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Interview with Charlie Micoleau by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Micoleau, Charlie

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

June 26, 2007

Place

Lewiston, Maine

ID Number

MOH 444

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Biographical Note

Charles J. "Charlie" Micoleau was born on February 2, 1942 in Englewood, New Jersey. He attended Bowdoin College, graduating in 1963. He earned a master's degree in International Relations at Johns Hopkins University in 1965, and received his J.D. from George Washington University in 1977. Micoleau worked in Maine for an anti-poverty program in 1965, and eventually worked his way into the Maine Democratic Party ranks. He was a scheduler for Senator Muskie's 1970 Campaign, and became the Administrative Assistant from 1975 to 1977. He currently practices law in the firm of Curtis, Thaxter, Stevens, Broder, and Micoleau.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: 1970 senate reelection campaign; 1970 election eve speech; 1973 post-presidential campaign period; 1976 senate reelection campaign; Bill Cohen; Madeleine Albright; Charlie's time as Administrative Assistant and description of the job; potato blossom parade anecdotes; and Jim Longley anecdote.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Charlie Micoleau on June 26th, 2007 at the Muskie Archives in Lewiston, Maine. This is an interview for the Muskie Oral History Project, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. And this is our third session with Charlie, and we're going to pick up today in 1970 and talk a little bit about, a little bit more about the 1970 campaign, and

then go on from there chronologically.

Charlie Micoleau: The 1970 campaign had a climactic conclusion in terms of Ed Muskie's future. There was no question but that he was going to win reelection to the United States Senate in Maine, but at the same time, he wanted to win, he wanted to further his opportunities to be considered as a Democratic presidential nominee in the coming years for 1972.

So while we were all working with him to campaign in Maine, there was considerable tugging on the part of the Washington, or the national staff to arrange speaking engagements for the senator around the country in a way that would give him visibility and continue the momentum that had been generated by the 1968 presidential campaign where he was the vice presidential candidate.

That led to its share of frustrations in trying to be in two places at once, as the senator would quickly point out to all of us. But he managed to do it, and it ended with a very famous incident where, my recollection is it was the Harrimans and others who supported Ed Muskie at the national level, that suggested and then raised the money for, to have Ed Muskie respond to what they knew that President Nixon had done, or was going to do, because the Republican National Committee had reserved time on the national airwaves for an election eve speech by the president to support the Republicans in the midterm elections. And Ed Muskie became the spokesperson for the Democratic point of view in that, without knowing exactly what the president would say.

And then that led to an episode I won't describe in great detail, but there was much scurrying about on very short notice to arrange for a proper forum, which turned out to be, my recollection is it was the kitchen of Gus Barber's home in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, on election eve, and sometime between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. we managed to build a set with Bob Squier being flown in to work on the media, and Dick Goodwin working on the speech, and so on and so forth.

In any event, the speech was given. Nixon did an abominable job and it teed up the Democratic response perfectly, and Ed Muskie gave his very famous election eve speech in which he accused the Republicans of trying to scare us Americans with hobgoblins, picked up from Halloween, and as a result got a very favorable response. The Republicans didn't fare as well as they might have with the midterm elections. Ed Muskie was reelected handily to the United States Senate, but it launched the presidential campaign in a very serious manner. And an office I think, my recollection is it was by December or January, there was an adjunct in Berl Bernhard's law offices that became the Muskie presidential campaign suite.

I at some point in the next year, and it may have been earlier than that, when John McEvoy became the administrative assistant for Ed Muskie, Senator Ed Muskie, he asked if I would not come up and work with him in the Senate office, and in essence, at the senator's direction, do a couple of things. During the heat of a presidential campaign, again this is 1971, Ed Muskie wanted to be very sure that his Maine base, his Maine constituents were being served. And what he also wanted, and John McEvoy instructed me to accomplish, was to provide that Maine

perspective in terms of impact on the senator's home base and constituency of some of the inevitable discussions, policy positions and debates that would take place at a national level.

