She attended Duke University and majored in political science, graduating in 1968. She moved to Washington, D.C. and was hired by the staff of Senator Muskie. She worked for Muskie from 1969 to 1978, beginning with tasks like sorting and reading the mail and eventually handling speech writing and legislation.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Lockwood's family and educational background; Virginia Pitts; Lockwood's initial duties as a member of the Muskie staff; Vietnam protesters; Dr. Mansur Olsen and the Farm Bill; McGovern-Hatfield Bill; her press leak to David Broder; Gayle Cory; Lockwood's position in the "Boiler Room" during Muskie's 1972 presidential campaign; 1972 New Hampshire Primary; Muskie's statement about Tom Bradley; Lockwood's first introduction to Senator Muskie; Property Tax study; her experiences as a speech writer for Muskie; traveling with Muskie; Panama Canal; Proposition 13; and Lee "locking horns" with Don Nicoll over Vietnam.

Indexed Names

Aiken, George D. (George David), 1892-1984
Bitterman, Jim
Bradley, Tom
Broder, David
Bush, George, 1924-
Carson, Everett C. "Brownie"
Clifford, Clark
Coleman, Barbara
Cory, Gayle
Cutler, Eliot
Enfield, Sam
Enfield, Sarah
Friendly, Alfred "Al"
From, Alvin "Al"
Hall, Jim
Harrigan, Susan
Harriman, Averell
Hart, Philip A. (Philip Aloysius), 1912-1976
Hatfield, Mark O.
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
Lake, Anthony "Tony"
Leone, Dick
Lewis, Ann
Lockwood, Lee Enfield
McEvoy, John
McGovern, George S. (George Stanley), 1922-
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Nicoll, Don
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994
Olsen, Mansur
Pitts, Virginia
Podesta, Anthony "Tony"
Rackleff, Bob
Shepherd, Bob
Shields, Mark
Steinem, Gloria
Warnke, Paul
White, Kevin H.

Transcript

Don Nicoll: It is the 21st of June, 2001. We are at 3122 38th Street NW in Washington, D.C.

in the home of Lee Lockwood, and Don Nicoll is interviewing Ms. Lockwood. Lee, would you give us your full name, spell it, and also give us your date and place of birth, and the names of your parents.

Lee Lockwood: My name is Lee Enfield Lockwood, L-E-E-, E-N-F-I-E-L-D, Lockwood, as it sounds, L-O-C-K-W-O-O-D. I was born on February 17th, 1946 in Cumberland, Maryland. My parents were Sarah and Sam Enfield. We grew up in Houston, Texas; I grew up in Houston, Texas.

DN: Your folks moved from Cumberland to Texas shortly after you were born?

LL: I was born in Cumberland because my grandfather was a doctor. He was . . . I was the first grandchild. He wanted me born there. My parents were already living in Texas because my father was a pilot with Pan American at the time.

DN: And where in Texas did you live?

LL: In Houston, close to Rice University, a neighborhood called West University Place.

DN: And did you go to the schools in Houston, public schools or private schools?

LL: I went to public school for elementary school, and I went to private school for junior high and high school. After high school I went to college in North Carolina. I went to Duke University where everyone in my family had gone so it was sort of a family institution. I graduated from there in 1968 with a degree in political science.

DN: Had you had an interest in politics from a young age?

LL: I don't really think so. I don't have many memories of politics except the night of Kennedy's election over Nixon, when my parents thought the world was coming to an end.

DN: I take it your parents were conservatives.

LL: My parents were registered Democrats who voted Republican, because the Democratic Party was pretty much the only party in Texas at that point. I think I majored in political science, because there was a very strong faculty at Duke and I did find it pretty interesting, although when I finally got to work in politics, I wasn't so sure about the relationship between the two, the academic and the practical.

DN: What led you to Washington?

LL: Well, I had, it just seemed like a logical thing. I did not want to go back to Houston. I was very close to my family in western Maryland. I had other friends who were coming here and I thought, well, I'll go and, you know, I have this poli-sci degree, I'll go and see what happens.

DN: What did you do?

