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Quentin Kopp
Minority Politics in San Francisco, 1964-1996

Interviews conducted by
Martin Meeker
in 2007

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Interview #1: 4-16-2007

Begin Audio File 1 kopp_quentin1 04-16-07

01-00:00:16

Meeker: OK, today is the—

01-00:00:19

Kopp: April 16th.

01-00:00:21

Meeker: — 16th of April, 2007. This is Martin Meeker interviewing Judge Quentin Kopp, and it looks like everything's going well so let's begin. And I'll be looking over here occasionally just to make sure you're still framed and that the sound is recording adequately. So in your first interview, the one for the California State Archives, you spoke about your youth in political terms, which I found to be quite interesting, and you also talked about your parents being involved in Democratic politics in the city of Syracuse. And I just wanted to get a sense of from what, you know, what your opinion is of what being a Democrat meant to your father and mother at that point in time in that place.

01-00:01:15

Kopp: My father was a small businessman, operating a drug store. Sometimes he had two drug stores, but he had the viewpoint of a small businessman. My mother was first generation, born 1900 in Binghamton, New York. Her father never owned a business. Her father worked in a furniture store, retail, and in their view the Democratic Party represented an antidote to the Republican Party, particularly because the Republican Party was identified with the Great Depression of 1929 and was identified with corporate wealth, corporate America, and a corporate disregard for the vicissitudes and the problems of people who were not presidents or vice presidents of corporate entities. And secondly, my parents, probably because they were Jewish, were imbued with the notion that not all Americans were treated equally. My father, for example, during the 1930s operated a drug store in a section of Syracuse which had been almost exclusively Jewish, but the demographics of which had changed so that it was probably 50-60% African American, and he was well liked by his African American customers. He hired the first African American business clerk of any white-owned enterprise in Syracuse, New York in that period of time, so that was an expression of their high regard for black Americans and their insistence that all Americans be treated equally.

01-00:03:36

Meeker: How did they communicate these values to you?

01-00:03:40

Kopp: In conversations, both at home and also in the drug store from time to time. I began working in the drug store in the spring of 1940. I was 11 and a half years old. I worked after school. And my father moved his drug store to, or putting it the other way, the drug store he chiefly operated was a block from a home, which was the first home my parents ever owned that they purchased for I think \$3,000. Three bedroom home, at that! And after that purchase, the war began a year and a half later. Pharmacists went in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps. My father, therefore, was encumbered with operating the prescription filling part of the drug store almost entirely himself. Occasionally he'd have some part time assistance from somebody who was a registered pharmacist, and my mother thereby began working in the drug store, particularly at dinner hour. After she would make dinner, my father would walk home. She'd come down to the store to supervise me or to supervise my sister. My younger sister was working there. And so there were conversations almost entirely, particularly at home, probably 80% of those conversations were at home, and then there were civic events and civic affairs. My father was a leader in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and starting from the time I was eight years old, he brought me to VFW meetings, either the Post or the County Committee of VFW posts, or a Central New York Council of VFW posts. I went to a national convention in Boston when I was eight years old, and so there were discussions in the course of listening to meetings of VFW members. And then my mother was active in the National Council of Jewish Women, and so I would hear discussions relating to the National Council of Jewish Women. There were other experiences; my mother, for a short period of time, worked for the WPA, the Works Progress Administration, as a secretary when I was about seven or eight years old. So that was a source of discussion in the house. As a matter of fact, under pressure from higher authority, her boss had to let her go because she was getting too many jobs for non-Democrats, namely Republicans and Independents! (laughter)

01-00:07:00

Meeker: You know, this is a bit of an aside, but the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I don't know much about that organization, but I kind of wonder if there was a distinction between that and the Legionnaires, where they—

01-00:07:11

Kopp: There was.

01-00:07:12

Meeker: OK.

01-00:07:13

Kopp: There was an acute difference. Veterans of Foreign Wars eligibility is based upon military service outside the continental United States. I always aspired to be a VFW member, and I can recall a dinner conversation with a friend of my father's, who had been a U.S. Marine and had been in Nicaragua, I think about

1933, 1934. My father had been in World War I, the United States Army for two years from 1917 'til 1919, and most of the members of the VFW conventionally were World War I veterans. Some were remaining Spanish-American War veterans, but this man had been a Marine in Nicaragua, so he was eligible. So I remember saying something to the effect, "Oh, when I grow up I want to be in the VFW," and his reply was, "You'd better go in the Marine Corps." I never did; I went in the Air Force 1952, and I never served outside the continental United States. I was never eligible for the VFW. The American Legion, on the other hand, enabled anybody who had been in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard to be a member, whether you served outside the continental United States or not, so I've been an American Legion member. My father did belong as a member of the American Legion. Post Number One was located in Syracuse so although, of course, the American Legion was founded in Indianapolis, but he always had a bit of disdain or scorn for American Legion members, and there was more than a feeling that pervaded our household that American Legion members were more inclined to beat their breast about their patriotism than VFW members were. So there was a bias about Legionnaires.

01-00:09:33

Meeker: It's almost, perhaps, like Legionnaires who didn't serve on foreign soil felt like they had something to make up for their service.

01-00:09:42

Kopp: Could be, psychologically. I never thought of it, and neither did my father.

01-00:09:46

Meeker: You know, thinking again about your father and your mother and their Democratic politics, obviously the party and its politics changed a great deal between the 1930s and, say, the 1970s, and from reading your previous interview I understand that they remained committed to the party throughout that period of time. Do you recall having any conversations with them about either their evolving political viewpoint or how they responded to the evolving politics of the Democratic Party over that period of time?

01-00:10:28

Kopp: Not specifically in that sense, but in 1952 I was in the United States Air Force, and the Republican nominee was Dwight David Eisenhower, and the Democratic nominee was Adlai Ewing Stevenson. I was captivated by Stevenson. I'd just graduated from Harvard Law School; he had spent a year at Harvard Law School and he flunked out and finished at Northwestern! And my dean, Dean Erwin Griswold kept his transcript locked in his desk drawer, I have learned from a biography of Adlai Stevenson. My father was operating a drug store in an industrial suburb of Syracuse called Solvay, named after the Solvay process, which was an Allied Chemical subsidiary that had a process which polluted Onondaga Lake, but that's another story! (laughter) In any event, the mailbox was removed from the corner on which my father's drug

store was located. My father's philosophy and policy always was to have his drug store on the corner. That gave him a geographical advantage, and having a mailbox in front of the store was another advantage. My mother attributed it to the Harry Truman administration! (laughter) She was sore, and she thereupon volunteered for the Eisenhower early in the year 1952, even before he was nominated, and she ran the volunteer operation on South Salina Street in downtown Syracuse, and was later in the year, after Eisenhower won, named Woman of the Year in Politics by the morning newspaper, the Syracuse Post Standard. So she expressed distaste for the Democratic Party and Democrats, beginning in 1952. It probably goes back even further, because when my father ran for County Treasurer in 1935 as the Democratic candidate—of course, he learned after the election that he'd been sold out by the Democratic County Committee Chairman, Bill Kelly, to the Republican County Committee Chairman, John Giminski, who was also the incumbent County Treasurer. But during that campaign, much of my father's support came from Republicans and Independents, but it didn't cause either one of them to reregister as Republican or any other party. And then my father died in 1973. In 1973, he was supporting Joe Alioto for the Democratic nomination for Governor of California, my parents having moved to Los Angeles in 1957. I suppose my mother voted for Joe Alioto in the primary, and from time to time there might be comments about changes in society, but never a strong, overt expression of disgust with the Democratic Party as such. I'm reasonably certain they voted for McGovern in 1972. They were no admirers of Nixon, so it made it easier, comparatively easy, and I don't know my mother's voting habit after 1973 and my father's death, but I suppose it was more Democratic than it was Republican in partisan elections. And my mother died in 1992 and, of course, in the last ten years she was horrified by societal developments, the way people acted, and socially the way people acted toward others. And then she also developed an impatience with immigrants who didn't speak English, and she'd express that from time to time (laughter)!

01-00:15:19

Meeker:

And she was living in Los Angeles throughout this period of time.

01-00:15:22

Kopp:

And she lived in Los Angeles, yeah.

01-00:15:25

Meeker:

From the way that you described it, especially, you know, with the mailbox and with your father's campaign, it sounds like the axiom that all politics is local really applied to their political sensibility.

01-00:15:36

Kopp:

Yeah. Yeah, yeah it did. All politics is local and—

01-00:15:42

Meeker:

Do you believe in that, as well?

01-00:15:44

Kopp: No, I don't believe in that. I know that politics is local, and I used to preach the mantra that non-partisan government, local government in California does not have a different system for collecting garbage or disposing of sewage, which can be identified as a Republican philosophy or a Democratic philosophy, but I don't think all politics is local. Politics is, to me, manifestly national and even, to an extent, international, but it's certainly national, and it's certainly statewide as far as policy difference is concerned.

01-00:16:31

Meeker: This point about your mother sort of being disgusted at the decline of civility, I'm wondering if you'd give me a sense of what, how she would have thought about that, like an example perhaps of...

01-00:16:45

Kopp: Well, if somebody interfered in a line, people waiting in a restaurant, or somebody dressed in an offensive manner, she would express herself about it. She'd inculcate it, and that was a favorite verb; she inculcated responsibility in social relationships. Letters of thanks to anybody who conferred a favor upon you, a gift or a dinner or anything of some value, and she was insistent upon promptness in expressing gratitude and thanks, more so than my father, but that was attributable to the fact that my father had to devote more hours in a day to earning a living.

01-00:17:45

Meeker: What year again did you move to San Francisco?

01-00:17:48

Kopp: On December 20, 1955.

01-00:17:52

Meeker: OK. You know, thinking politically, there was a big transformation in California state politics in the late 1950s. Many call the 1958 election as the big shift when Knowland was defeated and—

01-00:18:06

Kopp: Well, when Pat Brown was elected Governor, Clair Engle was elected U.S. Senator, replacing Bill Knowland who had run for Governor, and there was indeed a shift. Now I came late to that in the sense that I did not live in California in the 1930s or the 1940s. I visited California first in 1940 as a 11 or 12 year old. I spent half the summer of 1947 in Los Angeles. I spent the entire summer of 1948 in Los Angeles, and, of course, that was the convention which nominated Dewey again, and which nominated Harry Truman, whom I respected and liked much. I thought the end of his administration was tainted with corruption, but it's corruption of a lesser level than I have since seen in politics and since I left politics! But in 1958, which was the first year I participated in political campaigns, I was relatively uneducated about the

genuine political history of California. There was a great book I'd read by Carey McWilliams which gave the history of California in '30s, and that was helpful, but it was difficult for me to understand that there'd been only one Democratic governor in the 20th century in California up 'til that point.

01-00:19:55

Meeker: Do you recall what Carey McWilliams book that was?

01-00:19:57

Kopp: That was Culbert Olson in 1938-1942.

01-00:20:02

Meeker: But what book did Carey McWilliams write?

01-00:20:03

Kopp: Oh, Carey McWilliams's book? I don't—

01-00:20:05

Meeker: Yeah, was it the California book? *California: The Great Exception* or something like that.

01-00:20:09

Kopp: Yeah, I can't remember the name, and I don't think I still have it. I think it had been lent to me by a cousin of mine in Los Angeles.

01-00:20:18

Meeker: But it was a general overview of California?

01-00:20:20

Kopp: It was, yeah, and it covered, for example, Upton Sinclair's futile campaign, which I guess was 1934, and it covered Culbert Olson, too. It was written in the early '50s. About 1950. I was enlisted to campaign for Stanley Mosk for Attorney General. I was enlisted by a lawyer who was a year behind me at Harvard Law School, but who had come to San Francisco to seek his fortune, Charlie O'Brien. Matter of fact, we took the California Bar Examination at the same time in October 1953. I was stationed at McClellan Air Force Base, and he had already been hired by the Heller Ehrman firm. He called me; he was active in the California Democratic Council. Didn't surprise me, because in law school we talked politics a fair amount of time, and he told me about Stanley Mosk, a Superior Court judge in Los Angeles, who Culbert Olson's Executive Secretary, Chief of Staff so to speak, at a young age, and asked me if I'd be interested in the campaign. I said yes, and I brought along a friend of mine and an associate of Pillsbury, Madison, and Sutro, the law firm at which I was employed, and that was my first campaign. And, of course, it opened the panoply of California politics, particularly the California Democratic Party, and the CDC, California Democratic Council, which I favored as part of my introduction by Charlie O'Brien to that campaign.

01-00:22:16

Meeker: A couple questions in following up on that: just briefly, the CDC, California Democratic Council, who were some of the main players in that when you first participated in it.

01-00:22:27

Kopp: The main player was Alan Cranston, who was running for the nomination for Controller in 1958, and I can't remember if he had an opponent. If he had, it was a lesser quality opponent, and I'm tempted to say Melvin Douglas, the actor, his wife, Helen Gahagan Douglas. Roger Kent, San Francisco attorney, part of the Kent family, Kentfield, it's an old Illinois family originally, was a part of CDC. He was also State Democratic Party Chairman, I think, as of perhaps 1960. He'd been wounded in the Navy World War II. I think he was a collaborator of the Kennedys in 1960. And Glen Anderson, who was then a—trying to think—anyway, Glen Anderson was the Lieutenant Governor candidate of the Democrats in 1958.

01-00:23:42

Meeker: Was there another coalition of Democrats that perhaps opposed the CDC?

01-00:23:47

Kopp: There were longstanding Democrats in San Francisco. For example, the leader was Bill Malone, a lawyer, who had been prominent certainly in the '40s, who had been prominent in the Harry Truman campaign, because that was a difficult campaign. Many Democrats fled from that campaign because they thought it was futile. And Truman, of course, operated in the shadow of Franklin Roosevelt. He'd had some episodes in the administration that revolted the purists, and so Bill Malone stood up for Harry Truman in San Francisco. Jim Rudden, R-U-D-D-E-N, stood up for Harry Truman in Los Angeles. I dare say Ed Pauley was probably not a CDC type even though he was closely identified with Pat Brown. Pat Brown was not a CDC type. Clair Engle was not a CDC type. They were traditional, New Deal Democrats, but CDC took it a step to the left. It was more liberal than the New Deal Democrat would be, and by 1958 the New Deal Democrat had begun to wither away across the nation, so many of the bright young lawyer types and non-lawyers who came to Washington in 1933 had by this time become lobbyists, lawyer firm type of political fixers, and had abandoned many of the shibboleths of the New Deal. And that characterized the majority of California Democrats, including the high leadership, because Cranston had no public office in 1958. And, for example, in San Francisco, a marvelous man J. Eugene McAteer was the State Senator. San Francisco had only one State Senator at that time.