And to boil that into something a lot more specific, we had for example a fail safe mechanism, not that it worked all the time, to deal with the fact that at a national policy level, the senator's advisers might propose that you spend X millions of dollars in this, that or the other program. And my job was to act as sort of a Maine filter for those proposals and make sure, a) they made sense politically, and b) that it could be explained and would be acceptable, or at least defensible with his Maine constituents.

So what we ended up doing in that period of time was to set up a microcosm of the original Senate office within this little group of four or five of us, within this larger Senate office, that was increasingly dealing with national policy issues, a whole spectrum of policy debates, that perhaps the senator wouldn't have tried to staff in earlier years. But as you move toward a presidential campaign, it was perceived to be important that he develop a capability and add resources in a variety of policy areas.

And so we had a Maine staff that was comprised of some very interesting people. Tom Allen, now Congressman Allen, running for the United States Senate himself in this particular year, worked on that staff. Cyrus Vance's daughter, Elsie Vance, worked on that staff. Gayle Cory of course was a, really ran it, notwithstanding my title. And Doreen Scheive, from Fairfield, and who now, I believe she's still the queen of the unorganized territory, she heads up the unorganized territories for the state of Maine. But there were a number of Maine folk that, and that worked with the Maine offices that, as I say, were sort of a microcosm of the original Senate office within a broader and larger organization.

And that was the circumstances throughout 1971 and into 1972 presidential campaign. I will, unless you want to ask questions, I will skip over the presidential campaign for the moment, and then move on to 19-, the post-presidential campaign. So there we had McGovern as a nominee, we had the Muskie support in delegates sitting around the pool side bars in Miami Beach watching the convention on television. We had a disastrous presidential campaign from a Democratic point of view. Nixon's reelection victory. You come into 1973 and Watergate began to surface and was a great preoccupation of the Muskie office, as you can imagine.

But in the course of this, there emerged in this '73 time period a very successful, bright, energetic, attractive young congressman in Maine who was a Republican, named Bill Cohen. And Bill and I were at Bowdoin together, and had a lot of mutual friends. And as you got into '73, needless to say there's, as is always the case in political circles, there's speculation as to who might run against Ed Muskie. And as you move toward 1976, and it was clear that Bill Cohen would be a very logical candidate for the Republican Party, and he, we all began thinking in terms of how do you protect the senator's strengths and appeal back home in the state of Maine after he had run a national campaign which led him off in far corners of the globe, and which generated a lot of pride among Maine people but Maine voters are very pragmatic and they want to know 'what's somebody done for them lately'. And so there was, we knew darn

well we had to perform excellent constituent services and attend to our knitting in terms of pursuing those legislative priorities that were important to the state of Maine.

Which we did, but in addition, which led to a lot of joking between myself and Bill Cohen's staff, originally in 19-, let's start with 1972, there was really only one Maine constituent office for Ed Muskie and that was in Waterville, actually located in his former law offices. And -

AL: Was Marjorie Hutchinson still there at that time?

CM: Oh absolutely, yeah, Marj was there, and her sister.

AL: Doris [Cyr]?

CM: Doris. And, but I can't give you the time frame, so I have to go back and check that. But as it became obvious that there was much to be, there was the possibility of a hard fought campaign, should the senator choose to run for the election in '76, then we had to prepare for it. And in my mind that meant opening additional offices. So in a time period leading up to 1974, we opened offices in Biddeford, with Judy Catarat, and in Portland, and I'm not sure whether Larry Benoit was there at that time or not, ultimately he was. Lewiston, and we had John Delahanty on the staff, he was sort of the chief field director, and the Waterville office, and we had a Bangor office with Clyde MacDonald. And we covered Aroostook County; we hired someone for Aroostook County. I've forgotten exactly who that might have been at this time.

But in any event, we really began to concentrate on constituent services and building into a schedule that had much more, many more visits, I was going to say more visits around Maine, but I think the real answer is there may not have been a greater frequency as much as a conscious effort to build a schedule that had a greater impact in terms of audiences. And the people the senator was dealing with, was not a haphazard approach. It was one that combined both an opportunity for visibility and a forum to speak with a conscious effort to develop and maintain personal relationships that were important to the senator, that he felt, the people he felt were important to him, and good advice. And that was what was going on, leading up to the 1974 election.