LL: Well, I came up here and I moved into a basement apartment with another woman from Duke. And I went to see my congressman, who was George Bush actually, to sort of check in and see about, you know, if he could help me. By that time I had identified myself as a Democrat, but I knew him so I went there and, you know, nothing came of that. So I just started poking around looking, looking at different . . . I decided I wanted to work in the Senate I think because it seemed more interesting, more stuff going on.

The story of how I came to Senator Muskie's office is not very exciting. I had no particular, I had no connections there. I was from Texas, everybody else was from Maine. Basically I had decided that I'd like to try and work for him, and after reading and hearing about the '68 campaign, I hadn't been in the country then so it was hearsay. I mean it was after the fact. But I started volunteering in Muskie's office and a woman there by the name of Virginia Pitts sort of took a liking to me and said, "If you stick around and volunteer for a while, we're getting swamped with mail, after the '68 campaign we're just getting swamped, so I think there'll be a place for you." And at about that time is, you know, when Don Nicoll came into my life. And I don't re-, I guess you offered me a job but I don't remember the circumstances of it at all.

DN: Probably on recommendation of Virginia. And this, what was the approximate date of this, when you did finally -?

LL: This would have been in September of 1969.

DN: And what was your first assignment in the office?

LL: I worked, I helped Virginia with military casework, letters. You know, everybody starts on the mail. That's what I remember, and then I guess after that I started doing other different kinds of mail.

DN: Tell us about Virginia.

LL: How much do you want to know?

DN: Oh, -

LL: Virginia was a very colorful character. Very intense as I recall her, there was some things about her that I wish that some people had told me about earlier, that I found out sort of by accident. What I remember was that she was a hard driving woman, a very intense, not very happy I would say person, but who was totally devoted to Ed Muskie. And I can't remember when she left the office.

(Break in taping.)

DN: She, you say she was intense and she was devoted to Ed Muskie. She also was devoted to the people she was trying to serve as I recall.

LL: Oh yes, absolutely, absolutely. No, she was really a very strong advocate for, I don't even remember what those cases were about, lost checks and family visits and stuff, I don't really remember. But, no, she was completely devoted to her work.

DN: And you worked on that for a while and then you moved on to other correspondence, was it more political and legislative correspondence?

LL: Yeah, yeah, I don't remember the progression. Somehow I ended up between late 1969 and 1971 doing more . . . Well I guess at some point the mail was divided up and I got some committee assignments that were committees that Muskie was not a member of. So I got the agriculture stuff, maybe judiciary, and I also got the foreign relations, which was what I remember most because that was in the middle of all the Vietnam protesting, and veterans coming to Washington, and I think one night they even slept in our front office. That was the portfolio I had was those, I think it's pretty much those three committees. And I did the mail, and I did sort of, because Muskie wasn't on the committees he didn't need, you know, as detailed leg' [legislative] work. I did sort of rudimentary leg' work for him on those committees, stuff coming out of those committees.

DN: And did you do briefing papers for him when votes were coming up?

LL: Yes. I remember one in particular where, I mean everything that we did at this point was sort of colored by the fact that he was likely to be running for president again. And I remember trying to master the arcane subject of farm subsidies. And we had an outside advisor named Dr. Mansur Olson, do you remember him?

DN: Yes.

LL: And he was so dear to me, and he would come into the office and sit down and explain to me, you know, what was coming out, it would be like the annual Farm Bill.

So, one of the stories I remember is writing a memo on this bill, and the bill came up. I was over on the floor, I had giv-, I gave the senator my recommendation, I guess I had given him a memo. And I was recommending that he go for final passage of this bill. Now maybe there were some things in there that were, you know, not perfect for the state of Maine, I don't remember. But Dr. Olson had assured me that for his political career he should support this bill. So I got him on the floor, and he kind of puts his glasses down on his nose like he's a little skeptical of this, you know, because I don't speak with a great deal of authority on the subject. So he gets up from his chair, or no, was his desk next to Phil Hart?

DN: Yes.

LL: So he calls Phil Hart over and Phil Hart sits down on his desk and he says, "Phil, should I vote for this bill or against this bill?" And Phil said, "Well Ed, if you're running for president I think you better go for it." At which point, you know, Muskie looked at me and, you know, kind of grumbled like, well, you got it right this time. So that was a just a funny story about my

responsibilities, you know, this, everything being colored by what was going to happen.

DN: Was this the first time you had briefed him and gone to the floor, do you remember?