01-00:26:17

Meeker: And would McAteer have been affiliated with the CDC?

01-00:26:20

Kopp: No, he was not affiliated with the CDC.

01-00:26:22

Meeker: Was he more to the conservative side?

01-00:26:24

Kopp: Yes.

01-00:26:24

Meeker: OK, so when we look at the Burtons that then follow this, they are more to the left than of the CDC.

01-00:26:31

Kopp: Oh yeah, the Burtons would have been identified with the CDC, although even then Phil Burton had been elected to the Assembly after losing the first time to somebody who was dead but was still on the ballot. That was a famous line about Phil, but he'd thereafter beaten Tommy Maloney who was a Republican around Telegraph Hill, North Beach, that area. San Francisco had five Assembly districts then, not two like it has now. It doesn't even have two full Assembly districts; it really has one Assembly district now. But in any event, Alan Cranston was most prominently identified with CDC, and then Charlie O'Brien went up from being the Treasurer, being a leader. He eventually ran for Attorney General against Evelle Younger I think in 1966 and lost, and I think then he abandoned politics.

01-00:27:42

Meeker: So after participating in the successful Mosk campaign of 1958 with—

01-00:27:49

Kopp: And the Primary.

01-00:27:50

Meeker: And the Primary.

01-00:27:51

Kopp: And the Primary was an example of the CDC and other Democrats, because the other Democrat was Robert McCarthy, who was a State Senator from San Francisco, and Bob McCarthy—wait a moment, McAteer became State Senator in 1959, because after Pat Brown was elected Governor, he made Bob McCarthy Director of Motor Vehicles. But Bob McCarthy, who I later met, but in 1958 I thought was close to being the evil disputant in this primary race, was conservative. His brother was a Republican, and represented Marin County in the State Senate. His father had made money in the construction business and poured money into Bob's campaign, so Bob was campaigning on television, which was at definite advantage in that era. And election night, Bob McCarthy was leading Stanley Mosk because the votes hadn't been entirely counted, but the votes were counted by the next morning; Stanley Mosk had won on the basis of Southern California votes in Los Angeles. But that was a good example of a CDC candidate against a non-CDC candidate.

01-00:29:27

Meeker: So after the general election and—

01-00:29:30

Kopp: And then the general election, Stanley Mosk beat Pat Hillings, who had beaten Casper Weinberger in the Republican Primary, and Pat Hillings had succeeded Richard Nixon in that Congressional district that then existed around Whittier.

01-00:29:47

Meeker: I remember that area. So with your friends and colleagues working on these political campaigns, what was the sense and the post-mortem after the general campaign and Democrats swept into office statewide, what would the sense of some of the major reasons why that happened, why that was able to come to pass?

01-00:30:08

Kopp: (laughter) It was rather easy to see why Pat Brown won, because Bill Knowland was a more wooden type of personality, and there was a major issue, this Right to Work law. By that time, unionism had increased in California, World War II and all of the California industries which had begun, and then the post-World War II era, the only interruption of that was later in '52, the Eisenhower administration. Actually, in 1947, the Taft-Hartley Act, but labor was much stronger than it had been in the 1920s, or even in the 1930s after Roosevelt in California. And so Bill Knowland campaigned 100% for the Right to Work Constitutional Amendment.

01-00:31:04

Meeker: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Prop 14, right, I think it was Prop 14.

01-00:31:07

Kopp: I don't remember the number, but basically it had requirements that made it—oh, it prohibited a union shop. It prohibited a closed shop, it prohibited a union shop where it's volunteer. Maybe it just prohibited a closed shop, I've forgotten. In other words, compulsory union membership was prohibited in any collective bargaining agreement. So that was a second reason. Personality is one, that was a second reason. And Clair Engle won the U.S. Senate seat against Goody Knight, and that was a reflection of Democratic Party power, 'cause Clair Engle came from Shasta County. He had nothing going for him by way of a metropolitan center kind of base, and Goody Knight was a personable kind of fellow. And all the Democratic candidates won with the exception of Secretary of State, where the Frank Jordan family had held that office since about 1914, so the sense was that suddenly Republicans were no longer the major dominating force, that Democratic registration had increased, that that's where the body politic wanted the state to go, and then Pat Brown tapped the water, the education, the transportation problems, and that ingratiated the Democrats to California.

01-00:32:52

Meeker: To what extent do you think that 1958 was maybe the sort of canary in the coalmine for the national Republican Party, the changes that you start to see happening in 1960 and thereafter? So maybe just a California sort of early indication of disgust with, you know, Eisenhower America and so forth.

01-00:33:13

Kopp: Well yeah, there was disgust with Eisenhower. It wasn't deep seated, but toward the end of his administration—of course, I was a Democrat so I was privy to this kind of humor—but much of it was based upon him playing golf all the time. People thought that was frivolous. Of course, Jack Kennedy probably played golf more, notwithstanding his back condition! And putting on the lawn at the White House, and he didn't pay attention to governance, he didn't work hard, he wasn't obsessive about public policy, and I bought that and purveyed it probably. Of course, wouldn't I love to have Dwight David Eisenhower today! In a minute! But that was the general theme, and also personally, I had been repulsed by Nixon in college. He appeared at Dartmouth in 1948, after the Whitaker Chambers episodes and the like, and he appeared weasely to me then, so I never abided Nixon. I probably still don't, although he had more worthwhile qualities in terms of the nation and national policy than I give him credit, but nevertheless, he did have a—

01-00:34:54

Meeker: For instance?

01-00:34:55

Kopp: Well, like opening up China, and taking a chance on that, and he probably had I think a cushioning effect with the USSR, but he had this dark side of him that emblemized the worst in a politician, the very worst in a politician! So I was happy being a Democrat, and I was happy with Stevenson. I thought Stevenson was a wonderful man. And I liked Eleanor Roosevelt; of course, Jack Kennedy came along in 1960, and you had to be a part of that because I'd spent three years at Harvard Law School. Teddy was one thing, 'cause Teddy played football and I knew maybe one or two guys undergraduate—you usually didn't know undergraduates, somehow I knew a kid who played end at that time, and knew about Teddy. Knew about Bobby, I liked Bobby. He was fighting racketeering. Bobby had played football. Bobby was in the class of '48 at Harvard, so he was a year ahead of me, but I'd seen him play at least twice in the four years that I was at Dartmouth, so it was that part. Jack Kennedy had it all. He had the ability to express himself. So it was a love affair; 1960 was a wonderful time, 1961, '62, I didn't know much about Johnson and I'm glad I didn't! (laughter) I've learned more about him since! But the Kennedys gave us something to be idealistic about.

01-00:36:47

Meeker: Well back to local politics in San Francisco, shortly after the 1958 election, there seems to be a split within the Democratic Party in San Francisco.

01-00:37:00

Kopp:

Yeah, well that was clear-cut. That was the ascendancy of the Burtons, and that was attributable to Phil. He was the fulcrum for that whole branch. Frank Brann was a part of it, they had John O'Connell in the Assembly. Poor Frank Brann ran, I think, three times against Bernard Brady in the primary. I think he beat Brady every time in the primary, maybe it was twice. But then he would lose to the Republican, and I'm having a (laughter) senior moment! John Busterud. And he lost to John Busterud, but they were spreading their power. They had Jack Morrison. I belonged to two CDC clubs; one was in the Assembly district in which I then lived, 21st Assembly Democratic League, and the other was not a young Democrats club, but it was called the Tipplers, and it was Democrats in their post-college, post-graduate school year. I attended CDC conventions. Even in the 21st Assembly Democratic League there was a fight between Burton people and non-Burton people, and it extended to the County Committee, it extended to CDC, because we were a member of CDC, and it took the Burtons several years before they became dominant. I can remember 1962, Democratic County Committee Chairmanship election with Don King, who was a lawyer on West Portal Avenue, as our candidate, and George Moscone, who was a lawyer and whom I knew only as a lawyer. I was startled in 1960 when he ran against Milton Mark for the Assembly! I always thought George just wanted to be the best trial lawyer around, but he had other things on his mind, obviously. And we supported Don King—I say we, I wasn't on the county committee but lobbying for him—and he won, and it was close. It was very close. And that was really almost the “last hurrah,” because by 1963 Shelley was running for Mayor. That opened the Congressional seat. Burton had two or three opponents but won it easily going away, and they spread their hold, their tentacles, and developed strong tentacles.

01-00:40:09

Meeker:

So it's in 1963 or thereabouts that the change happens.

01-00:40:12

Kopp:

That's when the change was palpable. Willie Brown had run in 1962 for the Assembly in the Primary against Eddie Gaffney, who was certainly non-CDC, and of course Willie Brown was a part of Burton, and he'd lost, came back two years later, won easily. And only Milton Mark survived in what had been the 21st Assembly District, the so-called “Silk Stocking District” because it had the Marina, Seacliff and Pacific Heights, and he voted mostly like a Democrat, but Milton survived.

01-00:41:01

Meeker:

Well, he was sort of the last of the moderate Republicans it seems like, even though (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Republican.

01-00:41:06

Kopp: Although Milton had run unsuccessfully for the Assembly against—he'd run at least twice before 1958, and I campaigned for Ruth Church Gupta, the Democrat against him—but he'd run at least twice, and one of those times he'd moved to run against Charlie Meyers on the western side of the city, and at least one of those two times he was endorsed by not the John Birch Society, but something else that was almost the John Birch Society! Milton was—

01-00:41:41

Meeker: Which could have been the kiss of death!

Begin Audio File 2 kopp_quentin2 04-16-07

02-00:00:01

Meeker: OK, we are going, just let me get this... So the question I want to follow up on then is if Burton is sort of the standard bearer of his new political coalition or Regime or however one wants to describe it, who would have been the leader or the equivalent leader on the other side, leaders maybe?

02-00:00:25

Kopp: All right. After the 1958 election, and I answer this with a foundation historical in nature, five of us banded and decided to meet on a regular basis to formulate political achievement on higher levels. One was Jack Ertola, who had campaigned for Bob McCarthy. Another was Ron Pelosi, who had campaigned for Clair Engle. Another was Jack Casey, who had also campaigned for Clair Engle. Another was Leo McCarthy who had campaigned for Gene McAteer. That's right, McAteer... Bob McCarthy had to give up his State Senate seat. Gene McAteer was on the Board of Supervisors, ran for that Senate seat and won easily. So there were five of us, and that group later was augmented by John Foran, who was then a Deputy Attorney General, but who had been a childhood friend of Leo's, or at least during adolescence. And then Don King was added to it. Jack Casey was the fifth original member who never assayed any elective office, but whose family had been a part of San Francisco for at least 70 years. He had a grandfather who was, I think, a leader of the Teamsters' Union. His uncle Joe Casey was a union guy, was on the Board of Supervisors.

02-00:02:19

Meeker: Was Casey a union guy, as well?

02-00:02:21

Kopp: Is that who?

02-00:02:21

Meeker: Was Casey a union guy as well? A union man, Casey?

02-00:02:26

Kopp:

No, he was an insurance broker and lives happily today, but an old county committee operator. In any event, that was a nucleus, and by 19—well—65, in 1963 we had prevailed on the county committee, or 1962. 1963 was the Shelley race. Jack Ertola almost ran for that congressional seat, because he had been campaign chairman for Jack Shelley. He was a lawyer, later went on to be a Superior Court—well, later went on the Board of Supervisors, then a Superior Court judge. His father was on the Board of Supervisors then. And then in 1964 came the Johnson campaign, and then in 1965 the US Supreme Court rendered that decision on “one man one vote,” and that caused a redistricting of legislative districts, and that caused a special election for an additional State Senate seat for San Francisco. And into that contest plunged George Moscone, who was elected in 1963 to the Board of Supervisors with Leo McCarthy. By that time, Leo McCarthy had pretty much taken the responsibility of being the leader of the non-Burton faction. There were others, a lawyer by the name of Tom Feeney. Bill Malone was pretty much toward the end of his involvement; his partner had been appointed by Pat Brown of the court of appeal. But it was primarily Leo, and that was a watershed election, because that proved for once and for all that the Burtons had now become king of the hill. Leo McCarthy was the favorite in that election, great name, great identification. I’ve since learned that Gene McAteer had not been happy with him leaving as Chief of Staff to run for the Board of Supervisors in 1963, but, of course, Gene McAteer was dead. He had died in the summer of 1963. Otherwise, it would have been Shelley against him for Mayor. And in any event, Leo lost to George Moscone in June, in a June election, and (laughter) that was a surprise. And, of course, Leo then got a break because a year later Charlie Meyers got caught with a few peccadilloes, using office stamps for personal letters, and using his aide, Virginia Bigarini, to baby-sit! (laughter) And Charlie decided not to run in the wake of that adverse publicity, and I think had qualified by then for a pension, because he’d been elected at the age of 25 to the Assembly, right after I think 1946. He’s quite a story himself. But so Leo then went to the Assembly, and then went to his future career. But that was a demarcation.

02-00:06:44

Meeker:

To what extent were the differences between the Burton and McCarthy faction based on issues, or what were the differences based upon?

02-00:06:55

Kopp:

Now, I had a different perspective by then because I was involved mostly with Jack Ertola and the Board of Supervisors. He’d been appointed in 1964 after his father died, ‘67 he ran for election and we were devoted to making him number one so he’d be President of the Board, and I had chaired locally a futile campaign of Norb Schlei for the Democratic nomination for Secretary of State, which he won but then lost to Frank Jordan, Junior in November. I had helped Glen Anderson, and I can’t remember the campaign, because Glen Anderson then went to the House of Representatives. I think it was a

campaign for re-election. No, it was his Lieutenant Governor's race, when Reagan got elected in 1966, whether—was it Finch, Robert Fitch or Finch was elected Lieutenant Governor. Anyway, so I didn't devote much time to the policy part of it, but I think it was mainly personalities. And it was in Sacramento, too, where by now you had Willie Brown, and you had George Moscone at the same time, and Leo was moving up to be Speaker, and Jesse Unruh had run for Governor in, what, 1970 I guess by that... Yeah, he ran for Governor in '70, and then Leo was elected—no, Moretti was elected speaker, and ran for Governor in '74. That's when Leo was elected Speaker. But to go back to San Francisco, it was chiefly personality. Jack Morrison was elected to the Board of Supervisors, and he represented Burton. The Board of Supervisors was, however, not Burton dominated, and Phil devoted his time to the House of Representatives and to the State legislature.

02-00:09:34

Meeker: When you say personality, I understand that's—

02-00:09:38

Kopp: They pretty much followed the same defined liberal Democratic policies, at least in my mind they did.