(Taping paused.)

CM: So we left off in the period between '72 and '74, building up the senator's, and modernizing I might add, his staff resources in Maine. And then we come into, and then Watergate in '73 catapults Bill Cohen into the national limelight, a lot of speculation. We come into the '74 campaigns and our mutual good friend George Mitchell is running for governor, even with his white socks. But you have this three-way race, and you have, the following took place – but just let me, before we get to the conclusion of that campaign.

So Ed Muskie comes up in the last two weeks of 1974, when the Senate, the Congress recessed and really campaigned around the state for the Democratic ticket. It really only took him about a

week on the campaign trail, and again, there's a chemistry that used to occur, a chemical reaction that used to occur between Maine voters and Ed Muskie when he got into these circumstances of the campaign trail. And there's a great interchange of not only energy but of information, and the senator's keen political instincts would pick up movements in the body politic.

And it only took Ed Muskie about a week before he, not even that, a few days campaigning around Maine, in which he began to tell George and others that the Longley campaign was really getting some traction. And it was this combination of anti-tax, anti-authoritarian, pitch of Longley's, coupled with his professed populism on a number of issues. But he also was conservative on social issues, which was still very important in the Franco-American community, that conservatism.

And in addition to that, Irwin was not getting anywhere, this traditional Republican who one might have thought, given his record, his looks, his words, his experience as attorney general that he would have done much better. But Longley began to pull from both sides, and Irwin began to decline. Ultimately what happened is Irwin collapsed, his campaign collapsed and that made it very much of a Longley picking up the Republican, a number of Republican votes, and then defeating George in some critical Democratic areas.

But look at it from an Ed Muskie point of view where I was sitting, worrying about 1976, if the senator chose to run for reelection, and that night here in Lewiston is where George's campaign, well we were here, I'm not sure where, whether George's campaign headquarters were here or in Waterville, probably in Waterville. But in any event, Jim Longley wins, George Mitchell is defeated, David Emery scores an upset and Peter Kyros [Sr.] is defeated, and Bill Cohen gets seventy-one percent of the vote in the Lewiston north, second district of Maine.

So it was a period of some serious soul searching, following the '74 election campaign. And exactly how should one prepare for that campaign, knowing that the most likely candidate would be this, would be Bill Cohen, who was not only younger and more energetic, but had run a very skillful and very modern campaign to get his seventy-one percent, showing great strength in traditional Democratic communities. And he certainly knew how to handle the media well.

On top of all this, there was, Ed Muskie was very much at a pinnacle of his career as a U.S. Senator, and a leading figure in the Democratic Senate, pushing back against, along with others, pushing back against the excesses of the Nixon administration. By then, when did Nixon resign, was that August of '73, or a year later? But in any event, he had the Budget Committee operating at full tilt, which was a new exercise so there is a great deal of personal time and effort put into the Budget Committee. You had the environmental legislation, you had a strong staff support and wonderful opportunities to legislate, which of course is Ed Muskie's great strength and his legacy.

So he was working very hard on a broad number of fronts in Washington, while at the same time we began planning for a reelection campaign. And then became, there took place in 1975, and you can read about it in other sources, from Chris Potholm's, This Splendid Game, of that period

to Bernie Asbell's book on, The Senate Nobody Knows, which covers the period of 1975. But my personal approach was, which is difficult to engage Ed Muskie in, but my personal approach was to do a great deal of planning and sitting down and trying to write out what would take place in a campaign and how to organize it. And, from fund raising to scheduling in the early years, to organizing a campaign staff and all those elements of a campaign. And of course that was not at all what Ed Muskie's view of how to campaign was. He just said, in effect, 'turn me loose and I'll go campaign'. He knew it had to be done, but he really did not like many aspects of the details of a campaign.

Don Nicoll used to say that, you know, it was important, Ed Muskie liked to get involved with the details, but my experience was that aside from focusing understandably on this, on what the bumper sticker should say, and what his TV spots, which TV spots should be selected, he really didn't like to get involved in that level of detail. Or, to put it another way, he delegated the planning of that and didn't interfere with it, which was a positive thing.