LL: No, no, this one was the hardest one that I recall because the Farm Bill was a nightmare. A whole new language among other things. Nobody wanted to touch it, that's why I got it as the new person in the office. [laughter]

DN: Now you were also dealing with foreign relations and essentially the Vietnam conflict, which was a tough one for Senator Muskie.

LL: Very.

DN: Do you remember the internal debate that was going on?

LL: Very much, very much. I sat in on a number of meetings, people with, people like Clark Clifford and Paul Warnke. There was an awful lot of pressure on Senator Muskie to do something. There was this McGovern-Hatfield amendment, which was . . . basically, what, pack up and come home? I mean, it wasn't the George Aiken proposal but it was not -

DN: Close to it.

LL: Yeah. And Senator Muskie thought it was irresponsible. But of course all of the protestors and all of the media, I mean the hype on McGovern-Hatfield was very intense. In 1969 there was a, well actually maybe I wasn't here for that, but the Vietnam Veterans Against the War started coming to town while I was working on this. There was a fellow from Maine by the name of Brownie Carson, I think he's still up there, C. Everett Carson or something?

DN: Yes, he's the head of the Natural Resources Council of Maine now.

LL: Oh, okay. Well, he was the head of the Maine contingent of this Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and all anybody could talk about was McGovern-Hatfield. And, again, the jockeying for 1972, McGovern was going to run and he had this dynamite issue, and it was putting a tremendous amount of pressure on Senator Muskie who was unwilling to take a cheap shot. He was probably also just kind of, this was a hard issue and he wasn't very decisive, I think.

I had one of the most sobering experiences of my life during that time. You probably remember this. When, I don't when during this two year period this happened, but David Broder called our office one day to talk about Muskie and McGovern-Hatfield. And somehow I ended up talking to him. Now maybe Bob Shepherd wasn't there, or whoever the person, the regular press person, we weren't really supposed to talk to the press. But the call got forwarded to me, and I thought I understood Muskie's position pretty well, having been through all these meetings. And so I basically gave him, David Broder, what I thought was the party line. Which of course he sort of massaged, and the next day it came out kind of not quite like the party line. It came out, I don't remember, I don't think I even have those clippings any more. It came out making Muskie

sound more wishy-washy that he was actually being.

And I of course got to work that morning not having read the paper, not knowing, and there's this quiet when I walk in, and the phone on my desk rang and it was Senator Muskie in a very, I mean I had, by this time I knew what had happened. And I give him a tremendous amount of credit. He said, "What happened?" He asked me what happened, and I said, "Well I thought, you know, I told him what your position is and I thought I got it accurately and I think frankly that he's trying to push you. You know, I think he manipulated what I said."

And he never, he never said anything else about it, he didn't get angry. I thought he was great. I was scared to death. I mean, he does have this kind of legendary, he did have this legendary temper which he did not use on me. Now you've told me that he mostly got angry over small things, so maybe this one was so big that he just couldn't, you know, who knows. It was a time of, I don't know whether there's an equivalent time in the Senate, maybe during the civil rights legislation, I mean civil rights, and I wasn't there then. And, you know, Nixon and Watergate. But this whole war thing was a very intense time. A lot of nerves were stretched. I felt really stressed, having to defend this position that was kind of -

DN: I was going to ask you. Given your age and your contemporaries' concerns, this must have put you in a very difficult position from time to time.

LL: Well, I think one of the reasons I was working for Senator Muskie and not somebody else, was that I had a tremendous amount of respect for his instincts and his integrity. And it was hard not to have sat through meetings with these advisor types, probably Tony Lake was there, too, and see the consternation on his face, if that's the right word, I mean, you know, trying to . . . "Where, what's the way out of this situation?" I am not sure that there was a legislative alternative to McGovern-Hatfield at that point. It was always negotiation. That's what it was. You have to negotiate, which doesn't go over really well when you're talking to anti-war activists in the front office. It was hard. But I didn't, but that was sort of my personal issue, I mean I still, and I wished he would have taken a more forceful position, but it wasn't clear to anybody what that could have been, so.

DN: You continued in that role for how long?

LL: Well, I stayed in that role until John McEvoy came. And there were a lot of staff changes then, you remember.

DN: Uh, huh.