02-00:09:51

Meeker: What were the differences in personality if you could characterize that? Like, you know, what kind of person might be attracted to the Leo group versus the Burton group?

02-00:09:58

Kopp: Well, Leo was more traditional. He was measured. He did things right, by the book. Willie Brown, of course, was in your face, and shrill. John Burton was shrill, he wasn't as expressive as Willie Brown, and then he had his own demons because he had probably, by that time, a drug habit that was probably beginning by the late '60s. Must have been, it was part of that whole era.

02-00:10:37

Meeker: Is this on record? I mean, what sort of drugs was he doing, what people said?

02-00:10:41

Kopp: Oh, cocaine!

02-00:10:43

Meeker: Oh really?

02-00:10:44

Kopp: Oh yeah, he left the Congress, what? 1970? When did he leave, '76? He went into rehabilitation and recovered, and has never had another drink, never used drugs. I think he still drinks coffee. Oh, that was remarkable, what he did! What he did to overcome that affliction! So he was erratic, is a way to define

John. He's always had a quick sense of humor and a good sense of humor, but he was erratic. And George Moscone was far different than Leo. George would hang around North Beach, he was fun-loving, he'd been an athlete, he was a trial attorney and a pretty good one, a charmer. Those were the differences. And John Foran was more like Leo. John was by the book; gone to law school, Deputy Attorney General, would apply himself to a studied approach to issues. It wasn't off the seat of your pants, it was think, think. Leo was a thinker, analyzer.

02-00:12:26

Meeker: To what extent would you characterize it as a generational difference between the two groups? Between Leo and the Burtons, between the McCarthy group and the Burton group? To what extent do you suppose it was a generational difference?

02-00:12:43

Kopp: Well, they're the same generation, but they viewed the generational changes, that whole period of time from 1963 to the end of Vietnam, in different ways. And sure, Leo supported civil rights for African Americans without quibble, but he wasn't on the soapbox. He wasn't marching outside of some automobile dealers on Van Ness Avenue as Willie Brown would be. That's a difference. John Foran wouldn't do that, wouldn't... It was a different approach to achieving a policy, and that was consistent with the difference in personalities.

02-00:13:43

Meeker: So—

02-00:13:44

Kopp: I want to emphasize, however, that the Burtons did not control the Board of Supervisors.

02-00:13:50

Meeker: Were they not interested in the Board of Supervisors?

02-00:13:52

Kopp: Don't know. Could be, could be, certainly. They didn't control Shelley. When Alioto ran in '67, it just staggered Phil. He couldn't believe it, because he thought with Shelley being weakened by a poor administration, a failed administration, that he'd be able to put a candidate in, and that would be Jack Morrison, if you can imagine. You didn't know Jack, but I can't imagine Jack, God bless his soul, being Mayor. But that's what he thought, and Alioto was a traditional Democrat. He was older than Phil, and Alioto won. And that took him to '75 and the only, and then and then only did the Burtons control City Hall with George's election.

02-00:15:01

Meeker: So with Shelley's election in 1963, which you participated in, you supported him—

02-00:15:07

Kopp: Yes, I was Co-Chairman of his Speakers Committee with Ron Pelosi.

02-00:15:13

Meeker: And there was a sense that you were going to be appointed to a Commission position after his inauguration in 1964.

02-00:15:20

Kopp: Yeah, I was going to be appointed to the Board of Education, which was then appointed.

02-00:15:24

Meeker: Which was a choice commission, yes?

02-00:15:25

Kopp: Huh?

02-00:15:26

Meeker: Which was a choice commission.

02-00:15:28

Kopp: Oh yeah, but it was not a commission in the sense of a city commission, 'cause it's a different governmental district, San Francisco Unified School District, and the only relationship of City Hall was that the charter provided that the Mayor would appoint the members of the Board of Education, and traditionally, to touch another theme that you mentioned, it would be three Protestants, two Catholics, and two Jews. And I would be one of the two Jews; the other Jew was Sam Ladar, who I think had been appointed by George Christopher. But that was what I thought would happen. I didn't apply for it, interestingly. I never sat down with Jack Shelley and had him say to me what you would be interested in, and I never wrote him a letter, because I was in a jury trial in this county, the biggest jury trial of my career, which ended the day of the election. So I missed the last ten days of the campaign, almost ten days, and I was jealous of Ron Pelosi, because even though we were on this level or par, and I was part of the inner circle of maybe eight people of the Shelley campaign. Jim Thacher, Democrat, was one Chairman, Jack Malliard, Bill Malliard's brother, Republican, was the other Chairman, and Jim Rudden was part of it. Ron and I were part of that group, and there were one or two other people. In those last days, Kevin O'Shea was a part of it; at least, Kevin O'Shea was in Shelley's car several nights that I was in it campaigning. You had to have your whole vanguard with you in those days. Well, you still do when you make an appearance, although Jack Shelley was one of the laziest campaigners I think I could ever remember, because he never had to

campaign. He'd been in the House seven terms, 14 years, and never had to campaign! But Ron had the advantage of being with Shelley almost every day for the last eight days, and Ron knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to be on the Planning Commission, and that's where he was. I was sitting in my office, law office, the Saturday after the election, and I got a call from Shelley's Congressional Chief of Staff, John Riordan, who was still operating out of Shelley's office in the old Federal Building in San Francisco, said that the Mayor wants to talk to you, or the Congressman wants to talk to you, and Shelley got on and said, "How would you like to be on the Board of Education?" (laughter) And it stunned me! It dazzled me, and I said, "Oh, very much, Mr. Mayor!" And then that was aborted in the next five days by non-friends in the Jewish community who argued that I hadn't participated in Jewish community activities, and therefore I was not a true Jew, and that's how Rennie Colvin, a lawyer, was appointed, and I was bitterly disappointed! And instead, Shelley put me on the precursor of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. It was called the Bay Area Transportation Study Commission, a.k.a. BATS, and that's about what it was worth! And after a year, I resigned and put out a public statement that I didn't want anything to do with this administration, and this BATS was a waste of my time! (laughter)

02-00:19:59

Meeker:

So this almost seems like a metaphor for the ineffectiveness of the Shelley administration for you.

02-00:20:07

Kopp:

Could be. In those terms, that's right, because Kevin O'Shea was appointed to a vacancy on the Board of Supervisors, Ron Pelosi to the Planning Commission, Jim Thacher, Pacific Heights type, didn't really want anything, he was already a Pat Brown appointee to the State College Board of Trustees. He got a little business out of BATS, he was the lawyer for BATS! (laughter) But look at the other people who weren't even devoting as much time as I did to Shelley. Oh, I devoted a lot of time to Jack Shelley and got zero from doing so! So that tells you that there was something missing.

02-00:20:58

Meeker:

So I'm really interested in this notion where there were established seats for different religious groups. Did you know the history of that? Was this something that was formal or informal?

02-00:21:09

Kopp:

I did not. It was informal. I didn't know the history, but I knew it had been practiced by George Christopher, I knew it had been practiced by Elmer Robinson, who was a big Mason, he was a Masonic leader. I don't know about Roger Lapham, who was '44-'48, and I don't know about Angela Rossi, but from the time I started in '58, it was three, two, and two.

02-00:21:37

Meeker: Were there other commissions that also had this arrangement?

02-00:21:41

Kopp: No, no. Police Commission then had three people, and under Christopher one was a Jew, Paul Bissinger, one was a Catholic, Harold McKinnon I think was Catholic, and I've forgotten who the third one was. So there may have been a commission or two like Police Commission where you only had three, and it was always stated that oh, the Archbishop would call the Mayor about something, but that's hearsay. Could have been true.

02-00:22:17

Meeker: OK. So for the Catholic appointees, it seems like the Archbishop might have played a role in selecting who would have been appointed what appointment.

02-00:22:26

Kopp: Yeah, and I would speculate that happened from time to time, but it wasn't a part of the fabric as such. I know, but it was rumored that the Archbishop had to approve the Chief of Police, and the Chief of Police in that era was always Irish, meaning Catholic, Irish Catholic yeah.

02-00:22:53

Meeker: So were there other groups that were also informally to be represented, say, on the—what was the education?

02-00:23:04

Kopp: Board of Education?

02-00:23:04

Meeker: Board of Education that you were on. So like for labor, for instance. Would they have—

02-00:23:08

Kopp: Yes, labor always had a place. So on the Board of Education, either one of the Catholics or one of the Protestants would be labor, and labor would be on the Civil Service Commission, always be at least one labor leader. Bill Kilpatrick was in the '60s. There'd always be at least one on the Board of Permit Appeals, that is true.

02-00:23:32

Meeker: OK, all right. What about ethnic minorities, like blacks or Asian folks or something?

02-00:23:40

Kopp: No, no, there were no Asians that I can remember in the '60s. There were some blacks under Shelley. Dick Bancroft, who later became a Superior Court judge, was on the Board of Permit Appeals. Terry Francois was appointed by

Shelley to the Board of Supervisors, but he wasn't on a commission. And then there were some others; Joe Williams was appointed by Shelley. Shelley appointed some blacks, yes.

02-00:24:23

Meeker: Well, it seems like that's the first administration that would have appointed ethnic minorities to commissions.

02-00:24:28

Kopp: That's correct, and there may have been one or two Chinese. The Postmaster was Chinese, Lim P. Lee, and he was an associate of Burton's and a leader in the Cathay Post, American Legion. And that was a political recognition of the Chinese, and he was also appointed to the State Veterans Board by Pat Brown. I can't think of any other Asian who was on a commission in the '60s.

02-00:25:04

Meeker: Well, in the 19—yeah, in Shelley's administration, shortly after, I think it was maybe the summer of '64, so about six months into his administration, the Human Rights Commission was established, which was the commission that was really to address civil rights issues.

02-00:25:22

Kopp: Yeah, and there were African Americans appointed to that. Shelley did appoint African Americans, because Shelley had that turmoil out at Hunters Point in 1964. It didn't turn into a lot, but it was a very perilous time for him, so he commenced to do that.

02-00:25:47

Meeker: So was there a sense, for instance, when thinking about the Board of Education, that there would be a time that that group of three, you know, the Protestant, Catholic, and Jew, would expand to include other groups? I mean, was there a sense that maybe—

02-00:26:06

Kopp: Well, of course, the Board of Education was abolished as an appointed office in 1972. John Barbagelata and I did that. In fact, it was 1971, it was in the year I ran for the Board of Supervisors, and that occurred because of its implementation of busing, school busing. So that fell apart, and is subject to vagaries of elections, but there certainly in the Alioto administration, there was recognition of Asians, of Hispanics. He appointed Bob Gonzalez to the Board of Supervisors, seemingly out of nowhere. I'd known Bob as a young lawyer, younger than I, and he appointed other people; the names may come back to me from time to time.

02-00:27:02

Meeker: Had Gonzalez been involved in the Latin American community and in the Mission District and that, like, was he readily identified as a Mexican American, for instances?

02-00:27:12

Kopp: Who, Bob?

02-00:27:13

Meeker: Bob Gonzalez, yeah.

02-00:27:13

Kopp: Oh yeah, he'd come—he's from, oh, not Shafter, another town... Selma, near Fresno, and he'd gone to Cal and Hastings Law School. He was single, and he was a bit active, but that was a big break for Bob. But there were other people who had been more active and may have been a little bit older, and I don't—I'll have to ask Bob how it happened that Alioto did appoint him. I never asked him that.

02-00:27:45

Meeker: By the time that the Board of Education becomes an elected entity in 1971, had there been any break in the established appointment that you mentioned?

02-00:27:59

Kopp: No, no, Alioto maintained them. He knew the power structure. And Alioto, of course, was the candidate of, let's call 'em, conservative Democrats. He was the Ben Swig, the Cyril Magnin, the Jim Rudden, Bill Malone I don't think... Maybe Bill Malone would have found that one a tough one, because he was identified with Jack Shelley, and I didn't follow those machinations, 'cause all I was concerned with was Jack Ertola. But Joe Alioto followed that to a T. Sure, he put Howard Nemerovski on as a Jew, and Nemerovski then double-crossed him (laughter) after telling him that he would never support busing, and he did a year later!

02-00:28:50

Meeker: Was this notion of busing already an issue in 1964?

02-00:28:54

Kopp: No, and it wasn't in '67, either. Terry Francois represented the NAACP filing suit, oh gosh—

02-00:29:05

Meeker: To end segregation of schools.

02-00:29:08

Kopp: In US District Court, but the suit had been—it was before Alioto was mayor, so it was before 1967, because Joe Alioto represented the school district. And

the suit was abandoned, and the reasons escape me. And I didn't pay any attention to it, I don't think I knew about it 'til after I got in the school busing fight in 1970.

02-00:29:36

Meeker: So when you were appointed for this, I guess, how was the link made? You know, I mean the Archbishop for the Catholics is a possible explanation, but then how was the link made between—

02-00:29:50

Kopp: The Protestants and the Jews?

02-00:29:52

Meeker: Yeah.

02-00:29:53

Kopp: Well, I can only infer from my experience that a Mayor... Well first of all, Elmer Robinson would know, because he's a Mason. Their big venture was the cemetery, and the name of which will come to me because (laughter) it's a contemporary entity.

02-00:30:22

Meeker: Colma?

02-00:30:23

Kopp: Yeah, Forest Lawn, it's the big old Protestant—Forest Lawn. Forest Lawn? What is it? Not Forest Lawn, that's L.A. It'll come to me. Elmer Robinson would know, but George Christopher, he'd take the pulse. Probably, I'm speculating, he'd go to Grace Cathedral, he knows the Presbyterians, and he would know the power structure. He'd go to downtown corporations.

02-00:30:52

Meeker: There was a group called the Council of Churches. Do you recall that, because—

02-00:30:55

Kopp: Yeah, but that was not the source. Council of Churches was a liberal entity, very liberal, National Council of Churches, and locally, too. They had formed something called the Council of Civic Unity. What would Jack Shelley do? Well, he'd have the Archbishop, he'd know the Catholics, and he could rely. Elmer Robinson was still active, he was still a player. He had something called—oh, it's League of Civic Unity and I can't remember. It was a council, but it was really a middle class establishment, like a group of burghers, and they would endorse, and they would back it with a mailer to every San Francisco household.

02-00:31:50

Meeker: So they would endorse people for commission positions? No.