Having said that, we began in this period on every front to try to mount a campaign to convince Bill Cohen not to run for the United States Senate, and that led to a lot of very capable work by many people on issues and on fund raising, on evidencing support back home in Maine. It was the reason for, that led me at one point in time to Madeleine Albright's home, to try to convince her to leave her home and come to work for Ed Muskie. And I take some pride in convincing Madeleine to, that the kids were strong enough to get by themselves and get her out of the home. And she was reluctant for a couple of reasons, but not the least of which was she had not really worked in a paying job. She'd done a great deal of very effective work, but she was nervous about getting back into -

AL: And how did you know her?

CM: From the presidential campaign.

AL: Okay, yes.

CM: She had been a superb supporter and fund raiser, and friend of the Muskie family during the presidential campaign. And I think Doug Bennett and Harry McPherson and others suggested that I talk to Madeleine. And Madeleine not only came to work, but she was absolutely invaluable and great fun to work with and be with. And still is a friend to this day.

But in any event, all through 1975, this election that never was played out and ended in January of 1976, during the holiday break, with Bill Cohen announcing that he was not going to run for the United States Senate. But all throughout that, there was not a lot of effort because I knew Bill Cohen well, and also had gone to Bowdoin with Chris Potholm, his advisor and campaign manager. Chris and I would get together periodically and needle each other as to why the other person's candidate was, candidacy was doomed to failure, and so we had great fun during that.

We also I think ran a very sophisticated campaign for its time. Not the millions and millions of

dollars we have now and the days of, you know, the daily polling and the automatic telephone calls, but it was adequately financed, it was an important race. And – I'm referring to the pre-race in 1975 – but at the same time I think we, Ed Muskie really connected again with the folks in Maine in a way that he hadn't since back in the '60s. And that may be unfair, but my own perception was he, over that time period of '74-'75, into '76, in part because he had some continuity to his meetings and visits and phone calls with people in Maine that I think we, he felt pleased that he had reconnected with folks.

And when all is said and done, as you got through the '76 campaign he got, I probably have to call up Chris Potholm to get the exact context of this, but my recollection was, it was the highest absolute vote total of any candidate in any, either party, or any party, in that year of 1976. And needless to say, Ed Muskie was pleased with that result.

AL: I want to ask you one thing about in '75, with Bill Cohen. I've heard a story about the Potato Blossom Festival in Aroostook County, I wondered if you were there for that.

CM: I was not there.

AL: But did you hear about it?

CM: What was the story?

AL: The story was, Bill Cohen and Ed Muskie, and they were both going to go up and talk, give a little, say a little something. And Bill, showing his youth, was very agile and jumping on the, you know, being very agile getting up on the stage, and that Muskie sort of played on that and exaggerated his bringing a chair over to help him get up on the stage. Have you ever heard that story? And the crowd loved it; he sort of turned it around on him.

CM: I'm sure the crowd did. Those folks up in Aroostook County were great friends of Ed Muskie. He always felt that he could relate to them and sense what they, was on their minds better than any other group in the state, you know, except perhaps his hometown of Rumford or Waterville. But, and it was the place where he felt he first began to feel that you can win the governorship, in that campaign, back in the '50s.

No, the story that I remember, we'll comment on that same parade, because I was down in Washington. He came back from that, and they had marched, Bill Cohen and Ed Muskie had walked together in this parade, side by side, with other dignitaries, and either Bill or Tom Daffron, who was Bill's administrative assistant, another fellow that I kibbitzed back and forth with as to who was going to win, we each promised the other a job if our guy had lost, sent a photograph over of Ed Muskie and Bill Cohen walking together, and asked if Senator Muskie would please autograph it. And that led to three days of this photograph sitting on the senator's desk and he, you know, we kept sending a note in to sign this and explained it, and this would, you know, sort of move, migrate to another corner of the desk but it wouldn't be signed.