LL: Not always friendly. And I guess I was one of the lucky ones, because I was given an alternative to what I was doing, which I didn't want to do. I was given the alternative of, I don't know, I guess doing all the mail or being in charge of the mail or something. And I had had a taste of something that was more interesting and I wasn't sure I wanted to stay in the office then, the personnel changes were not, I'm not sure I'm talking about other people too much or not.

DN: No, no, this is good.

LL: But I wasn't sure that some of the personnel were people that I wanted to work with. So I left actually, took a leave in probably June of 1971, and came back in, that fall, in September, working for the campaign staff because by that time that was gearing up, and I went to work in the boiler room.

DN: During your time, the earlier years, about two years with the Senate staff, one of the most important people in the office was Gayle Cory. And, what were your encounters with Gayle and your working relationship like, and what was she like?

LL: Gayle was fabulous. Gayle was a mother to the staff. If I, you know, I was new to the city, to the job, to politics, I was totally green. If I needed to find a doctor, you know, a dentist. I still see Senator Muskie's eye doctor, Dr. Day down on Massachusetts Avenue. She just kind of looked after, it was like she was sort of the mother hen and we were her flock. She was completely generous with her time. Sometimes I wondered if she were not too generous, because I wondered about her family. But completely generous with her time, totally devoted to Senator Muskie, who was not the most effusive of people in terms of letting people know that they were appreciated. But Gayle understood that, and it didn't bother her. I mean she would, you know, everybody would gripe but she loved, she had a great sense of humor. I just adored Gayle.

I got to know her better, actually, quite a few years later and, got involved planning the eightieth birthday party for Senator Muskie. And Gayle and I were the main people who sort of worked on the, getting a list and all of that stuff together. And I probably spent more one-on-one time with her then and, you know, just the, she always had time for everybody. I don't know how she ever got anything done, because so many people were calling her for, you know, favors, help, whatever.

I remember one time . . . When was this, oh, I must have been on the committee staff so it would have sometime between 1973 and 1978. A friend of mine was on an island in the Caribbean and was raped. And her father -- she was from Chicago -- and her father called and said, "We can't get them, we can't get the local police to pay any attention to this, is there anything you can do?" And he called, he was, he said, "I'm going to call Sen. Percy's office, can you call Senator Muskie's office?" So I said, "Well sure, I guess." So I called Gayle, who else are you going to call? Gayle did everything. And she either wrote a letter or got on the phone, you know, with an official inquiry. And the combination of having these two senators inquire -- I can't remember whether Muskie was on the, no, I don't think he was on the Foreign Relations committee then.

DN: Not at that time, no.

LL: But Gayle did it for me, and the parents of that girl were forever grateful because they got a, somebody from the consulate to go and, you know, the local people took it seriously. So, she was a phenomenal person, a great loss.

DN: You went to the boiler room in the campaign.

LL: I did.

DN: And you were there for the whole campaign?

LL: No, I went out. I guess I went to New Hampshire for, and then I went to Wisconsin, I think at some . . . and then Boston. At some point it was sort of legwork. And I'm not sure whether it was an attempt to cut back on staff after New Hampshire? I remember the, of course probably everybody does, I remember the crying incident.

DN: Were you in Manchester then?

LL: No, but I was in the, I remember watching it on the, is it Jim Bitterman?

DN: Yes, Jim was, had left, well he had been with us in the, he was with us in the campaign at that time. And I think if this was seventy-, if, yeah, this was early '72, I think Susan Harrigan and he married for a short time. He may have left by then.

LL: Well, somebody had a feed in the, that we could watch in the press room. It was hard to tell from a camera, you know, from a camera perspective, but I just remember wondering how it was going to play. I didn't do that, I mean in the campaign I worked with Barbara Coleman, Mark Shields, Tony Podesta, some of whom have gone on to later fame and fortune. Jim Hall, Dick Leone, and those were my out-of-state people.

DN: When you went out in the field, were you doing advance work or overseeing an operation?

LL: Well, I really, I mean I think I went up to New Hampshire for just the last couple days, maybe for the election. I felt like I knew everybody in the state because I'd written a letter to every one of them. And then New Hampshire changed people's expectations, and so maybe that's why I wasn't called back to Washington. That's when I went to Wisconsin, but Wisconsin was the next week I think, or maybe two weeks, so there really wasn't much to do. And then I was in Massachusetts for probably two or three weeks. That was one of the worst experiences of my life, absolutely horrible.

DN: What was awful about that?

LL: Everyone smelled the smell of death. Kevin White had this supposedly fabulous political machine. Ann Lewis was detailed to work in our office. But I think there was a tremendous gap between what was promised and what was delivered, and Massachusetts was a McGovern state. I remember having to go to some college and speak to a student audience. And it was not long after Senator Muskie had made that statement about Tom Bradley. He'd been asked whether the country was ready for a Black vice president or something like that. And this was supposed to be an off the record conversation, and he, his answer was the usual honest Abe, "Well, I don't really," you know, thoughtful, "I don't think it's quite ready yet." And Tom Bradley I guess got up and took that outside, and it was on the, on the wires instantaneously. So talking to, right after that, talking to a group of students in Massachusetts, with the war, Massachusetts was just a, you know, a goner for Muskie. So that was a very unpleasant experience. I don't remember

that he ever even came to the state. He may have. But I didn't, I was not in the thick of the campaign.

DN: But you had a sense of what was going on.

LL: Oh yeah, I did. Yeah. The senator, though was very, was very, my impression was that he was quite insulated. That could be wrong. He was never someone who was gregarious with the staff. I have a story I want to tell you that I think is funny. I've told it a lot of times because I think it's so funny. And it sort of illustrates, I think, how inept he could be with, well I don't know, with everybody, but staff, you know, without really intending to hurt anybody's feelings. But, so if I went to work for him in let's say September of 1969, the first time I actually met him was an office Christmas party in his office for the staff. And somebody introduced me to him and vice versa. We hadn't met. And I was terrified because he had this presence.

So he looks, and he shakes my hand, and he looks at me and he says, "You remind me of Gloria Steinem". And I thought, well, I didn't say anything, I didn't know what to say. But I thought, 'well, I guess I can't be all bad'. I mean, you know. . . . But then he said, the next thing he said was, "I hate Gloria Steinem". And, you know, I was totally nonplused, I, there was nothing for me to say. But I thought it was so funny of him. He didn't mean, he didn't mean to insult me. He was, I think sometimes in a different world from everybody else. I don't know.

DN: Now you were there, did you go to Miami at the end of the campaign?

LL: No. Chicago was as far as I got.

DN: Did you return to the congressional office then, the Senate office?

LL: In 1973.

[sounds of LL going to screen door to let her dog in the house]

DN: Nineteen seventy-three, yeah.

LL: In spring, I came back to work at, for Intergovernmental Relations. Al From hired me to do some property tax study. I become Miss Property Tax. And then just, you know, I stayed there until 1978 when I left.

DN: And during that time, you mentioned before we started the taped interview that you had made a trip to Philadelphia with Senator Muskie.

LL: That was the only time I traveled with him. I didn't have, well for the first few years I was there I didn't have that much contact with him. We had a lot of interesting legislative work, and he thoroughly enjoyed that subcommittee. Because, he told me one time later he thought it was the best subcommittee anybody could have because you could do absolutely anything you wanted with it. This does not have to do with me, but this is about him. There was secrecy legislation, and there was property tax legislation, and there was "sunset" and there was budget

reform, you could sort of make it fit a whole variety of things.

Towards the end of that time that I was there, the main speech writer for Senator Muskie left, his name was Bob Rackleff. I can't remember where he went, he's in Florida now. And so I actually became, I mean I'd written a lot of sort of minor league stuff over the years, but I become [became] the main speech writer for about nine months. It was in that capacity that I went with him to Philadelphia. He was giving a speech on sunset legislation which was a tough subject to make interesting.

Again, I don't have any, he was a model of politeness, I mean, I was afraid of, you know, I was always afraid of him. But he, he was reluctant about traveling with a woman. I don't know that, I think he usually traveled with men. He certainly didn't know me very well. I had a very interesting experience with him trying to write a speech about the Panama Canal. He did not know which way he wanted to vote. This was in 19-, whenever there was, the Senate was going to pass legislation I guess to honor the -

DN: Related to the treaty.