02-00:31:53

Kopp: Elected, and they'd also advance you for a commission. Elmer had an office in the Flood Building, you'd have to go up there and kiss Elmer's ring, he'd put the blessing on you and he'd put out the word, including Chinatown! Because, of course, when he was Mayor, the rumor was that he had a couple of bag men in Chinatown who would bring back the money from gambling. When George Christopher became Mayor—interesting, I never knew George Christopher then, but he was a man of practiced rectitude, and he was going to close down all gambling in San Francisco, and did! (laughter) But Elmer was pretty good, so they said, but when I met him in 1970 or '71, he would hold forth in his law office, and he would confer his blessing on you or not, as the case may be. Sometimes he'd extract a condition! I was retained by a group of Chinese opposed to busing, but within Chinatown there were two groups who wanted to be my sponsors, so to speak. Jack Chow was a lawyer with this group, and I think by that time Jack was on a commission. He may have been on the Civil Service Commission. Another group had—I can't remember who it was as a lawyer. I decided to go with the group with Jack Chow. They wouldn't pay me my fee! They wouldn't even pay me out of pocket costs when it was all over, despite promises! In fact, Bill Knowland spoke at a national CACA convention in Chinatown, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, which told me through one or two of the people there, "Your bill will be paid next week." And I was not paid, and I am not the kind of fellow, especially in those days, who walks away and says well, I'll get other benefits. So it shocked me when Elmer Robinson said, "Forget about your bill!"

02-00:34:24

Meeker: Why'd he say that?

02-00:34:26

Kopp: Because that group had affiliations with him from his era as Mayor. I can remember one fellow who had a radio station, a Chinese radio station, and I said, "Gee, can I at least get my out of pocket costs back?" (laughter) Which were over a couple thousand! And he said, "I think that's reasonable," and that's what I got out of him! (laughter)

02-00:34:55

Meeker: So did Robinson, was the understanding then that Robinson was going to—

02-00:35:01

Kopp: That then I'd be endorsed by his organization.

02-00:35:05

Meeker: For Supervisor.

02-00:35:06

Kopp: Supervisor, and that was 1971. So to go back to how did they do it then? In my experience, Shelley probably called some Jewish leaders. He probably talked to Sam Ladar who was rather active, and he talked to Ed Stern, he talked to Rabbi Alvin Fine, who was a big figure. Because I can remember Ed Stern calling me at home—I lived in a flat in North Beach—and saying something to, “Why didn’t I talk to you earlier in the day?” He said, “I’ve had five”... Oh, I’ll tell you who was a leader: Earl Raab, R-A-A-B. He was a leader, and had the Jewish Bulletin, and no, Ed knew me. Maybe it was Earl Raab who said to Ed, “Why didn’t you call me earlier in the day and tell me about Quentin Kopp?” That’s how it went, because I’ve had all these calls. So they make the calls and they take the pulse and see who was acceptable.

02-00:36:25

Meeker: So how was it determined that you were not acceptable?

02-00:36:28

Kopp: Well, based on non-participation in Jewish organizations, and I am desperately pointing to the American Jewish Congress Chapter, which I was Vice President of. I belonged to B’nai Brith, to a lodge, but that isn’t enough. You had to have been a chairman or a vice chairman of something. There’s tons of Jewish organizations; could be Jewish National Fund, could be the American Jewish Committee, could be the Jewish Community Federation raising the money, could be anything. But I didn’t make the cut, yeah. And I remember talking to Rabbi Fine. By that time I had left Emmanuel and belonged to Temple Judea, which had already consolidated, merged with Congregation Beth Israel, but anyway, and saying to him, like it was on the phone, or maybe I did just go by and just meet with him. But I was dismayed, to say the least.

02-00:37:43

Meeker: What was his response to your dismay?

02-00:37:46

Kopp: He regretted it. I don’t think he was—see, he didn’t know me. I had once belonged to that congregation, but it was so huge, that’s the reason I left. There was no personal contact.

02-00:38:00

Meeker: Well, he remains quite active, as well as Earl Raab, throughout the 1970s. Did you ever have an opportunity to—

02-00:38:08

Kopp: Rapprochement, no, I never did. And I admire Earl Raab, who still writes occasionally. He must be in his late 80s.

02-00:38:17

Meeker: I interviewed him, actually.

02-00:38:18

Kopp: Did you?

02-00:38:19

Meeker: About a year ago, sure.

02-00:38:21

Kopp: I never talked to Earl Raab about it, and who knows, when you look at life you say, maybe it was better that way. Although, of course, if I had been on the Board, I would have been a no vote on busing.

02-00:38:37

Meeker: Would that have changed it?

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Kopp: I think it would have not changed. I think it would have made it a fourth no vote, because whoever the heck was on there, well, that Mrs. Lilienthal was on it. What did she get on there? Lee Nemerovski was on it. I think Sam Ladar had gone—oh, sure! Sam Ladar had left the Board of Education.

Interview #2: 4-17-2007

Begin Audio File 3 kopp_quentin3 04-17-07

03-00:00:02

Meeker: OK, this is Martin Meeker interviewing Judge Quentin Kopp, and today is the 17th of April, 2007. And let's just get it settled here. We finished up yesterday just as we were talking about the busing issue in San Francisco, which launched your political career on the Board of Supervisors, as well. And we got to that by way of discussing your attempted appointment to the Board of Education.

03-00:00:42

Kopp: Education, 1964, yeah.

03-00:00:45

Meeker: And that it was deemed by the leadership of the Jewish community in San Francisco that you were not the appropriate appointment, and so—

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Kopp: Representative of the Jewish community, yeah.

03-00:00:58

Meeker: Sure, and so Nemerovski was appointed instead of you, yes? No?

03-00:01:02

Kopp: No, Rennie Colvin. Colvin was appointed, and Nemerovski wasn't appointed until Alioto became mayor, and that was about 1968, or even 1969 that he was appointed.

03-00:01:23

Meeker: And so it was in your previous interview that you said that he sort of stabbed Alioto in the back, because he said that he was not going to vote for a busing solution.

03-00:01:32

Kopp: Yes, yes.

03-00:01:33

Meeker: So from the way that I understand what happened, there was a legal case, basically the NAACP versus the Board of Education, correct?

03-00:01:42

Kopp: Yeah, what had occurred by 1970 was the filing of a new and second suit by the NAACP.

03-00:01:53

Meeker: OK. Which was the first one?

03-00:01:55

Kopp: Well, the first one was before 1967, and probably after 1964, because Terry Francois represented the NAACP in that lawsuit, and Joe Alioto was hired by the school district. And that case was eventually dismissed. It was certainly dismissed by 1967. In early 1970, a new case was filed with other lawyers. One of those lawyers was James Herndon, and African American lawyer whom I knew casually. He was a plaintiffs personal injury lawyer who was associated with a firm that represented plaintiffs in personal injury suits. And another such lawyer I think was Arthur Brunsswasser, who was a volunteer type of lawyer, as was James Herndon.

03-00:03:04

Meeker: And they were both on behalf of the NAACP?

03-00:03:06

Kopp: That's right. And the school district was defended by the City Attorney's Office, or was represented by the City Attorney's Office, and there were parents, individual parents, who intervened in that suit, and they were represented by a pro bono lawyer by the name of Ray Bright, who had been, I'd known as a plaintiff personal injury lawyer, and—

03-00:03:39

Meeker: These parents, were they African American families seeking a decent—

03-00:03:42

Kopp: No. No, no. They were Caucasian, Asian, and African. There was at least one African American parent. I think there were seven of them, and their position was that it was unjustified, legally, to impose racial balancing on the San Francisco elementary schools, because there had been no segregation de jure or by law. That suit was stayed by the judge to whom it was assigned. That judge was the late Stanley Weigel, US District Judge. The suit was in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco. It was stayed because the US Supreme Court had accepted review of a case arising from Charlotte, North Carolina, which was Swann, S-W-A-N-N, V. Meeklenburg School District, and in the meantime the Board of Education in San Francisco in early 1970 voted voluntarily to begin the racial balancing of certain San Francisco elementary schools, starting with the Richmond district and a part of the Sunset district.

03-00:05:23

Meeker: So they were doing this of their own volition, it had nothing—

03-00:05:25

Kopp: Correct.

03-00:05:26

Meeker: — ultimately to do with *Brown vs. Board of Education*, right?

03-00:05:29

Kopp: That's correct. They were doing it without a court order. They were doing it voluntarily. That's when Howard Nemerovski cast the vote to do so together with the majority of the School Board members. I don't recall that any School Board member voted no, although perhaps one did, and that one would be Doctor Eugene Hopp, H-O-P-P, who I think had been an appointee of Jack Shelley's, possibly 1966, 1967, and whose four year term hadn't expired. I think Doctor Hopp did vote no.

03-00:06:12

Meeker: Do you know what background he was from?

03-00:06:15

Kopp: He was a medical doctor, and I think he was a registered Republican, and, of course, in that era there were more Republicans in San Francisco, and a Mayor typically, before Joe Alioto and including Jack Shelley, would include Republicans on commissions or boards. And that was particularly true of Jack Shelley because the Malliards, who were Republicans, had supported his candidacy, and that candidacy defeated Harold Dobbs, who had been on the Board of Supervisors and was a Republican. And Harold Dobbs was a Republican, so that may have been the source of Doctor Hopp's service on the Board of Education.

03-00:07:30

Meeker: Was he Caucasian?

03-00:07:31

Kopp: Hm?

03-00:07:31

Meeker: Was he white?

03-00:07:33

Kopp: Was he right?

03-00:07:34

Meeker: White! (laughter)

03-00:07:35

Kopp: Oh yes, he was. In any event, in the fall or in the summer of 1970, in the spring of 1970. In the spring of 1970, the Board of Education announced that in September it would bus children out of the Richmond elementary schools and those specified Sunset district schools, and then bus in children from other parts of the city, African American, African Americans almost entirely. My

eldest, Shepard Kopp, was born in 1964, so he was going into the first grade, and my number two son was just turning four, so he wasn't in school yet. And I was outraged by what was being done. My son walked to Lafayette School, which was about a block and a half away, and so together with a friend of mine from my days at Pillsbury, Madison, and Sutro, Bill Hannawalt and his wife, who lived in the Ingleside then, we filed suit in behalf of I guess about eight or nine parents, mixed group of people racially, to stop that plan from implementation. And we fought that throughout the summer of 1970, we filed suit as I recall in—I think we filed it as an extraordinary and original proceeding in the California Supreme Court, which denied our petition for review. I think we did start in the Supreme Court, but I can't remember for sure. Someone will have to investigate or research that.

03-00:09:53

Meeker: Can we pause here for a second? I just want to sort of go back and ask you if you had been on the—

03-00:10:01

Kopp: School Board.

03-00:10:02

Meeker: — Board of Education, obviously you would have voted against—

03-00:10:04

Kopp: I would have voted no.

03-00:10:05

Meeker: — this measure. But I would—

03-00:10:06

Kopp: But I may not have still been on it, because if I'd been appointed in '64, it would have been a four year term. By '68, Alioto was Mayor and it probably would have depended on whether I had helped Joe in his campaign. I did not help Joe in his campaign. Maybe if I were on the Board of Education I would have. I helped, I worked full time almost for Jack Ertola's running number one for the Board of Supervisors. But if I had been reappointed in 1968 and served, I would have voted no.

03-00:10:45

Meeker: Because it seems to me you approach this question of school desegregation from both the point of view of somebody who was intimately, had an intimate knowledge of the law, and then also was the parent of young children who would be immediately impacted by this, and it seems like you maybe see it from both of these points of view, and the point that you brought up that was interesting was that there was no *de jure* segregation in San Francisco. In other words, Jim Crow did not exist in San Francisco, although there was— how do you say—

03-00:11:21

Kopp: Well, you could argue there was de facto segregation, and that was the argument of the NAACP, and the argument of the School District in opposing our State Court suit.

03-00:11:35

Meeker: Did you see this de facto segregation as sort of a benign consequence of residential patterns, or if you had been on, you know, the School Board at this point, would you have said yes, the de facto segregation is still a problem and something needs to be done, and if so, what might have been some of the solutions to that?

03-00:11:53

Kopp: I would have attacked the housing, and I would have argued for improving the distribution of housing that would be affordable and usable by African Americans in all neighborhoods, and I would've encouraged the migration of African Americans to other neighborhoods. There were some African Americans in the Richmond district, few, but there were some, notable Noah Griffin. His parents lived in the Richmond district.

03-00:12:32

Meeker: Who was Noah Griffin?

03-00:12:33

Kopp: Well, Noah is a San Franciscan by birth who went to Fisk University in Nashville and then to Harvard Law School, whom I met in 1971 because he came home from Harvard Law School and ran for the Board of Supervisors! (laughter) And then Noah's done many things since. He hasn't practiced law, but he's been a radio talk show host, he's been a columnist, he was press secretary for Frank Jordan, he was Feinstein's administrative assistant. In any event, my position would have been break down any housing barriers and encourage proliferation of available housing.

03-00:13:23

Meeker: What was the state then, to the best of your knowledge, in the late 1960s and early '70s of residential discrimination in San Francisco? Was it a problem that needed to be dealt with as far as—

03-00:13:36

Kopp: I don't think it was. My impression was that, of course, it was contra to San Francisco city law. The Unruh Act had been passed on a state level by that time and was being enforced by the State Fair Employment and Housing Commission. I don't think it was a major problem. There'd be instances, I'm sure, but it wasn't wholesale.

03-00:14:05

Meeker: So it was probably—

03-00:14:06

Kopp: It wasn't like it had been in the 1950s.

03-00:14:11

Meeker: So the change would have been the State law that was originally passed and then overturned by the voters and then passed again.

03-00:14:17

Kopp: And then enacted by the legislature.

03-00:14:20

Meeker: Yeah, then enacted by the legislature, OK.

03-00:14:22

Kopp: And the City ordinance, by that time the City had a civil rights ordinance, the Civil Rights Commission had been established—

03-00:14:32

Meeker: Human Rights Commission, yes.

03-00:14:33

Kopp: The Human Rights Commission had been established.

03-00:14:36

Meeker: Yeah, and that included the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)—

03-00:14:38

Kopp: And that included ordinances barring discrimination in housing and services, employment. So that lawsuit in 1970 consumed a lot of our time, but schools started in September and Shepard Kopp at the age of six got on a bus and was transported to Sutro Annex, which is, or was then near Funston and California Street. In the meantime, sometime in that winter or spring, I think it was the spring of 1971, the United States Supreme Court rendered a decision in *Swann versus Mecklenberg School District*, which had the effect of permitting and approving busing in Mecklenberg County of children from Charlotte to outside the city, and from other parts of the city, and so Judge Weigel then vacated the stay and scheduled pre-trial conferences. Ray Bright had expended all the time and effort he wanted to expend on a pro bono basis, so these seven or so sets of parents needed new representation. And in that—so Bill Hannawalt and I substituted for Ray Bright. I think we substituted as attorneys after Judge Weigel indicated in some pre-trial proceeding that he intended to order citywide busing, not just the voluntary Richmond and some schools in the Sunset, but citywide! Well that drew the attention of the Chinese American community, and they did not want their children bused from Chinatown. At Jeen Parker School over on Broadway, I think 90% of the students were Chinese, and when I say Chinese I mean Chinese American. At Commodore Stockton School on Pacific Avenue near Grant, 95% of the

students were Chinese, and there may have been one or two nearby schools with that same distribution of population. They didn't want to be bused. And so they—

03-00:17:35

Meeker: Even though Chinese Americans had been subject to *de jure* segregation in previous decades.