And this went on for some days. And finally it turned out, I forget how it came about, but my recollection, it turns out the senator was very sensitive to the fact of where was this picture, and his autograph, whatever he said, where was it going to appear next and how would it, might be used or misused. And in any event, he very proudly called me into the office when he had signed this and pointed out that what he had decided to do was something, some kindly remark, respectful remark, but noting that although we're in pace with one another in this photograph, that they still march to the tune of a different drummer, the beat of a different drummer. And he thought, he was very proud of himself to avoid anything that might come back and haunt him about it, but still be nice.

The other thing that was bizarre during that period, and I'll relate another anecdote, was Jim Longley's presence. And Jim Longley would throw these curve balls, if not time bombs in, or smoke bombs, into the congressional delegation, which at that point was David Emery, Bill Cohen, Bill Hathaway, and Ed Muskie. I got to sort of set the stage – and it was difficult to deal with Longley, because he was attacking all politicians and you weren't quite sure who he was going to attack next.

AL: Anti establishment type?

CM: Yeah, and he would always, and he'd send these stream-of-consciousness letters that he apparently would dictate in the middle of the night, according to some people that knew better than I, and they'd arrive and you didn't know how to answer them because they were filled with, you know, the people have, want this, 'the people have asked me to do this', and 'on behalf of the people I'm writing you', and he would, he would just take these strange positions and ask both Bill Cohen and Ed Muskie to do something together. And, you know, when these two guys were busy trying to figure out how to campaign against each other.

So the classic example was, with no forewarning, Jim Longley came and asked for a meeting with the congressional delegation. And I have to point out that a number of us had worked hard to have the Maine congressional delegation of these four people, notwithstanding party labels, work together on behalf of constituents. And I and my counterpart on Bill Cohen's staff maintained, for reasons of self interest, that it served both our guys' purposes, if we continued that practice of sort of bipartisan approach to a constituent service on big ticket items. And that, needless to say, took some work at times. But we had an unwritten understanding as to how that would operate.

Well, Jim Longley shows up, as governor, requests a meeting with the congressional delegation, we gather in the capital, in Senator Muskie's capital office, and he begins, Governor Longley begins to explain that the people have elected him to do away with partisan politics. And one of the best steps he thinks that could be taken is for the congressional offices, the members of the opposite parties in the Maine congressional delegation, if they would combine all their offices into one in various towns. So in Lewiston, Bill Cohen and Ed Muskie would share an office, and in Portland, David Emery and Ed Muskie and Bill Hathaway would share an office, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. And he said, "And this is, shows we're being efficient, economical and non

partisan.”

And then he reached into his pocket and he pulls out a piece of paper and he says, “And I’ve prepared a press release announcing this, and I thought today would be a terrific time to announce this merger of the congressional offices.” And needless to say, the entire congressional delegation is flabbergasted. Now, Emery was fairly new at this, but Bill Cohen is, you know, rolling his eyes, and Ed Muskie is just staring wide-eyed, not knowing what to do as this man is bandying about this press release.

And then finally Tom Daffron, the administrative assistant and myself, Tom had worked, was working in the House you have to understand, and myself, broke in and said something to the effect of, “Governor, that’s a terrific idea, you know, really worthy, but you know, you can’t just leap into this kind of thing because in the United States Congress, the House rules and budgets for offices are much different than the Senate rules for budgets and offices.” And “We’re going to have to check with the sergeant at arms and the clerk of the House, and you know, there are payrolls to be adjusted, and this really is not something that you could leap into.”

You could see this sigh of relief on the faces of Cohen and Muskie and Emery and Hathaway, saying, “Oh that’s right, that’s right, I should have thought of that.” And so we managed to head that one off at the pass and the press release was never issued. But, you know, Longley added a flavor to all of which was going on because he was so unpredictable in terms of what he would publicly demand from the congressional delegation. Or what he would publicly criticize them for doing, or not doing, as the case may be. So that was the story of ‘75.

AL: And then you became, how did you become administrative assistant?

CM: Oh, that’s a, oh, I totally forgot. Maynard Toll resigned, and I forget whether that was the time he went with the bank, or he went back into academia. But in any event, there was a, it was a combination of things, you know, the job was so demanding that, you know, Maynard had his burnout period and, but above all, or in addition to that, we’re approaching this reelection campaign. And I think, so Maynard had resigned. The question is, who would step into his shoes? Leon would be a, you know, is the senior guy on the staff and it’d be very logical for him to, from a substantive point of view, legislative point of view.

But I think the feeling must have been that, given the reelection campaign and the importance of having someone that really understood Maine and had spent a lot of time in Maine, and was from Maine, to serve in that capacity as administrative assistant. And so, I sort of forget the time period, and it was sometime in ‘75 I guess maybe that Maynard left, went to New York, and I took over. But you also have to remember that at that point we just had a terrific team of staff directors. We had Al From in the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, you had Leon in environmental pollution, you had myself on the personal staff, along with a number of others, oh, and the Budget Committee of course which, truth be known, there was, they were not a bunch of subcommittees with separate staffs, there were about a hundred and twenty-five people over there who could comment on anything from A to Z, even if they had no idea where the

Piscataqua River was, but, or the Sandy River in your case.

But, so we just had this wonderful team, and I used to describe my, people asked what an administrative assistant was and I'd say, "Well, it's real easy." I, there was a, I had an office that was fairly narrow and small, and actually I sat at a desk that George Mitchell had sat at once, and subsequently even Mary McAleney sat at that desk. But [a] small office. On one side was this staff of a hundred and twenty-five, and a personal staff and all these, everyone else. And on the other side was a big office, behind a closed door, big office with one person in it. And the staff was always saying, "He's got to see this," "I've got to talk to him, they always," "he's got to vote," "he's got, I have to explain a memo, and you can't deny me." And behind the other door on the other side of the room was a single voice that would say, "Shit a good goddamn, can't I have any time to myself!" And so my job was real easy, I just sort of put my feet on one door and my hands on the other door, and I just kept the two doors shut and never let anybody pass between. And that was the key to being a good administrative assistant.

AL: Well, was it, really, seriously, you were to be a buffer between the senator and his staff, is that -?

CM: Well, not so much a, yeah, I don't call it a buffer, you know, you prioritize. Because the only -

AL: A filter I think is what I meant.

CM: Yeah, it was the only way that, I was the only person between Dolores Stover and myself that had the overview of his time, and what he, what demands there were on his time, whether it be his kids calling or, you know, a vote coming up or a meeting or, you know. And in a sense, the committee staffs were, or committee staff directors, were competing with each other for his time, but understandably, you know, given the senator's fo-, the way he would immerse himself in subject matter, they'd want as much time as possible, or he'd want, he'd say, he would tell them he wanted as much time as possible. And then of course he'd come back and he'd say, I need more time for myself.

So a lot of what you did was sort of organizing the flow of information that was being presented by committees and others to the senator so he could deal with them. And if you need more time, you can figure out a way to make more time. If a decision could be made relatively quickly, based on you know, progression of decisions that maybe preceded, then you make sure that decision can be made quickly and easily without taking up a lot of his time.

And a very important part of that was, which wasn't always accepted, but it was to suggest that, to the senator, that he, knowing the history of his involvement in a particular problem or matter or issue, and knowing also the recommendation and options being presented to him, to suggest that this is one that, if you went with this option, it would build on the decisions and the information he had previously, and he need not recreate the wheel and take a lot of time with this. But if he did wish to revisit it, or there was some change of a position or change of

information, you organize an opportunity for people to come and get together with him and thrash it out.

So there are a lot of different responsibilities of an administrative assistant, but a lot of it was channeling the flow of information and requests and demands to him in a way that he could deal with it, which he did very well.

(Taping paused.)

AL: I wanted to ask you, I know that some staff people have said that they saw a lot of Muskie's temper, and some sort of didn't have that type of relationship. I think it was Leon Billings, maybe, like -

CM: Who saw it, or didn't see it?

AL: Saw it. And I wondered what your experience was in the mid to late '70s.

CM: I, well first of all, of course you saw his temper. But that's not really the right question. You need to sort of say, well what was his temper? And you can answer that at different levels, because it was sort of a complex issue. But he would get frustrated, and in no uncertain terms would declare his frustration. Would he ever get angry at a person, particularly on his staff? No. Now, they might not have realized that. I mean, there would be much hollering and, 'you mean to say', you know, 'how could you', you know.

But the reality is that it, he was a lawyer by training, and an advocate, and he had this personal style in which he was combative, he was argumentative. And you just had to realize that that was part of the act, I mean it was part of his style, and you couldn't let it bother you.

So the answer is, yeah, I saw him blow his top. But a lot of it was things I probably shared the feeling about. If there was a frustration that he created, with some of those outbursts, it was only because he'd get so wound up that you couldn't sometimes get a word in edgewise, if you felt that he was going, if he was off base, and you'd just sort of have to engage in a strategic withdrawal and come back again another day.

And the funny thing was, to my way of thinking, it was not that he, his temper was one thing or another. In working, because he could always work through his, you know, this verbiage that he would use, and use to good effect. It's when he didn't tell you what was on his mind that was frustrating. Because he frequently would stew over a decision or a problem that he was grappling with, and when he was, when you saw flashes of his temper it usually meant that he's talking about it, he's focused on it, and you knew darn well what his concerns were. It's when he would sit on a memo, when you were trying to give him more time, he'd sit on a memo and then he would never, he'd never -

(Taping interrupted.)

CM: . . . maybe if I can conclude this. I wanted to address, so '76 was a great victory, and I was just thinking that I have no recollection of '77. And perhaps the reason is that I was finishing night school, law school at night and was doubling up on a couple of courses. And I took the Bar exams in D.C. and in Maine in the summer of '77, so that probably explains why I have no recollection of '77.

But I wanted to just observe, because Ed Muskie -

End of Side A

Side B

AL: We are now on Side B.

CM: I was, I left the Senate office in early '78, and it was before, of course, the call from Jimmy Carter, President Carter, to invite Senator Muskie to be Secretary of State. But I was going to observe that it's very hard for any elected official, but also for the staff, to decide when's a good time to leave, and how do you do it gracefully. Well, Ed Muskie figured out how to do it gracefully – get a promotion. So that was not an issue for me. But there was a serious question of, 'Should I stay on Capital Hill, or stay in Washington, or go back to Maine?'

And I think I decided first that, as the, as I had seen a great many people, friends, leave Capital Hill to go to work in the Carter administration and come back to report how frustrating it was to work in the executive branch, having worked in the legislative branch where you could get things done, you know. I've since come to realize, having seen Congresses that don't get things done, that we got things done because we had some really senior legislators that we worked with that were just like Ed Muskie, that wanted to get things done, and very talented staff, and you could take an idea and convert it into legislation in the space of twelve to eighteen months.

Whereas my colleagues that tried out the executive branch almost uniformly came back and said you have, a) it's a very short period of time to try to get anything done, and b) the bureaucracy is horrendous, you just can't move it, so you got to pick one or two targets or opportunities, push as hard as you can on those, knowing that you're pushing uphill.

So that was a good part of my reasoning for not, leaving the government, was that. Then the issue came, do I stay in Washington to work with a big city law firm, where a lot of friends and people you got to know over the years of Ed Muskie were, or do you go back to Maine? And there I sort of looked at Ed Muskie's experience, and chatted with him about it a couple of times. And he pointed out that if you really want to have an impact, that you can, on people's lives, in addition to the clients but, you know, your community, that the place to do that was in a state like Maine where you can have a much greater sense of community and you can have an important contribution, rather than Washington.

And I think he, it was good advice, and I came back to Maine to practice law, joined the firm that

Ken Curtis had put together when he left office in 1975, and had occasion to deal with Ed Muskie as a lawyer, and as a client actually in a couple of matters, in the years that followed. So, you know, he very much influenced the direction that I took, not only as a young person but years later.

AL: Great, thank you very much.

CM: Yes, thank you, it was a pleasure.

End of Interview