LL: Commitment, yeah, to turn the canal over in the year 2000 I think. And it was a very hot political issue, you know. People were . . . You can imagine. And he, but he didn't know which way he wanted to vote. Madeleine was working as his administrative assistant at that point. So I wrote a speech for, you know, in support of passing this legislation, and I took it to him and he read it and we talked a little bit about it. And then he said, "Now I want you to write a speech on the other side". So he made me write, you know, a pro and a con speech, and then he ended up voting pro, which I knew he would, because, you just knew that he would.

DN: Did he test the con speech with you as well?

LL: Oh yeah, oh yeah. We had discussions about both of them. That's an interesting intellectual exercise.

DN: Did you have any other exercises like that?

LL: That was the main one. I guess, there was another speech that I had been wanting to write for him for a long time, and he kept, well Al was sort of the intermediary, so Al was sort of blocking the speech. And, Proposition Thirteen was passed in California where they slashed their property taxes, and that gave me the opportunity to write a speech and Muskie was a little hesitant about it. It was about community, later became a very trendy issue. But at the time he was, he and Al were like, "Why do you want to, you know this is, this is kind of mushy, touchy-feely stuff". But I thought the Proposition Thirteen was a really good vehicle. It gave a very good vehicle because you sort of had to sort of find a way of saying that this wasn't, you know, the world wasn't going to come to an end and people didn't hate government and all this kind of stuff.

And there was, there was back and forth with Muskie on that speech. And he finally gave it in University of Alabama I think, it was the last speech I did for him. Gayle said he thought it was,

that the response he got was more positive than, now maybe she was just saying that because it was my last one. But she said that it was more positive, that he said it was more positive than anything he'd given in a long time. So that was an interesting experiment.

You always felt like, the thing I loved about writing stuff for him was that you always felt like he would come out on the high road. You didn't, I don't know . . . this guy . . . I'm always amazed when I read speeches or comments by politicians where there's fudging with numbers or, I mean you just, there's just never any thought of that, I mean you just knew that his instinct would bring him out. He might go through this, you know, wrestling with the angels, but you knew he was going to come out on the side of the high road.

LL: [*sound of vacuum cleaner*] Is that a problem? Okay.

DN: When he was going through, when he was going through that kind of effort with you and you had confidence in what the outcome would be, how much of his attention was devoted to the substantive issues that you were, the intellectual challenges of the speech, and how much of it to style and how it might affect the audience?

LL: Oh, I would say that, you know, in the Panama Canal one for example, that was all pretty much substance.

DN: That was a floor speech?

LL: Um-hmm.

(Outside interruption.)

DN: We've had an interruption, and now back on the subject of speech writing. Lee, you said that you remember another speech where there was a lot of detailed wrangling, as you put it.

LL: Well, a lot of, I mean obviously there would, he really liked to play with speeches, and Alfred Friendly can probably give you a thousand of these stories. But I was not writing speeches at this point, this was in 1970, again back to the anti-war stuff, so I was doing that stuff. Muskie was going to Kansas State to give a speech. Don Nicoll was in the office, I think this is the time when Don Nicoll and Lee Enfield kind of locked horns maybe. I remember Elliot Cutler. And he -- and I -- staying up pretty late one night to write an alternate speech for Muskie to give at Kansas State that was pretty, kind of a risky kind of thing for Muskie because it was more impassioned. His speeches tended to be, well not all of them, the election eve speech was pretty passionate. But this one tended, this one was more impassioned, about the war and the kids who had been killed at Kent State, and what was happening to the country. And Elliot and I were of course reflecting our, you know, youthful concern, and Don Nicoll was being the voice of reason.

And to tell you the truth, I'm not sure what Muskie ended up giving. I think he may have given an amalgam. But it was a situation where, I know he gave part of our version and it was part of this whole process of him intellectually wrestling with what was going on in the country at that

time. Averell Harriman was on the phone a lot, trying to find some way to work with Muskie, to find a way to give young people a voice, because, you know, the country was sort of splitting apart at the seams, generation against generation. It was, the turmoil, and that speech is another, just another example, where Muskie sort of moved a little bit.

DN: I think I will pause here because we're opening up a whole series of questions to pursue, and I'd like to come back and have another interview with you and get into it in more detail than we can at this hour.

LL: Okay.

DN: Thank you very much.

LL: You're welcome.

End of Interview
moh300.int