03-00:17:41

Kopp: You've studied the history! Exactly. And some of the Chinatown leaders called me. Anyway, they wanted separate representation of Chinese children through their parents to prevent inclusion in Weigel's eventual court ordered plan. Bill Hannawalt and Vivian Hannawalt and I decided that Bill and Vivian would continue to represent the non-Chinese parents who were in that NAACP suit, was the only pending suit because our state court litigation had failed, that I would represent the Chinese students. And then, as I think I indicated, there were two groups in Chinatown which wanted to be the drivers of the litigation, and I finally chose one group which included Jack [Chow?], a lawyer, and he and I became co-council on the pleadings at the expense of another—and Tom Shay, Senior was associated with that, and then there was another group which I decided I would not associate with. There wasn't any hard feelings as a result of that. But anyway, now—

03-00:19:15

Meeker: Why did you choose one group over the other?

03-00:19:17

Kopp: Oh, I can't recall. I think this one group, Jack Chow and Tom Hsieh represented that they, in effect, represented CACA, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, a national organization which had a solid footing in San Francisco, may have been more associated with the Big Six companies, which in that era was a more powerful group than it is now, because I can recall making appearances at meetings of the Big Six companies, and so they were cheerleaders for the endeavor that looked like it was better. That began the saga of Judge Weigel's department. He was as autocratic a judge as I have ever appeared in front of, and he was hell bent to dismiss any arguments against his idea that all San Francisco elementary school children—these are the five, six, seven, eight year olds should be bused, and we, the first thing I had to do was to file a motion to intervene as a party on behalf of whatever number of parents I had, and I probably had eight, nine, ten groups of parents. And he denied that motion, and he chided me both in open court and in his chambers. And at one hearing, he suspended proceedings and he said, "I want you in my chambers, Mr. Kopp." And Jack Chow was co-counsel, so we went into chambers, and he proceeded to admonish me not to make arguments that I was making. That's what a federal judge would do in those days and could do, but not as pronounced as he. The years when I was at Pillsbury, Madison, Sutro, there was an antitrust case, Pillsbury was defending Standard Oil of

California, it was a US Department of Justice case, in front of—I think it was, maybe it wasn't the oil case. It was another case, I know what it was. It was bringing in artichokes or something from the valley, and Louis Goodman had the case. And he called counsel into chambers and said to the plaintiff's lawyers—one of them I think was named Fleischmann, Julian Fleischmann, who to me seemed old, he was probably only in his 60s—but he admonished the plaintiff's lawyers to pep it up, to step it up! (laughter) That the presentation was too tedious and too slow, that the jury was falling asleep! I've seen that, and I might do that myself today with the lawyers in a given case, even though you don't want to hurt their feelings or cramp their style, it's their client. But anyway, I never had a judge do what Weigel did, and he was renowned for that. His brother Marshall was a nice man, but this Stanley Weigel was so autocratic!

03-00:22:47

Meeker: What was the content of his criticism? Why did...?

03-00:22:51

Kopp: I was making an argument, well, the crux of our argument, and this was probably what offended him, because it was so legitimate, was that the Chinese had been the object of official invidious State discrimination. Up until 1948, the Education Code allowed a school district to establish a separate school for Chinese, Japanese, American Indians, and other children of Oriental or non-Occidental origin. Oh, of Mongolian ancestry, it used the word Mongolian ancestry. And San Francisco had done that; in the era about 1903, 1904, San Francisco ordered the Chinese children to attend the Japanese school, and Theodore Roosevelt stopped it. He stopped it as part of the settlement of the Russian-Japanese Conflict in 1905, and the Japanese wanted that policy in San Francisco abandoned. And Theodore Roosevelt implemented that as part of the truce between Russia and Japan. So the argument was that the Chinese had a Constitutional right, historical, to attend a racially-balanced school. I never used the word integration or segregation. I used the words "racially-balanced," because that's what the Unified School District policy was, and that's what Weigel was trying to do. They had a Constitutional right to that racially-balanced school attendance, but they didn't want to exercise their Constitutional right. And could a court force them to exercise that Constitutional right? The answer to that is no, it could not, and he resented that argument, which has never been acted on as a matter of its merit by any court to this day.

03-00:25:15

Meeker: I wonder if in your conversations with these Chinese families you got a sense of why, on the one hand, it seems that many African American families throughout the United States did want to attend racially balanced schools, but then why, on the other hand, did Chinese Americans not want that to happen?

03-00:25:35

Kopp: Different culture. Chinese, if you want to stereotype them, have a strong belief in education, and they are not at all intimidated or have a feeling of suppression or inferiority by attendance at a school in their neighborhood. And that's what it involves, schools in their neighborhoods. And also, there's another element that's probably lesser in their thinking: they had Chinese language schools, for example, after school in Chinatown, and those children could go from public school to the Chinese language school. Now if you bus them over to the Bayview, or in those days to the Sunset or Pacific Heights, they're not going to be able to carry on those institutions, and there may have been other institutions, also, that were part of the common fabric in Chinatown. So they were happy.

03-00:26:44

Meeker: There a sense, you know, particularly after the late 1960s, early 1970s when a lot of these civil rights ordinances around the country around discrimination and housing, employment, and so forth are enacted, that there is, that different races in the United States, particularly minority group races, are analogous to one another, so there is, you know, it's kind of now under this umbrella term 'people of color', assuming that, you know, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Chinese Americans have more in similarity than they do in difference. But it seems like from this perspective that the people that you worked with—I don't know, how do you think they would respond to that notion? Was this, do you think this was a rejection of this?

03-00:27:32

Kopp: Yeah, they're different, and I think the Hispanics are different, too, although my experiences with the Chinese and one everyday living practical aspect of that was the language schools that they had in Chinatown, and—

03-00:27:55

Meeker: To what extent, then, did the... I'm sorry.

03-00:27:57

Kopp: Did that what?

03-00:28:00

Meeker: I was asking to what extent did the Latino community in San Francisco—

03-00:28:05

Kopp: Participate?

03-00:28:05

Meeker: — make their voice heard in this particular debate?

03-00:28:07

Kopp: Not as a group. I think one of the sets of parents in the start of the Weigel litigation, or the litigation before Judge Weigel, was Hispanic, because there was a Hispanic history in San Francisco, and for example, I know or I knew Mexican Americans who were born in San Francisco. They're not part of the modern day immigration of Central or South Americans, so there have been, may have been two parents that were of Hispanic descent. Anyway, Weigel denied my motion to intervene, and we filed an appeal. He then ordered total busing of the Unified School District. Appealed, interestingly, and the clients Bill Hannawald represented who had been granted interventions status, let's call them almost entirely Caucasian, they appeal. And the upshot was after I was elected to the Board of Supervisors, in 1972 the US Court of Appeals reversed Weigel for denying the Chinese motion to intervene, and I think also reversed him on the citywide busing order. I think, I'm not sure. The second, and for that matter the first, didn't matter, were academic subjects because the San Francisco Board of Education in 1972 elected now—no, elected... No, I'm trying to think of how it happened. It must have been '73, but it was the elected Board which reestablished busing as a school policy.

03-00:30:20

Meeker: So was that a surprise to you?

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Kopp: Yeah, we had only I think it was a four to three vote. I know Lee Dolson voted against it. I think Gene Hopp was part of our slate who won, and maybe we had a third person. I can't remember now. We lost, sure it was a disappointment, and then the Chinese had scattered. They started their own private schools in Chinatown, and they operated 'em maybe for as long as a decade, and then they withered away. But then, of course, the Chinese population, Asian population increased, and they constitute a larger percentage of public school enrollees. But of course, the public school population diminished almost instantly. Before busing began, there were about 92,000 children in the unified school district, and by 1975 there were maybe 62,000 left, and that started the deflation of the school district.

03-00:31:37

Meeker: Would you attribute that to the busing? People were enrolling [in private] schools instead?

03-00:31:39

Kopp: Yes. Yes, I would. I would.

03-00:31:42

Meeker: And your children?

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Kopp: Hm?

03-00:31:45

Meeker: And your children?

03-00:31:46

Kopp: And my children stayed in. Yeah, they stayed in. My son Bradley enrolled, and then my son Shepard was lucky because they had a gifted child program at Alamo School, and then Alamo School closed for earthquake repair, and they were taken to Golden Gate School, where in effect they were bused again. I used to take them down to it, and they both were placed in the same school. That was fortunate. So I used to drive them to it, but then they took a bus home. My children were part of it, unlike, since I'm on record, some others, like Ms. Feinstein, who, to my knowledge, never attended public school, and whose daughter didn't attend public school, but who was a pronounced supporter in 1971 when she ran for Mayor of the Weigel busing plan.

03-00:33:00

Meeker: What was the support for it? Because the way you're describing it, it sounds to me like the vast majority of parents, at least, in San Francisco would have been opposed to it.

03-00:33:10

Kopp: The support was the Council of Civic Unity, the Council of Churches, the liberal Democrats, the Feinsteins, the middle-upper class San Francisco Jews were almost 100% in support. I say almost; that's probably hyperbole, but 60, 70—

03-00:33:36

Meeker: So the Temple Emanu-El congregation.

03-00:33:37

Kopp: Yeah, that whole Temple Emanu-El, certainly. There were a few at Emanu-El who were opposed. Joe Meyer and Ann Meyer were part of our litigation. The entities of San Francisco supported it. The Chamber of Commerce took no position. Elmer Robinson's group took no position. It was left to a small band of parents who struggled against it, and some other neighborhood types. Marge Lemlow had no children, she had a small business on Clement Street. She was one. There were, Babette Drefke up on Potrero Hill was another I can remember. But we were fighting against a tide of well placed institutions. Alioto was against it, even though his children didn't go to public school, but Joe saw it as a political issue in part, I think, and also probably as a matter of principle. He was a neighborhood type of person, grew up in North Beach. Anyway, if you put it to a vote, I think we would have prevailed over 50%, but it never came to a plebiscite of any kind, and all these—

03-00:35:09

Meeker: Well, except for the election of the Board of Education, when it became an elected body.

03-00:35:12

Kopp: Yeah, that was, yeah, an indirect plebiscite. But that also had the overtone of enfranchising people. Yeah, that's why it's hard to change an office that people vote for into one that should be appointed. Example, Insurance Commissioner should not be the subject of election anyhow, for other reasons.

03-00:35:42

Meeker: Did you ever consider enrolling your children in private school?

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Kopp: Later I did, and they did, because I got divorced. My wife and the children moved to Marin County, and my son Shepard spent one year at St. Ignatius, but the commute was too difficult for him, and my son Bradley spent maybe a semester at Marin Academy in Marin County, but otherwise they all went and they all graduated from public schools in Marin County.

03-00:36:21

Meeker: So they moved to Marin County when they were still in grade school age.

03-00:36:25

Kopp: Yeah.

03-00:36:26

Meeker: OK. Now, you mentioned in the previous interview that you did that when you ran for the Board of Supervisors in 1971, busing was a central issue and motivation for you.

03-00:33:36

Kopp: Well, what had happened, the history of that was that I had an idea I'd like to run in 1969. I had two boys then, my daughter was born the following year, and I still was building a law practice, and I had a house, good house, best house I've ever had. And so it wasn't right. My father once said to me, "You never run for office until you are assured of being able to support your wife and children," so I wasn't assured. 1971, I was grossing over \$110,000 a year, so the lawyer low overhead had won—well, that's a little more complicated, but my overhead was low, and I was doing fine financially, had money in the bank started for college education, and then this issue put me in the newspapers a good deal. So along about April, maybe even March, I started thinking about running for the Board of Supervisors, and by April or May, maybe it was in May, I decided to do it, and I had a good friend, lawyer in Los Angeles, in fact, we had our first fundraiser at his house in Los Angeles, charging \$25 a person admission. Thanks to a Dartmouth friend who worked for Pauley Oil, and who secured a \$3,000 contribution, we could say we raised

maybe \$4,500, \$5,000. And then I had a fundraiser at a friend's restaurant at Maiden Lane. And in August I had a press conference announcing my candidacy at Commodore Stockton School in Chinatown, so it was part of a theme. Of course, I was criticized using that issue, because the office was the Board of Supervisors, not the Board of Education. But I used the issue as emblematic of issues and problems in which the voters are ignored at the expense of a relatively small group's decision on what's good for people.

03-00:39:19

Meeker: What were some of the other issues that you felt that voters were being ignored, and it was sort of the—

03-00:39:24

Kopp: Well, I found in campaigning that I'd become a fiscal conservative. I was no longer a New Deal Democrat, and two years before, John Barbagelata had run in 1969. I only knew him superficially, but I knew him in a respectful way, because in 1964 when I was co-chairman of Pierre Salinger's campaign for the US Senate nomination, Salinger, who had attended and graduated from USF, had a number of USF type friends. And Bob Barbagelata, who was a Democrat and a lawyer, was one of them, even though he was younger than Salinger. I don't think John knew Salinger in college, maybe he did. But in any event, that's how I met John Barbagelata. We had a lunch in North Beach with about 12, 13 USF graduates, and John Barbagelata said, "I will distribute 50,000 flyers on the weekend, let's say, of May 9th, and he did. And it was extraordinary, because in politics, you don't expect reliability. All you expect are promises and then non-performance, and the people who perform you can count on the fingers of one hand, and I never forgot John Barbagelata did what he said he'd do. And then he'd also secured a headquarters I think in the Richmond district for me, somebody's small office he was agent for or something. So in 1969, he ran for the Board of Supervisors, upset the applecart was elected. I'd gone to one fundraiser; he had a lunch at Bimbo's 365 Club, \$25 was the cost. And then in 1970, even though his children for the most part didn't go to public schools, and he had seven children, they all went to Catholic schools, but he fixated on busing, and expressed opposition to it. So we were thrown in together, and we saw a lot of each other, and it was his idea to make the Board of Education elected. And I joined that, and I flyspecked and edited the actual language of that charter amendment, which was an initiative we qualified. And he broke a tradition for the worst, but he broke it for me and others. At that time, supervisors would never endorse another candidate, whether it was a colleague, incumbent, or whether it was someone else, and you'd never endorse in the Mayor's race. 1967, Jack Ertola, Italian, with all the Alioto connections, didn't endorse Alioto, wouldn't endorse Harold Dobbs, even though Harold Dobbs had been on the Board of Supervisors with him. Harold was no longer on the Board in 1967, but I think he did overlap Jack Ertola, maybe not. So John Barbagelata broke that tradition by endorsing Jack Molinari, another fellow by the name of Bob—I can see him, maybe his last name will come to me.

03-00:43:21

Meeker: Gonzalez?

03-00:43:22

Kopp: No. No, no. No, this fellow was a—Bob Nelson was a Republican, was active politically, and me. And Jack Molinari and I were elected, so then John had two more allies on the Board. But John Barbagelata was the ultimate fiscal disciplinarian, and I guess in conversations and also on my own, I've found that that was a major issue.

03-00:43:55

Meeker: What did that mean then in 1971, to be a fiscal disciplinarian versus not being one?

03-00:44:01

Kopp: Well, it was the era of the War on Poverty, and Joe Alioto got that federal money, and did he spend it! All over town! The Bayview, Hunter's Point! So it meant that you were swimming against the Democratic policy tide in San Francisco, because everybody loved that federal money, loved to spend, loved to do that! It was before Prop 13. The issue was always what the property tax rate would be next year, and the Feinsteins, the Mendelsohns, the Francois', the Bob Gonzalezes, the Ron Pelosis had no compunction in adopting your expenditure budget and then raising the property tax rate to raise the money to pay the expenses. So it was going against the tide.

03-00:45:07

Meeker: Was there a sense that—

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Kopp: Except downtown, except the Chamber of Commerce and downtown.

03-00:45:14

Meeker: Was there a sense that this spending was accomplishing anything, or did it seem, from your perspective, to be accomplishing nothing? Or is that too black and white?

03-00:45:21

Kopp: Well, it accomplished, I suppose, some items, but a good deal of it is wasted. Alioto was laying money on hoods and gangsters and the Bayview, Hunter's Point, a couple of them were indicted, he had some minor embarrassment! The Beasley Brothers, I remember the Beasley Brothers assaulted some people, so that money is wasted. To me, most of the War on Poverty money, at least in San Francisco, was wasted. And city services were pretty good, pretty good, but of course you had the massive union power, too, that you were contesting, and I was still a Democrat, so conventionally you'd expect unions to embrace me. A few did, but that was mostly because of personal connections. At one time, I represented Local 400, which is part of the SEIU,

it's long gone, and I represented Local 400 until Phil Burton interfered and ended that retention after I made noises about Jack Ertola's candidacy against Phil for that Congressional seat, and the Business Manager, John Jeffrey, called me one day and said, "I understand that you're thinking of endorsing a candidate other than Phil Burton for Congress." And I said, "Yeah, Jeff, you probably mean Jack Ertola." He said, "Yeah," said, "That would be unfortunate." And I said, "Well, Jack is a friend, a personal friend." So he said, "Well, Phil Burton is like a member of this union." And within 90 days, I no longer represented Local 400. And to show you what a wonderful human being Phil was, one Saturday afternoon I walk into John Monahan's bar on Sanchez, number 10 Sanchez. Phil is sitting at the bar as he would do from time to time, even though Monahan was an old San Francisco Democrat, and Phil was who he was, and Phil says as I walk by him, "How's Jeff?" Meaning "John Jeffrey," so he wanted me to know that he'd "fixed" that client for me! (laughter) But I did also represent the Communication Workers, the local, which was large, and I may have gotten some other union endorsement. But anyway, I was bucking that, too, always bucking the public employee unions.

03-00:48:17

Meeker: So you were then elected in 1971, and the Board of Supervisors election then, rather the Board of Education election in 1973. Did you consider then—

03-00:48:27

Kopp: '72.

03-00:48:28

Meeker: In '72, OK, so—

03-00:48:29

Kopp: Or maybe it was '70... No, I think we—no, it was '72, because it was on the ballot in '71. It passed, and so the election was in June '72.

03-00:48:42

Meeker: So rather than actually running for a position on that, you instead recommended a slate of—

03-00:48:49

Kopp: Yeah, yeah, we had a slate of candidates, yeah.

03-00:48:52

Meeker: OK. Did you think there was much you could do about busing in the context of supervisors, or did you have another agenda?

03-00:49:03

Kopp: No, the only thing I could do anything about was housing patterns, and I remember that Terry Francois and I supported some legislation; in fact, we were the coauthors that had to do with either the Housing Authority or a

Redevelopment Agency project in the Bayview, and ensuring that that would be mixed. And, of course, Terry later became a conservative (laughter) before he died! He hadn't yet become a conservative, but in '72 we were the coauthors of some legislation. But you couldn't do much to effect a housing pattern change, but that I would sound that theme in any legislation was even faintly relevant to it. But you couldn't do anything on the School District.

03-00:50:14

Meeker: Well as you mentioned, the Human Rights Commission was created through an ordinance that, you know, was a modification, I believe, of the City Charter—

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Kopp: Well, no, I think it's in the Charter, but I think it was first created as an ordinance by the Board of Supervisors. Then it was a Charter amendment, which was approved by voters.

03-00:50:36

Meeker: All right. So it was created in '64, and one of the things that they were to regulate was antidiscrimination in housing and employment and services. Oh, what was I going to say?

03-00:50:55

Kopp: I didn't have much action with the Human Rights Commission.

03-00:51:00

Meeker: Well there was, so you know, in relation to this notion of changing sort of minority political constituencies in San Francisco, one of the things that definitely comes up in the early 1970s is the emergence of gay and lesbian groups, and some of their, in my research I found some of the major changes in city government first came through the Human Rights Commission, that would have been approved by, from what I understand, the Board of Supervisors. So in April '72, which would have been shortly after you joined the Board, there was a vote to add sexual orientation to the nondiscrimination ordinance. Do you recall that coming up?

03-00:51:46

Kopp: No. I don't even know how I voted. Do you know?

03-00:51:50

Meeker: No, I don't know. I was going to ask you! (laughter)

03-00:51:52

Kopp: No, I'd be interested to know how I voted. [I did vote for it.] Actually, I had represented a guy in the mid '60s who, it started as a criminal case, was accused of molesting some neighbor child. He lived out in the Excelsior, and he worked for the United States Weather Service. And I handled the criminal

case, got him probation, straight probation with a misdemeanor plea. In fact, I think Norman Elkington presided. He was then a Superior Court judge, he'd been the Chief Assistant DA. Then the United States Civil Service notifies him that he's discharged from service, so that was the second case, fighting the Civil Service, United States Civil Service action. And boy did I fight it! Did I fight it! What did it have to do with his job performance? Well, we lost. I think I've forgotten the route it took. I think I did file an action. I lost in the Federal Civil Service Commission, US Civil Service Commission, and then I can't remember if I went to the US District Court or not, but I lost, and he was out. And then I'd had somebody else, similar, the police would run stings so this guy was in the balcony of a motion picture theater, and some plain clothes guy ran a sting operation. He got charged, and I thought that had some employment component. Maybe it didn't, but I got him probation on that. But the Weather Service guy is the one I remember, and in '67 when I campaigned, there was—oh, I can't remember! Was it SIR, Society of Individual Rights?

03-00:54:04

Meeker: That was an organization.

03-00:54:05

Kopp: Yeah, but there was a predecessor.

03-00:54:08

Meeker: The Mattachine Society?

03-00:54:10

Kopp: No, it wasn't Mattachine, because that's what Walden hung around Christopher in the '59 election, which didn't work at all. But—

03-00:54:20

Meeker: Were you aware of that when it was happening?

03-00:54:23

Kopp: No. 'Cause Wolden was a Democrat. I can remember, those were the days of the Tipplers, when Christopher spoke before us, so did Wolden, but you didn't endorse. You couldn't endorse in a non-partisan election. And I think I voted for Christopher, although I didn't know why particularly. Wolden was a joke, and of course, three, four years later he was in the dock as we know! I shouldn't say he was a jerk. He was somethin'. His assessor's office was on the first floor, and election night, he had a huge conference room and he'd have a full bar, and after you were in the know, that's where you'd go to get a drink election night, 'cause you couldn't buy booze on election day anywhere! So let me see, maybe it was SIR. Yeah, maybe it was 'cause one night—in those days, a candidate for Supervisor could get away with having a Speaker's Committee. You didn't have to appear at every event. Those days I think are gone, people would be insulted. So one night, Jack Ertola said he was busy

with some dinner, and they had three appearances. I could kill him! One of them was SIR, one was out in the Oceanview at some church, and I can't remember now the third. But he knew what he was doing, because none of 'em was a friendly audience! And I remember SIR because Alioto sent Fred Furth over for him! I knew Fred, but Fred was, as much baloney as he is, he was nimble-footed to survive, and I was treated a bit better because there was a Vietnam, get-out-of-Vietnam policy declaration on the ballot, and I supported it and Jack didn't. So I made that point, thinking I'd ingratiate Jack through my support of it and whatever else happened. So they were a part of it. SIR had a pretty good, they had a big audience, a big audience! I think they were on Sixth Street. Anyway, Sixth, I don't remember much after that until I ran for Supervisor, SIR was still going. Presented my credentials, I'm sure I told them my Weather Service story, and that's why I'd be interested to know how I voted on that ordinance. I hope I voted for it, I don't know.

03-00:57:36

Meeker: Well, there was also something that I did in looking through the Human Rights Commission records, and then in 1974 there had been this case through the Human Rights Commission about discrimination based on sexual orientation in Pac Bell, in Pacific Bell. And Pacific Bell basically said that the City of San Francisco didn't have jurisdiction because it was a State mandated monopoly, and so really the State had precedence over this, and the State didn't outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. And so then there was this move within the Board of Supervisors to get more gay representation on the commission itself, and so I came across this proposal that you and Terry Francois cosponsored to add a 16th seat onto the Human Rights Commission that was to be explicitly associated with the gay community.

03-00:58:37

Kopp: (laughter) Is that right? I can't remember it!

03-00:58:40

Meeker: OK, 'cause it seemed—

03-00:58:42

Kopp: I can visualize it happening, because even though Terry—what year was it? [I was the co-author.]

03-00:58:52

Meeker: This was '74, so it was the year before Moscone was elected.

03-00:58:55

Kopp: Terry—yeah, and Feinstein was President of the Board, and the lineup was Terry [Francois], Gonzalez, Mendy, Ron Pelosi, Feinstein, and I'm trying to think of—oh, Roger Boas was gone by then.

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04-00:00:17

Meeker: So we were talking about that proposal before the Board of Supervisors in 1974.

04-00:00:23

Kopp: Yeah, I can't remember, but I remember the lineup, and probably the sixth person in that lineup was Al Nelder, because he was Feinstein's protégé, and he would follow her. He would vote. In the other way, it was Barbagelata, Kopp, Molinari was still with John and me although he jumped ship after the Moscone election, Peter Tamaras, and Dorothy von Beraldigen was usually the lineup. So Terry would have been on the other side, but as I say, I remember pairing with him on encouraging diversity of occupation of housing, so I probably did on this.

04-00:01:19

Meeker: Eventually—I assume, from what I understand—

04-00:01:21

Kopp: And I probably voted yes on that amendment to the human rights ordinance, now that I think of it.

04-00:01:26

Meeker: OK, so that was, that was then in April '72, but this 1974 thing apparently never went to a vote, because it looks like what ended up happening was... What ended up happening? You know, apparently the Human Rights Commission itself and the people they were working with didn't like the idea of a new seat specifically identified, so this thing, this is what goes back to the Board of Education and the seats for Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, because there was this notion that, well, maybe there should be a seat specifically identified, actually mandated for the gay and lesbian community in San Francisco, and it sounds like the Human Rights Commission didn't like the idea of there being a specific seat with one community, because that would open up the Pandora's box for all the communities that were to be represented. And it seems like this interesting turning point where it moves from the Protestant/Catholic/Jew notion to something that's much different. And just from your previous experience, I just found it to be, I just want to know your perspective on opening it like that and changing it.

04-00:02:41

Kopp: Probably pressure, lobbying from gays—

04-00:02:48

Meeker: So who would be lobbying, individuals or groups?

04-00:02:51

Kopp: Individuals, people I'd become friends with or at least acquaintances who I'd see around City Hall—

04-00:03:02

Meeker: Do you remember any of those people?

04-00:03:04

Kopp: Gosh, I don't now. I remember there's a fellow who had a shoe store on Market, Larry, and I can't remember his name. I don't see him in town now. So that group has become more strident than it was.

04-00:03:23

Meeker: Meaning?

04-00:03:24

Kopp: Well, there are more, and they occupy positions in power throughout San Francisco government. In fact, people argue, and you could argue, that they control power. But these were earnest people, they were active either in SIR... I met Harvey Milk, for example, in I think 1975. Yeah, I did, 'cause he ran for Supervisor and I'd see him on the stump. And I just can't remember the names now.

04-00:04:09

Meeker: OK, well I actually found your discussion of Harvey Milk to be interesting in the previous interview, because the way that he's usually written about in literature is more in a heroic sense, right? But you didn't talk about him either as a hero or a villain, but merely as a politician.

04-00:04:28

Kopp: Oh, he was. He was as good a finagler as you could imagine, and he would devote full time to finagling. I don't know what the camera shop brought in, although that's become legendary, but he was some finagler! And in '75, he'd get up and make speeches, and he'd say something that wasn't right! And I can remember at least once in the Mission pulling him aside. I'd say, "Look, that's not correct! Here's what is correct!"

04-00:05:09

Meeker: Do you remember what that was about?

04-00:05:10

Kopp: I don't remember the issue or the problem. I knew he's no threat to me as a candidate, he's not going to come close to finishing number one, but he was a good schmoozer, he's a schmoozer. When I think, now I think of what I did in '76 for him, and then I'll bring us up to '77 with him, if that's at all interesting. So he ran in '75, and he wasn't at the tail end. He probably finished around tenth, eleventh. Well, there were six seats up that year, and it

went me first, Molinari second, Mendelsohn, I think Ron finished fourth, and either—

04-00:06:00

Meeker: This is '75.

04-00:06:01

Kopp: '75. Either Terry or Bob Gonzalez finished fifth and sixth, respectively. I think Terry finished sixth. Terry did very badly in that election, and Gonzalez had surprised everybody finishing third in '71. I finished sixth in '71, and Terry was fourth, but Bobby really surprised people—and then he was so cocky! And so Alioto got him to run against Phil in the Democratic Primary in June of '72, and he got blown out! And then Burton tried literally to put him out of action! Everything, his law practice, anything he could! He couldn't do much, and he's in Washington. Oh, God! Had the guts to run against him! Milton Marks did that years later, too. The Republicans wanted me to run against Burton. That was when Reagan was President with Ed Rollins, Ed Rollins made that pitch to me. But so Harvey finished whatever, eleventh, tenth, and then so he started coming around committee hearings. Well then, oh, George Moscone was elected, so now it's going to be a liberal sweep, radical sweep, and he appoints Harvey to the Board of Permit Appeals, which was a strong—

04-00:07:37

Meeker: That's a choice appointment? OK. That's a choice appointment?

04-00:07:38

Kopp: Yeah, that's a strong Commission, 'cause you hear appeals from everything, building permits, this, that, the other. So then '76, George is out of the Senate, oh, so John Foran's going to run for the Senate. And the Burtons really had nobody for that election, because it picked up a part of San Mateo County already by 1970 in that reapportionment, and I remember there were a couple of people. Bill Schumacher was on the Daily City Council, I think he ran. But Foran then vacates his Assembly seat, and Harvey Milk will run for that Assembly seat, and Art Agnos. They must have all cut a deal, George and Leo McCarthy, they must have cut a deal. OK, John moves to the Senate, and that's what they did, sure, because Agnos was McCarthy's Chief of Staff. That's what they did, and then Agnos.

04-00:08:52

Meeker: So wait, spell that out for me. What was the deal you think that happened?

04-00:08:55

Kopp: Well the deal is this: George is elected Mayor, he vacates the Senate seat. Foran was in the Assembly. His Assembly district, or where he lived, who the hell knows how the reapportion in '70 had been, it was a distorted reapportionment, already run by Phil Burton. Maybe Jesse Unruh had a piece

of it, too. And Foran vacates the Assembly seat, and then Agnos moves into the Assembly. Well, Harvey Milk wants to run for the Assembly and says so, and George Moscone announces publicly that if he runs for the Assembly, he will be taken off the Board of Permit Appeals. There's a nuance, there were about six commissions under the old charter, the existing charter, which were at will commissions, so that included the Police Commission, it certainly included the Board of Permit Appeals. I've forgotten what the other ones were. So you could yank 'em, not a fixed term. The term was four years, fixed term—a term, not a fixed term, a term, but you could be yanked at will. So he said, he threatened to yank him. I made a public statement that it's outrageous the Mayor would do this, et cetera, although I don't know what policy position, but the policy position was that it would be a policy conflict to have somebody running for office while sitting on this commission. So then he does file his candidacy for the Assembly, and I promptly, or Moscone promptly fires him, and I promptly endorse him against Agnos and helped him.

04-00:11:01

Meeker: Then what was the politics, if you will, behind your endorsement of him? I assume that he came to you?

04-00:11:06

Kopp: It was 50% indignation over treating the guy that way, and maybe another 50% with Leo, because Leo and I were estranged, and that began in his '65 campaign when he lost to Moscone. I lost enthusiasm for that campaign because of Leo's personality, and he never tried to help me politically. When I ran in '71, for example, George was by then associated with the Hanson Bridget Law Office, and I went to see George. You try to get everyone's endorsement, and George was friendly, and George had carried a bill to help my father, and I knew George as a young lawyer and he was always a good guy to be with, North Beach or elsewhere. So here was a deal which Leo had arranged, obviously, with George and the Burtons. So 50% of my endorsement was attributable to not part of either. I'm not part of Burton/Moscone/Brown, I'm not part of Leo [McCarthy] or John Foran, for that matter, and in later years all of that was mended. In the last ten years of his life, or the last eight years, Leo used to convene every three, four months. He'd make every call personally to about 11 or 12 of us who went back to 1958, 9, and '60. Foran's supposed to take over the responsibility now that Leo died last month. But in any event, I endorsed him. He came close; I was with him election night, for example. He came close to prevailing. So now he runs, they get this district election, '76 in the fall.

04-00:13:28

Meeker: Can we hold, pause there for a second? And, you know, the 50% sort of contra Moscone's actions and the 50% attributable to long-term—

04-00:13:40

Kopp: Yeah, the machine, it was a collective machine to me.

04-00:13:43

Meeker: Well then, there's, you know, there's push and pull factors in everything, and it seems like might there also have been a motivation that perhaps Milk represented a new voting constituency in San Francisco, and perhaps—

04-00:13:56

Kopp: There might have been, but I don't remember. I remember Leo and I being on the outs. I'd had experience with Agnos. Now I remember him, and Richie Ross, who humiliated me out in the Bayview one night in 1975, and I was carrying water for Feinstein who was President of the Board, and I was chairman of the Health Committee. It was the sewers service project. I remembered Agnos pretty good, and to this day I don't know why Leo ever embraced him, as a friend of mine observes a great mistake in judgment, but that's the case.

04-00:14:45

Meeker: So with supporting Milk, it was more the adage of the enemy of your enemy is your friend sort of thing.

04-00:14:53

Kopp: Yeah, and then half of it was the principle. He shouldn't have been fired. So now we get to '77, and district elections, fall of '76 we didn't pay enough attention to that district election initiative, we being Barbagelata, Feinstein, me, Molinari, so it passed. '77—

04-00:15:22

Meeker: Well, it had been on the ballot before and been defeated, yes?

04-00:15:24

Kopp: Yeah, in '72 it had been on the ballot. In fact, there were two or—in '72 in November, there were three different versions. Voters rejected 'em all. Ron played a part in at least one of 'em, and so did John and I. Now it comes back to me. We supported district elections in '72.

04-00:15:44

Meeker: Huh, why?

04-00:15:47

Kopp: To be contrarians, I think. We had some theory. *The Bay Guardian* loved this, they thought we were the only honest people on the Board, which we were! Anyway (laughter), or mostly intellectually honest. Yeah, we supported that in November '72.

04-00:16:07

Meeker: But you were opposed to it in '76.

04-00:16:08

Kopp: Yeah.

04-00:16:09

Meeker: Why?

04-00:16:11

Kopp: Because we knew who was behind it, and who would come with it.

04-00:16:16

Meeker: And who was that?

04-00:16:17

Kopp: That Community Congress, Calvin Welch, Nancy Walker. I can't remember all the names. Jeez, I'll come back to them.

04-00:16:31

Meeker: What was the Community Congress? I—

04-00:16:32

Kopp: Well, you got to look that up in history. They began meeting around I think '72. Take a look at the *Bay Guardian's* old files, they covered them. And they were, oh, they came out of that Alvin Duskin movement, anti-downtown development, and this and that. Sue Hester was in it. I think Arnold Townsend was; he's a minister now and has been for a number of years. There was another guy, tall African American was part of it. I think Harvey was part of it. So we knew what it meant, you were going to get radicals on the Board of Supervisors, and we did! We sure did!

04-00:17:29

Meeker: Then when he ran in '77, did you endorse him?

04-00:17:34

Kopp: No, because I... The only Supervisor I ever endorsed was Barbagelata in '73 against Feinstein, 'cause John had broken the tradition of no endorsement.

04-00:17:48

Meeker: And he must have run again in '77. Everyone had to, right?

04-00:17:53

Kopp: Yeah, I ran, and I was unopposed, so that's another story. And so I got about 21, 22,000 votes, which was the highest. Everyone else had opponents, including Feinstein, which leads to another story, and she got about 10,000. Dan White got 5,000, and Harvey probably didn't get much more, because

there were about five candidates there. Terrence Hallinan ran, Bob St. Clair ran. I've forgotten who else. Oh, there was a lawyer, a gay lawyer. What was his name? Rick something.

04-00:18:31

Meeker: Stokes?

04-00:18:32

Kopp: Stokes.

04-00:18:32

Meeker: He ran, too?

04-00:18:33

Kopp: Yeah, he ran. So two nights after the election, we were up on Grant and North Beach. Rena—oh Lord, I'll think of her name, whatever her... La Pantera was the restaurant, and they had kind of a street closing. Anyway, I got sick, and I wound up with an appendicitis, and I was in the hospital and it got infected, and I was in the hospital almost two weeks. And that's when Feinstein put together, started putting together the votes to be President, even though I'm supposed to be President on the Board. But let's forget that for a minute. She would bug me to come up and visit me, and I didn't want to listen to her. But Harvey came up to the hospital, and I let him, and he was already wheeling and dealing about the President this and that, and who was going to be President. To shorten the story, John Barbagelata had a idea that I cut a deal with her, and he would play on her emotions by saying she'd been rejected by her party twice, '71, '75. You don't think the Burtons were going to let her be Mayor, do you? And she had tried in '76 to get a job under Carter. I'd written a three page letter for her. I wonder where that letter is, it must be in the National Archives. Oh, God! (laughter) She was bereft of any political future, so John would play on her emotion if she'd endorse me for Mayor against Moscone, and I'd let her be President of the Board. While I was in the hospital, and then home another two weeks recuperating, she got this Dan White, if you can believe it, she got him.

04-00:21:00

Meeker: How so? What do you mean by that?

04-00:21:01

Kopp: She got his support. She lined up his vote.

04-00:21:04

Meeker: To be President.

04-00:21:05

Kopp: So then John gets this meeting after I could get around, with Nelder, Francois, John, her, and me, and the deal is that she promises to endorse me, and I

promise to support her to be President, which probably means bringing Lee Dolson, Ron Pelosi, and Bob Gonzalez. She'd already pretty much had Molinari, but she wouldn't have, because if I hadn't done that, I would be the top vote getter, and you work the press to make sure nobody strayed. The lefties wouldn't vote for me, meaning Ella Hill Hutch, Harvey Milk, Gordon Lau—

04-00:22:06

Meeker: Carol Silver.

04-00:22:08

Kopp: Huh?

04-00:22:09

Meeker: Carol Silver?

04-00:22:10

Kopp: Carol Ruth Silver. But the others would. Those who came from the old Board would all vote for me, and Lee Dolson would, and White would, too.

04-00:22:20

Meeker: What, then, happened between '76 and '77, when you were endorsing Milk, and then '77 when he wouldn't vote for you for President, even though you were the top vote getter?

04-00:22:30

Kopp: Well, nothing as such happened. Harvey was an operator, and I was in my own—wait a minute, I did endorse, I remember I endorsed White. No, I did. This is the worst thing a politician—I endorsed two candidates in whatever that district was, the [Portola?], 'cause I remember one was a Palestinian, Waddie Ayoob, who I knew from hanging around the old deli out there (Armanino's), it'll come back to me, just hanging around San Bruno Avenue. So I vote, endorse two or maybe three. There was a woman who I liked who had been around City Hall. And I think I may have endorsed two in another district. But I didn't endorse in his race, because Bob St. Clair by then was a friend of mine. There was a woman, I'm trying to think of her name, who was nice. She was married to a City gardener by the name of Bob Killian. Or no, she wasn't married to him, he was a supporter. She later ran for Treasurer. Clint Reilly put her up to it, and she put herself in hock with the mortgage—thank you, Clint—and lost, got blown out! (laughter) So I endorsed maybe in two, three districts. Probably endorsed Lee, and maybe Ron, who narrowly beat John Bardis. Anyway, whatever it was, Harvey came, well, I let Harvey come over to the hospital, and he's talking, he's wheeling and dealing, all that stuff. Anyway, to bring it on home, Dan White had only one issue. That was to stop Mount St. Joseph's, up there on University and Mound in the Portola, being turned into a home for delinquent children. It was a home for unmarried mothers that the Catholic Church ran, but there were fewer and fewer

unmarried mothers, right, with birth control and everything. And so of course Feinstein is going to vote no anyway. So Feinstein gets elected. She got Ella Hill Hutch, and the other, she got Molinari, of course, and Gonzalez was very unhappy. He knew a deal had been cut, and he couldn't understand why I was going to vote for her. She promised that day of the vote, the endorsement would be by April 1st. So much for politicians' promises. So now she's the President, and now this Mount St. Joseph issue comes to us. I've forgotten how it got to us, maybe it was a rezoning ordinance of some kind. And, of course, Dan White loses, and Harvey Milk votes no. And Harvey had probably dangled him into thinking he might vote against the rezoning. Let's say it was rezoning. Feinstein voted against it, and I voted against it, and Dan White, maybe Lee Dolson, and that was it. Dan White got wiped out. I remember he came across—he sat on the other side, he came over to my chair, and he says, "You're right, the leopard never changes his spots." 'Cause I told him, Milk isn't going to vote for this. He can't! He's liberal/radical! That was Harvey. And then after that, Harvey was always wheeling, dealing with this, that, and the other thing. The pooper-scooper, that ordinance, which was fine, who the heck cares? It's not going to change the world, but it got him a lot of press. Oh, he was a shrewdie. He was a shrewdie political wheeler-dealer. The problem was, you got a nut on the Board. His name is Dan White, and there was always something about him in his eyes. He came down to me in that campaign, and came down to my law office to get my endorsement, and I did eventually endorse him. But there was something that was strange about him. And, of course, I knew people, friends of mine, the Annussi boys had gone to Wilson, which was a high school, with him, and how he'd take—it was predominantly black even then, and he'd get in fights with them, and he was just crazed. And Barbo, John had the same sensation of him. John was no longer on the Board, he'd have nothing to do with district elections, but he thought he was "off," too. And then, of course, what added to it was him playing footsie with Feinstein. He had no business from a political philosophy standpoint being with her, so it made him suspect, and it caught up with Harvey. That's why he killed him, because Harvey had lied to him, probably, or if he hadn't lied, he'd misled him to such an extent. And then Dan White works up all this. He sees the voting patterns, he sees how Harvey votes, and it caught up with him.

04-00:28:15

Meeker: The way that you talk about politics in San Francisco—

04-00:28:17

Kopp: I'm not condoning it, in case anybody looks at it, but that's what happened. It's like what happened at Virginia Tech yesterday. You get people who are crazed, right? Who would ever think that someone would bring a gun into City Hall! OK, go ahead.

04-00:28:39

Meeker: The way that you talk about politics in San Francisco is interesting because, you know, I mean obviously you as a politician there interacted with other politicians, and the way that the world happened was endorsements and deals and so forth, personalities. But what I don't hear is a lot of discussion of how you're going to develop, you know, voter constituencies to insure that they vote for you. To what extent did—was that something that you were thinking about a lot?

04-00:29:12

Kopp: No.

04-00:29:12

Meeker: Or did it seem like, did it seem like the voters would line up with various established constituencies of politicians?

04-00:29:24

Kopp: The voters would line up. That's how I figured it. If John and I, or when he was gone, if I stayed the course of fiscal discipline and conservatism, I just figured they'd respect that. And in those days, the Theriots owned the *Chronicle*, and the *Chronicle* was behind me. The *Examiner* never was, I always had trouble with the *Examiner*, even when the Hearsts owned it. '71, *Examiner* didn't endorse me. There was a political guy there who took over the editor page, Sid Rossen. He was liberal, and he, boy, I had a terrible time with him! Terrible time! And then this guy Reg Murphy became the editor, and he fell in love with Feinstein, and he was hostile to John and to me. He tried to cover it up with that Georgia charm, but he was hostile. But I had that, I had the Chamber of Commerce. Chamber of Commerce was a big institution, not like it is now. The Chamber of Commerce would send the President, Jack Sutro. Jack Sutro was my first boss so to speak, when he was President, to go down and testify against the salary ordinance increase, he'd get booed by all those union city employees, but he'd go in there and do it. Even Jim Harvey, Transamerica Corporation in the '70s, would come in and testify. I don't think, they're afraid to today. Chamber of Commerce isn't an entity today in San Francisco. So you had that. You had—

04-00:31:21

Meeker: In the same way that perhaps union aren't an entity as much in San Francisco, either.

04-00:31:24

Kopp: I think they're, I think they're every bit as much, and more. And more. And you had homeowners associations, which were stronger. Albeit, I'll stereotype. The Asian population, what's the population now? 38%, you see those last figures in the context of African Americans leaving the city. They don't join the homeowners groups. What's supplanted the homeowners groups, I think, are these Democratic clubs. They're just cover, blanket the

city, but in those days homeowners associations were large. My homeowners association had 1,000 dues payers. We'd have an annual dinner up at St. Stephen's. You'd have 250, 300 people, and that was true around the city. Well those were homeowners, and I had them all. I didn't have to work for it. I didn't take 'em, I was polite and courteous, of course. I'd campaign around them, during the year I'd go to as many as you could. So I didn't think about building a constituency base. I never did that until I was in the Senate, and then I only had two more elections.

04-00:32:47

Meeker: Well, the homeowners groups would have been a constituency base.

04-00:32:50

Kopp: Yeah, well I had them. I had them. And John Barbagelata had them, too. I got it from John, really.

04-00:32:58

Meeker: When did you notice the Democratic clubs starting to become a factor in the Supervisor elections, or for that matter—

04-00:32:07

Kopp: Well, probably I noticed them in the Mayor, in '79, the mayoral election, where I took a pummeling from them.

04-00:33:16

Meeker: From which ones in particular?

04-00:33:18

Kopp: Well, the Chinese American Democratic Club, that gay whatever it was—was it still SIR?

04-00:33:25

Meeker: Toklas, the Alice B. Toklas club?

04-00:33:27

Kopp: No, they weren't formed—maybe, was Toklas formed?

04-00:33:31

Meeker: Toklas was formed in the early '70s, and then there was one, I think, that became the Harvey Milk Club that was later.

04-00:33:37

Kopp: Well, whatever it was, it was a big one. It was an awful night, 400 people and oh, did they give me a tossing! And she racked them up, meaning Feinstein. Yeah, but there were other clubs, too, that... Was there a Franklin Roosevelt Club or something? But you just had the sense going into 'em, they were lined up as partisans, and she was a better Democrat than I was, so I was going—

04-00:34:09

Meeker: Meaning further to the left?

04-00:34:12

Kopp: Yeah, and so I was fighting uphill against them all the time, and that was—well, I guess Frank Jordan won in '91, but that was in large part due to Agnos's personality, and people's personal dislike of him. '79 was about where things started markedly to change inside the Board of Supervisors.

04-00:34:39

Meeker: So thinking about—

04-00:34:41

Kopp: And those clubs were a factor in that election that I can't remember being a factor in '77, which was not much as a campaign, didn't have to be, or '75, or '73, or '71, or '67 with Jack Ertola.

04-00:35:02

Meeker: So thinking about this Chinese American Democratic Club, how would an evening like that just go, from what you remember? I mean, you'd show up and there would be a large group of—

04-00:35:11

Kopp: Immigration. Immigration and education, and then the younger generation coming up. The old institutions started to fade. CACA isn't the force it was, the Six Companies aren't the force they were. Chinatown Chamber of Commerce started to move up the ladder and apparently still is a force. I'm not an expert anymore on such matters. This Chinese American Democratic Club, though, seven years later, endorsed me for the State Senate (laughter) over Papan! But that was part of a deal, because they had—no, awful, my friend, she was running for Judge. Or was she running for Supervisor? Oh, the name will come to me. Not Lillian Sing, but Julie Tang. Julie was running for something, I think Board of Supervisors, and I endorsed her, and she controlled that club pretty good. That's how I got it.

04-00:36:20

Meeker: But when I ask you—

04-00:36:21

Kopp: Although I had had it back in '71 when it was a nascent club. I'd had it the first time I ran, but by '79 they were pronouncedly following party line.

04-00:36:36

Meeker: So '71 would have been largely due to the busing issue, yes?

04-00:36:39

Kopp: Yeah, yeah. I was still a name in Chinatown.

04-00:36:45

Meeker: But I just wondered, like—

04-00:36:46

Kopp: Even though they supported busing, they couldn't be too vocal because they wouldn't attract people, 'cause all the institutions in Chinatown opposed it, so they didn't want to stand out like a sore thumb.

04-00:37:01

Meeker: So I've never actually been to one of these candidates nights at these Democratic clubs. How does it run? How does it happen?

04-00:37:08

Kopp: I don't know, I haven't been since at least '95. I don't know—

04-00:37:12

Meeker: But say like '79 when you went to one of these.

04-00:37:15

Kopp: You'd get up there and you talk. There's often a fight over who's enfranchised, who's a voting member. So it's all kinds of tricks where someone will bring in 20 people who sign up, pay \$10 or \$20, and get the vote. Yeah. That's, I'll tell you what it's more like, it's like a union campaign night.

04-00:37:49

Meeker: Meaning?

04-00:37:50

Kopp: Meaning that it's like the meat wagon! You're up there, and you get your three minutes or five minutes, and then they go at you with questions. You got to have a strong heart and a strong stomach! (laughter)

04-00:38:09

Meeker: So they're not always friendly questions. Very few softballs, huh?

04-00:38:11

Kopp: No, no, and you'll get these fanatics who are characters! (laughter) And they'll come out of left field with a question or a statement that is denunciatory, and then a question.

04-00:38:32

Meeker: I know that we probably need to stop, but I just wanted to ask a point of clarification about the commissions in San Francisco. I'm still trying to learn about this, and there are so many of them. And it seems, obviously, that there's a hierarchy in the more prestigious commissions that one might get appointed to, versus maybe the less prestigious ones.

04-00:38:54

Kopp: Yeah, there are.

04-00:38:57

Meeker: Can you just give me a sense of what some of the more prestigious ones are?

04-00:38:59

Kopp: Yeah, that's easy: Planning Commission, Police Commission, Fire Commission, Port Commission, Board of Permit Appeals, which is now the Board of Appeals.

04-00:39:14

Meeker: Airport, maybe?

04-00:39:16

Kopp: Yeah, the Public Utilities Commission. The Airports Commission.

04-00:39:17

Meeker: And some of the lesser ones, like Commission on Status of Women or something.

04-00:39:24

Kopp: Commission on Status of Women, Human Rights Commission, Animal Welfare Commission. Gosh, Housing Authority wasn't much of a commission. Redevelopment Agency was pretty good, pretty good commission. The Rec and Park Commission is probably in the top 50%, even though it's not as prestigious, in my opinion, as Police.

04-00:40:00

Meeker: Well then what made the top, say, five or ten prestigious, and what made the bottom ones not prestigious? (laughter)

04-00:40:07

Kopp: Well, in the old days, and that means the '50s, '60s, into the '70s, Police Commission only had three members. Three means more power than five or whatever they have now. I think they have seven now. Number two, public safety is at the top of people's worries. Planning Commission is close to the top. Number three, responsibility. Public Utilities Commission has genuine responsibilities. Airports Commission has genuine responsibilities. It's got a lot of money, it's dealing with a lot of money, and it has more money than any other commission, including the Port Commission, which is a so-called—what do they call 'em? A private entity type of commission? Meaning it takes in money. Port Commission is probably a lesser commission today, because there aren't as many steamship companies using the Board of San Francisco. So I think it's the—huh?

04-00:41:27

Meeker: Although the tourism is—although the luxury liners are increasing these days.

04-00:41:32

Kopp: Oh, that's minor. So the three factors are scope of responsibility, the smallness of the group, and number two is the importance of the assignments. So public safety, land use, the money coming at the airport, lesser extent PUC.

04-00:42:02

Meeker: So what, then, would somebody who served on one of these prestigious commissions get out of it?

04-00:42:09

Kopp: They get prestige, and they get esteem, and they probably, to some lesser extent, receive emoluments of office.

04-00:42:22

Meeker: Emoluments of office, right?

04-00:42:23

Kopp: Well, say the PUC. You can go to Hetch Hetchy pick your, you get the prime dates at Hetch Hetchy. I go to Hetch Hetchy still, but I take whatever isn't taken.

04-00:42:39

Meeker: Was there a lodge there or something, or...?

04-00:42:40

Kopp: Yeah, lodge, bunkhouse, cottage, the whole thing. It's a family tradition in my family. So I—

04-00:42:48

Meeker: So they're not paid positions?

04-00:42:50

Kopp: No, they get a stipend, \$50 a meeting, \$100 a meeting, something like that. Police Commission, of course, would be promotions within the Police Department. Fire Commission, to a lesser extent, would be promotions, trying to work around the Civil Service System. The Planning Commission, you'd get a good deal out of that both ways, because you're dealing with neighborhoods and what'll happen to neighborhoods. And then the Board of Permit Appeals would have all those appeals, and if you wanted to be a crook, that was a place to be.

04-00:43:35

Meeker: Greased palms and so forth.

04-00:43:37

Kopp: 'Cause what?

04-00:43:38

Meeker: Greased palms and so forth.

04-00:43:39

Kopp: Oh yeah, oh sure. Because it operated without court rules, so (laughter) and there was a Supreme Court case going back to World War II. It could operate outside the law! You could do anything!

04-00:43:56

Meeker: Do you think that was typical for commissioners on that commission?

04-00:44:00

Kopp: To do anything?

04-00:44:01

Meeker: Yeah.

04-00:44:02

Kopp: Oh yeah, sure. Gosh, in the Alioto years, when they had people like Peter Bodoures, and Dick Bancroft played it straight, I mentioned him yesterday. Trying to think of who else was on it. But you never knew how Peter Bodoures would vote. Something would get into his head, he was eccentric. I don't think he ever took money, but... (laughter) I represented a Chinese American, bought a one story house in Seacliff, paid a lot of money, '67, '68, '69, right in there, and he wanted to put another story on to bring the parents, the typical progression. So oh, that neighborhood was outraged, and they had a lot of big people. Lou Belinsky, they had the old, the two brothers, the Sloss, one Sloss, Frank Sloss on that block. They had Mrs. Cunningham, whose husband had been a Muni Court judge. The Cunninghams were... And let me tell you, and the second story was within the height limit! You wouldn't have known it! And I—and so they got a building permit, and then there's the appeal. That was some experience, I'll tell you! And I was up against a good lawyer, Charlie Morgan, represented the neighbors. He had no, there was no predictability to him, so that was a pretty good... You could just exercise your personal whim. There's an advantage to that particular commission, and no court would overrule you.

04-00:45:53

Meeker: I think that's probably all for now. I've probably taken up enough of your time, but actually just one last question about Feinstein. You described her as a goody two shoes in the last interview. What do you mean by that?

04-00:46:08

Kopp:

She always knew how to do everything by the book. By the book, and she was oh so sincere and earnest, but she was really innately cunning, although a bit naïve in the period when I knew her in the '70s. And then over the years she became less naïve and more knowledgeable in practice, so today she's the professional politician. And that probably began in the mid-'70s. But she would wag her finger about this or that. She introduced a noise, anti-noise ordinance, environment, we're going to get rid of all loud noises, and I took an interest in it and said, "The way this ordinance is written, it's impracticable, and it'll be nonproductive," and it was an occasion in which she sat down with me. And, for example, it would affect construction work. How do you do that? It would affect city work? How do you do that? And she, I think, initially wanted to exempt the City, which is poor policy. That's why I always, that's why I voted against that, what was it? Prop 64, the toxic thing? Because it doesn't include government, just private businesses that produce products which might be toxic. But she worked it out, and we included city departments, and we did it, but that's how she would start out with something. She had another one, she was campaigning in '71. I said this publicly, I love it. And I hardly knew her. She was on a platform with me in West Portal, she's making a campaign speech for Mayor. She's going to invoke a city income tax, because all these commuters from the suburbs come in during the day, take advantage of our police, our fire, our parks, our this and that, and then they go home, and they don't pay property taxes or sales taxes when they're not here, so we should have a city income tax. The only problem was, it was invalid, couldn't be done, because in 1967 or maybe before that, the legislature had passed a bill in the Revenue and Taxation Code which bars any city from imposing an income tax. And that night I just (laughter) felt compelled, when I got up, I think she had already left, to tell the people, "You can't have a city income tax, the State won't allow it!" But that was her in those days, would come up with an idea. And that's what I call goody two shoes, sure! Her argument is legitimate. That means commuters and suburbanites who use city services should defray the cost to some extent anyway.

04-00:49:53

Meeker:

So kind of like a busybody-ness, huh?

04-00:49:55

Kopp:

Yeah. Yeah! That's a good word! And don't forget, she had nothing else to do. Everyone else had a business or profession. Roger Boas had a auto dealership. Terry, Dorothy, Bob Gonzalez, me, we all had law practices. Ron Pelosi was a stock broker. Bob Mendelsohn even had a kind of cruddy consultant business on redeveloping other areas, and he had a deal with Lawrence Halprin, the great architect. Molinari sold insurance, he had an insurance agency. Everybody else had something to do. Peter Tamaras ran the custodial supply business. But she had full days, full, she'd sit there full days with nothing to do except think, think, think! We're going to do this, this! And

I'll leave you with this, in 1975 (laughter), it must have been early in the year, of course she's running for Mayor, she hadn't yet announced. In those days, people were gracious and you didn't belabor people with campaigns until maybe June, July, sometimes even August. (laughter) She proposed a city ordinance legalizing prostitution! (laughter)

04-00:51:27

Meeker: That doesn't sound like within a goody two shoes...

04-00:51:29

Kopp: No, that wasn't, but that was a idea someone had buzzed in her head. Maybe a Margot St. James! (laughter) OK.

04-00:51:43

Meeker: All right then, thank you very much for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW