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# Promises of Power: A Political Autobiography

Carl B. Stokes

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# PROMISES OF POWER

A POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by Carl B. Stokes



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*To my beloved mother, Louise Stokes,  
whose strength and love  
gave me motivation and an inner fiber  
that has refused to be broke*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No single group was as important in my efforts to build white and black coalitions and politicize the poor as were the clergymen of Cleveland. The black clergy were almost solid to a man. But there was outstanding cooperation from some white clergy. They cannot all be named, but some should because of their being representative: Reverend Thomas McCray of the black Methodist groups; Reverend A. M. Pennybacker of the white suburban ministry; Reverend Don Benedict and the late Paul Younger of the Inner City Protestant parish; mostly young white clergy working with the Puerto Rican and Appalachian poor; Reverend Donald Jacobs and the Protestant Council of Churches; Reverends E. Branch and E. T. Caviness of the black Baptist Ministerial Alliance, whom I also thank for bringing me the later Reverend Arthur Le Mon, who became one of my closest administrative assistants.

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## 1

## BIG MAN, LITTLE MAN

For a brief time in Cleveland, I was the man of power. I had what no black man in this country has had before: direct control of the government of a predominantly white population. That power came to me because I seized a situation that had made me seem like a savior to men who ordinarily look on blacks as an alien and vaguely dangerous force.

Most of what you hear about the power structure is so much easy talk. We feel the vague presence of a monolith out there, some well-defined but hidden body with an organization that can act for it. But the monolith is a myth. There were no times in the country when certain men, the great captains of industry, could command what they wanted; they could bring together the resources of a community by the overwhelming presence of their personal wealth, power, and control over others, and perhaps our notions about the power derive from those times.

In the spring of 1966, I was re-elected to my third term as a state legislator. I had been the first black democrat ever elected to the Ohio General Assembly, and in 1965 I had lost, by an excruciatingly narrow margin, my first run to be mayor of Cleveland. My brother Louis, and I had a law firm of five black lawyers on Public Square, but I was dedicated to politics, I didn't love the practice of law the way Louis did.

No white law firm accepted black lawyers in those days. Very few do now. So, like other young black lawyers in those days, no matter how talented, I was a jailhouse lawyer--a little real-estate business, some divorce work, and the kind of criminal defense cases you pick up by hanging around the municipal courts in the morning.

One day about 9 A.M., the secretary buzzed me on the intercom and said, "Mr. Cyrus Eaton wants to speak with you."

"Sure," I said back, "and you're Jackie Kennedy."

"Seriously," she said, "it's Cyrus Eaton."

"You get back on the phone and ask him which Cyrus Eaton."

After a minute she called back and said, "He says he is the Cyrus Eaton who is chairman of the board of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad."

I agreed to get on the phone, fully expecting a joke and fully expecting to take it out of her or somebody else's hide. Then on the other end of the wire is this crisp, fine old English-sounding voice with a slight quaver, just too authentic not to be true, saying, "Mr. Stokes, my name is Cyrus Eaton. I wanted to talk to you about representing me in a lawsuit, and I was wondering when you would be able to see me."

Now, in a situation like that, it is very important to stay cool.

"Are you kidding?" I blurted.

He was not kidding. Within the hour I was standing in the vestibule of his office.

Before me was a legendary figure, one of the world's wealthiest men -- a capitalist who had long fought for peaceful coexistence and trade within the communist countries. Finely combed silver hair, skin a healthy red color, he was dressed as he usually dresses, in a dark double-breasted suit, a crisp white shirt with no wrinkles in the collar, and a navy-blue tie with small polka dots. He walked briskly out of his office and said, "Mr. Stokes, thank you so much for being willing to come and see me," and then escorted me back into the office.

Inside Eaton's offices, it is difficult to remember you are in the citadel of an international operation. Silent people seemed to glide in and out of rooms. No hurry or frenzy, no ringing phones. The pace was so easy it felt like a private home. We talked.

For the next five years we talked, through the time I worked with him on the Cleveland Trust Company lawsuit, and on through my years as mayor, as Eaton became a trusted friend and adviser.

In that first talk, Eaton told me the Cleveland Trust had filed a suit asking the court to order Eaton to desist making his public charges against the bank's practices. Eaton had been telling anybody who would listen that the bank's board of directors was voting its own trust-held shares of stock, which was prohibited by Ohio law. He asked me to defend his former administrative assistant, Gordon Watson, whom he wanted to join him in the lawsuit. I would be working alongside Eaton's personal lawyer.

And so began my education in the byways of the power of big business. Patiently, in session after session, Eaton and his aides explored the growth and life of the Cleveland Trust empire for my benefit. I began to see how over the years its president, George Gund, had amassed a pyramid of trust holdings that gave him and his hand-picked board of directors voting control over the very economic life of northern Ohio. Eaton understood it as a man who had been part of it, and that is the best understanding there is. Before the stock market crash of 1929, Eaton had been on Cleveland Trust's board of directors. After the crash, Eaton was forced to liquidate his stock in the trust company, and Gund used that to force Eaton out. Gund rightly saw Eaton as the main threat to his own continuity as the dominant force at Cleveland Trust. Eaton never forgot; the feud between the two men was as personal as it was financial. In this case, Eaton had what he felt was a clear-cut case overriding his personal motivations; that is why he brought Gordon Watson into it. Behind the legalities, though, was Eaton's desire to see Gund's carefully built empire torn away.

Gund at the peak of his power ruled over the largest trust holding operation in Ohio and one of the largest in the country, an

accumulation of \$2 billion shares of stock. At one time he sat on the boards of fifty-two different corporations. Sitting there, representing, say fourteen percent of the firm's stock, Gund pulled the levers. Gund had Cleveland's economy by the neck. You don't have to be a high school graduate to see that when a man or his representative sits on the boards of three competing coal companies, as Gund did, there is not going to be much competition. He also determined which firms got which contracts. The beneficiary of all these associations was not likely to be the consumer. Nor was the consumer going to benefit when Gund controlled affairs for two of the city's largest department stores. The list is long. It was just the sort of situation you would expect a newspaper to investigate. Unfortunately, controlling interest in the *Plain Dealer*, the largest morning newspaper in the state, was held by Cleveland Trust.

Gund was an extraordinarily conservative man; the effect this had on the use of risk capital in Cleveland is only too clear. The old industries were carefully protected from any new, competing interests that wanted to come in from outside. Young businessmen within the city with ideas for new development found that venture capital was held intractably within Gund's marmoreal fist. At a time when Cleveland should have been growing and shifting away from its old, fat, but increasingly impotent interests; these men drew closer together, ignoring the need for vigorous competition. This is a form of dry rot.

And so it turned out that the only man who both understood the situation and was willing to fight it was Cyrus Eaton, himself one of the great entrepreneurs. Eaton had been devoting a considerable amount of his time trying to alert people to the dangers of this concentration of power; he was talking not only to his own associates but to congressmen, senators, and state legislators. That was what prompted the trust company to file suit against him. They wanted to shut him up. This evidence of their fear of Eaton is a startling thing by itself, and I would come across it again and again later when I was running for mayor. These powerful men, who can

play many trump cards the public never sees when the game goes against them, were afraid one man, fighting alone, but -- and this is important -- fighting in public.

Watch the game. The case was tried in July 1967. Gund died during the trial; he was succeeded as president by George Karch (who has since liberalized and loosened most of those old ties, making Cleveland Trust a more responsible institution). Judge John V. Corrigan ruled in our favor, and Karch immediately announced he would appeal. By the time the case reached appellate court, I had been elected mayor and my brother Louis argued the case. The appellate court eventually reversed Corrigan's ruling, but meanwhile a much more fascinating struggle was going on in the state legislature. From under the tables and out of sleeves, new cards were beginning to appear. Even before the case actually went to trial, the Cleveland Trust Company, through its lobbyists and friendly legislators, was moving to amend the state law to make its voting practices legal.

During this time I was reelected to my third term as a legislator, in November 1966. Then occurred a graphic lesson in the protection of special interests. I had a good working relationship with Republican Governor James A. Rhodes and with Roger Cloud, leader of the Republican majority and Speaker of the House of Representatives. I went to Cloud to talk about my new committee appointments. He said, "Carl, you can have any committee you want with the exception of banking."

I asked, "Because of Cyrus Eaton and the Cleveland Trust fight?"

"That's right," Cloud said.

When the amendment was introduced in the legislature, I went to see Rhodes. I wanted to explain to him why it was wrong for Cleveland Trust to vote its trust-held shares.

"Carl, Cyrus Eaton is one man," he said, "There are a hundred banks in this state that will be affected. One man never beat a hundred. That's all"

So the legislature did amend the law and made our issue moot. The members of the banking committee that passed the legislation on to the floor were persons who the lobbyists had determined were either neutral to their interests or on their side. The people are not really represented when the work of government is being done. The day-to-day business of a legislature is to pass laws that affect the fundamental economic life of their state or, in the case of Congress, the nation itself. The men who really do the work on those laws, working on language construction and persuading legislators, represent special interests. The people's lobby is supposed to be the legislature itself, but the men elected to it almost never are specifically knowledgeable about the industries and interests they are asked to pass judgment on. And, when these men want information, the only people they have to turn to are lobbyists and others with vested interests.

I learned a lot from my contact with Cyrus Eaton and the power structure's fear of him. In the spring and summer of 1967, when the same power structure was grooming me as the man to back in the mayor's race, I was invited to the most exclusive clubs in Cleveland to talk to them about myself and what I hoped to do for Cleveland. It became clear after a couple of these lunches that these men had two things on their minds -- the fear of another riot and the possibility of an alliance between Stokes and Cyrus Eaton.

At one of these luncheons, I was talking to five men who would have to be numbered among the very top bankers and industrialists in the state. Now, when you have men like these in that kind of corner, the thing you do for the sake of frankness and fun is drive them up a wall. I decided to get the thing out in the open, the way Eaton would. Here is approximately what I told them on several occasions, until my advisers told me I'd better cut it out: "I can't understand you. From the outside, you fellows represent the brilliant leaders in business and industry. You are powerful men and you represent powerful men. But you are almost saying that if Cyrus Eaton becomes involved at all in city government, there would be nothing you powerful men could do."

Oh, my. They almost trampled each other to be first to deny they had any fear of Eaton. It was just that Eaton was not the "kind of person" they wanted involved in city government. I had to ask them what in the world they thought Cyrus Eaton would want with the city of Cleveland. What did we have that he could be interested in? Of course I knew perfectly well that it was a simple fear, born, in many cases, of the talk of their fathers. The fear came out of the old family transactions in Cleveland, in the baronial days when there were no rules, regulations or laws and it was always a question of who was the strongest, smartest, most powerful man. Far too often for their comfort, Cyrus Eaton had won.

One of the main things I learned from Eaton was their rule -- unwritten but as rigid as a fist -- against getting involved publicly on issues. That is the rule for the power structure, the business community, those very private men at the tops of our businesses and industries. They couldn't afford to fight Eaton in the public arena because they do too many things the public must not know; their deceptions, their intrigues, their dealings with each other must stay private. They considered Eaton a traitor: he knew all this only too well and yet went on to expose them. Eaton is a confirmation of my belief that a man's knowledge of right and wrong is the child of his experience. If you want to judge about right or wrong you have to have been there yourself, taken your own risks and positions. This is an awkward truth for a father to pass on to his children, perhaps, but that is why it is an important one -- awkward, brittle, dangerous.

As my talks with Eaton drew on, my own life was changing; by the summer of 1967 I knew City Hall was mine for the taking. Eventually, I would have to take positions that flew in the face of public opinion, I would have to make people learn things they wanted to ignore, I would have to make them understand what had to be done and the price they would have to pay. Eaton's example was a help to me. Out of our relationship grew a confidence that a man can take an independent position and win. But also that castigation and vilification will come to any man who tries to do



something that he thinks is important but that is inconsistent with what powerful special interests want.

It was a curious chemistry and an odd luck that brought Eaton and me together at that important time in my life; although the worlds we moved in were vastly different, he was my kind of guy. But I have always moved easily across social lines that usually divide people and keep them from each other.

I was formed by many forces. If I have been a lawyer, politician and TV anchorman, I am still a kid from the public housing projects and never forget it. I learned important lessons from Eaton, even through his cool, Europeanized sophistication and crisp grooming. But twenty years earlier, when I was twenty-one, I had the honor of learning about the realities of politics from John O. Holly, a greasy haired, short, very black, homely man from Alabama who had successfully practiced confrontation politics in Cleveland a generation before anybody ever heard of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Holly was one of the most remarkable men I have known. His fame never went beyond Ohio, but he was a hero to our black community in the late 1930's when I was a kid growing up. They didn't call it black pride then, but if there was ever black consciousness and pride in Cleveland, it came through John Holly.

It is hard for people now to appreciate how extraordinary a phenomenon he was. He came along at a time when Negroes completely rejected any leadership from within. To be black-complexioned even minimized your mobility within the ghetto; the Negro community, with its churches and social groups, was as strictly hieratic as the brahmin structure of Boston. The black politicians of that time -- and this is still true for most -- learned only to get themselves insinuated into the white party apparatus. They had political expertise, but they never questioned their minority status, nor did they question being mere beneficiaries of the system rather than entrepreneurs in their own right. Other than Holly, none of them had that extra dimension it took to understand a mass politics that ignores ward lines. Even later, when younger

men with supposedly new understanding came along, they too saw politics as an arena for personal aggrandizement and ended up in the same kind of subordinate status within the party system that choked off their predecessors.

Curiously, the Democrats and the Republicans were quite different in the way they worked their Negroes. A black Democratic councilman, for instance, was convinced by the party leaders that he could not go beyond the ward lines of his black neighborhood. The Republicans had a different discipline, for, I think, three reasons. For one thing, Republicans tended to function at a higher level, intellectually, than Democrats. And, being an elitist and therefore minority party, they hung together more easily. Finally, the Republicans were the ones who owned things in town, they determined what was going to happen, so they were not threatened by having Negroes on countywide tickets. From the late 1880's until 1962, when I was elected to the General Assembly, there was almost always a black Republican legislator from Cuyahoga County, but no black Democrats, even though most Negroes are Democrats. There were those ironic effects. In 1959, a man named Clarence Sharpe, a Republican, ran for county commissioner. He carried the vote in prosperous white suburbs like Shaker Heights and Lakewood and lost in the black ghetto. His own people defeated him, not because they didn't like him, but because he was a Republican.

In such a system a man like John Holly was almost unthinkable. Though lacking in formal education and ignorant of history, Holly understood that real power was in the hands of the man who could put the people together. In the 1930's he organized sit-ins and boycotts and took over an absolute leadership that had all the recognized black leaders following him. Holly took on the local giants, the utility companies, and won. He put together the little guys, the Negro masses, for an exercise in confrontation politics and had clout. He raised the consciousness of Clevelanders about rights and the sheer wrongness of men and women paying utility bills to companies where they couldn't get jobs.

Holly not only accomplished that, he formed a virtual union of the employed Negroes. It was called the Future Outlook League. It worked simply enough. Holly went to every store owner. The owner was told to hire Negroes or else he would be boycotted. Then whenever a black man got a job in that store, he had to belong to the Future Outlook League. So throughout the black community by 1940 every place had someone black working in it, and all these workers were dues-paying members of the league. So Holly was supported by his own people, and that made him independent. That was the single most important ingredient: self-sufficiency. Nobody could touch him.

When John Holly put it all together, the black aristocracy, the lawyers and doctors and schoolteachers, had no choice but to follow him. The white and black politicians and anyone else who depended on Negroes had to follow. It is a good thing the flush of victory brought with it so much pride, because it is disconsoling to realize that he had to force those black leaders to come up as much as he forced the whites to back down. It used to be marvelous to go into Holly's office and see those old newspaper clippings on his wall. There was one with a picture taken after Holly was released from jail -- he'd been arrested during a sit-in -- and it shows Holly, Call & Post editor William O. Walker and City Councilman Lawrence Payne standing on the steps of the jail. What you see in their faces is pride. It's the same kind of feeling some of the black councilmen in Cleveland had after my victory as mayor. For those four years I was in office, the councilmen and other elected black officials had an independence from the party machinery they had never contemplated.

It was not until 1948 that I really got to know Holly and learn some lessons from him. I was twenty-one I'd been in the Army during the days immediately after the war and then returned to finish high school and graduated in 1947. I got involved with the Young Progressives, the young people's group of Henry Wallace's Progressive Party. At that same time I had become friends with a man named Bert Washington, who had been thrown out of his

post-office job for alleged involvement with the Communist Party. Bert was a local casualty of the Senator Joe McCarthy witch hunts of the time. We in the Young Progressives spent long hours with Bert Washington arguing the comparative merits of socialism and capitalism. And we'd all go to all the political meetings, especially when a speaker for Wallace or for Harry Truman would appear. We'd go to those meetings and harass the speakers for Truman and generally raise hell or get into intense discussions with the young people who were for Truman.

It was through Bert Washington I met Paul Robeson. Paul made several trips into Cleveland campaigning for Wallace. After the rally, a small group would meet with Robeson at Bert's. There was this tall, imposing and yet gentle man, who filled the room with his presence, would talk at length of the nationwide effort to rally the workingman behind Wallace. He softly talked about the long labor struggle, the deaths, imprisonment and economic and social ostracism of those committed to raising the level of the working poor. Paul Robeson's lessons and example heavily influenced my philosophy of government and the positions I later took with organized labor. At the same time I was going through the exhilaration of this more intellectual approach to government, I was learning the hard basics of politics from John Holly.

Holly was travelling around Ohio putting together the Federated County Democrats of Ohio for Lausche. Frank J Lausche was running for his second term as governor. Holly's job was to organize the black Democrats for his campaign. I went to Holly for a job, and he said, "I need somebody to drive my car." So Wallace Connors, a friend of mine, and I drove Holly around the state.

As we'd go down the highway, I'd be asking Holly all sorts of questions. Holly loved to talk, anyway, and he was more than happy to show off his know-how, which was considerable. How do you get to the people of Steubenville? He would tell of such-and-such a leader there he knew about, and about a woman in town whom Holly had known for fifteen years and who was close to the

leader, and a man who working in the Highway Department who got his job during Lausche's first term as governor. It was like that with any town. And then when we'd get into a town, Connors and I would serve them while they were meeting. If we didn't bring liquor with us, we'd go out and get liquor and some setups and then serve them. So we would always be in the room where they were talking. We heard the details of how to put together a local chapter of a campaign organization: who should go for the money, who would see to it that they got a storefront for headquarters, whom you should watch out for in town, who was for you, and who only seemed to be with who was working against you. This was an approach he could take in a town like Dayton, for instance, where he was working with C. J. McLin, Sr., an old, established black politician. It was different in a town like Lima, smaller and more rural, where there was no established leadership and no organization. He would have to put it together, and in those cases you would hear a lot of threats, telling people who had low-level jobs in local government they would lose their jobs, and telling others they could get a job if they worked on the campaign. All this time I would be asking Holly who was so-and-so and how had he gotten to be this and that.

Holly's responses and the actual experience of being with him as he put together a state-wide political machine were my primary-level education in politics.

These cumulative experiences taught me to be a hardheaded realist in most ways; as one who took to politics as a duck does to water, I quickly developed a sure eye and an ability to sense the other man's bottom line.

Such things are necessary for political success. And yet that success is hollow without commitment to some social goal that carries a man beyond his own petty concerns. This is the paradox of political reality: the mainstream (what most people do most of the time) is a flowing system for mediating petty concerns, and the man who tampers with it does so at his peril; whenever he tries to divert its energies for the purposes of the disenfranchised, the poor,

he finds himself on the wrong side of the floodgates. Underneath all the high talk, the campaign promises, the idealist theories, politicians are mostly interested in perpetuating their privileged positions. No matter how well a man understands this, no matter how hard he is, if he fights for the have-nots he will find himself alienated from most of his fellows, and they will do their level best to wear them down, to break him. He may, if he is good enough or sharp enough or powerful enough, win some particular and even important victories. But eventually, he will be driven out.

Cyrus Eaton may have an empire of his own, but to his colleagues he is a pariah. When the energies of the Future Outlook League began to dissipate, Holly's independence began to crumble. The traditional politicians were able to break him and bring him into their fold. Robeson left the country. I am writing this book.

## 2

## HUSTLING

The poor boy's story is universal. The poor American boy's story is the starting point of the American Dream. The poor American black boy's story is no dream, believe me, but it does contain one. Mine goes like this: I am walking in front of a house. It is cold outside, and I can feel the wind cutting through my thin jacket. I look into the house through the big picture window and I see a white family sitting in the living room. The father throws his baby into the air to make it laugh. A fireplace is going, the family is warm, happy and alive. There is a fence in front of the house. I am outside.

I haven't the slightest idea how I ever picked up that mental image, whether it really happened once and stuck, whether I dreamed it or read it in somebody else's life story, whether somebody told it to me I just don't know. But, for as long as I can remember, that image has been the emblem of my need. I suspect that most black children develop such an image. Some learn to live with it, some try to escape it, some fight it. I have kicked around and been kicked around, grabbed and abandoned several careers, and through it all been driven by one demand: How do you not be on the outside? How do you not be poor?

Two years after I was born on June 21, 1927, my father died. He was a laundry worker. His name was Charles. I have no memories of him. My brother, Louis, two years older than I, has taken it on himself to learn more about our father. But for some

reason, and perhaps this says something about me, I have never really tried to learn much about him. After his death, my mother was forced to take on domestic work in the homes of white people for twenty years while she was trying to raise Louis and me. She worked hard and made so little that she had to accept welfare to scrape together enough for us to live. Louis and I saw in her an example of how our people are forced into not merely the labor but the style of servitude, with its superficial deceptions. We all know that servility is an act, something we do with our faces and voices when we have to. It is generally assumed that the posturing is superficial, that there is a 'real' person underneath. But after a time the habit of the servant wrenches a man at the roots of his being. What had been superficial becomes a radical change, and a man's basic outlook on life is ruined. It takes a deeply felt, an abiding personal integrity to survive as a whole person. Fortunately for Louis and me, our mother is such a person.

So I grew up poor and black in Cleveland. The facts of our kind of big-city poverty have been fully documented in sociology and the fiction of James Baldwin and others. The world we knew, before we moved into a public housing project, ran from East Sixty-eighth Street to East Seventy-ninth Street going east, and from Cedar Avenue south to Central Avenue. Everybody in that area knew everybody else, knew what they were doing and most of the time knew what they were hiding. We had almost no notion of anyone's living beyond the horizons of our narrow patch of neighborhood. My mother, Louis and I lived on the first floor at 2234 East Sixty-ninth Street in a rickety old two-family house. We covered the rat holes with the tops of tin cans. The front steps always needed fixing, one of them always seemed to be missing. The coal stove kept the living room warm; we used heated bricks and an old flatiron wrapped in flannel to keep warm in the bedroom. The three of us shared one bed.

Poor people are herded into such neighborhoods, where survival too often means that they are forced to prey on each other. When



my mother washed the clothes on Saturday night, she hung them in the kitchen to dry. Hanging them outside meant you didn't want them anymore. When Louis and I would take our wagon down to get the surplus dried peas, flour, rice and dried milk that was dispensed to welfare clients, we took along a baseball bat to get the food home past the other kids and sometimes even adults.

And we had some fun, but you won't catch me being nostalgic about those times or recommending that it is good for a boy to grow up in such conditions. I grew up with a strong, elemental hatred for poverty and a deep need to have things, nice things. We had a sense of community in that neighborhood, but it was not the kind of community in which people should have to live. There is nothing glamorous about stealing from a delivery truck, or bootlegging, or the numbers racket.

Yet, because the essential condition of our lives was poverty, the men who were successful at these things did have a kind of glamour. My uncle, Pughsley Stone, whom everybody called Dock, ran an after hours spot next to our house. It was a bootlegging and gambling hole, full of tough characters, but none of them tougher than Dock. As a child of eight, I saw them bringing Dock Stone home all busted up from some fight, and at other times I heard stories about him pistol-whipping somebody. He was a very rough man and I was proud of him. In a community where people live in despair and denial, the man who defies the rules and is able to make a living becomes a hero. Dock was one of our heroes.

We were delivered from the most oppressive physical presence of our poverty in 1938, when I was eleven. Cleveland was the first city in the country to construct housing for the poor with federal funds. For some time after the plans for the housing projects were known and Mother had made an application for an apartment, we lived in day-to-day anticipation of getting out of our rickety old house. She would tell Louis and me about steam heat, painted walls, beds of our own, but I'm sure these things meant little to us at the time. We had no experience to give those words meaning.

The day we moved was pure wonder. A sink with hot and cold running water, a place where you could wash clothes with a washing machine, an actual refrigerator. And we learned what it was to live in dependable warmth. For the first time, we had two bedrooms and two beds. My mother for the first time had a room and a bed of her own.

For me, the most important advantage of the projects was the Portland-Outhwaite recreation center only a block away. The swimming pool, ping-pong tables, boxing ring, art classes -- these things gave us a structure for our time we'd never had before. The center was where I first learned to box, and I got good enough at ping-pong to be a member of the city championship team.

Adolescence hits a boy like a fist, and if he is at all close to more than one world of activity, he is likely to find himself shoved toward the seamier. Until I reached the ninth grade I had been the pride of the classroom, getting excellent grades, singing in the glee club, that sort of thing. But about that time I began to develop other talents -- lagging pennies, shooting craps, playing poker, forging my mother's name on a paper excusing me from school. I was caught, of course, and my mother was severely disappointed in me. I felt her disappointment, but didn't change my ways. Whether I would have changed in a different high school I don't know, but I went to East Technical High School, which offered the best vocational training in the city. It was located in my all-black neighborhood, but it was attended by white kids who commuted there from all over. The student body, in fact, was about ninety percent white. (I wonder how those white kids, now middle-aged feel about busing today.)

East Tech had produced a number of internationally famous black track stars in the 1930s and 1940s -- Jesse Owens, Harrison

Dillard, Dave Albritton. One of the reasons the black kids were so good in that one sport is that they were actively discouraged from going out for team sports, football, basketball and baseball.

I remember spending a good deal of my time in the afternoon beating up white kids. We'd go down the halls of the school in the afternoon, looking for white boys to beat up. A lot of times I would do that by myself. If I caught one white boy standing around by himself waiting for a bus, I would just run up and start hitting him. My motivation and rationale for this were as illogical and senseless then as were the unprovoked attacks on black boys who dared to venture into the white neighborhoods. It is impossible for me to recall now what was going on in my mind then, what I thought I was accomplishing. Whatever it was, it had me out looking for trouble a lot of the time. I had been boxing at the Portland-Outhwaite recreation center and was developing a fair reputation; maybe I just saw those white boys as a chance to get in some training.

The other sport I was working on then was pool hustling. I ran with two fellows, starting when I was about fifteen; one, named Albert Williams, we called A. C., and the other, Alton Ausbrook, we called Big Al. A. C. was a great pool shot but only when he wasn't gambling. Once you put money on the game, A. C. fell apart. Atom wasn't as fine a shot as A. C., but he was a marvelous hustler. I practiced constantly until I managed to learn the best of both their styles, and by the time I dropped out of school, at seventeen, I was one of the two or three best hustlers in the neighborhood. Pool is a wonderfully competitive game, in some ways a good analogy for political infighting. It takes a great deal of technical skill, a good eye and a smooth delivery. Beyond that, hustling requires a man to seize quickly upon his opponent's weaknesses.

During the year between the time I dropped out of high school and the time I enlisted in the Army, I learned how to live on the street. I badly wanted to be successful, and I was. But I came to see that no matter how good I was as a street hustler, it wasn't a way

out. At some point I would wake up still tied to the old ways and still not secure against poverty. But I also learned the values of the people who live that life, the forms of honesty they insist on from each other, the things they would and would not do. I learned much of it from a prostitute who became a good friend. I'll call her Ruth.

I doubt that this girl was typical. Her moral stance had a great impact on me. An ethics professor might not have little trouble finding flaws in her philosophy, but the ethics professor would not likely have been born black and a woman and poor in a big city. Ruth is now a member of the middle class and a grandmother. At the time I knew her she was twenty-five and had had the same boy friend since she was sixteen. She is still with him today. It was he who turned her out to make money with her body. If she hadn't, there is no way they could have saved the money to buy the small retail business that has ever since provided their income and enabled them to send two children through college and professional school.

Ruth had an unbargainable rate for her services, and performed no acts she considered perverse. She defined a difference between herself as a prostitute and other girls she called whores, the ones who worked the streets and would do it standing up in doorways, in the backs of cars, would take whatever they were offered and would do anything they were asked. She was even more contemptuous of the middle-class girls, both black and white, who were merely promiscuous -- they were doing the same thing she was and not getting paid for it. What she did, at least in her own eyes, was provide a service, a simple, negotiable physical service that did not reach below the skin and touch her fundamental self. As far as she was concerned she was faithful to her man, and I agree with her. Ruth's philosophy served me well over the years as I had to make one political compromise or another to achieve a desired and needed end. But I never compromised on anything basic and fundamental to my personal self and my commitment to my people.

The street life taught me much. I mastered every aspect of it.

I understood it well enough to know it led to nowhere, and on July 27, 1945, just barely eighteen, I joined the Army. This was no moral decision. The war was over. I just wanted to get the hell out of a world I had had enough of. The Army picked me up out of that world and dropped me, of all places, in Alabama, where I learned a clean-edged unadulterated hatred for whites.

We were first taken to Atterbury, Indiana, but that lasted only a few days, and then we were off by train for Fort McClellan, Alabama. We stopped to eat in Birmingham. The recruits were led through the depot; around a restaurant, into an alley and through a back door into a large room filled with wooden tables. I was one of four acting corporals, and the four of us were standing there while the rest of the men were being seated. A white woman in her early twenties walked in carrying a huge basin filled with silverware. She dumped the contents on the table with a crash and said, "Help yourself, boys."

I told her she was wrong to dump the silver like that. She turned, looked me straight in the eye and said, "You may not know it, nigger, but you're in Alabama now."

The stories my mother had told me about the South flooded my mind and I realized suddenly that I was helpless.

The effect on me was so strong that in the thirteen weeks we spent at Fort McClellan I never left camp. I was the only man there who did not go to town. I wanted the fun and the release as much as any man there, but I wasn't going to go looking for it at the cost of humiliation or worse. My mother, realizing that my general attitude in Cleveland would get me into serious trouble in the South, had told me all sorts of horror stories. The stories hadn't meant much to me, but I am sure I carried away the notion that in the South the white man could kill any black person he wanted to. The passing remark of the waitress had brought it all into focus, and my fears hardened into hatred.

After Alabama, we were taken to Fort Lee, New Jersey, where we boarded a ship for France, and from there we took trains to Germany. Armed with K rations, chocolate and cigarettes, we

arrived, the conquering American Army. There was nothing we couldn't get, from war souvenirs to women. The excitement of Germany for many of us black soldiers was the availability of white women. Back home there were always a few available white girls, but any time you spent with a white girl in Cleveland was stolen. You didn't tell your black friends about it, and you sure as hell didn't let any white people know about it. Suddenly, in Germany, willing white women were all around us, ready to come to camp and service us any time, any way we wanted. Most of us took advantage of it brutally. If most of these women were whore and camp followers, there were also some who were desperately supporting children out there somewhere in the war's rubble. And these women reminded me strangely of the street world I thought I had left behind me. These women kept their children as well as they could. Sometimes the children would be in bed with you. But these women kept a dignity of their own, inviolable because you could not reach it. The soldier got her body, but she got the food and clothing she needed for her children. It was Ruth's philosophy all over again.

But then I found Hilda. We had a kind of free and proud man-woman relationship that would never have been possible in America. We grew extremely close in the months I spent there, and as my time began to close around me I almost decided to stay in Germany. But the pull of home was too strong.

Almost immediately on arriving home, I was enveloped in everything oppressive about being poor and black and uneducated in America. The comforts I had in Germany were gone. I felt confined. I wrote the U.S. government, asking whether civilian jobs were available in Germany. I quickly learned that without a high-school education I was going nowhere. A couple days later I registered to return to East Technical High School.

My attitudes had been changed. The contact with educated black men in the Army had made me see a new value in going to school. More important, I now had money I had saved, and I had the G.I. Bill. I coasted through the last year at East Tech and

enrolled at West Virginia State, a black college outside Charleston, West Virginia.

West Virginia State was no doubt a typical Southern black college, giving Southern kids enough education to pacify their desire for status in the black community but not enough to arouse their desire for more. Fortunately for me, though, there was one professor at the school who was not typical. His name was Herman G. Canady. He taught psychology and philosophy and had a doctorate from Northwestern University. As I think back, I realize that in some ways I must have taken him as a substitute father. He had a kind of open-door policy, and he taught very informally both in class and at his home, goading his students as much as lecturing them.

"You little black bunnies," he would say in class, "you came down here to this black school for a nine-month vacation."

We would laugh, and he would laugh with us, but he meant it. If he thought you were good enough and serious enough, he would describe to you how the black faculties in black colleges have the function merely of turning over the same piece of dirt in a plowed field. All the black colleges do, he would say, is redistribute the ignorance. They don't have the money to attract and hold scholars, to set up adequate libraries or laboratories. There is no way to get a first-rate education in such a place. Go, he'd say to where the people who really run this country get their educations. Canady was brilliant, skeptical, sarcastically pessimistic. But the depth of his commitment and devotion was clear to me. If it hadn't been there, he wouldn't have stayed at that school. And I remember that after one of those interminable cosmological arguments about the origins of things and values, he shocked me by saying, "God made it that way." It had never occurred to me that such a rationalistic, skeptical man believed in God. But I knew by the way he said it that he meant it. I kept more or less in touch with Canady over the years. When I was elected mayor of Cleveland twenty years later, one of the first calls of congratulations I received came from this great old professor, crying like a baby over the telephone.

Canady convinced me I was wasting my time at West Virginia State, and so in September 1948 I enrolled at Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Back home, I went to John Holly for a job. I drove him all summer in that Lausche campaign, which Lausche won, and then when school started in the fall he got me a patronage job as a clerk in an Ohio Department of Liquor Control Store in the afternoons. So I had time for morning classes, an afternoon job, and a little pool hustling at night.

I managed to keep my income up to a more or less livable standard, but my desire for more or more soon ate away at my sense of the need for education. Working for Holly had given me my first real look at politics, and it had given me just a glimpse of a way out, a way to not be poor and a way to not have to work for someone else. I was still casting about, with no sense of a particular ambition or vocation. Tired of being a part-time student, part-time clerk and part-time hustler, I went to Holly again in December of 1949 and asked if he could get me a job with the state's liquor enforcement division. Within two weeks he had me on the force.

When I started as a liquor enforcement agent in 1950, I was twenty-three, with three years of college behind me. Still without any sense of direction, I just wanted some stability and enough money to live on without having to scratch for it. My two years with the enforcement division changed all of that. I emerged as very serious, if scrappy, adult. It hardened my will to take risks as well as my need to be out from under the thumb of the white man.

The enforcement division provided me with an elaborate mechanism of legality to back me up, and then it gave me a gun. My job, basically, was to assist in closing down bootleg operations in black neighborhoods in whatever city I was assigned to. It was never written that I would not be enforcing the law in white-run places, but it was understood. Sometimes I neglected to understand it, though, and that got me transferred to another city. Over the months, even though I was wielding a certain quite enjoyable



power, I found myself running into the same racism in the bureaucratic apparatus behind me as existed in the joints I was out to confront. It came to me, finally, working constantly with lawyers on liquor cases in court, that those lawyers were the only black men I could see who didn't have white masters. In time, that feeling became a desperate need.

I had two guns, the short-nosed .32 revolver I wore, and a long-barreled .38 police special I kept in the car. Actually, I don't think enforcement agents had the legal authority to carry guns then, but we all did. I had been trained in some pretty rough arenas in my few months as a liquor agent.

The first town they sent me to was Canton, a town of about 116,000 just southeast of Akron. At that time Canton was like a tiny Las Vegas -- slot machines right along Main Street, houses of prostitution right behind it, open poker and blackjack games, all amazingly public and, of course, highly illegal. Why they sent me there I don't know. I was about six feet tall and hardly weighed 150 pounds, had a baby face and a moustache you had to be in the right light to even see. In Cleveland they had told me to arrest anybody with a liquor license who permitted gambling, and we had gone around to the different places and done just that.

Canton was my testing ground. I went into a large, neon-lit bar on Main Street, bought a drink, paid for it, and then called the bartender over. I showed him my identification and said "Mister, you're serving liquor here and that's against the law. You have to go to jail." He broke into laughter.

"Really, mister," I said, "I'm not kidding."

He called some people over and said, "Come here and listen to this kid. Now tell them what you just told me."

"I'm a liquor enforcement agent and I bought this liquor and it's against the law for you to sell liquor. Now you have to go to jail." There was more laughter.

"What are you going to do if I don't go with you?" he asked.

"I'm going to have to take you," I said.

"Punk, get on out of here," he said. "You don't understand what's going on. You aren't taking anybody to jail."

"Yessir," I said, "I'm going to take you to jail, one way or another."

At that point I took out the pistol they had told me I could wear and hit him on the head. Blood popped out all over, and he hit the floor. I was as scared then as I ever expect to be. I turned and, waving my gun at the crowd, said, "Don't anybody move, please just don't move, I'm scared, I'm frightened, and if anybody moves around here I'm liable to shoot you."

That bartender went to the hospital before he went to jail, but he did go to jail. The word got around in Canton that when the young kid says you gotta go to jail, you go.

As my reputation grew, so did my attitude. Finally I provoked an incident that got me transferred.

The agent in charge of my district sent me to the neighboring county, to a small town that was supposed to have a number of bootleg joints. I was to meet a deputy sheriff and we would raid the places together. The two of us met on the edge of town in the middle of the afternoon, agreed to meet in a certain neighborhood that night, and parted. I wandered into town looking for a place to eat. I had a hamburger and started walking again. At the town's sole movie theatre, the feature was 'The Jackie Robinson Story'. I had never seen it, so I decided to spend the time watching that first of the antisegregation films. I was walking down the dark aisle when I heard my name called. I turned and there was the deputy sheriff. We walked back to the lobby and he explained to me that because I was a Negro I would have to sit in the last five rows on the left-hand side of the theatre. I could tell he was embarrassed to have to do it, but that hardly mattered. Here was one law-enforcement officer telling another that he was going to have to sit in a segregated section of a theater. It is only a heavy irony that *The Jackie Robinson Story* was playing. But I suddenly understood what was going on in that town, what I was being called upon to do.

I still had some time. I walked out of the theater and into the nearest bar. I asked for a drink and was told I had to go behind a pillar, all colored people had to get their drinks at the end of the bar.

"Are you kidding?" I asked.

"No, I'm not," the bartender said.

"Fine," I said, and showing my identification. Nicely enough, a black legislator from Cleveland, Chester Gillespie, a Republican, had some years before shepherded through the state House of Representatives a bill requiring any establishment that sold liquor to operate on an equal-opportunity basis. There were five bars on the main street of that town. Within a half hour, I had cited all of them. I drove back to Canton, wrote up the reports, put them into envelopes, stamped them and mailed them to the state capital.

The next morning, my boss, Stanley Cmich -- now the mayor of Canton -- called me in. He was steaming. He wanted to know why I had done whatever it was that I had done instead of what I was supposed to do. I said, piously enough, "They were violating the law, Chief, they wouldn't serve me down there."

"You had no goddam business down there trying to get served," he said. "You had an assignment to go down there on the bootleg joints in the Negro neighborhood."

"Well, it was still light," I said, "I didn't have anything to do and I went into these places and they wouldn't serve me. I had assumed that the department was interested in enforcing all the laws."

"Give me the reports," he said.

"I can't Chief," I said, "I put them in the mail to Columbus last night."

"Get out of here," he said.

Next day I was transferred to Dayton.

It was in Dayton that I met my first wife, Edith Shirley Smith, a refined, attractive middle-class girl, very remote from the ruffian's life I had led. We met in October 1951, at a political party. Ours was a brief courtship, we were secretly married two days after

Christmas that year. Then the next month I was transferred to Toledo, and we had a weekend marriage for the next half year, seeing each other only two days a week. Finally in June 1952 we had a formal wedding with a Greek ceremony in Dayton, attended by the cream of Dayton's black society.

Only one man on the force, Edward Payne, also from Cleveland, had a higher arrest record than I. Payne and I were transferred to Toledo at the same time to work together. There was bound to be trouble.

By the time I was assigned to Toledo, I had long been disabused of any notions of fairness in the agency's enforcement policies. I knew that some spots were allowed to stay open and others were routinely closed usually because of some sort of deal on the local level. The collaboration wasn't always a payoff; it could be as simple as the dropping of a dime -- an old street phrase for the practice of protecting your own operation by calling the vice squad and informing on other operators. When agents like Payne and me come in from out of town, it takes a while to master the particular convolutions of local politics.

In Toledo there was a black man named Jinx Green who ran a bar in an almost legitimate manner. I say 'almost' because he did have a pool table in the back room that was used, not for shooting pool, but for shooting craps. And I say 'manner' because, although the bar had the usual signs and furniture and openness of a legitimate operation, it happened that Green had no liquor license. He had been arrested on occasion, but never closed. Payne and I learned from other bootleggers that Jinx was protected and permitted to operate virtually unmolested by the vice squad.

We noticed Green's odd record in the liquor department files. We never asked the Toledo vice squad about him, we just went out there.

It was in the middle of the afternoon. You could look in the front windows of Green's place and see the customers sitting at the bar drinking, and beyond them, through a curtained door, you could see men shooting craps on the billiard table. We walked in,

ordered drinks, paid for them, identified ourselves, arrested the bartender, confiscated some whiskey and walked out to Payne's car. I had just gotten into the car, next to the arrested bartender, and Payne was walking around the car when this middle aged guy ran up and yanked open my door. He reached across me and grabbed the arm of the bartender, pulling him in front of me and yelling. "What do these sons of bitches think they are doing? Come on out of there."

It was so startling that for a moment I just sat there, stunned. But before the bartender could get across in front of me, I grabbed him and hit the little guy's arm away. By that time, Payne was back around the car and he grabbed the fellow. It was an amazing sight. Payne was a thick, tough man, and he was having a tough time holding on to this wiry little whirlwind jumping around in his arms, swearing and raising Cain at the top of his lungs. Payne finally got him settled down enough to ask him if he knew who we were. He allowed that he understood perfectly well who we were, that he didn't give a good goddam, and we had no business arresting his bartender. We informed him that the bartender had sold us drinks, that it was illegal and we were taking the bartender to jail, and we would take him to jail, too, if he didn't quiet down. He quieted, and we took the bartender off to jail and booked him.

The next morning in municipal court, Jinx, the tough, wiry, little man, was there and it was at that point we discovered Jinx's political strength. The bartender was fined twenty-five dollars and costs, with the costs suspended. Green turned to us, right in the middle of the courtroom, with the judge and the police listening, and declared his place was going to stay open, "and if you ever come back I'll kill you."

Quite an amazing remark from a bootleg operator in the middle of an open court. One sees clearly what the word "political" means in the phrase "political reality." For the next six months, we left Green alone.

In June, the governor's office sent two young investigators to Toledo, both white, to go out with Payne and me. They were new

and inexperienced, and the state office wanted them to go around with us to get a little street-wise. Payne and I had the highest arrest records in the division, so it seemed we would be good teachers. What's more, we were going to be accompanied by the agent in charge of our district, Al Kopan. Kopan had told us he wanted to put on a good show for these young white fellows from the governor's office, so we set up three places. The five of us went out, made our arrests as clean and quiet as you could ask and began driving out of the ghetto.

Kopan said to Payne and me, "Well, that about cleans this town up."

"Not quite, Al," I said. "there is a place that has been running wide open, both liquor and gambling. But the man who runs it said if we ever come in there, he'll kill us."

Now Eddie Payne and I had what we wanted. Kopan couldn't admit he knew about Green's place in front of these fellows from the governor's office, and he certainly couldn't refuse to go raid the place. And we would have the added advantage of the presence of two white agents from outside.

Kopan looked at me a long minute before he said, "we aren't going to have a place like that running in my district. Let's go get them."

The place was full of people. Payne went in first, followed by the two young guys and Kopan. I went in last, locking the front door behind me. I had changed guns, and was carrying the long-barreled .38 special. Payne walked to the back of the room, grabbed a full glass from somebody's table, held it up in the air with one hand and held up his identification with the other and said to the bartender, "You're under arrest."

Jinx came running out of the back room at full tilt. He ran into Eddie and hit him in the face at the same time and never broke stride. Eddie went sprawling on the floor, and suddenly there were two kinds of people, fighters, and fliers. The ones who weren't jumping out of windows and dashing for the back door jumped on Eddie. Jinx ran to get behind the bar, right over the cash register, in

plain view, Jinx had a Horse pistol, a Colt .38 on a long frame. I yelled to Kopan to stop him, and the two of us grabbed him just as he was getting behind the counter. Everybody was getting involved in the fight at this time, everybody but those two white boys from the governor's office, who were standing stock still in the middle of the room, in the eye of the hurricane.

Payne had struggled up from the floor, with a couple of guys hanging off him. He drew his gun and fired two shots into the ceiling. I held Jinx off long enough to get my gun out and yelled, "Get back!" Jinx grabbed the barrel of my gun and Kopan did too. Just for a moment, the three of us were standing there, all of us with our hands on my gun. I forced my arm up as hard as I could and fired. Jinx fell back, but Kopan had been holding the end of the barrel. The bullet went through the fleshy part of his thumb. I wheeled around and shot Jinx twice, one in the stomach and once in the thigh, and he fell. I turned and there was a guy coming up behind Eddie Payne, about to hit over the head with a bottle. I shot the man in the chest and he fell.

Suddenly the only people in the room were the five agents, all standing, and two men lying bleeding on the floor. It was over. We called the police. The ambulance came, and that was it.

Both men lived, and when they had recuperated and their case came up they were fined on one liquor-violation count and one count of resisting arrest. Payne and I were told not to leave town, that the county prosecutor was investigating the shootings. We were led to believe charges would be filed against us, or at least me. But the head of the state's enforcement division, Anthony J. Rutkowski, now a municipal judge in Cleveland, came to Toledo and had a conference with the prosecutor. Afterwards, Rutkowski told us everything had been cleared up, there would be no charges and the shootings would be ruled justifiable. However, Eddie and I would be transferred to other districts. I went to Cincinnati.

The Jinx Green incident was the last straw for me. I wanted out of the enforcement job. The job had brought me a number of luxuries I had never had before, nice clothes, a car and a classier

wife than I had ever thought I would be able to marry. Those same luxuries just gave me a taste for something better. The men I saw who had something better were lawyers. My brother was already in law school. A couple of lawyers I had worked with as an agent encouraged me, and so in March I had applied to the University for Minnesota and had been accepted. Shirley and I sat quietly in Cincinnati until September, when we left for Minneapolis.

My marriage didn't fare well for long. Shirley and I moved into a tiny apartment on the third floor of an old building in St. Paul. She took a job at a hospital in Minneapolis, but she wasn't happy. Almost immediately, we began to have arguments, and by January 1953 we had broken up. Ours had never been much more than a series of weekend affairs; we never developed a strong relationship.

After two years at the University of Minnesota I had a Bachelor of Science of Law degree, which was about as negotiable as Confederate money. I came back to Cleveland with the intermediate degree, moved in with my mother and enrolled in night law school at the Cleveland Marshall School of Law. My brother, Louis, had just married, and he and his wife had moved into their own home leaving mom alone.

My degree qualified me for nothing, so I turned to Judge Perry B. Jackson about a job as a probation officer for Cleveland's municipal court. The judges make those appointments. I was appointed in September 1954, and kept the job through the rest of law school.

The job as a probation officer enlarged my sense of social commitment and enraged me. Until then, I had been occupied keeping my own head above water. Now I felt relatively secure and headed for an independent future. But that job brought me again and again into contact with those who were not making it, people whose spirits had been broken by oppression, filth, and squalor. I was supposed to be their supervisor and guide, but I began to see that they needed more than that, they needed advocates at the highest levels of government. Being a probation



officer can be dispiriting, the feeling of helplessness can be overpowering. One night the wife of one of my parolees called to say rats had attacked her baby. I drove out there to their filthy apartment, bundled up the baby and took them to the hospital. The baby's nose and upper lip had been completely gnawed away. The doctors saved its life. There is nothing more to say. And what could I tell that poor mother?

I graduated from law school in the spring of 1956 and promptly failed the bar exam. I stayed on in the probation department until the results of the June 1957 exam were released. I quit the same day I learned I had passed.

## 3

HOW TO GET ELECTED  
BY WHITE PEOPLE

The petty tacticians of local government are fond of talking about politics as though it were a game, subject to narrow rules and ritual, and arena for private competitions and personal ambitions. At the other end of the scale, the theorists and political dreamers conceive of politics as synonymous with all social life. Politics is both and neither of these. It has levels of play and levels of importance. The back-room maneuverings of city councilmen pad the pockets of a few and affect little. The protest politics of a legion of dreamers can turn the tide in a President's career and change the course of a nation. Even though it so often draws mean and ordinary men, politics is a grand human activity, and it is often cheapened by easy comparisons. The source of those comparisons is easy to spot: he is that constant figure, the professional politician. The professionals who make their living from political life find their levels of play and their levels of importance. There have been men of strategic genius whose time never came, and men of vast social understanding but no daring. And there are those who play only to survive. You see them all around you, the bailiffs, the commissioners, the judges, the councilmen. They play their game well enough. They keep their jobs and do small favors. They go as far as native wit and a knowledge of their people and their times will take them. But there are levels where men turn petty games into important events. The stakes are higher and you have to gamble more to win more. The game is tough and fast and sometimes meaningful.

In the summer of 1957, thirty years old, still poor, but with my law degree, I began to move into Cleveland's political arena. Ten

years later I was elected the first black mayor of a major American city with a predominantly white population. I did things other men could or would not do. It came to me not because I had a new politics but because the old politicians had forgotten the most basic lesson: people, acting together, are power. They don't just *have* power. They *are* power.

With \$120, my brother and I formed the law partnership of Stokes and Stokes, with offices at 10604 St. Clair Avenue, in a lower-middle-class neighborhood at the northern frontier of the ghetto called Glenville. Louis had already been in practice a few years and had some clients. What I lacked in clientele I made up in direct referrals of automobile accident cases and criminal cases by the investigating police officers.

In that first year, although I made much more money than other freshman lawyers, and as much as some veteran practitioners, my more serious efforts were political. I ran the campaign for Lowell Henry, a black man on my ward who was running for city councilman. It was an easy campaign, pure majority politics. Henry was running against a complacent Jewish councilman who, it was to turn out, owned more than eighty thousand dollars in slum properties. We used that and beat him.

Running Henry's campaign, I grew closer to some men who would be important to me as political confidants and counselors, Al Sweeney, Perry B. Jackson and Lawrence Payne. Sweeney was city editor of the Call & Post, the Negro weekly newspaper. I would bet that from sometime late in 1957 roughly through to 1971 after I left office as mayor, not a week went by that I didn't visit the Call & Post offices and counsel with Al Sweeney or, after Sweeney left the city in 1967, with the editor and publisher, William O. Walker.

Perry Jackson, a black Republican, was a former state legislator, then a municipal judge, then a judge in the Court of Common Pleas. The late Lawrence Payne was Cleveland's second black city councilman. Like Jackson, he was a Republican. Both men had a sure understanding of the groundwork for political

success. That they didn't go farther in the politics themselves is the measure of white prejudice during their time. But they laid the foundation for me and other young black politicians. Both men served as mentors and guides in the early days of my political career.

Also, in 1957, I joined the Young Democrats, an organization open to any registered Democrat under thirty-five. It was not devoted to any particular progressive ideals, but served as a kind of gathering point for the young men who intended to be active in the party. I tended to be more liberal than the regular party, simply because younger men tend to be more liberal than older men. But, like the party itself, it was mostly white. Most of the white politicians I was close to in those early years were the men I met in that club.

But the most effective political work I did on my own behalf in those first years didn't look like political work at all. Jackson and Payne had advised me to get involved with civic groups the Boy Scouts, the charity drives, and NAACP and the Urban League. And the churches, always the churches. There is no more effective political force in the black community than the church. When you need good zeal, when you need people out there working for you, having a hundred black preachers out there rallying them up for you is invaluable, unbeatable. So, during the years after I started the practice of law, I did anything I was asked to do in the community.

Judge Jackson would call me and tell me that some small church group needed a speaker and I would accept always and without question. There were plenty of times that I would end up talking to only two or three people, but I would talk and give them my whole load. For the civic and civil-rights groups. I would agree to be a chairman or co-chairman of particular drives, always volunteer work, never elected office. Long before I ran for anything, politics was for me a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. The party regulars never saw me coming. I had never worked through the ward leaders or precinct committeemen, the heelers. I worked

through the civic workers, the dedicated volunteer women and men who believe a community can be helped, but never think, or at least never thought in those days, of politics at all. They didn't think of me as a politician either. Later, when I called on them to help, they thought of my candidacy as different from that of a "regular" politician. I was the one who had worked alongside them on that charity drive back in 1959, or in the NAACP membership campaign of another year. Whatever our experience had been together, it was much more solidifying than the typical political relationship. Through this process, I developed a depth of relationship with neighborhood people whose existence was ignored by politicians other than Jackson and Holly.

We say that politics is a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. Yet a man does have a personal life, a home, a family. These things have always been very important to me. Having them reminded me that I am in the real world, not outside it. My first attempt at marriage was unsuccessful at least partly because I didn't yet know what I was doing with the rest of my life. Shirley came to Cleveland shortly after I returned from Minnesota, but we didn't see each other, and in 1956 I filed for and was granted an uncontested divorce.

In 1957, when I was in the middle of running Lowell Henry's campaign, I started to hear about this girl from Mississippi, a graduate of Fisk University who was doing graduate work at Western Reserve University. She was staying with friends of mine, and they were trying to get us together. Finally, the day after the primary election in September, I went over to meet her. I was feeling proud of myself, Henry had won big, and I was ready for something celebratory. And she was. Long, soft brown hair, tall, proud-looking and solid, a beautiful girl named Shirley Edwards. I told her I was going to be busy with Henry's campaign until after the general election. For the next month then I would have lunch with her on campus a couple of times a week, and we would go out once on the weekends. After Henry won in November, though, we dated steadily until, in late December, we decided to get married.

On January 28, 1958, we were married by Reverends Donald Jacobs and A. Fuller in St. James's Church in Cleveland. Carl, Junior, and our daughter, Cordi were born in the next three years. It wasn't until 1970 that our son, Cordell, joined us. In 1973, we agreed to seek a divorce.

This, of course, was my second marriage to a girl named Shirley. They were both born in January and both were Capricorns. I met both of them at about the same time of year and married at about the same the same time of the year. My first wife signed her name "E. Shirley Stokes," since her given name was Edith Shirley. My second wife signed hers "Shirley E. Stokes," since her maiden name was Edwards. Neither of them liked professional politics.

In 1958, I changed my mind about being in private practice. For one thing, Louis didn't like my political activities invading the law office. One of the few bitter arguments we had was that spring when I was running my nominal campaign for the state Senate. Louis didn't like my using the secretary to send out my political materials. I explained to him that I was paying half her salary and I could use her to do that as well as typing up briefs. But he just didn't want that kind of thing going on in the law office. If I used her only for legal matters, I wouldn't be getting my money's worth. The kind of law I practiced involved little clerical work. You go down to the police station in the morning, a bondsman tips you to a case, you get the name and number from a policeman, you talk to the accused, and if he can scrape up a couple hundred dollars you represent him. This is quick work, cash and carry, no checks, no record of money changing hands. Another one of those chinks in the edifice of justice.

I decided to try for a post that would give me a title, and some sort of entrée to the political apparatus. I went once again, and for the final time, to John Holly. He got Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze to appoint me assistant police prosecutor. By the time I left that job in 1962, after being elected to the Ohio Legislature, I had had -- including my time as a probation officer and as a defense lawyer -- eight years of contact with the administration of justice at its

lowest level, the municipal court. I witness that justice is not blind; neither is it just.

White bookies flourish while black numbers writers, pickup men and runners were arrested and given fines and workhouse terms. White racehorse bookies took their bets in the halls of Central Police Station. A white prostitute house operated right across the street from the station. But black girls were arrested and run through on an assembly line. They were brought in, told by their lawyers to allow a finding of guilty, fined, and released all in a few hours. The police arrest record looked good, and the judge looked good.

One of the few times I remember a white girl being charged with prostitution, her case was quickly thrown out. I was the prosecutor in the case. An Irishman whose last name was famous in Ohio politics and who hurried to get through his docket so he could get to the racetrack was the judge. The girl had been Miss Cleveland five years before this arrest. The detective testified he had called her for a date and they agreed to meet. He registered in a hotel room at East 105th Street and Euclid Avenue. He said he asked her how much and she replied twenty dollars. He said he put the twenty dollars on the dresser, she took off her clothes and he put her under arrest.

The judge said, "Well, you know that she was Miss Cleveland."

Yes, the detective said, he knew that.

"Well," the judge said, "so how do you know that she wasn't taking her clothes off for twenty dollars just to let you see her body?"

"That wasn't the arrangement," the policeman said.

"She has already denied that she agreed to have intercourse with you," the judge said.

While the policeman stood there, completely at a loss for words, the judge dismissed the case. Such judicial concern for the rights of the defendant was never exhibited in cases that involved black women, at least not in my presence.

The courts' willing blindness toward the manipulations of the jailhouse lawyers is a perversion regularly practiced on the body and ideal of justice. Those lawyers merely hang around courtrooms, handling flocks of clients, and using about as much

knowledge of the law as the average man could pick up in a week. These men did little but convince accused men to plea guilty to lesser crimes than they were charged with. The lawyer could guarantee the accused man a lesser sentence or a smaller fine. And by convincing him to plead guilty to something, he removed the necessity for the policeman to testify and made the judge's handling of the case a merely clerical matter. The accused man, always poor, whether black or white, left the courtroom happy with his smaller fine, ignorant of the implications of the fact that he now had an incontestable police record.

Payoffs reflected whatever the traffic would bear. One elderly Hungarian judge, now dead, would commit the most outrageous legal decisions for a case of liquor. Few judges worked past noon, and many headed for the racetrack at midafternoon to be the guests of two or three lawyers willing to place their bets, willing even to stake them for their losses. Homicide detectives were usually willing to lower a charge from first-degree murder to second degree, or even manslaughter, if two conditions were met. The first was that the man charged with the crime had to come up with some money, at times as little as a hundred dollars. The second, but most important, was that he had to be a Negro accused of killing another Negro. Money, of course, also determined whether a man would be charged with reckless driving or the less serious offence of failing to keep an assured clear distance, or in another case charged with drunk driving or the less serious offence of being in physical control of a vehicle while under the influence of intoxicants.

The bar associations know at least casually about these things. The news reporters know, too. But nothing is done. The administration of justice is wrenched. But it is not entirely blocked, so it is left alone, and the people who have get more, and the people who have not get more trouble.

In 1958, I "ran" for public office for the first time. I circulated enough petitions to get my name placed on the ballot in the primary for the Democratic nomination from District 25 to the state Senate. It took only a hundred signatures, and fifty dollars for



the filing fee. I had no serious thoughts that I would win the nomination, and didn't campaign beyond the routine appearances before the endorsing bodies -- the newspapers, the Citizens' League, the League of Women Voters, the Cleveland Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. The seriousness of my effort lay in finding out how many people would vote for Carl Stokes just on the pull of the name alone. This was part of the political groundwork I had to do. I had to find a control factor, a base figure for any serious analysis of my political chances. I chose the state Senate race because I wanted a district larger than a City Council ward, yet not so large that I couldn't find out easily where my votes had come from. Without any visible campaign, I pulled 5,000 votes. The man who won the nomination received 53,000 votes. But now I had something to work with.

I was determined to run for public office, but I was just as determined to do it on my own and in my own way. I had my own purposes and ideals, which I knew didn't mesh with those of the local Democratic Party.\* At the local level, the party exemplified neither the national party's ideals nor its power. It had not been able to elect a mayor since 1941. The prototypical politician of the time was Frank J. Lausche, mayor, then governor and finally United States senator, a nominal Democrat who was as conservative as any Dixiecrat and as independent as a cat. He was the first of what was to be a succession of "newspaper mayors" -- elected by the powerful Cleveland Press and its aggressive editor, Louis B. Seltzer.

There are great advantages to having a strong and unified party behind you, but those advantages were not going to be available to me, not only because the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party was

\*But I am a Democrat. I align myself with the continuing philosophy of government expressed by our great Democratic presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, and by the majority of Democrats in Congress-men with commitment to social programs, men like Hubert Humphrey, Wayne Morse, George McGovern and Walter Mondale.

divided and weak, but because I was black. I knew that I couldn't count on support from the party once I set out to tackle any office

beyond the level of city councilman. The party's patronizing attitude towards Negroes was all too clear. And I had no intention of running for councilman. I had helped put Lowell Henry in, but membership in the City Council repelled me. The only interests I could see being served by councilmen were petty and pecuniary. They counted their success by whether the office brought them money -- so much for allowing a new gas station, so much for a zoning change, so much for allowing a cheat spot to operate. Being elected to the Council wasn't a mandate to legislative responsibility, it was a ticket to a bartering system.

Lawrence Payne said to say, "In figuring out how to win an election, if it works out on paper go ahead. If it doesn't, don't try it." I decided to project the potential countywide vote I could hope for if I ran in the 1960 primary for designation as Democratic nominee for member of the Ohio House of Representatives, the lower house of the state legislature. Party nominees for lower-house seats were selected countywide on a "bedsheet" primary ballot -- a list of candidates which in Cuyahoga County might run to 150, of whom seventeen were chosen. I spent my off hours at the County Board of Elections going over the voting records. I wanted to find out how the community turned out for black Democratic candidates -- and whether they had had the endorsements of the local party organization, labor, the newspapers, or the Citizens' League. The known factor was that no black Democrat had even before allied himself with white candidates in the suburbs. I knew that I was running a race that turned in the familiarity of the candidate's name as much as anything else; in a typical election, the Corriganes, Pokornys, Gormans, Celebrezzes and a handful of Sweeneys always won. I had determined in the 1958 state Senate primary race that my name

\*As Anthony J. Celebrezze's political star rose in Cleveland, a man named Orlando A. Calabrese, a former bouncer in one of the randier downtown nightclubs, changed his name to Anthony O. Calabrese and ran for the state Senate. He won.

was known enough to pull five thousand votes without a visible campaign. It took me several days of note-taking from the Election

Board's records, but I ended up with fourteen single-spaced typewritten pages of statistics that proved, at least to my satisfaction, that if I ran for the Democratic nomination to the lower house I could come in fifteenth or sixteenth.

I called three of my closest friends and showed them my blueprint. I handed out a copy of my fourteen-page analysis and informed them I was going to run for the state legislature. They agreed that the figures were very nice, but wouldn't I be a lot better off running for the City Council? They thought I was crazy, but they agreed to support me if I ran.

The next move was a larger meeting. I pulled together a group of them, this time mostly white men my own age I had met at the Young Democrats. Once more, I gave them each a copy of my study and went through it with them patiently, projecting the vote in the 1930 primary. This was in December of 1959. I showed them where the votes were, where my endorsements should come from, where my base vote would be, and what the minimum vote was to get nominated at somewhere around the fifteenth or sixteenth position.

They didn't believe I could get the necessary white votes. No black Democrat has ever gotten those votes, but the reason was that his white political colleagues had always persuaded him to keep his black face hidden from the white community. The party had told him to keep his picture out of the newspapers and off any campaign literature in the white areas. No one had thought to challenge the logic. It seemed clear to me that other than those with politically popular names, people vote for you because they know you; if you don't let them know who you are, there is no way in hell you are ever going to get their vote. So even if you lose votes because you are black, you can still dip into the band of liberal whites if you can convince them you are progressive, socially committed, intelligent and, well, one extraordinary black man. I had everything to gain and nothing to lose by running visible in white suburbia. (Not quite visible: for campaign mailings we had two sets of campaign pictures; one for the black community, and

another, overexposed and with my mustache retouched for the whites. I didn't explain all this to the people at that meeting.)

Now I needed an entrée to suburban political meetings. I couldn't just show up. There had to be somebody who would introduce me to the ward club leader and get me on the agenda.

I needed a slate. How could I persuade suburban white candidates for the legislature to get on a primary slate with a Negro? For certain kinds of candidates who were running for the first time, I had two things to offer. I told them that I was going to wage an intensive campaign to bring out the black vote, and that by being on the ticket with me they would pull some votes they would otherwise not get in the community. Second, I was certain I would get the endorsement of the County Democratic Executive Committee. They were fresh candidates running against a field of "regulars" and were unlikely to get the committee's endorsement. Being on a slate with me, their own candidacies might gain by osmosis. This bit of maneuvering was certainly against party discipline -- if you are the endorsed candidate, you don't first run off with some rump ticket. I didn't give a damn about that. I knew that the committee wasn't going to endorse until late and that its endorsement wouldn't mean but so much anyhow. Those other fellows didn't know that, though, and so we formed our slate. As soon as the campaigns got under way, I started moving.

And I mean moving. I would put a hundred miles a night on my car, crisscrossing the county, going to the Slovenian card parties, the Hungarian Democratic Club, the Irish-American Democratic Club, the Polish-American Club. I went into all the suburbs I could -- not just the old-guard upper-middle-class suburbs where I knew the liberal pockets, but the new bedroom suburbs filled with first- and second-generation ethnics, or (as we called them in Cleveland before "ethnicity" became an American watch-word) "cosmos," short for cosmopolitans.

It was a marvelous experience. Those white people had never been confronted with a Negro campaigning in their clubs before. When I entered the room, there was a chill. The chairman would

rarely know what to do, so I would walk over to the other candidates and ask whom I should see about being called to speak. Because of the natural camaraderie that had developed as we saw each other every night, I could depend on finding the right person. Once I opened my mouth, I had an advantage over the other candidates. I was the alien, the exotic, and I knew I could count on their complete attention. Then the amazing thing happened. I spoke English. Enough has happened since 1960 that it is hard to remember now what a shock I was to them. But in those days whites, especially suburbanites, had lived in pure isolation from blacks. I feel certain that the first word those whites expected to hear come out of my mouth was "mother fucker." But standing before them was a clean, well-dressed young man discussing the biennial state budget appropriations for the maintenance of roads and highways, child welfare, mental retardation, and education tax formulas. I could feel them melt. Those people disliked Negroes, but they didn't dislike Carl Stokes -- didn't, that is, after he had talked long enough to show them he was a real human being with intelligence and understanding equal to those of the candidates he was running among, if not against.

This was all brought home to me one night in Parma, an ethnic, blue-collar suburb of some 100,000. In Cleveland, Parma jokes are synonymous with Polish jokes. I was attending some political meeting. After I had spoken and answered some questions, a small man in a lumberjacket and shirt open to his stomach walked up to me.

"Carl," he said, "I want to meet you. I'm Mr. Kwiatkowski. I like you, you talk just like us."

I thanked him of course. A politician always does. Neither did I say anything about his calling me "Carl" while styling himself as "Mr." I knew that most of the things I had said had gone right over his head. What he meant was that he had never heard a black man discuss issues before, and he was impressed.

Politics, especially local politics, tends to draw second-raters, and I knew that I was bound to look good in that company.

Besides, I knew that I was intimidating those people just by being there among them. I was daring them to show their prejudice. I always went alone. There is a certain psychological benefit in walking into a room full of whites alone, letting them know that I am just as aware as they are that I am not supposed to be there. They were already on the defensive when I would go into my speech about democracy is supposed to mean in this country.

Some years later I read Robert Dahl's 'Who Governs?,' which presents a theory of ethnic politics in America, based on a study of the political history of one town, New Haven, Connecticut. When I read that book, I understood instantly that what I was doing was what ethnic groups on the way up had always done. Politics today may not be what it was before the old machine broke down and civil-service procedures ruined the old corrupt patronage systems. But the ladder is still there, even if all of the rungs aren't. I saw that coalition politics as the Germans and the Irish and the Italians had practiced it was still possible. Dahl took New Haven as his example, but you can plot the same movement in any large town in the country. When the predominant ethnic group moved up the social and economic ladder, it moved out or organized politics. The people moving out may, at the most, leave one of their own in politics as a kind of boss. But it is always true that the group, having moved up economically, moves out -- out geographically as well as politically. And as they move out they are no longer interested in being ward leaders, councilmen, and judges, clerks of court or members of the school board, and they leave a vacuum for the next group.

People take it as remarkable that I won the mayoralty in a predominantly white city, but if you look back on the history of Boston, New York, Chicago, the new ethnic group has rarely been in the majority and ordinarily would make up no more than about thirty percent of the population. A man in the advance guard of that sort of movement makes very certain he has his thirty percent locked up and then puts together what he can take from the rest. In my own case, I would spend about half the time with the base in

the ghetto, and then spread the rest over places where I hoped to pick up marginal support.

And I played my appeals the way they have always been played in ethnic coalition politics. The Italian politician would go to his own people and talk about the need for Italian participation in government, he would rant and rave and cry and moan about his Italian pride, about injustice, about Italian culture, all of the things that stir the loyalty of the people. He would let his people know that he felt Italians should take care of Italians. Then he would go all over the rest of the city and talk about democracy, about how government is for all of the people, about the need for new coalitions for the common good. To outsiders he talked about the great melting pot; to Italians he talked about Italians. That's how we came to have Italian mayors, and Irish and German mayors. It's a game well defined and well understood by the people who play it, each in his own turn. It's the way things have been done for two hundred years. All the black community of Cleveland needed in 1960 was someone who could do that same old thing for them.

I put on major campaign, far more intense than any other candidate for the legislature was waging. I rented an office in the old Hollenden Hotel, the busiest hotel in the city, and from there, Blanche Bolden, my campaign manager, and I put it all together. Blanche ran the mechanics. She was a remarkable leader. She could mangle the English language, but she had the tough eloquence that can get people excited enough to work and work hard. When I was elected mayor either years later, I named her executive secretary to the service director, one of the toughest jobs at City Hall, since it put her in charge of managing the waste-collection and street-cleaning crews, and she handled it with aplomb. In 1969, Blanche was discovered to have a terminal illness, and she died a few months later, not yet fifty.

In 1960, blacks made up only about eleven percent of the county population. I intended for that eleven percent to be a much higher percentage of my vote. They must learn to "plunk" their vote -- that is, vote for my name only instead of voting for all

seventeen candidates, as the law permitted. This "plunking" would have the effect of multiplying each black vote seventeen times. This is one of the oldest methods used by white ethnic minorities to increase their voting strength. Now I had to teach my people how to do it. In addition, I had to wage a campaign in the ghetto to change the habitual voting pattern of a drop-off as a voter makes his way down the ballot. I was running in a Presidential election year in which delegates to the Democratic National Convention were waging a hot primary battle, which would ensure a heavy turnout by the white Democrats. This increased the necessity of the black voter to vote the legislative ballot as strongly as he did the top of the ballot for the presidential delegates. I knew that the total vote for state legislators in the county would be a good deal less than half the vote in the Presidential race. I had to make sure that blacks would make the extra effort to look for my name, regardless of any lack of interest in the state legislature. And I used that great source of inspiration, the church. I went to as many services as I could on Sunday, and during the week I spoke to the study groups. Having a preacher mention your name favorably to his congregation is worth any number of union endorsements.

For the rest, I was running on a primary slate with five white candidates from the suburbs of Euclid, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, Parma and Lyndhurst all predominantly ethnic and for that matter, racist communities. But those candidates wanted to get elected. They got me into meetings in their areas, and I reciprocated in the inner city. Every Sunday night Jewish liberal friends arranged for me to attend a coffee klatsch in someone's home in the Heights, a group of three predominantly Jewish suburbs east of Cleveland -- Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and University Heights. I knew that by continually presenting myself to as many whites as possible, I would gain a certain margin of votes. I knew some people would forget exactly who I was but would remember the same Carl B. Stokes when they saw it on the ballot and vote for me. More important, though, was my faith in that margin of idealistic, progressive white people who are not



caught up in the tide of America's racial paranoia and fear. I suspect that that margin doesn't change much, never getting much smaller or larger. But it is always there. I knew it mainly from my experiences with community groups, the Urban League, the NAACP, the Boy Scouts, the United Appeal. In all those activities I had worked alongside white people and had found some white men and women I didn't have to mistrust. And they knew me. They were votes I could get.

I made the rounds of the two daily newspapers, because the mass appeal of their endorsements were an integral part of my campaign. The Call & Post was devoting most of its front page each week to my candidacy. The one endorsement that was necessary, because of the deal I had offered my running mates, was from the Democratic County committee. That meant getting the nod from the county boss, Ray T. Miller, the man who had put it all together back in the 1930's. I turned to Charles V. Carr to deliver that.

Some ten years later at a testimonial dinner for someone else, Charles Carr got the biggest hand of the evening and endeared himself to me forever when he introduced me by saying that he was "the only black politician in the country that doesn't take credit for Carl Stoke's victory as mayor of Cleveland." It was of course an exaggeration, but the truth was that a good two or three dozen people, both black and white, had been claiming personal credit for my success. And, to be sure, most of them had done something important for me at one of the many crucial times in my career. What they forgot, though, was how many crucial times there had been and how many activities had engaged me -- too many for any one person to take the credit. It was easy for them to miss that essential truth because I never built a formal organization that would bring all the disparate elements of my support together. I never wanted them together; the more that each of them thought I depended solely upon them, the better.

But in terms of the importance to my career, Charley Carr's speaking for me to Ray T. Miller in 1960 ranks very high. At that

time Charley who was already in his seventh term as city councilman, was the Council's majority leader. He was one of three men who virtually ran the Council for a decade. The other two were the Council president, Jack P. Russell, a wily infighter who knew where all the skeletons were, and Russell's crony, Thad Fusco, the Council clerk. Those three men and Ray T. Miller had lunch together almost every day. Many fates were sealed as those men broke bread together. Charley spoke for all the Negroes, (whites always like to have one black man who can speak for all the Negroes.) I took my case to Charley, and he agreed to support me. He took me in to see Miller. Miller asked me a couple of questions and then said, "Well, Charley, I can't make any commitments at this point. Get his petitions filed and appear before the Scanning Committee."

As we walked out of Miller's office, Charley said, "All right, You've got it. You're all set." All that had to be done was for Charley to remind Miller later that we had met. There was certain to be one black on the endorsed primary ticket, and it would be me. The fact is, my meeting Miller was a mere formality. Charley Carr told Ray Miller which blacks to endorse.

Although, Carr got me the endorsement, he really didn't believe I was going to win. He was a man from a different generation, resigned to a mediating position, wheeling and dealing with whoever was in charge. Since Ohio's ratification as a state in 1803, no black Democrats ever had been elected to the legislature. None had ever won the nomination in the primary election in Cuyahoga County.

The primary election was May 3. In the early counting, I ran far behind. I expected that. The counts from the black wards were always the last to be tallied. This was a pattern that was to repeat itself in all my elections. Because there were so critically close, the results were never clear until the small hours of the morning. And because the last votes to come in were always pre-dominantly black, there were always rumors that I had somebody out there waiting to see how many votes I needed to win and then "finding"

them. That night in 1960 I went home at about 1 A.M., running about thirtieth but still confident that I would win.

Early the next morning I received a phone call from the late Richard Maher, the veteran politics editor for the Press. "Congratulations, Carl" he said. "You've just become the first Negro Democrat ever to be nominated in the Ohio legislature."

That was the morning of May 4. It took until the middle of September to find out he was wrong. In the unofficial count I finished sixteenth, with 26,535 votes. Michael J. Crosser won the last berth with 26,465. William M. Feighan, son of a congressman and nephew of a judge, pulled 26,272, finishing eighteenth, just out of the money. But twenty three days later the board finished its official tally. In his case it didn't make any difference, he had finished too far down the line. But in my case, a few votes made all the difference. In the official tally, Crosser picked up 164 votes, Feighan gained 184, and I lost 102. Suddenly I was in the eighteenth position, and had lost the nomination by twenty-three votes.

I had ten days to decide whether to ask for a recount. I was entitled to one recount, for which I had to pay ten dollars a precinct. There were more than 2,200 precincts in the county then. I called a rally. My supporters showed up and I put it to them. I told them that I thought we could focus on 150 precincts, all in the black community; that would cost \$1,500. They responded with a zeal that was overwhelming. What had happened was that although I ran an intense campaign, and black people were solidly behind me in my effort, most of them didn't really believe I could win; but once the vote came in and they saw that I was within breathing distance of winning the race, they realized for the first time that one of us could make it. And that really put the fire under them. In this case, two days after that rally we had the \$1,500. Lawyers would send checks for twenty-five dollars, poor people would come up with one dollar, little kids would come in with dimes. And beyond that, when the recount was actually made, we had more volunteers than we could use as watchers. The recount of

those 150 precincts took two days. When the new results were tallied, I was ahead of Feighan by nineteen votes. I had won, and Feighan had lost.

Now comes the tangled part the period of legal maneuverings when being the son of a congressman can make a difference. After my recount, Feighan was entitled to call for one himself. But he didn't quite do that. His father brought in a couple of lawyers and called in his own staff and some campaign workers, and they went down to the Board of Elections, asking that the board call its own recount of the votes in those precincts to justify the figures. The board did that, and after this recount Feighan gained, I lost, and he was declared the winner by eight votes.

What was I going to do? I had used up the one recount I was entitled to. I conferred with William H. Stein, the president of the Young Democrats, who had agreed to act as my lawyer, and we presented the position to the board: when the board ordered its own recount and changed the final results, it admitted that the official count was erroneous. Since it was this erroneous count that we had relied upon in requesting our own partial recount, our recount should be thrown out and we should be granted a new one, based on the corrected official count.

Our Board of Elections consists of two Democrats and two Republicans. In case of a tie, the secretary of state votes to break it. The two Democrats on the board voted for my position, and the two Republicans voted against it. The secretary of state, a Republican, sided with the Republicans. We had lost again.

Then I had Bill Stein ask the board to consider the matter an issue of law and to call in the county prosecutor, to make a legal ruling on our position. It was a classic scene. The board is sitting before us almost like a court. I'm sitting on one side in front of them with Bill Stein. On the other side are Bill Feighan, Congressman Michael A. Feighan and his executive assistant, plus their two lawyers. The prosecutor comes in and makes his ruling; I am entitled to a new recount. One of Feighan's lawyers leans over to the other one and says in a low voice, "File it." That lawyer

walks to the back of the room and makes a short phone call. He nods back to Ned Mann, the lawyer still sitting with the Feighans, who stands up.

"I want to advise you," Mann tells the board, "that we have just filed an injunction and a mandamus action against you."

I'm sitting there with my friend Bill Stein, and there they are with an army out there, people standing in the courthouse ready to file suits against us when they get a phone call. The mandamus action asked the Court of Appelas to restrain the board from holding any further recounts and ordered it to immediately issue William Feighan the certificate of nomination.

The county prosecutor argued his position -- actually mine -- before the appellate court. Stein, as a friend of the court, filed a similar brief.. Feighan was represented by the same two lawyers. We lost, three to nothing. We appealed in the Ohio Supreme Court. By this time it was almost the middle of September, and we had reached the deadline for printing ballots for the general election. The Supreme Court ruled in less than a week, four to three against me. The Chief Justice, one of the minority unfortunately, wrote a separate opinion on the issue, asking, "When is a recount a recount?" He said that you cannot base a recount on an erroneous count. If you correct the official count, anyone who has relied upon the previous one ought, as a matter of law, not be considered as having had a recount. Nice logic, it seemed to me, but it didn't carry the day. There I was, eight votes down, and the legal war lost. That same afternoon, Richard Maher of the Press called me to ask what I was going to do. I told him I was going to support William Feighan in the general election, and then settle down and prepare for 1962.

The battle over recounts had generated a great deal of publicity in all the papers and on television. I emerged from that primary much more widely known, and I believe admired, than I would have been had I simply won in the first place. I had been shown as a serious and competent candidate and a good loser. I was legitimized in the eyes of many whites who would normally only

have known me as just another Negro. When I ran again in 1962, I won without too much trouble. I didn't have to wage anywhere near the battle I had waged in 1960. I had made my own people realize I could make it. Now that they knew we had it in our grasp, they came out with confidence. The same pattern applies to the mayoral race of 1965. I didn't quite win in 1965, but a similar recount I had then brought me more goodwill from whites, and more confidence from the black community. Interestingly, I've had more recounts than any public official in Ohio's history. My mayoral victories in 1967 and 1969 resulted in recounts. But I had won those.

Also, my system of analysis had been proven correct. I had come within two hundred votes of predicting not only the votes I would need to be nominated, but how many votes I would actually receive. And this was in a very heavily voted Presidential election year when John F. Kennedy was running. In Cuyahoga County, which is heavily Catholic, that made it difficult to analyze the vote from the experience of previous elections.

Finally, I saw how the black community had perceived the recount battle as their fight for equality and justice. Remember that William Feighan was not only the son of a congressman, he was the nephew of a judge. Edward Feighan, the congressman's brother, had sat on the municipal bench for more than a decade. With his good political name, he was running for an open seat on the Probate Court bench, one of the most powerful political posts in the county because of the amount of money that was handled in wills and estates. When the battle between me and his nephew was getting started, the judge quietly tried to get his brother to call it off. He was afraid of backlash from the black community if I lost. He had reason to be afraid. That November, the vote against him in the black community was overwhelming. It was one of the rare times that a Republican beat a Democrat for a judgeship in that county.

## 4

## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

On Monday, January 2, 1963, I made history and began what would be a series of changes in the Ohio House of Representatives, as I took the oath of office as the first black Democrat ever to be elected to the House or Senate of the state of Ohio.

It was one of the few times in public that I ever saw tears in my mother's eyes. She stood in the balcony with my brother, Louis, Blanche Bolden, Al Sweeny and a host of those from Cleveland who had helped make it possible. The system had worked. Traditional ethnic-coalition politics had proven it was as viable in 1962 for a black man who understood it as it had been for two hundred years for Irish, Germans, Italians, Jews, Poles, and other ethnic groups.

In the May 1962 primary election I had ranked ninth of seventeen candidates to be nominated out of a field of over a hundred aspirants. In the November general election, I ran twelfth of seventeen to be elected, and my 291,782 votes exceeded those of some of Cuyahoga County's most prestigious political names. In a county only eleven percent black, I had received a majority of white votes.

All my planning, analyses, projections, and the hard work by myself and so many others had won victory. Now elected victory had to be translated into legislative achievement. That, I was to learn, was a whole new ball game. I was now in the major league of Ohio politics.

Most of the political leaders in Ohio -- congressmen, senators and governors -- started in the state House of Representatives, whereas the state Senate seems to be more of a stopping-off place for men whose ambitions are not clear. For me, the tedious grinding pace and the oppressive conservatism in the lower house

eventually became overpowering but for the first few years I felt I was actually accomplishing something. I saw important issues raised and decided, and found some men who were serious, intelligent, committed and honest.

Sadly, most of those men were not in my own delegation from Cuyahoga County. The men elected from my area refer to the legislators from the downstate areas almost contemptuously as the hayseed members of the "cornstalk brigade." But if a hayseed is a thick-headed man who can't think beyond his own narrow concerns, then it was the Democratic contingent from Cleveland, not the rural Republicans and Democrats, who were hayseeds. With the exception of the two or three of the seventeen Cuyahoga legislators, when detailed, knowledgeable debates on the budget occurred, it was the down-state, small-city legislators who were the best informed. Ohio has a national image of being composed of small, typically Midwestern towns, or at least typically Midwestern people. Yet it has eight large cities, more than any other state in the Union. Most of its ten million people live in those cities. Less than ten percent of the people are farmers. Yet of its eighty-eight counties, half are still dry, these things mattered in the legislature, where each county, no matter how sparsely populated, was entitled to at least one representative in the House of Representatives.

I was elected to a legislature in which Republicans outnumbered Democrats five to two and whites outnumbered blacks 184 to two. David Albritton, a black Republican from Dayton, a former track star who had been a co-hero with Jesse Owens in the 1936 Olympics, had already been serving when I was elected.

As the first black Democrat, I knew I was going to be watched. I couldn't afford to make any wrong moves. The only thing I had going for me was integrity. In a body like the legislature, where so many issues on so many fronts are thrown at a man that he can't possibly be knowledgeable on all of them, personal integrity is the one virtue that stands out. Nobody can claim universal competence. You quickly find that you have to depend on other



men whose knowledge in special fields is superior to your own. If you can't trust them, what are you going to do? I had to be a man who could be depended on, could be trusted.

I worked hard at learning the structure of the legislature and learning the men who made it work. I didn't go to the lobbyists' parties and I didn't let them buy my dinner, and never accepted a favor from a lobbyist that could compromise my position on some future vote. The men I worked with in Columbus understood what I was doing, and I soon developed a reputation as a legislator who did his homework and intended to stay clean of the special interest people. In any legislative body, when a controversial vote is taken just about everybody knows how it will come out. This means that the party leaders on the floor will have canvassed all the legislators and will know within a vote or two how an issue is faring even before it reaches the floor. I also means that when you are asked how you stand on an issue, you have to be forthright, you can't be changing your mind. My colleagues never could predict in advance how I would stand on any particular issue -- I took some positions that were pretty unorthodox by traditional standards; but when they asked how I would vote, I told them straight and kept my word.

My interests in the legislature naturally centered on the issues that concerned the people who had elected me -- welfare, housing, civil rights, education and mental health. And my concern quite as naturally brought me into conflict with the state administration of Republican Governor James A. Rhodes, whose main policy was to keep taxes down to seduce business and industry. With slogans like "Profit is not a dirty word in Ohio," and actions like ten percent across-the-board budget cuts in the social-welfare programs when the state's participation in those areas was already grievously low, Rhodes naturally became my target. Because of my position as the first black Democratic ever elected, I was in demand as a speaker. All around the state I would speak to groups, castigating Rhodes, articulating the social blindness of his actions, and itemizing the failures of the Republican majority in the legislature. These speeches were usually reported in the local

newspapers. When the legislature adjourned during my first session, I had done what few freshman legislators accomplish. I had gotten legislation passed under my own name, and had developed a position as an articulate liberal of integrity who could debate the substantive issues on the floor. I was ready for a comeuppance.

My pet legislation was a bill that guaranteed a person under arrest the immediate right to see a lawyer. That this right was not already in the Ohio Code was in some respects inadvertent. I was determined to see it spelled out, though; the issue was too basic and important to just assume, I laid all the proper groundwork, presented the bill on the floor as persuasively as I could, and got it passed. A major and important victory.

A couple of weeks after adjournment, I got a call from John McElroy, the governor's aide.

"Carl," he said, "I'm calling you to tell you that the governor had vetoed one of your bills."

"He can't do that," I said.

"Oh, yes," he said, "the governor can veto."

"What I mean is, I said, flabbergasted, "that this bill is just too vital. He can't have any grounds for a veto."

McElroy gave me some ambiguous talk about how my bill might be in conflict with a provision in another law. I knew he wasn't leveling with me, and I wanted to find out why. I told him I wanted to talk to the governor about it. He said come ahead.

Jim Rhodes is a consummate politician of what we call the old school. He is out of that same mold that produced the Lyndon Johnson and Richard Daleys. He stands over six feet tall and looks like a football player turned mortician. His gray hair is combed up in a small pompadour and then swept back. Although his clothes style has changed now, back in the 1960's he wore almost a uniform -- blue suit, blue shirt, blue tie. He must have had a dozen suits, all the same cost and color. Yet somehow on him it didn't look as plain as it sounds. He managed to look natty.

Rhodes never went beyond high school, but nobody ever questioned his expertise. And he understood power. He was mayor of Columbus at the crucial time of suburban expansion for that city, the 1940s. Unlike the mayors of Cleveland, who couldn't see beyond their own reelections, Rhodes saw that the suburbs had to be forced to incorporate as part of Columbus if the central city was to survive. Whenever a newly developed area decided it wanted water lines, Rhodes laid down his hard line. The suburb either submitted to annexation or it got no water. As a result, Columbus today has the largest land area of any city in the state. Had the same policy been followed in Cleveland, our city would not have been strangled economically by the surrounding suburbs who paid low sewer and water rates for Cleveland water and used the availability of cheap water to attract industry and business from Cleveland. After Rhode's mayorship, he was elected state auditor, and used his office to embarrass and subsequently defeat the Democratic governor, Michael V. Di Salle. Jim Rhodes lives politics.

Until he vetoed my prisoner bill, I had never talked at length with Rhodes. I drove down to Columbus. When I walked into the governor's office, Rhodes was sitting in his shirtsleeves. He stood up and put out his hand, giving me his usual hearty welcome.

"Hi, Carl, good to see you. How's the legislator from Cleveland?"

"Fine, Governor," I said, "I came down to see why you vetoed my bill."

He sat down and grinned at me. "You understand that, don't you?"

"No, Governor, I don't"

"John, he called out to McElroy, "go get Carl's file."

McElroy came in with a folder full of newspaper clippings. Rhodes sat there and rattled off the headlines: **STOKES ASSAILS RHODES; STOKES SLAMS RHODES ON EDUCATION; STOKES SAYS RHODES PROGRAMS RUINING THE STATE.** The list went on and on.

"There it is, Carl, you know, you've been giving me hell all over this state. And you never heard me say anything, did you?"

"No Governor, I never did." I replied.

"Well, now it's my turn," he said, "I've been laying in the weeds for you."

My political education took a great leap forward. When the legislature resumed its session the next spring, the Republican governor and the second-term black Democrat from Cleveland began to find areas they could agree upon. And when the legislator gave speeches, he was much more, shall we say, issue-oriented. He attacked the terrible problems that existed in Ohio. He did not descend to petty name calling, or even name mentioning.

There were, of course, more important reasons why on occasion I found myself siding with the Republican rather than the Democrats. The more important of those occasions arose in late 1964, immediately after I had been reelected to my second term. The United States Supreme Court had made its first one-man, one-vote ruling, which overthrew an amendment to the Ohio constitution that guaranteed each county representation in the legislature whether or not it had sufficient population to warrant it. Rhodes immediately drew up a plan that involved mapping out each legislative district within the already defined congressional districts. This would end the bedsheet ballot in populous counties like my own. Liberals and good-government groups had advocated this for a long time. But Rhodes had built into his plan a way for the Republican legislature to gerrymander the districts, perpetuating the dominance of the rural areas. The Ohio Democrat is a city creature, he doesn't even know what rutabaga looks like. When the implications of Rhodes's redistricting plan became clear, the Democrats were outraged.

From my point of view, the Rhodes plan had at least one good thing going for it. More black legislators would be elected. I had won a second term handily, but I was still the only black Democrat elected, and I knew that as long as members of the lower house were elected countywide I was likely to stay the only one. Under Rhode's plan, at least three blacks would be elected from Cuyahoga County alone, and there would no doubt be others from

the other large cities. When the issue came up in the Democratic caucus, I stood up for it.

This caused a panic within the party, since each vote was crucial. The reapportionment plan had to pass the legislature by a two-thirds vote, and the Democrats had just barely enough votes to block it. But one or two defections could change everything. Just before the issue came up on the floor, both Rhodes and Speaker of the House Roger Cloud asked me if I would support the bill and I said I would. The bill was brought forth. The vote was in progress when suddenly it was stopped. There was a phone call for me. The Democrats had arranged to have Bert Porter call at the last minute; the Republican leadership had agreed to hold the vote while he made a last-minute attempt to change my mind for me. Albert S. Porter, the county engineer, who had taken over as county boss of the party after Ray Miller dies earlier that year, was an autocratic and stern leader. As county engineer he controlled more patronage jobs than any other public official in the county, and that gave him at least an apparent clout that was seldom challenged. Except by me. When he called this time, I doubted that it occurred to him he had no club to wield.

He told me that he had heard I was going to vote with the Republicans on the reapportionment bill. I said, "That's right, Bert."

"I'm calling to ask you to change your mind," he said, "You're a young fellow and I think you have a bright career ahead of you with the Democratic Party. You're the first Negro Democrat to serve in the legislature from Cuyahoga County."

"No, Bert," I said. "from anywhere in the state."

"Well, yes, and that makes it more significant. What I want to do is see to it that you don't hurt that career."

"I don't see how I could hurt my career, Bert. As I see it, I get elected because I went out and put votes together that had not been put together by anyone before, and you didn't have anything to do with that. And in addition, I haven't seen the Democratic Party electing any blacks around the rest of the state. Under this plan, black legislators will be elected."

"I want you to know that our party doesn't turn on black and white. We're Democrats."

A fine old street verb came to my mind when he said that, but I held my tongue. I asked him if he had anything else to say.

"Yes," he said, "I want to caution you that this is such an important vote to the Democratic party that I would doubt very much that you'd be a welcome member of the party if you insist on voting this way."

"Bert, they're waiting for me on the floor. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going right out there and vote with those republicans just like I was going to do before you called. Thank you. Goodbye."

When I went back to the floor, the Republican leadership approached me and told me they would have the votes, and that I could change my vote if I wanted to patch things up with my party. I told them I wanted my vote to stand. So the bill passed by one more vote than it needed.

The coalition between me and the Republicans paid off. I put through a strong fair-housing law; reform of the state welfare system; a law giving a person the right to designate that his organs be used after his death to save another's life; and major revision and reform of the state's approach to financing and staffing of mental health facilities.

I learned how to function in the legislature in my own way during my first term and during the first few months of my second term. But after that point, my positions on issues often coincided with my political ambitions, which lay elsewhere. By the spring of 1965, I had begun to see that I had a fighting chance to run for mayor. I did run and nearly took the prize the first time. When I was reelected to the legislature in 1966, I had my eye continually on two possibilities, running for the U.S. Congress or running again for mayor.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Ohio's congressional districts would have to be redrawn, along with the state legislative districts. Cuyahoga County's four U.S. representatives -- two Democrats and two Republicans -- were all veterans, wielding considerable seniority, and therefore power. It happened that most of the black community, because of the

segregated housing pattern, lived within the boundaries of the Twenty-first Congressional District, represented by Charles A. Vanik, A Democrat, a Czech and a sometime liberal. Michael A Feighan, representing the twenty-second District, was the other Democrat. The Twentieth District, which included the old-guard suburbs of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights, was represented by a rock-ribbed Republican, Francis M. Bolton. The other Republican, representing the remaining republican suburbs, was William E. Minshall.

The legal authority to set the lines of the new districts lay with the state legislature, but in fact the drawing of the lines was put into the hands of local party leaders to work out. The leaders of both parties in Cuyahoga County agreed that they wanted to keep their incumbents. The most threatened was Vanik, a long-time congressman who had good relations with the black community he represented, but would obviously soon face strong opposition from a black candidate. Bert Porter handled this situation by carving the black ghetto in half, giving Vanik some and Feighan most of the rest. The blacks were in a minority in both districts, therefore, and unable to elect their own man in either.

The party leaders and the political writers at the white daily newspapers explained that this plan would benefit Negroes, giving them influence in two districts rather than one. This is the kind of influence we had for a hundred years. Those whites were happy to segregate us for their purposes, but when the segregation happened to become a political benefit for our purposes, it became wrong. They proceeded with their plans to redraw the district lines and politically integrate the blacks, while leaving them residentially segregated and politically impotent. I pleaded our case with Bert Porter, but it was a waste of time.

The plan was submitted to the legislature. When it reached committee I formed a contingent of black leaders and white liberals and made another presentation to get the lines redrawn. The redistricting plan passed over our objection. I pulled the NAACP lawyers together and we filed suit in federal court,

charging that the redistricting violated the equal protection fo the laws and the one-man, one-vote principle. The suit was filed in 1965. The U.S. district court ruled against us in 1966, and in the congressional election that year all the white incumbents were reelected.

Comes 1967, another mayoral election year. Ralph S. Locher, the incumbent, is being roasted by the media. I think I can beat him. But what I would really like to do is get those congressional lines changed and run for Congress in 1968. The NAACP suit has been lying in the U.S. Court of Appeals for nearly a year. It is summer, and the deadline for filing petitions for mayor is fast approaching. I heard that the court had made its decision. Unfortunately, a Plain Dealer reporter, James M. Naughton, claimed a reliable source told him what the major decision would be and he ran a front-page story in the Sunday paper claiming the decision supported the NAACP position. I would have my district. I could sit out the mayoral race. But I didn't count on judicial vagary -- or reportorial inaccuracy. When the decision was announced on Monday, it went the other way, two to one against the NAACP position.

We appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Three weeks after I was elected mayor, the court overruled the appellate decision. Victory was ours. The lines would have to be redrawn. A few days later I was in Columbus and met with Governor Rhodes. We discussed the decision of the court and he said, "We'll bring out your congressional district, Carl."

It was my district. I had fought for it. Now three black Democratic councilmen lined up to run for it -- George Forbes. Leo A. Jackson, and George White. They hadn't supported me in my fight against the party to create a district a black could win in, and I'd be damned before I'd let them reap the benefit. I ran my brother Louis -- who had been one of the lawyers who argued the case -- and put behind him all the machinery which had just elected me as mayor. In the May 1968 primaries he soundly defeated all three of them -- soundly thrashing them in their home precincts. In



the November general election he defeated the Republican candidate and became the first black congressman ever to be elected from Ohio. Now in his third term, Louis is Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee, and a nationally recognized political leader.

My last shot as a maverick in the legislature came in the spring of 1967, when Jim Rhodes called me to his office to ask me to support his pet project, the Ohio Bond Commission. The commission, whose creation would have to be submitted to the Ohio voters for approval, would sell bonds to pay for all sort of projects and services that are normally paid for with tax monies. Rhodes had promised no new taxes, and the Bond Commission scheme would bring in \$1.7 billion without taxes.

The commission also happened to be a gigantic Republican pork barrel. The plan, once it was presented, was immediately denounced bitterly by organized labor and the Democratic Party. Instead of using actual income from taxes for essential services, the commission plan would have committed the state to extraordinary debt in the future.

Rhodes appealed to me on the basis of what could be done through the commission. He pointed out that without new taxes there were not about to be any major improvements in spending for education, housing, health and welfare needs. I stood up in the Democratic caucus and said that unless the Democrats could come up with an alternative that would get these things done, I had no choice but to go with a proposal that at least benefited heavily for the plan -- both Cleveland dailies gave it a fervent editorial support -- and the entire business community, which saw it as an endless source of goodies and gratuities, was for it. I remember one terrific editorial in the Press that included my picture, along with three others, next to a text headed "Four Courageous Men." I already knew I would be running for mayor against the party's incumbent and couldn't expect their or labor's support. Further, I didn't see Cleveland or Ohio organized labor as any great friend of the black

man. Two years later, the Ohio AFL-CIO was still bitterly opposing a graduated state income tax. Why? Because union members are now middle-class and no longer are dependent on public-assistance programs financed from taxes.

In any case, my stand was morally and practically right and had benefits in goodwill with the newspapers and business interest and didn't hurt anyone else. When the votes were counted in May, the Ohio voters expressed their own opinion and defeated the commission issue two to one.

## 5

## CARL JUNIOR

Not all my battles were being fought in the legislature. I fought one at home that benefitted not only my own son but many young black boys who followed him.

My son, Carl Junior, became five years old in 1963. Shirley went to the nearest public school to register him and discovered that the kindergarten class he would be attending already had thirty-seven children enrolled. This was early summer and parents were still registering their children. When I returned home from the legislature, she told me about it and asked me what I thought we ought to do. Now, I had watched the deterioration of education in the public schools, and I was determined that my boy would get the maximum of the best education available. I had a friend in Columbus who had sent his children to University School there, a school connected with Ohio State University, and I assumed there would be such an institution in Cleveland. I told Shirley to look for a University School and left the matter with her. The next week she said she had found a private school called University School, but when she called she was told that no Negro children had ever attended there.

I was not pleased. In the previous ten years I had worked on any number of civic campaigns and had worked with some of the city's "outstanding citizens," the civic-minded heads of the most prestigious law firms, businesses, industries, and utilities, men who publicly campaign against, among other things, racism. Here was a private school, obviously in the control of some of these same men, that appeared to be maintaining privately the very policies that they were decrying in public.

Shirley and I went to the school and talked to the head of the elementary grades, Jonathan Ingersoll. He told us that he had been

trying to get the board of trustees to change its policy. No Negro child would be accepted. Others had applied and been turned down, he said-usually sons of physicians who lived in the suburbs. They had never fought the policy because they didn't want the publicly known that their children had been denied admission to this prestigious school. Now, I was a politician, a man who lives in the public, and I didn't give a damn about the prestige thing, I wasn't about to handle the matter quite so delicately. I told Mr. Ingersoll that I was going to make an application for Carl Junior and that he could expect that the school's experiences with me would be somewhat different from its past experience with black parents. (I later learned that Ingersoll had been forthright with us. He had in fact fought the issue, but had never won his case.)

It happened that another black family was trying to enroll their son in the school at the same time. Dr. Sylvester Davis and I had grown up together; his family lived on East Seventieth Street when I lived on East Sixty-ninth. He was trying to enroll his son, who was the same age as mine. Ingersoll told me that Dr. Davis had applied and that he had had to tell him the same thing. I thanked him for his comments and asked for a list of the members of the board of trustees of the school.

Shortly after we made the application, we received a reply from Roland McKinney, Jr., headmaster of University Schools, explaining to us that our son, Sylvester Davis, Jr., would not be accepted. McKinney's secretary had put Davis' letter into my envelope and mine into his. I immediately sat down at my own desk.

August 1, 1963

Dear Mr. McKinley:

Ordinarily I would have had some problem in answering your letter of July 28, 1963, in that the envelope addressed to me and my wife contained a letter addressed to Dr. and Mrs. Sylvester S. Davis. The letter informed them that their child Sylvester Jr., had not been accepted for enrollment. Since, however, I knew that their problem was identical to mine,

namely the peaceful, uneventful acceptance of a young child who happens to be a Negro into a school which, from all appearances, has always been restricted to white students only, I was able to reason that that tradition would permit an identical form letter to both Negro families, regardless of the proper identification. No other ordinarily insignificant secretarial error could have so well dramatized an institutional policy.

Now I accept the fact that at the late date we applied for Carl's admission there were no vacancies. I appreciate in full Mr. Ingersoll's unsolicited effort to take this opportunity for University School to meet the challenge of these times by increasing the quota by two and accepting these two young boys. I do regret the arbitrary decision that this would not be done, which was made unilaterally by the board president and concurred in by you.

I reject the consideration of space as the basis for this decision, having seen the remodeling currently in progress creating larger classrooms.

My most basic reaction to this whole matter, however, lies with the information given that should a vacancy occur, neither of these boys would be accepted as a matter of course from the current waiting list. This, I understand, would require "further consideration." I doubt that this position would fare well under the test of public reaction.

Finally, the perdurance of this policy of segregation and discrimination by University School cannot help but affect my reaction to the public posture of some of your more widely known board members. I have worked closely with many of them in inner-city community affairs. There can be no reconciling of their 60-minute speeches on fair play and equal opportunity at community lunches in Cleveland and their endorsement and support of a suburban school's segregation policy where they themselves determine the policy.

Very truly yours,  
Carl B. Strokes

Under the signature, I noted that a copy of my letter was being sent to all of the trustees as well as the officers and member of the corporation of the school, some forty-two people.

My phone started jumping off the hook. Here is William Laffer, vice-president of the school and at that time president of the board

of trustees of Forest City Hospital, which is operated by black people and serves the black community:

"Carl, this is Bill Laffer."

"Hi, Bill."

"I just got a copy of your letter to University School."

"Yes?"

"You were calling me a racist in there."

"No, Bill. The facts might, but I didn't."

"Well, we're certainly going to do something about this. You'll hear from me."

"Okay, Bill."

A couple of board members called and said they had never noticed there weren't any Negro children at the school.

Ralph Besse, the president of the electric utility in Cleveland, wrote me a long letter explaining to me that I certainly knew better than to think that the school's policy in any way reflected his personal policy, and that he couldn't understand why such treatment was accorded me and that he hoped in the future other black parents would take the opportunity to register their children in University School. I never did understand that little piece of woolgathering, but I knew I had found him at home.

A couple of days later I got a call from the headmaster. Would I come out and talk with him. Certainly. I went out, and he gave me about twenty minutes' worth of talk about being the new headmaster there, about the schools he had worked for in the East, and how certain he was that I was quite wrong in assuming that the school was excluding Negroes, that the school had no policy at all on such matters. I told him finally that, since he was new, he had no way of knowing what had been the school's policy. He replied that they couldn't have such a policy, because it was like the schools in the East where he had worked, and they didn't have such policies, and besides, he had gone to an Ivy League university where blacks had been admitted for years, and it was his personal policy that blacks should not be excluded.

I was beginning to understand what he was doing. He wasn't about to let my boy go to his school; he wanted to convince me to be quiet.

"Have you spent the last half hour talking to me in the hope that I am going to withdraw the assertions I made in this letter?"

"I don't know if you should withdraw the letter," he said, "but certainly you say some things there about this school that are simply not true, which I don't think should be permitted to stand unchallenged. You should understand that there is another side."

"The only side I care about, Mr. McKinley, is that my boy is being refused admission to this school because he is a Negro. I guess that is as far as you and I can go, because there isn't one thing in that letter I am about to change, and I am telling you I mean it. I am not one of those Negroes who cares about having people know that my son was refused admission to this prestigious school. Your prestige means nothing to me. And I am not going to keep silent about those men on your board who say one thing at civic functions in Cleveland and then take another attitude once they cross those suburban lines. They may be able to get away with it, but not without everyone I am able to reach knowing about it."

Oddly enough, Mr. McKinley called me back the next day. He was interested in reconsidering Carl Junior's application. Could I bring the boy out. No, he was in Mississippi, and wouldn't be back until the Sunday before Labor Day. Could I bring him out then. On Sunday? Certainly he wouldn't be making decisions about such things at that late date. Well, he didn't know, but he would just like to review the application again and talk with young Carl again.

Shirley and Carl Junior returned early, but I waited until Sunday morning to call the school. Sure enough, Mr. McKinley was in his office, as I am certain he is every Sunday morning. We took Carl out, and Mr. McKinley sat there and said, "You know, we have reviewed the application, and, since we have had some changes in the kindergarten class, we would like to have Carl join us as part of the school, which of course was our position all along.

We would like to know if he can attend class starting Tuesday morning."

At such times it is hard not to strike out, but you hold yourself in and you don't do it. You act as graciously as possible, you say, "Yes, Mr. McKinley, we'll be glad to have him here," and you shake hands and smile, gentlemen all, for this is the way gentlemen act, and we are, first and last, all gentlemen.



## 6

## HOW TO TAKE THE HALL

By 1965 it was becoming clear to me that the ethnic machine that had run Cleveland for more than a generation was running out of steam.

Three years earlier, President Kennedy had been casting about for an Italian to put into the Cabinet had settled on Cleveland's Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze for the Health, Education and Welfare slot. According to Cleveland's charter, when the mayor leaves, the post goes to the law director. Ralph S. Locher, my former boss when I had been assistant prosecutor, had been hand picked as the perfect law director. He was Romanian, a dedicated worker, and he posed absolutely no political threat since he had never run for political office. But suddenly, with the Presidential appointment, Locher was in by default. Conservative and patriotic, Locher was the ideal public servant to see to the ethnic community.

But the years of neglect were beginning to show. School integration was the issue that exposed the wounds. In the spring, a group of blacks and white liberals attempted to disrupt construction of a new school being built in the ghetto; their argument was that the school was placed just far enough within the lines of the black arena to perpetuate an all-black student body.

In the confusion of the sit-in, a white minister was accidentally run over and killed by a bulldozer. And in the Murray Hill area-Cleveland's Little Italy-there were a series of running battles between blacks and whites over the few black children attending the elementary school. All this served to boost the popularity of the racist president of the School Board, Ralph McAllister, a man whose only political sense lay in the ability to create an endless series of frightening sentences that always referred to the black community as "them." Screams of lackluster government were

being directed at Locher from all directions, mostly from lackluster men.

I had been paying attention to all this when I began to get word that two shrewd veterans of the political scene were launching an effort to draft me for mayor.

Geraldine Williams is a dedicated campaign worker. She stayed with me from 1965 through the 1967 campaign, and I named her one of my administrative assistants. Jean Murell Capers is one of the brightest politicians ever to come out of Cleveland. She understood what it takes to mix economics, politics and social forces into that curious admixture we call power. And she knew where the country ought to be going in relation to the needs of black people. But there was also a flaw there.

Jean was riding high in the late 1940's and through the decade of the 1950s. She was a member of the City Council from 1949 until 1959, when the black community turned away from her. In that year the white establishment, the local Democratic Party and the newspapers all turned on her and she lost her seat to James Bell. She had somehow forgotten things she knew better than anyone else about maintaining a political organization and staying close to the people. Her association with a major rackets figure became the subject of a newspaper expose, and other rumors of misconduct combined to discredit her permanently. Despite her political savvy, Jean never got over her political loss and in 1965 was still trying to find a way back in.

Jean and Geraldine announced in February that they were going to draft me for mayor. I read about it in Columbus. They hadn't talked to me about it in Columbus.

It was clear to me that Jean had a hustle in mind. I am confident, though, that she never intended things to turn out as they did. I understood that Jean wanted me to be her candidate, and I assumed that she really wanted to use me to force certain concessions from the 'regulars' in the race. That is not a new gimmick. You put a man you know is not going to win into a race to scare the incumbent. They you go to the party bosses and agree

to pull your man out if they will give you something else you want. This is especially effective for a black politician in a white city -- you can negotiate the entire black vote because the white party bosses believe you can control it, whether you can or not.

I give Jean credit for not coming to see me and talking to me about her draft-Stokes movement, because she knew perfectly well I would never agree to it. Not only that, if I did agree to go along with her hustle, then she would owe me something. This way, everything was in her hands.

The newspapers carried a running account of their efforts in my behalf collecting petition signatures. I kept quiet. When the reporters would ask me about it, I was able honestly to deny any knowledge. Meanwhile, though, Al Sweeney, the *Call & Post* city editor, and I began going over the figures from my legislative races. We figured out that although blacks made up only thirty-five percent of the actual population, they comprised thirty-nine percent of the vote. Ralph McAllister declared himself an independent candidate. Ralph J. Perk, later my successor as mayor, announced he would run as a Republican. If I filed as an independent candidate, that meant a four-way race. Our thirty-nine percent loomed large. We decided to let the draft-Stokes movement build its own head of steam.

One night Geraldine called me at my home to say that a delegation from the draft-Stokes group wanted to visit me and talk about the petitions. I told her I would be in Columbus and they could visit me there. I could just as easily have met them in Cleveland, but I wanted to establish my remoteness from them. Sweeney and I decided that we would give the group a goal that, if they attained it, would touch enough people to set up a viable jumping-off place for a campaign. At that point, we would set up our own group and publicly disassociate ourselves from Jean.

Geraldine and a small group came to Columbus. I told them, "Get twenty thousand signatures and I will run." You needed fifteen thousand to file as an independent. Geraldine swallowed hard and said, "Okay." She returned to Cleveland, and the next day

I saw newspaper stories quoting her as saying that I had not committed myself but that I had not stopped them.

As the filing date drew near, I saw articles saying that the group had over fourteen thousand signatures. I decided to go see William O. Walker, the publisher of the *Call & Post*. I told him I wanted to run for mayor, thought I could win and explained how Sweeney and I figured it would work. He said that if I wanted to run, the *Call & Post* would support me.

"We have some problems, though," I said, "You know Jean Capers is involved with this draft effort."

"Yes," he said, "and I don't think it's good for you."

"Well, we aren't too worried about that. We plan to get her out of the whole movement. But what we have to do is put together the framework to displace her."

I told Walker that what I really needed from him, beyond his support, was his contact with the leading members of the black bourgeoisie. I wanted to put together a group of impeccable, influential men who would support me, a group that Jean would immediately see was off limits for her. I wanted the group to be headed by Dr. Kenneth W. Clement, and I asked W. O. Walker to intercede for me, asking Clement to head the group.

Walker agreed and that same day he sat down with Dr. Clement, who at that time was probably the most prominent civic-minded professional men in the black community. The white media, then and now, sought him out for quotes on all matters affecting the black community. Clement agreed to be my man, and I immediately set up shop to take the ball game out of Jean's hands.

The draft-Stokes group was really very small, and they hadn't got as much done as the newspapers reported. I called Geraldine and asked her to bring me the petitions. They had just over 6,700 names, far short of the twenty thousand I had set as a goal. But I immediately called a press conference and announced that over twenty thousand voters had signed petitions asking me to run for mayor, and that a group of distinguished black leaders, headed by

Dr. Kenneth W. Clement and William O. Walker had prevailed upon me to accept the draft.

Jean, Geraldine, Sweeney and I knew we really had only 6,700 signatures. But nobody else did, and we presented the draft petitions at the press conference in a "Michigan bankroll," with real petitions at the top and bottom of the pile and blank ones in the middle. While the television cameras zoomed in and Richard Maher, the veteran politics editor for the *Press*, took notes, I riffled through the impressive stacks of petitions. Not one of the fifteen or more reporters looked through the petitions for himself. Then I dropped a bomb that nearly choked Sweeney. I announced that on my birthday, June 21, four weeks away, we would file 35,000 signatures with the board of Elections and I would run as an independent.

After the conference, Sweeney came up to me and said, "Man, what in the world made you say that? Where are we going to get thirty-five thousand signatures?"

I told Al that we would get them. I knew that even for an established politician the collecting of signatures is an arduous task, taking considerable work on the part of his ward leaders and committeemen; the idea of a Negro running for mayor and without organized political support getting that many signatures was unbelievable -- to them. But past experience had confirmed for me that I had a reservoir of supporters the politicians and political writers consistently ignored -- preachers, civic and community volunteers, and the little people whose interests I'd fought for in the legislature. You won't get response to a political appeal from these people if you haven't laid the groundwork. But groundwork or no, my relying on them this time, for those 35,000 signatures, was a bold and dramatic move.

I went to my files and pulled out the names and addresses of all the people I had worked with in the community and in my various jobs as probation officer, prosecutor and legislator. I sent them a short letter, asking for their help and explaining how the petitions should be filled out.

Those letters had just been sent off when I received a call from a young white student at Oberlin College named Charles Butts. He said he had read about my announcement in the newspaper and wanted to help. He told me he had some experience in organizational politics and editing a newspaper in Mississippi. It was almost summer, the college had just closed, and Butts came to Cleveland. We worked hard putting the petitions and the letters together. But he didn't believe I could get the signatures, either.

The next thirty days were marvelous. We worked out of the law offices on East Fifty-fifth Street that Louis and I shared with the famous defense lawyer, Norman Minor. People were almost constantly coming into the office, dropping off petitions and picking up new ones. But the impression was deceptive. June 21, my birthday and the deadline I had set for the 35,000 signatures, fell on a Tuesday. The Friday before, we counted up what we had; it was only eighteen thousand names.

"What in the world are we going to do now?" asked Al Sweeney, who carried dramatic front-page pictures and stories each week in the *Call & Post*.

"All we can do is let the people know we need those names," I said.

I went to the two radio stations that beamed to blacks, and broadcast an appeal. I reminded the black community of the challenge I'd established for us. The word spread that Carl Stokes needed help. All that weekend and through Monday afternoon, people were streaming into our office, dropping off petitions, asking if they had time to do another. They came by taxi, by car, on foot, on bicycles. Children were bringing them in. We couldn't keep up.

We had some keeping up to do. When relatively uninformed campaign workers are out there getting signatures, they often let somebody forget to write something—the date or the proper ward number or the city. One of the fellows went to a dime store and bought a couple of dozen pencils and pens of various colors and we cleaned up the petitions so they wouldn't be subject to technical challenges. We would complete dates, finish out the spelling of

"Cleve," sometimes change a date that was obviously out of sequence.

Monday evening we had petitions all over the floor of the offices and up and down the hall. We finished the correcting while Charles Butts did the counting. At 9 P.M., Butts came up to me. "Something has got to be wrong," he said. "I've counted them three times, and I keep coming up with thirty-seven thousand signatures."

We had done it. The next morning, Butts and I had all the petitions copied by photostat, to guard against any wrong-doing after the petitions left our hands, and took them to the Board of Elections. It made a dramatic news conference. We had actually picked up a couple of thousand signatures from the white West Side. Not many, but some. At the news conference, I was asked if the signatures were all from black areas.

"Oh, no," I said. "Well over ten percent of these signatures are from white areas."

That figure was at least twice as many as we had. But some times you have to help white people believe they can forgo their prejudices. Stretching the truth in this case made a lot of liberals feel proud of themselves, and more able and willing to help later. The fact of that signature drive was that the added theatricality of my arbitrary deadline and the unnecessarily high goal gave my people a challenge and kept the adrenalin flowing. When we made it, they were able to congratulate themselves much more feelingly than would have been possible in a routine petition drive. They didn't think about what would have happened if we hadn't made it.

I had the added fillip of nine days between filing the 37,000 signatures and the actual filing deadline of June 30. We picked up 14,000 more signatures, for a total of 51,000. Very impressive.

We had been having campaign meetings every Thursday night at the *Call & Post* building. Each time, more people would show up. The campaign was organized by blacks and their support was my base, the thirty-nine percent. But I knew I needed white votes and white workers in the campaign-whites I could trust. I began

with Lois Hays, an old friend who served with me on the board of Fairhill Psychiatric hospital; she became treasurer and co-chairman. Her being treasurer was important. Lois' integrity and that of her husband, Robert, an investment banker, were vital because at every step I had to build a confidence in the white community about the legitimacy of my effort. The other co-chairman was Walter Wills, a black funeral home director widely respected in both the black and the white communities.

Next I went to the *Plain Dealer* and the *Press* to ask for their endorsements. I had little hope of getting them, but it was important to me to let them know that I knew I could win. I wanted them to think back on how I had explained to them that I would win for the legislature and how they hadn't believe me. Both eventually came out for Locher, praising his honestly, his hard work and his clean record. His lack of accomplishment and his adamant stance against leaders of the black community were not mentioned.

The newspaper endorsements didn't strike me as being the products of ill will. But it was different with the local Democratic Party. I had gone against Bert Porter, the county boss, before, and this time I wasn't even running as a Democrat, but as an independent. Everybody knew I was a Democrat and intended to stay one. But I ran as an independent to force a four-way race. Bert Porter took my campaign as a civil-rights action and did what he could to discredit me. He had me barred from speaking at any Democratic ward meetings. And organized labor, while not as open in its techniques, was more virulent in its opposition. The AFL-CIO was notifying it members that Ralph Locher was the only "safe" candidate.

The other group that opposed me, sadly enough, was the black politicians in the Democratic Party. I had to run over them. They always ran scared, staying safely within the fold of party dominance. They had a persistent and debilitating lack of faith in or understanding of the black community. They were as certain as Bert Porter that I would lose, and they were not about to jeopardize



their standing with the mayor and the party by supporting me. In the primary, Locher was running against County Recorder Mark McElroy, another weak candidate. Locher received 53.6 percent of the Democratic vote, but only 23 percent of the black vote. The councilman should have seen that we could get the man.

The popular belief, sometimes encourage by me, is that I became a legitimate or serious mayoral candidate in 1967 when the *Plain Dealer* endorsed me. The implications are that until I was recognized as a fully functioning, competent man by the white establishment, I was not for real. There is a certain truth to that implication. Until I could impress the white community with my competence, they were not about to believe that I was really as good as any white man, even a ninth-grade dropout like Ralph J. Perk. Until I did that, I knew I could count on precious few white votes. But the truth of the matter is, I did my own legitimization, and I did it in 1965, and I did it by debating Ralph J. Perk.

About a week into the campaign for the general election, Perk made the sort of statement that has characterized his career, both in its disregard of the facts and in its appeal to the anti-tax voting blocs. Perk's campaign cry has always been "Economy and efficiency, no new taxes." In this case he said that the city could meet its needs and being about needed improvements on the income it had if it were only run efficiently. When I read this remark in the *Plain Dealer* the next morning, I said to Charlie Butts, "I think we've got him. This is our chance to legitimize this campaign."

I knew I had great credibility problems. This especially bothered me when I could see it expressed among my own people, my base. Of course, the white areas just weren't prepared to concede that any black man had the intelligence to run for mayor. That is probably the nicest thing they thought. Now I saw an opportunity to bridge the gap.

I arranged with a friend to get an open date at the City Club, Cleveland's most popular public forum. The club has for over fifty years been the traditional forum for debates and speeches by

Presidents, governors and outstanding public and private personages. I wired Perk telling him he was wrong in his finance remarks, told him the City Club was available and challenged him to a debate. Perk had to bit on that one. As county auditor, he just had to believe he knew more about finances than a Carl Stokes. Few Clevelanders were aware of how hard I worked on the state budget in learning its intricate details of state financing. It was a great chance for me, the opportunity to demonstrate to the entire town that I knew more about city finances than Ralph Perk. Or any other candidate for that matter.

The Monday before the Friday debate, I checked into the Hollenden Hotel, and for the next five days I lived in what was virtually an intellectual gymnasium. Butts and I had put together every document, pamphlet and report on city finances that could be found. Much of the time I spent studying them. The rest of the time I spent talking to various experts on finances. One of them was Locher's own budget director. Butts would be out making appointments with everyone he thought could help, and those people would in turn recommend others. I developed a depth of understanding from the parade of opinions. I questioned and probed, and when they left I read and studies. Thursday I started writing my speech. That night I called Butts and told him, "Charlie, we're going to bust him wide open."

I had put together a short speech with a stagging set of statics and interactable facts about the city. The speech was written so that a reporter couldn't take a solid quote from it without including my fingers. It was all meat.

Perk came in with a public-relations gimmick. It was a neat example of the point he wanted to make. He had a series of stacks of poker chips set up on the table in front of him. He told his audience the chips represented the people Laushe had hired, and former Mayor Thomas A Burke had hired and Celebrezze had hired, and Locher himself had hired. Declaiming, "This is what needs to be done at City Hall," he swept his arm across the table

and knocked off all the poker chips, clattering across the floor, "Clean out that place," he said for emphasis.

It was the strongest part of his presentation, and it obviously had an effect on the audience.

In my rebuttal I devastated him in one line: "I don't know if Mr Perk is right or not that those poker chips represent employees the city doesn't need. The one thing I do know is that those chips represent people, and you don't smash people."

The effect on that audience, and on the reporters, let alone Perk, was electrifying. I had their rapt attention. I then went into my speech, hammering home the documented and unrefutable facts supporting the city's need for more money. The speech flowed so well, hit so hard, and I was thoroughly familiar with all its facts, that there was no contest between Perk and myself on the issues. In the question-and-answer period, I inundated him and the audience with additional facts, figures and statistics. No histrionics. I intended this to be intellectual slaughter, and it was. My hard work had paid off

After that debate one black man came up to me and made this remark: "Stokes, I was so proud of you. I never knew that a brother could know that much about finances." Now, he didn't know whether I really knew that stuff, but it sounded so impressive he had to believe I did. It was the reaction I had planned for. Most voters can't really judge competence. That is not meant to be a denigrating remark -- it is just that a subject like city finances is so specialized and complicated that most voters have neither the opportunity nor the inclination to master it. I knew that my main need was to put together remarks with fluidity and the feel of expertise. My speech was assembled not so much to inform as to overwhelm. When you campaign for office, you don't care so much about educating voters to the issues, you care about educating them to you, to give them confidence in your abilities. People will vote for a candidate when they won't vote for the issues he stands on. The word began to spread in the black community, and a new recognition of what I was doing and a new

excitement were developing. The realization that an actual black man was out there threatening to do something important that had never been done before began to be brought home in many ways. I was never made more mindful of this than during a parade the black ministers staged. They had gotten several convertibles from the auto dealers, streamers and banners and whatnot, and advertised the parade on the black radio stations.

Shirley and I were riding up on the back seat of a car, with big signs on the side that had my name and mayoral slogan. When we passed Central High School, a group of black kids, yelled and waved at us. We waved back, and as we did, one of the smaller boys jumped up in the air and shouted, "He's colored, he's colored!" Then he ran down the street, skipping and clapping his hands, yelling "He's colored, he's colored, he's colored!" That little boy felt, perhaps for the first time in his life, black pride.

For election night, we had two headquarters -- the ballroom in the Sheraton Cleveland Hotel downtown and the *Call & Post* auditorium out in the ghetto. Both rooms were filled with a most unlikely mix of people. Welfare mothers and wealthy residents of Shaker Heights. Ministers, truck drivers, laborers, doctors and lawyers, both white and black. Teen-agers and little kids. Out of a variety of motives that ran from idealism and personal commitment to guilt, people came. People who had previously ignored politics. People who had been deliberately excluded from politics. They gathered at those headquarters and waited to see the results of their work.

It was a bitter night, the early editions of the *Press* had broadcast, almost as a warning, that black voters were turning out in unprecedented numbers. That scared out the whites in the afternoon. By the end of the day, it had become the highest turnout for any municipal election up to that time. Of some 338,000 registered voters, 237,000 had voted. Locher received 87,967 votes. I received 85,675. Perk received less than half of my vote, and McAllister got less than half of his. I had lost by less than one percent of the vote.

I had to move quickly, both to cool the high and bitter feelings I knew were building and to let my people know that we had proven we could win. It was a difficult speech, but I tried to get across not merely that we had a moral victory but that in short order real victory could be ours. Their mind had to be taken off the immediate defeat. I reminded them of the recounts I'd had for the legislature and set a goal of \$10,000 for them to raise for another recount. They raised it within three days. The recount we had a week later did not change the results. But we had taken on an incumbent who had the support of the two newspapers, the local Democratic Party, organized labor and his twelve thousand city employees and we had come within one percent of beating him. As far as I was concerned, we had beaten not only Locher but the whole traditional establishment of political power, and in two years we would take it for good.

There is one more thing to be said about the 1965 campaign. In terms of the politics of coalition, of zeal and commitment, the 1965 campaign was the high point of my career. Just as, in 1960 my campaign had produced the hard work and the excitement and people involved that carried over into an efficient machine for electing me to the legislature two years later, so in 1965 the workers together my effort did so with a dedication that come only from working toward a goal that no one else believes can be achieved. In 1967, I had the support of much of the power structure I had men working with me who understood administrative procedures and how to most efficiently use manpower. It was an effective, expensive machine. But the human excitement of that campaign was at a much lower level. And in 1969, for my reelection, it was almost all machine. We hardly needed the volunteer help that was an absolute necessity in 1965. Such developments are probably inevitable, but to me they are disheartening. It is a truism among some socialist philosophers to say that the revolution always runs out of fervor. I have seen the truth of that, and it is a sad truth.

## 7

## TAKING OVER

Cleveland has been a city in which "caretaker" mayors, men like Ralph S. Locher, Anthony J. Celebrezze and Frank J. Lausche, could respond mainly to the public relations and ignore the gut issues. They were able to survive in Cleveland for a quarter of a century, until the years of neglect created problems so obvious, so threatening to that sense of order everyone wanted to protect that the very people and institutions that created the conditions turned savagely on Locher and caused his defeat.

Over the years, the newspapers, the business community and the electorate, comprised primarily of lower-middle-income blue-collar whites, had successfully resisted taxes and spending in areas vital to the basic health of the city. After World War II, when the deterioration of our cities became apparent, there was a complete failure to respond. City government was praised when it could show itself to be frugal. Nobody cared that it wasn't providing health services, wasn't enforcing housing and building codes, wasn't adequately collecting garbage and rubbish or building recreation areas. When I say nobody, I include the newspapers. And those same attitudes toward money were causing the collapse of our school system.

The mayors before Locher understood the mentality of the people to whom then felt accountable: the Middle and Eastern European immigrant who inherited a traditional dislike of government; heads of newspapers, who merely reflected the failings of most newspaper editors around the country in their conservatism and insensitivity to the changes going on around them; the business leaders, who, beyond their opposition to taxes, were waging their own internal wars which militated against their heading toward even routine innovations. And in the government

itself these mayors were responding to a thirty-three man City Council, with its ward system and its parochialism, a Council that fought any issue that might benefit blacks, even if whites would benefit at the same time. Locher, a mayor by default, tried to perpetuate those attitudes under a crisis conditions. Cleveland wandered into the late 1960's surrounded by its failures and fearful of its future. Ralph Locher could hardly be expected to respond to the situation; he had nothing in his background to help him understand urban problems or take a principled stand on an issue as important as racial conflict.

The newspapers weren't about to force Locher to face his problems. They had themselves partly create and then supported Cleveland's petty political situation in which a mayor could make himself look good by waging a phony battle against a public utility asking for a rate increase. They had themselves not noticed that a third of the people were being systematically excluded from business and from cultural and governmental institutions. They couldn't notice it. They were excluding those people themselves.

In the summer of 1966, Ralph Locher was walking blindly along, tied to this monster. In July it turned on him. Fittingly enough, it happened in the Hough area, once Cleveland's proudest neighborhood, which had been turned over to the Jews when the rich moved out and then turned over to the blacks when it was completely sapped. In four days of rioting, four persons were killed and ten wounded. There had been more than a million dollars in damages. It ended only after Locher, indecisive from the beginning, finally called for the National Guard. The Hough riot had been preceded by a number of smaller incidents that would have alerted any reasonable viewer to the desperate situation: roving gangs of white youths beating up blacks, abuse of blacks by whites adults, and police who allowed and sometimes participated in the act. The entire black community had been enraged when Cleveland's police chief, Richard R. Wagner, told a committee of the state legislature that the state should keep the death penalty as a defense against growing black nationalism.

To Wagner, the death penalty was all that stood between the black menace and defenseless whites. (Not defenseless himself, Wagner roamed the streets of Cleveland during the Hough riot armed with a deer rifle.) The statement seemed to call for an explanation from Wagner's boss, the mayor. The United Freedom Movement, a group formed during a bitter school integration fight the year before, sent a delegation of ministers to see Locher. He had them thrown into jail. Sit-ins and picketing at City Hall drew no response, nor did similar activities at Locher's home. The mayor's position was that certain "channels" had to be gone through before the mayor would see anybody, and, besides, the mayor could choose which persons he would allow to see him.

By January of 1967 Locher had become everybody's target; the man was being destroyed. At the turn of the year the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development cut off all aid to the city's chaotic urban renewal program. Locher had picked as his urban renewal director a television newsman, Barton R. Clausen, with no experience in administration or government, but who wrote bitter and critical editorials about the city's failures, and the urban-renewal program was soon in the same kind of shape as the dilapidated buildings it was supposed to replace. So HUD cut off ten million dollars in urban renewal funds.

Businessmen organized a Little Hoover Commission to study various aspects of city government after the Hough riot, and by the turn of the year they were beginning to issue their reports. The commission's devastated just about every phase of the city administration. Most of the problems went back long before Locher, but he was the mayor and had to wear the jacket. After these business leaders went after him, the real jackals, the newspapers, began to tear him to bits. The *Plain Dealer* devoted half the paper and a full editorial page to detailing Locher's failures. The *Press*, preferring to prolong the agony, ran daily criticism in the form of front-page editorials with the running headline, "Promises, Promises," Nationally, it became popular to send reporters to Cleveland to write about the urban mess.



The mourners began their search for a candidate to defeat Locher. He had been rejected, and a replacement was needed. The mood of the city was a mixture of futility and fear-futility at not being able to get the city moving, and fear of the niggers. Curiously enough, that made me obviously the most desirable candidate. I had legitimized myself as a politician in the 1965 campaign, especially in the debates, and the closeness of the election and the subsequent recount kept me in the news. I was better known than any politician in the county. The businessmen could look at my record and see that I was out there fighting for their and Jim Rhodes's pork barrel. Clearly, I was a "safe" candidate. In the backs of their minds, those white men believed that if they put me out front they would be buying off the ghetto.

Lois Hays, who headed up the finance committee in my 1965 campaign, introduced me to Bernard A. Towell, a managing partner in one of the large investment firms and a member of an old established WASP family. It is an index to the desperation of such people that a man like Towell, who had voted for Goldwater in 1964, now felt he needed me. He told me that a number of businessmen were ready to support me for mayor, and he wanted me to meet them. Towell, Lois and I began to set up lunches with small groups of these leading bankers, businessmen, and industrialists.

I told them that the issue was Cleveland's problems, not whether the mayor was black or white, that the city could not survive another man who didn't understand the town, all of its people and their concerns. I made it clear that I wanted their support, but that they shouldn't support me as an insurance policy against violence from the black community. Riots are the product of unresponsive and repressive societies, I said, and they will come whether the mayor is black or white if the people feel desperate enough. I told them also that even when a government tries to change there can be no guarantee against the expression of frustrations that have been building for generations.

I got their support. Slowly the movement built, and when I formally threw my hat into the ring I had two leading business executives playing major roles in the campaign.

There was another thing going for me. As early as 1961, I had been invited to the White House for conferences. In the years since, I had been repeatedly invited to Presidential conferences and dinners, and it had become clear to the sort of people who watch such things what electing me might help the city by bringing us into favor with President Johnson's administration. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey called me after my candidacy was official and offered to help me in any way he could. "I'll come to Cleveland and praise you, or I'll come in and denounce you, whatever you think will help," he said. It is understanding like that that endears me to the man. But I don't believe in having anyone come in from outside to participate in my campaigns; I believe that if I can't put it together for myself, an outsider certainly can't do it for me. I declined his offer. However, Locher's loss of federal funds gave us a chance to attack him at a most vulnerable point. When those attacks were coupled with frequent and visible trips to Washington, it began to seem to people that President Johnson wanted Carl Stokes to be mayor of Cleveland. They were right. And it was certainly true that the national Democratic Party wanted a black Democrat as mayor of a major city to solidify its support from black voters.

Meanwhile, I was reassembling my organization. The Stokes machine was a portable model. Unlike other politicians, I never allowed my campaign organizations to live beyond election day. I knew where the people were, and I knew how to bring them together when I needed them.

Black politicians who had been able to sit out my 1965 campaign realized they had better get behind me or get out of the way. And a group of black legislators, who owed their jobs to the reapportionment I had helped pass, were out working for me.

The two groups that any regular politician, any regular Democrat that is, thinks he can't live without are the party and

organized labor. Both these groups informed me they were supporting Locher and would give me no help. I was not surprised.

But I was surprised by the newspapers. I was surprised at each of them, for opposite reasons. The *Press*, the afternoon paper, had, under the stewardship of Louis Seltzer, been the most powerful political force in town. The paper addressed itself in its idea of Cleveland's "little man," the ethnic blue-collar worker and his family, a man of inadequate education and marginal income. The *Press* and the *Plain Dealer* had been roasting Locher continuously. I felt I had a chance to get their endorsement. Just months before Louis Seltzer had retired from the paper, and Thomas Boardman, who had been Seltzer's chief editorial writer, had taken over as editor. Boardman is a man of good instincts and goodwill, but a weak administrator. He told me that he intended to run the paper differently, that he didn't feel the paper should play the power role it had under Seltzer. It was only later that I began to understand and believe him.

The *Plain Dealer*, run by Thomas Vail, a patrician, is more subdued, more articulate, and much more establishment-conscious than the *Press*. I asked Vail for the endorsement, but I knew I had to depend upon my businessmen supporters to swing him. They did.

It was becoming clear that both newspapers were anguishing over their endorsements. We passed the first of September and there had still been no endorsement. The primary election was only three weeks away. They wanted to endorse a winner, to preserve the illusion of their power, but a black man-how do you endorse a black man?

On September 3 the *Plain Dealer* carried its editorial endorsement of Carl Stokes at the top of page one. I wish now I had waited to get that paper at home in the morning. As it happened, I picked it up the night before in the lobby of the Sheraton-Cleveland, and a reporter for the paper was there. When I saw the endorsement, I impetuously said, "Hot dog, now we're legitimate." He reported it. Nothing wrong with that, but later,

when I was having continuing battles with both papers, any time I attacked the *Plain Dealer*, Bob McGruder, the City Hall reporter, would drag that quote out again. I often accuse newsmen of having short memories. I learned to wish that were particularly true in his case. I knew when I saw that editorial we had the election in our hands. An endorsement of me from the *Plain Dealer* would calm the fears of the average white voter. It would not make him come out and vote for me, but he would be less likely to feel the urgency to come out and vote against me.

Next came the *Press*, with a sniveling, weaseling non-endorsement of Locher that said nothing. They endorsed no one. What a departure from the hard, strong line laid down by Louis Seltzer for thirty years. At least if they had endorsed another candidate I could have denounced government by newspaper. Now I couldn't even do that.

But it didn't matter. I had put my black base together solidly. Reverend Milan Brenkus, a white West Side minister, and Reverend John T. Weeden, head of the black Baptist Ministerial Alliance, headed up an interdenominational group of ministers who had put together a massive voter registration drive throughout the black, Puerto Rican and Appalachian communities, and by the time of the election blacks were registered more solidly than whites. The Ford Foundation also gave CORE \$175,000 to put together a voter registration effort.

Mrs. Coretta Scott King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference has since claimed that the SCLC spent \$500,000 in a registration drive in Cleveland. Our entire election campaign didn't spend half that amount. Cleveland's SCLC's director, Reverend A. A. Sampson, reported having spent \$27,899.40. SCLC should run an audit. If their records claim a half-million dollars was spent in Cleveland, it has to be the biggest rip-off of all time.

With my base intact, my success with business, my exposure to white voters, I could see all the pieces fitting together. You learn to

expect the unexpected in politics, you even try to plan for it. But how could I have ever dreamed that suddenly a threat to all my plans, my attempt to put black people in power in the eighth largest city in the country, would appear in the form of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the most honored black leader in America?

I had put together a delicate, not to say precarious, structure. No one outside my campaign organization, and few on the inside, understood quite how it worked. The principles were elegantly simple. I had on paper what was out there, where the votes were, both for and against us. And I had in my head the things I knew had to be done to protect the votes for me and neutralize the votes against me. The delicacy of the structure lay in the proportion of my base vote; or, taken the other way, I had to keep the sixty-two percent white population from using its strength against me.

In 1967, Dr. King's great career was at a low point. He had just come out of Cicero, Illinois, with great disappointments, discovering just how profound are the white man's hatred and prejudice. He desperately needed a victory. The near-success we had in Cleveland in 1965 had swept the nation, and in 1967 all the national political writers were covering the Cleveland mayoral race. They wrote articles on our organization, the use of the business community, the registration drives. It began to look like we would win. Dr King let us know he wanted to come.

We had been through it before. In the late spring the so-called Big Six, the major civil rights figures, had announced they were coming to Cleveland that summer to register every black voter and energize the black community. Well, we already had black community organized, mobilized and energized. If the Big Six came to Cleveland with the various rhetorics, they would create an energy that would in turn create an opposite and probably more than equal counter-energy. Dr. Clement and I had flown to New York and met with those men in a motel right at La Guardia Airport. We had explained to them that they could only bring problems for us. We were juggling a delicate situation that could, with the slightest wrong move, come down around our heads. We

had asked them not to come. We had understood why they wanted to come. Cleveland was where the action was, at the focus of the eyes of the black world. Remember that at the same time Richard Hatcher was running for mayor of Gary, Indiana; but Gary was predominantly black. A victory in Gary was inevitable, therefore comparatively dull. The real action was in Cleveland. But fortunately we had managed to head off the move.

When Dr. King made his decision, Dr. Clement tried to talk to some of his aides, to convince them that we already had a winner, but that it could be lost if black pride started prodding white fears. Dr. Clement told them that we had for the first time the opportunity to seize real power by winning a city hall. Dr. King's coming would only release the haters and the persons looking for an issue to excite racist reaction to what we were doing.

He was not successful. Dr. King came to town. W. O. Walker arranged a meeting between Dr. King and me in his *Call & Post* office. I had met Dr. King at various national conferences since 1965, but we had never worked together. I felt a towering respect for the man, even awe. Facing down the bigots in Cleveland is one thing, but I knew I would never have had the nerve to walk across that Selma bridge or lead the people against Birmingham's Bull Connor. King's courage was of a different order from mine, suitable to different places, different actions.

In our meeting, I explained to Dr. King that I had carefully put this whole campaign together. I had worked to get actual white votes. I couldn't afford to do anything to aggravate the white voter. There was too much at stake. We had everything together, and if nothing foreign was introduced we knew how to handle the situation.

"Martin," I told him, "if you come in here with these marches and what not, you can just see what the reaction will be. You saw it in Cicero and other northern towns. We have got to win a political victory here. This is our chance to take over a power that is just unprecedented among black people. But I'm very concerned that if you come here you're going to upset the balance we've created.

You're going to create problems that we do not have now and may not be able to handle. I would rather that you not stay." How on earth can any black American say that to Martin Luther King? I can tell you it was hard. But I knew I had my own way to make it hard for whites to live with their own prejudices. I knew that Dr. King and I wanted the same things. Finally, I knew my own situation, my own town, and I knew I had it in my hand. Once I got it, I knew I could do things that no civil-rights march ever did.

"Carl, I know just what you mean," he said. "We discussed this at SCLC headquarters before I come out here. But I am responding to the invitation of the United Pastors."

The United Pastors was a group of about a dozen ministers who were in an internal struggle with other ministers and were bidding to establish their own community leadership.

"I understand that, Dr. King, but they're thinking about promoting their group, while the question here is whether or not a black man takes over audacious power."

He listened to me, but I could see that he was going to stay. He needed to be on the scene of a victory.

"I will have to stay," he said, "but I promise you there will be nothing inflammatory. We'll try to do a job here and our people will get in touch with your people, and any time that you feel there is something harmful to your overall campaign, just let me know."

Dr. King did limit his visits and he did conduct his activities in a very restrained manner. He helped a great deal in not creating a more problems than those posed by his mere presence. And those problems were real. Letters with the signature of the Democratic Party county Chairman, Albert S. Porter, went out, saying that the election of Carl Stokes would mean turning over the city to Martin Luther King, a calamity that was meant to sound on the order of turning over a daughter or sister.

Ever since Dr. King's death, I had had to grapple with the problem of dealing with a small group of black leaders who grew out of the SCLC movement, because they knew of my not wanting Dr. King here. Asking Dr. King not to stay was one of the toughest

decisions I ever had to make. It was a confrontation with a man whose recorded words I turn to for solace and inspiration at moments of depression. But it came down to the hard game of politics -- whether we wanted a cause or a victory. I wanted to win. Our people needed me to win. I had been the architect for a unique assembly of interests, and I knew with one wrong move it would be just another house of cards.

In the September 28 primary my margin was more than eighteen thousand votes. I arrive at the Rockefeller Building headquarters at seven-thirty, about an hour after the polls closed. A few minutes later, I walked to the podium and declared myself the winner by more than ten thousand votes. The reporters were flabbergasted. No other vote projection system was giving me a win. But nobody else had Marvin Chernoff.

Chernoff had a small business selling office machines. He came into our camp early in the campaign. By election day, he was volunteering more than full-time labors to organize our volunteer workers and had become himself one of our most invaluable organizers. On election day he put together a system of four thousand volunteers, with a minimum of three people working at each polling place. Chernoff was able to monitor every precinct in the city at two-hour intervals. An hour after the election he was able to have dependable counts from the precincts he wanted, and could predict our victory. Even so, his estimate was conservative. It was a remarkable performance.

Now I had to face the general election and one of the oldest and most prestigious names in Ohio politics. I had gone into the primary as a Democrat when everybody thought I would avoid it and run as an independent to force a three-way race. I had proved I could meet a white candidate head on and beat him.

Actually the primary had turned out to be a three-man race. Frank P. Celeste, the sixty-year-old former mayor of a western suburb, had been talked into running by his cronies -- and perhaps by a newspaper. His being in the race was a kind of added insurance that I would win, but it really wasn't important. I beat



Locher by more votes than his and Celeste's combined. Beating Locher was a heady victory, but I realized that he was an already discredited mayor when he went into the race. Seth Taft would be different.

The Taft family had given the nation a President who went on to become Chief Justice of the United States, A U. S. senator who carried the title "Mr. Republican," and would later send another Taft to the Senate. Periodically, the Taft family just seems to spin off one of its members out of Cincinnati and into national prominence. Seth Taft had moved to Cleveland in 1947. In 1967 he was forty-four, was a lawyer with the most prestigious law firm in town, had a fine home in the new, rich suburb of Pepper Pike, and had a good record of civic involvement and an impeccable reputation for honesty and integrity. He had no practical background in government and knew little about the political jungle. By moving into an apartment in Cleveland just before filing deadline, he acquired the label "carpetbagger." He had no vitality as a speaker and no personal strength in handshaking campaign situations. But he was a quick learner and developed into an effective campaigner and formidable debater. He had a family name that, big as it was in the rest of the state, was anathema to labor, and labor dominates Cleveland. But he was white. That ultimately became the major issue as the general election drew near. If it weren't for the race issue, I would have won an easier victory. But the drubbing I gave Locher had alerted the white voters, and I knew that, come November, there were going to be more Republican votes than there had been in more than a generation. The *Plain Dealer's* political writer, James M. Naughton, now political writer for the Washington Bureau of the *New York Times*, put it extremely, if pessimistically, when he wrote that "a white Mickey Mouse could beat a black Carl Stokes."

The best move I made was to debate Taft. We debated four times. But in the second debate I made a serious blunder. It was held in the auditorium of a West Side high school in the heart of George Wallace country. I quoted the James Naughton line about

the Mickey Mouse and immediately realized I had made a mistake. The hostility came back to me in a wave, as Taft piously disclaimed the presence of any race issue in the campaign.

The other memorable moment for me was in the final debate, held at the City Club and carried live on all three television stations. I had been carrying a piece of paper with me for the entire campaign, waiting for the right moment. In all of my appearances, that moment had never come, but I always had that piece of paper with me, waiting. I debated Taft on that final Friday before the election. It still hadn't come up at the end of the formal debate. Then, during the question-and-answer period, someone asked about my poor attendance record in the state legislature. My position was that I had achieved more than most legislators by hard political work, and that not showing up for trivial votes was unimportant. That question had come up on occasion during the campaign, but never in quite the right way, and never with Taft standing next to me. This time I didn't have to give my position. I reached into my pocket and pulled out a letter that had been written to me a few months earlier. It was short and sweet. It said, "Dear Carl, the reports I hear of your performance in Columbus are excellent, and I congratulate you on the job." It was signed "Seth Taft"

By the November 7th election day, it was clear to everybody that Taft and I were neck and neck. The *Press's* Richard Maher predicted I would win a narrow victory, but only if the turnout was low. On election night, Taft took an early lead as expected, but the lead held. At midnight he was still 21,000 votes ahead and there were only about 30,000 votes left to be counted. I would have to get almost ninety percent of those votes to beat him. At twelve-thirty I went down to the main room of campaign headquarters and talked to my people. The emotions were high and intense, and I felt that I had to prepare them for the possibility that we might lose. Many of those people were on the edge of a total rejection of what we call "the system." They had spent themselves, physically and spiritually, on my campaign, and I knew that, if I lost, the

immediate impulse from some of them would be to run out and tear something up. I had to quiet them plead with them to have faith in the democratic process. It was a kind of talk I had to use on many occasions when I was mayor, handling the emotions of people, trying to keep things from getting out of hand.

At 2 A.M., Dr. Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy of SCLC joined me at the Rockefeller Building. At 2:30, It was announced that Taft was about to make his victory statement. A few minutes later, it became apparent that all the votes left to count were coming from the black community, and Taft was getting less than five percent of those votes. It was close to 4 A.M. when I passed him. The great-grandson of a slave and defeated the grandson of a U.S. President. Seth and his gracious wife, Fran, came to the hotel suite and congratulated me on my victory. Fran brought Shirley a beautiful spray of roses.

When they went down to announce the victory, Al Ostrow, the campaign public relations man, was concerned about Dr. King's presence. After the speech, Ostrow came to me and said Dr. King was calling a press conference. He said I had to stop him or he would take all the credit. I told him Dr. King wouldn't do that, that he was one of the greatest men in the country and nobody was going to stop him from holding a press conference. I certainly wasn't going to make things embarrassing or awkward for Dr. King. I felt bad enough about the earlier situation. One more note. After the election, I publicly promised that for six months I would accept no outside speaking engagements. I broke that promise when Dr. King asked me to speak at a conference in Chicago. I went.

The jubilation that followed my victory announcement is impossible to describe. Our workers and supporters literally danced in the street. There is a certain kind of winning that is more than a victory, it is a release. A man plays the numbers for years, every day the same number, and every day losing. Eventually he steels himself against the expected loss, wanting the win badly but

afraid to let himself feel the want. One day the number comes in and he is set free. Set free.

## 8

## THE "REAL" ESTATE

My advisers and I had a wonderful time the next few weeks building plans on the void of our ignorance. I rented a suite in the Sheraton Cleveland Hotel, and we would all go over there in the afternoons and talk through our position papers on various operations within city government. But only two of us -- Joe McManamon, my safety director, and Councilman George Forbes - - even knew where the departments were housed. We went into those sessions with wild-eyed dreams of the reforms we would wreak on this corrupt machine, only to discover we didn't even know where the buttons were.

There were two reasons for this, one of them part of the local design of a city government, and the other endemic to a democratic political system. In Cleveland the mayor-elect is inaugurated the Monday after he is elected. That gives him only six days to try to put together a group of people to take over and to try to understand the workings of the machine he is supposed to control. This in the nation's eighth largest city, with over 825,000 people.

The other reasons is built into the political process. Politics is a difficult, demanding, exhausting, sometimes exhilarating arena in which gladiators win and lose. But a city is a business -- a non-profit service corporation. In Cleveland, when I took over, it did an annual business of \$76 million a year, and three years later it had grown to more than \$100 million. As a politician, a man learns what the social issues are and what services he thinks government out to provide, and he makes of his understanding political issues, campaign issues. But that understanding is an understanding of his society, not of management practices. I had never employed more than three people in my life, and now I found myself in charge of ten thousand. It was not longer a matter of standing in a public lot

and saying "elect me and houses will spring up here." Now I have this foreman standing in front of me saying that seven of his trucks are broken down, and should he double up on the work crews or send the men home.

The trouble with the strong-mayor form of government in a big city is that the mayor is administrator, chief political officer and chief ceremonial office for the entire city; everything flows to him directly. If he tried to directly handle all these duties, he becomes immobilized. This is a good argument for the city-manager form of government. However, I attempted something similar by naming an executive secretary, John C. Little. The first days of our administration were awkward, to say the least. I was trying to be the administrator, take care of my responsibilities to the press (which were legion -- my unprecedented victory had made me an international celebrity, and reporters from all over the country were descending on our office asking for interviews), run around making luncheon speeches, and tend to the political problems that were created by our victory over both parties. But every time a hard detail came up, or somebody else dropped the ball, John would say, "I'll take care of it soon." Soon he was in his office every day from eight in the morning until after midnight.

The constant ruck of phone calls and visits was in itself overwhelming. Everybody wanted to talk to me, to see me, touch me. So many people who had spent their lives feeling disenfranchised by the system now felt that I was their mayor. They wanted to come in and talk. Every minister wanted to come in and be recognized, all the old neighborhood guys, old school friends. One day the Reverend John T. Weeden called and said he would like to see me. Figuring I would find a few minutes to stop by his office the next day, I suggested I would be glad to do that. "Oh, no, Carl, I don't want to trouble you. I'll be there tomorrow morning at nine-thirty." There is no way you can say not to a treasured friend like the Reverend Weeden, so the next morning he comes over and you have to drop whatever you are doing. You sit down with him in your office and chat for forty-five minutes. But

you don't have forty-five minutes, so you'll have to tack it on the end of the day somehow. When these people came in I had to talk to them, the civic leaders and the people I had gone to for help in the campaign. I couldn't refuse. I had said in the campaign I would have an open-door policy. But I had no idea what I was saying.

For those first seven months the entire city was caught in an epidemic of euphoria. My election was certainly no mandate. Only fifteen percent of the white voters had chosen me; my tiny margin of victory was the product of the massive, concerted effort of the black community. But the white mentality, and its ability to wrench self-congratulation out of the simple maintenance of its old, predictable ways, quickly created the myth, faithfully repeated in the national media, that Cleveland was a liberal city, committed to reform. Fortunately for us, at least then, the people who would normally be hostile and suspicious were swept along in the jubilant mood, or at least intimidated by it, and we were able to create and successfully promote highly innovative, often paragovernmental programs that would have outraged a normally circumspect Cleveland populace.

The news media were having a field day. The reporters loves us, since things were happening so fast that we were feeding them stories every day. There was always a new appointment, a new program. We were a journalistic feast.

But it took its toll. The pace was incredible. We had so much to learn, we had to find people to take the key jobs, and we had to do it right. Everything had to be right because everything we did was in the limelight. Celebrity is a two-edged sword. It was personally exhilarating, but the responsibility was a steamroller. I knew that I had to be, in that horrible racist phrase, "a credit to my race." That meant that I had to be more creative, more honest, more intelligent, more available, more witty, more thorough, than any other mayor in the country. Every move had to be exciting and a confirmation of everyone's confidence in me. I was their boy. That January, for the first time in my adult life, my health broke down and I had to take a rest.

I went to the Virgin Islands for two weeks. During that time the press turned up an account of how Geraldine Williams, now my administrative assistant, was an officer in a club that served as a cheat spot. I did something that has haunted me since: over the long-distance telephone, I ordered her fired. I will tell that story in more detail later, but I throw it in here to point up the condition I was in to make such a terrible blunder. I needed so badly to be spotless that I threw Geraldine out without personally examining the real merits of the situation.

It was during this time that I learned how valuable my choice of executive secretary had become. John Little's father was senior partner of the oldest and most prestigious law firm in town, and John had practiced corporate and tax law with one of the other major law firms. The Little family was old, established, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant security. John was a very scholarly, thorough strategist and had begun with us writing position papers. He would sit in our meetings, quiet for the most part, but always very solid in his suggestions. It took me some time to recognize how good he was because he was not flashy and aggressive. Every administration needs a man like John Little, a man you can trust to do the detailed work in your name, a man who keeps a low profile himself, and who is committed to your effort. John Little's loyalty was, simply a gift. Observers were unanimous in praise of his integrity. Getting men like that to work for you has to be done by feel. There is nothing in a job application that can tell you the important things, and there is no way an applicant can get it across by merely professing it. Trust and confidence aren't negotiable qualities.

Shortly after my election, a local foundation put up \$68,000 to hire William A. Silverman's public-relations firm to assist us, and Bill went on to become close to me. He became, in fact, one of the handful of those I always called on to sit around and brainstorm when a particularly difficult situation arose. He, in turn, brought in Marc and Lois Wyse, who had their own advertising agency. The two of them brought invaluable perceptions to any discussion, and



Lois, who is also a popular poet, brought a quickness and a clarity to whatever she wrote that I depended on in delicate situations. In April of 1971, when I decided not to run again, I called on Lois to draft, in simple language, the complex reasons for my decision not to run for reelection.

It may seem at first glance curious that several of my most trusted advisers turned out to be white and engaged in either public relations or advertising. But the fact was simply that my greatest need for advice was in dealing with how public reaction to my conduct would be formed, since all of my actions would reach the public through the interpretative structure of the white media. I had learned to use the media as a campaigning politician, but campaigning and governing are very different functions, and actions are much more susceptible to interpretive reporting than speeches. So these people, all trained and highly sophisticated in the vagaries of the white print and television media, could tell me how they would react to specific acts of mine. It was a service that few people knew about during the years of my administration. I was often described as being impetuous, quick to anger, out there winging it alone and devil take the hindmost. That image couldn't have been further from the truth.

I had to put a cabinet together. It wasn't as difficult as I had feared. We were deluged with applications from ambitious white liberals and from black people who hadn't been given chances elsewhere. Each department, with its own set of problems and importances and priorities, more or less determined what kind of man was needed. I had made a campaign pledge that I would fire the police chief. My first step was to appoint Joe McManamon, former cop then a lawyer, a West Side Irishman who had been one of the first on the side of the Cuyahoga River to open his house to me for campaign meetings, to be my safety director.

In the rest of my appointments, none of which were promised, I admit I suffered from an excess of idealism. I was certainly determined not to give out important posts to political hacks, and I succeeded in that. But I also believed that if I chose real

professionals I could just let them alone and let them produce. I remember telling each of my appointees, "You just do your job and leave the politics up to me." And the persons I chose for the most part didn't like politics anyway and liked that approach. But reality soon caught up with us. A councilman goes to a director and asks for a favor that that director isn't required to perform. But the politics of the situation demand that you do him the favor because he could be useful later when something you want comes before a committee of which he is a member. There is just no way to avoid politics.

My next, and in many ways most important, appointment was law director. The director succeeds the mayor if he is incapacitated, and is acting mayor when the mayor is out of town. I had already made a public remark that I wasn't planning to name a black law director, yet I fully intended to do just that.

Paul White had called me right after the election and confided that, if I wanted him, he would be available to serve as my law director. Paul was then serving as a municipal judge, a job Blanche Bolden, Al Sweeney and I had convinced him to run for and elected him to, and now he didn't like being a judge, didn't like the day-to-day decisions that had to be made. He had gained a great deal of weight. He as a big, strapping, very black guy, standing six foot three, and weighing more than two hundred pounds. When I appointed him, I received city-wide acclaim. Paul had served for years in the police prosecutor's office, where his extraordinary indecision was mistaken for patience. Everybody, and most importantly the police, liked Paul.

But Paul quickly came to be the first example of a trait that pervaded many of my appointments. He wouldn't move without consulting me. I had to listen to every case, every issue that was pending in the Law Department. I would be in my office meeting with several people and in would walk this huge, imposing black man with the firmest grip of the world and a deep, resonant voice, and he would whisper some very ordinary problem in my car and ask me what he should do. When, in January, I went away to the

Virgin Islands for two weeks to get some rest, the Geraldine Williams incident hit the papers, and he couldn't cope with the situation. He had never dreamed the intensity with which the media would concentrate on his actions.

We had to find a replacement. I sat down with my brother and our former law partner, Norman Minor, to talk about Paul's successor. Minor was the dean of Cleveland's black lawyers and knew them all intimately. The one guy who kept surviving our eliminations was Clarence L. James, Jr. executive director of the Cleveland Legal Aid Services, whom everybody called "Buddy." He had in fact been my buddy, although I didn't even know him. In 1965, when I was running for mayor the first time, a short, fat, very homely girl had shown up in Buddy's Legal Aid office and contended that I was the father of her twenty month-old child. At that time, Buddy had worked with my brother on several committees, but he didn't know me at all. Buddy recorded her story, which varied each time she told it, and had her sign an affidavit to the one she said was the most accurate. She gave a license number for a car that I had supposedly used to pick her up. It checked out to a tile company in the heart of the ghetto. The interesting part of that incident was the fair play that not only Buddy showed me, a man he didn't know, but also the courts and a television news reporter showed. It was clear that Buddy didn't really believe her story, but he was forced to take her case to the courts, which were in turn supposed to automatically issue a warrant for my arrest. But it didn't happen. The State Highway Police checked out the license and the automobile involved. Sanford Sobul, the WJW-TV reporter, checked out the police findings and my own whereabouts the night in question. Sobul was a veteran police reporter. Buddy James collated all the findings, and the court refused to issue the warrant of arrest. Obviously, I would have won the case in court. But the very issuance of the warrant would have been irretrievably damaging. That girl showed up each election year, in 1967 and in 1969, but her story changed enough each time that the court could legitimately refuse her

request for issuance of a warrant. I was extremely grateful to Buddy for the unsolicited fairness he had shown me. I approached Buddy about coming with the city and he said no. I finally converted him, though, about a month later when I convinced him he could accomplish more in two years at City Hall than he could in twenty years with Legal Aid.

There were two departments, Health and Urban Renewal, that needed special help. The Urban Renewal Department was a scandal. Nobody knew what anyone else was doing. Cleveland had initiated the largest urban-renewal project in the country, and had failed just as grandly. By the time I took office, funds to the city had been cut off by the federal government because of its failures. The Health Department simply wasn't doing anything. It had been limping along with the little funds and providing almost no real services. It was housed in the basement of City Hall, and that was the position of priority it had with previous mayors.

The men I wanted would have to be professionals. Professionals have to be paid. Neither of the two directorships at that time paid as much as \$25,000 a year. I quickly discovered when I talked with Edward Logue, who was then regarded as the best urban-renewal man in the country, that we would need more money. Logue told me he was about to take a job in Boston, but offered to be a consultant, helping us to find a man, for a fee of \$25,000. I had to tell him I didn't even have that much money to offer the man we would hire. I then went to the business community and laid out my problem. They agreed to help by forming a search committee if we would submit legislation raising the salary of the urban-renewal director.

I went to City Council President James V. Stanton, who agreed to our raising the salaries. We were able to bring the salaries of the urban-renewal director and the director of public health up to \$30,000. That way we were able to get for these two jobs Richard Green, a man who had worked under Logue, and Dr. E. Frank Ellis, a dedicated black physician who had given up his practice in middle age to do graduate work in public health service

administration and to commit himself to the same issues I was interest in.

My other cabinet appointments were made in more routine fashion, without the kind of elaborate search committees that we found necessary for health and urban renewal. It always turned out that one of my advisers or someone in the federal government knew of someone else who would be good for a certain job. But they were never political hacks. They were bright, well educated and committed to public service. The one thing most of them lacked was the political instinct. They were, almost to a man, politically naïve. But they were honest and proved to be incorruptible.

Mayors and their cabinets come and go, but the men and women who really run City Hall, the commissioners, stay on and do their work. Finding good middle-management people is much harder than finding good directors, and getting rid of bad ones is harder than that, since they are all protected by civil service. I faced an army of commissioners throughout City Hall that had held their jobs so long that their control was impenetrable. But they had also held their jobs for so long that they were eligible for retirement. The unbroken string of ethnic workers, whose jobs were never challenged because they fit the purposes of one ethnic mayor as well as another. But they had been there so long that I had the opportunity of putting my own men in charge of departments and divisions simply through the retirement process.

But it was also true that I assumed that all those old ethnic hands would be against me, and I treated them that way. It was up to them to prove to me that they could work with and for a black mayor. That was a bad approach. There were good men out there that I would have gotten more work out of if I had simply let them alone. In my naivete, I had believed that when the mayor speaks, things happen. Reality turned out to be somewhat less tractable. I remember trying time and time again to move out one of the typical old ethnic appointees, a Slovenian, Steve Suhajcik, commissioner of fiscal control in the Utilities Department. There

were classic fights, and he beat us every time. Eventually, he came to be a strong supporter and one of our good guys. We could have had him sooner.

I learned the hard way that commissioners are consummate politicians. They know exactly what a mayor's political weaknesses are, and they know how to exploit them. They can leak stories to the newspapers about bad operations at City Hall when they themselves are responsible for the conditions, knowing that the criticism comes down on the mayor, not them. Or they can do things poorly or excessively to irritate the public, knowing that the public is responding to its mayor, not the commissioner in charge. The wildest example of that in my term of office came early on in my administration, when we had our first heavy snowfall at night. The snow had started in early evening, and by the small hours of the next morning the city lay under several inches of fresh snow. The street crews were called out. It happened that Blanche Bolden, newly in charge of the crews, decided to make a tour of the city about 3 A.M. to see how they were doing. As she drove around the East Side, especially in the black communities, she was delighted to see that the streets had been plowed and cleaned better than they had ever been in the past. Then she crossed the bridge to the white West Side. Not one street had been plowed. Wow. When those West Siders had to fight that snow in the morning rush hour, they would be ready to string me up. It was a canny conspiracy to embarrass me. Fortunately, Blanche was out there doing her job. She started calling the bosses of the crews and made them get the men out on the streets. By the time the morning rush hour came, the crews had cleaned away all the snow, and my neck was saved. On other occasions I wasn't so lucky. All your fine and noble policy decisions don't mean a damn if the functionaries are against you.

By the time I left City Hall four years later, I had managed to put black people in the policy and decision making positions in all departments of city government with the exception of the Police and Fire Departments. And I brought in black craftsmen. The crafts

situation was politically interesting. Then unions had managed to enact a city ordinance requiring the city to pay the same scale as their hiring halls. This was a tremendous concession to the unions, won only because they and the City Council were in the same ethnic control. I told the unions we were going to hire craftsmen on our own, especially black craftsmen who had been systematically excluded by the unions. I told them that I knew perfectly well that I was going against city regulations, and I knew they could fight us, but I reminded them just how public such a fight would be. I knew they couldn't afford to have the light of public attention focused on their discriminatory practices. So they didn't fight us -- openly.

Getting those middle management commissionerships took a lot longer. It took packing the Civil Service Commission with my own people. This had to be done because, other than retirement, the only way you get rid of commissioners opposed to you is to press charges and the Civil Service Commission has to be able to back you up when the man appeals his firing. I suffered a tremendous setback because of a police examination scandal, and it was two years before I could really make any moves freely.

We did do it, eventually, with a packed Civil Service Commission working closely with my personnel director, Walter Burks, and we rewrote all the job descriptions and got black people jobs -- good important jobs -- all over the Hall. In the last months of my mayoralty in 1971 I issued two reports, called "The Stokes Years," in which I listed all the successes of the administration. The first was about the housing we had put up, the progress in urban renewal, all those good things. The second part was about how many black people were in important jobs at City Hall.

A liberal newspaper reporter told me he was surprised that I would put out a report like that. He had evidently assumed I would try to keep it quiet. What was I supposed to do, issue a report on how many white people I had hired? When Paul Briggs, the white school superintendent, made a report about how many black people were in the school system he was applauded for his liberalism, his

compassion. When I did the same thing, they said, "Aha, it's just as we feared."

It is a sad thing that even with black people at the top and black people doing the work, many of the old ways at City Hall hung in. Nowhere was this truer than in the Streets Department. I had a black director, Ralph Tyler, and he had a black executive assistant, Blanche Bolden, and the work force itself, which is mainly made up of unskilled laborers, was predominantly black. Yet generally we couldn't get the crews to give the same service to the poor areas of the city that they did to the rest of the town. It's just a truism; black or white, the poor come last. Part of the problem was with Tyler himself, who was a nice guy but no administrator. The night Blanche Bolden discovered that the crews had plowed the East Side but not the West Side, I had earlier called Ralph. I said, "How are the snow crews doing?"

"Fine," he said.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Somebody would have called me if they weren't," he said. Thank God for Blanche.

The same thing was true in the Recreation Department: the parks in the middle class areas of town were well kept and the ones in the ghetto looked like battlegrounds. This was no strictly a racial bias. The parks in the poor-white and Puerto Rican areas of the near West Side were also in shoddy repair.

I was never fully able to get the bureaucratic machinery in motion to change those old ways. It's curious how you can come up with exciting new programs and catch the imagination of the community, but the basic services, which depend on workers who have been doing their job in one way for years, are intractable to renewal. Ben Stefanski, my utilities director, came up with the idea of putting weighted curtains in Lake Erie, to create large pockets of water at the beaches that could be sanitized enough for swimming. The pollution in the lake had long since reached the point of making swimming a dangerous health hazard. We put up two of these structures, one on each side of town, and they were a



complete success. We had people visit from other cities to find out how we had accomplished those "pools." But most of the city's recreation was run by John Nagy, a canny West Side Hungarian, who allowed the traditional inequities in park maintenance to continue.

Another area in which I hoped to crack down was slum-landlordism. I figured I would send out housing inspectors out to find violations of the housing code, and we could then cite them, fin them or send them to jail if they didn't keep the houses up. The record on the major slumlords' land ownership turned out to be so involute that prosecution was piecemeal at best. But, worse than that, I was informed by my urban-renewal director, Richard Green, that he lacked enough inspectors he could trust to do this work who were not on the payrolls of the large operators of slum properties.

We did move forcefully on demolition of old abandoned buildings, doubling the number of torn down in any one past year. Vigorous enforcement of the housing authority building code added millions of dollars to the tax duplicate and cleaned up some of the worst eyesores and safety hazards in the poorer neighborhoods. Over \$224 million in new building of Classic Greek design that keynoted our insistence on good architecture in new construction. In 1970, Norman Krumholtz, the city planning director I had brought from Pittsburgh, dusted off a forty-year-old plan for redeveloping the lakefront harbor area at the foot of East Ninth Street. I got the Nixon Administration to approve the potential \$100 million plan to authorize \$6 million in planning funds. But the City Council blocked final authorization until it could name the developers. Over a year after I left office, the legislation was still stuck there in a committee box.

It had never occurred to me how many roadblocks the road to progress is strewn with. I did learn to move some of them, and I will tell more about a couple shortly, but there was one that defied all my efforts.

Cleveland had the largest urban-renewal program in the nation and had demonstrated the least progress. Beginning under Mayor

Celebrezze, some six thousand acres of land were committed to renewal and federal funds poured in to strip them down. That was accomplished with dispatch, rendering thousands of people homeless and putting hundreds of small businesses out of business. The city officials understood demolition very well. They did not understand the relocation of people and businesses at all, and they related not at all to the vast rebuilding that was vital. Cleveland was not the only city in the country to discover it didn't understand relocation and rebuilding needs, but it was the most dramatic example. Even worse, in 1966 when the U.S. Civil Rights Commission held hearings in Cleveland, Mayor Locher's Urban Renewal commissioner, James Friedman, testified that the policy of the Locher administration was to permit housing in urban-renewal areas to deteriorate so that it would be cheaper to acquire for clearance purposes.

In January 1967, the compounding of these failures caused the federal government to cut off all HUD funds, including \$10 million in downtown development funds previously authorized. With the aid of the first black man to serve in the cabinet of a U.S. President, Dr. Robert Weaver, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, I was able to lift that ban and get the \$10 million restored. The revitalization of downtown with its jobs and tax base was clearly vital to the city. But a problem remained. A Columbus, Ohio, developer, John W. Galbreath, had put up the first building in Cleveland's prime downtown area, called Erieview. He still owned several major parcels and was talking about, at different times, either an apartment complex or a hotel, sometimes both. But that was in the early 1960's. After 1964, his public announcements of plans for Erieview became ver seldom things. It had become clear that he was sitting on his hands.

At least as interesting as Galbreath's reluctance to move was why he was the main developer in the first place. Why wasn't Cleveland's urban renewal in the hands of Cleveland developers?

The answer lay in George Gund's firm grip. It was virtually impossible to obtain any sizable chunk of investment capital in

Cleveland that didn't involve Gund and his Cleveland Trust Company. And Gund, who was extremely conservative, simply wouldn't allow that kind of money loose for that kind of purpose. So when the urban-renewal plan reached the stage of needing a developer, it had to go to Galbreath, who could raise his capital elsewhere. They made it impossible for Galbreath to refuse, by making the land available at a ridiculously low price -- around six dollars a square foot.

I told Dick Green, my urban-renewal director, to approach Galbreath and tell him that he would have to start developing his remaining parcel or we would revoke the agreement giving him option to the land. It didn't take long for me to discover that although the power to do it was ostensibly in my hands, the effective conspiracy of the business and newspaper interests tied my hands.

First, a prominent bank president came to see me. He explained how much it had meant to Cleveland to get Galbreath to come in and put up the first Erieview tower, and how if we moved to revoke the city's agreement with Galbreath there would undoubtedly be a lengthy and costly court suit, during which time there wouldn't, of course, be any further development of Erieview. He threw in a few more intellectual exercises, but his main mission was clear enough. He was telling me not to move against Galbreath.

Next, when I went to the editors of both newspapers, explained what I wanted to do and asked for their support, they kept trying to change the subject. They would bring in the names of other developers in other states who might be interested in developing other parcels in Erieview. They made it clear enough simply by not addressing the issue, that I would not have their support.

Council President Jim Stanton came to visit. He suggested that it wouldn't be wise to move against Galbreath unless we had a developer to replace him. But you couldn't even talk to another developer until Galbreath was out of the picture.

Finally, James Davis, a prominent Cleveland lawyer whose firm monopolizes bond counseling for nearly every city in Ohio, came over to suggest that it really wouldn't be wise to move against Galbreath and to try to work things out.

We did in fact have several meetings with the Galbreath people. To no avail.

Here was prime land, in the heart of the city, lying fallow while construction went up all around it. The value of the land had soared and was going higher all the time. I have every right, through the city's contract with HUD, to revoke the agreement with Galbreath. But I came to realize that although nobody could stop me, doing it without the support of the business community would produce nothing. So I decided, as the old joke goes, not to sidestep the issue but to rise above it. We turned our eyes elsewhere.

And we found housing.

Some people may recall that HUD cut off all of Cleveland's funds again in 1971, my last year in office. But the reasons were different. I engineered that one myself. All of the federal projects in HUD grants in Cleveland totaled more the \$206 million at that time. Only part of it was for housing the poor and the elderly.

Housing was ostensibly under the control of the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority, and five member body on which I had a minority of two votes. But a pending HUD agreement with CMHA on how many housing units would be built had to have the approval of Cleveland's City Council. Once that agreement had passed, the Council would lose control over housing. And the councilmen didn't want to lose control, because they knew perfectly well that we would continue our aggressive building of housing for the poor in middle-class neighborhoods. They had fought such housing in *their* neighborhoods, and they refused to approve the agreement. I wasn't going to be able to get them to approve the new agreement through persuasion. I was going to have to make their opposition too costly for them to continue.

I went to Chicago to talk to the regional director of HUD, Frank Fischer. I explained the problem and what I wanted to do. He

agreed to come into the city, to go before the councilmen and tell them with great air of finality that unless the housing agreement was passed forthwith, all federal funds for all the projects in the city would be cut off. The reality of losing \$206 million was an effective persuading force, and they eventually passed the agreement. HUD restored our funding.

Housing was one of my true and lasting achievements. When I took office there had been no new public housing built in five years and there was none under contract. When I left office four years later we had built 5,496 units of low and moderate income housing at a cost of more than \$102 million. No city in the country had a record like that. A project that vigorous was bound to be highly visible, and, just as naturally, to cause a good deal of opposition in neighborhoods where no low-income housing had gone before. This was especially true in the middle-class neighborhoods where we erected housing for the poor. The opposition was not solely a racial matter. It also reflected class hostility. We faced the same bright-red angers in Lee-Seville, a middle-class black neighborhood, as we did in the white southwest side of Cleveland. But, although we were blocked in some cases -- Lee Seville was the most dramatic -- we were successful in the overall project.

I had to pick up a club, too, to force Cleveland's banks to be more liberal in giving small business loans to black entrepreneurs. My finance director, Phil Dearborn, set up a dinner with the leading bankers in town. At the dinner I explained to them that their policies toward loans for beginning businessmen worked against the growth of black capitalism. I recognized that potential black entrepreneurs are without the training or experience the bankers like to see, that sometimes they have poor credit records, and finally that they seldom have sufficient collateral to secure a business loan. I suggested to these bankers that to maintain their strict rules on these issues would be to keep black people from becoming employers who participate in profits, not just wages. The bankers were sympathetic but said that they just didn't have the

ability to relax their policies though they understood the problems Negroes have and felt great compassion for them.

The next morning I called Dearborn in and asked him how much money the city of Cleveland had on deposit in the banks in Cleveland. It turned out to be a total of about \$50 million. I suggest to Phil that we should pull our money out of the five big banks that traditionally held the city's funds and spread the money around in some of the smaller banks. Phil put that plan into motion, and it took only a couple of days before the bankers called and asked could we have another meeting. We had a very fine session that time, and they told me they had been thinking about the good sense I had made at that dinner, and they now felt they could work this thing out. And they did. Over the next thirty months, Cleveland banks lent some \$6 million to black businessmen. The rate of default on the loans was about fourteen percent; the national rate on such loans is twenty percent.

We kept many young black businessmen and professionals in business by using them as suppliers to the city itself. Every Wednesday morning, the Board of Control held its required public meeting in the Tapestry Room, adjacent to my office. The board consisted entirely of members of my cabinet. I presided as chairman. All expenditures for capital improvements and purchasing of supplies, goods and services had to be authorized by the City Council, but the actual spending of over \$100 million a year was, by law, the prerogative of the Board of Control. Awards were made on the basis of the lowest and best bidder. Able and highly qualified black professional firms like the brothers Julian and Robert Madison found they were no longer excluded from city business because of their race. From the city contracts they received the Madisons were able to expand their architectural firm from six to twenty-six professionals, to create an engineering firm with a comparable number of technicians, and to open New York and Washington offices. Black realtors were awarded appraisal contracts, a black lawyer was hired to represent the city in an \$80 million rate case involving the telephone utility, and minority

producers and manufacturers were actively sought out and encouraged to make bids on city contracts.

I deliberately included the black businessmen in every aspect of the award and hiring process, just as they had been deliberately excluded before. My actions drew reprisal. White concessionaires and suppliers who had enjoyed the former monopoly circulated rumors that the blacks were getting jobs because they were paying off. The rumors, though false, fell on receptive white ears, and the reporters and councilmen missed no opportunity to repeat them.

As mayor, I found that the race issues worked in strange ways. I was able to achieve some great things for my people through some of my blackjack methods and through legislative maneuverings that produced such things as our Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance. But I also did things for people all over the city. At times this amazed the white councilmen. I remember one time when Michael Zone, a white West Side councilman, stood up on the floor of the Council and said, "They're paving streets in my ward!" He just couldn't believe it. Why was the black mayor providing his opposition with real services? Naturally, I was giving the best service I could muster to own loyal councilmen, but I never did it at the expense of other areas of the city. However, even though I had provided, as no Cleveland mayor in recent history had, substantially equal service to people throughout the city, it did not make me more popular among the whites. Those white councilmen could sit on their hands for an entire term, but when it came to election time all my favors were out the window. They could still play off the racism against me and get votes just by sound off against us.

Here is a pretty expensive example. We agree with the Cleveland Board of Education to share the costs of erecting six new recreation centers, each to be connected to an existing school building. The centers cost about \$1 million each. It was decided to put the first one on the far West Side, in the ward of George Blaha, an old Council veteran and a loyal tool of Jim Stanton. We broke ground for that center shortly after I announced I was running for

reelection in 1969. I chose a day for the groundbreaking that would coincide with a ward club meeting in Blaha's ward. I wanted to get as much political benefit from the recreation center as I could. Blaha was there for all the hoopla and the photographers when we broke ground for the center, and the *Press* dutifully carried a nice picture that included both of us, smiling away.

That night I took my campaign to the West Side. We went to George Blaha's ward club meeting. I had with me Helen Lyons, the clerk of courts, who was very strong on the West Side, and Richard Maher, the political reporter for the *Press*. We were informed at the door that there would be no speakers. I asked to speak to George. He was found after an exhaustive search. Suddenly, this man who had been so ebullient and effusive in the morning was awfully restrained. He told me that he was sorry, but there wouldn't be any speakers that night.

"That's all right, George. I don't want to make a speech," I said. "I just want to meet the people. Why don't you go around with me and introduce me?"

"George explained in a number of labyrinthine ways that he wasn't free just then to go around with me, but I should feel free to go around and introduce myself.

"I know they would be happy to see me, George," I said, "because we just gave them a million-dollar recreation center today. Before I leave I want to say a few words, but right now I think I'll just go around and shake some hands."

There were about three hundred people in the hall. I went from table to table all around that room. Some people received me enthusiastically and openly. Others just sat there and waited for me to introduce myself. With some, the hostility was patent and unremitting. But I allowed no one to refuse to shake my hand. I just held it out there and waited. Some of them sweated blood before they took that black hand, but they all did, and, oh, didn't I smile and remind them I was running and I certainly would appreciate their consideration. Sometimes they just mumbled after I said that, but I didn't let them off easy.



"After I finished off the hall, I headed for the door. I ran into Blaha and he asked then whether I wanted to say a few words, I said no, I thought I had met everybody in the room, it wasn't necessary. Just as my group approached the door, Jim Stanton arrived with his entourage of Irishmen. He nodded to me, but didn't say anything.

We passed through the door into the hallway outside. The three of us stood there a moment, just outside the open door of the meeting. Then I hear Jim Stanton call in a loud voice, "What did you let that nigger in here for?"

I heard Blaha explain that he hadn't introduced me and hadn't let me speak. Helen Lyons turned to me and said, "Did you hear that?"

I said, "It isn't important that I heard it, it's important that Dick Maher heard it."

He heard it. But the *Press* didn't print it.

It's not fair for me to say that I was one of only a handful of people who cared about Cleveland and understood the fight we were in for survival. Trapped in a process that was grinding me down, I often felt that I was alone and that most of the people didn't give a damn whether the city lived or died and certainly didn't care if the poor, the elderly, the unemployed, the sick, all those who needed help, lived or died. But then there was "Cleveland: NOW!"

Cleveland: NOW! was an extraordinary demonstration of how people can really respond at the maximum and the best that is within them. I never deluded myself that it could be a level at which people could continually respond, but when the program began I had the confidence that they could rise to a level where they wanted to respond to problems that human beings have in our society, while setting aside their prejudices and hostilities. I felt that if people can be brought to that level and persuaded to act, you can make considerable gain which will sustain you when the pendulum swings the other way and people return to their normal lack of concern, or when it goes to the opposite extreme and there

is active antagonism toward the less fortunate and members of minority groups.

The program began immediately following the April 4 death of Martin Luther King, when the black community and its leadership so magnificently kept the peace and enabled Cleveland to avoid the eruptions of violence in other cities that followed the assassination. I knew that because we had been able to keep the city quiet after King's death, the community was at a high level of appreciation and receptivity. The issue was, how do we take advantage of this in a way that will help the city? The idea came from Irving Kriegsfeld, director of the PATH association, a non-profit housing group, who later became director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority. His idea was to get the community together on the issue of financial support for housing and other areas of social concern. I asked him to head a group of people in formulating a program to take to the community leadership. He drafted it in very broad terms with input from members of my cabinet. I took it to the leaders of the business community, the heads of the media and small groups of community people. Everyone was excited about the program. To insure the integrity of the fund raising and raise the bulk of the money, prominent businessmen took leading roles -- men like Thomas F. Patton, president of Republic Steel, George S. Divey, president of Harris-Intertype, George Grabner, president of Weatherhead, and John Sherwin, a retired and highly respected banker. The three television stations combined their efforts to do a film that would show the problems we planned to attack. The only real difficulty I had was with the two newspapers, whose editors fought over who would break the story. We wanted to do it in the *Plain Dealer*. Tom Boardman of the *Press* finally agreed and then it broke the story anyway.

Our goal was to raise \$11.5 million from the business community and the general public. This was to generate \$165.75 million in state, federal and foundation funds for projects ranging from new housing to job training to recreation centers. The program was to last eighteen months, but that was to be merely the

beginning of a \$1.5 billion effort over a period of ten to twelve years to rebuild our city.

The response was fantastic. Money came in from elementary school children in nickels and dimes and from a man named Leland Schubert who gave \$1 million. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to be part of this effort to begin the rebuilding of the city. We actually raised and spent over \$5.5 million and generated several millions in federal and other assistance.

Cleveland: NOW! was instrumental in building housing, creating jobs, building day-care and recreational activities, new drug-treatment centers, and a number of other positive things. But the really important achievement was in solving a problem no other city had been able to solve, that of getting people totally involved in an effort to do something for their city. There was a lot about the program that was pure public relations. Everything positive that happened over that eighteen-month period was announced as a Cleveland:NOW! achievement. Obviously that was not always true. But people had to have a feeling that the building they saw, the progress in evidence around them, was the result of their effort and determination to see their city move. The program did not do all we hoped, and by now the spirit that moved it is dead; but for a moment, Cleveland -- a city that is the butt of so many jokes, and sometimes deservedly -- felt involvement, achievement, and pride.

## 9

## TWO BULLS

Cleveland's City Council is an anachronism in the second half of the twentieth century. No other major city in the country has such an unwieldy legislative body. Unwieldy isn't the word, it is corruptive, it is crippling. For quite honorable and well-intentioned, even liberal reasons, the city fathers in the first part of the century redesigned Cleveland's Council to give clear representation to the multitude of ethnic communities. One of the first of the major industrial cities in the Midwest, Cleveland grew most during the time when the Eastern European countries were the source of most of America's immigrants. As a result, the city became a quilt of extremely distinct neighborhoods, almost enclaves, each with its own ethnic character.

The Council was set up to have thirty-three representatives for the city's 800,000 persons, each councilman elected from a ward. Needless to say, the ward lines, drawn by the councilmen themselves, neatly marked off like-voting neighborhoods. This reached a point of absurdity in the decade before the U.S. Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote rulings went into real effect in 1970. Cleveland's thirty-three wards were so gerrymandered that some wards were more than twice the size of others. Now if this large body of councilmen served to mediate the city's ethnic pluralism in the first half of the century, that function was certainly wrenched out of shape by the advent of a significantly large minority of blacks. When more than half of the councilmen are elected by small ethnic strongholds, each with its own neighborhood isolationism, and when they choose a strong leader as their

president, it is easy to see what they can do to what the textbooks would call a strong-mayor form of government.

So what I faced was a government of negative capability, which may be fine for a poet but is hell for an activist politician. Had I been satisfied to be a mere administrator or caretaker, as for twenty-five years the mayors who preceded me were, there would have been no trouble. But I wasn't satisfied with that and that was the trouble. The suburbanites would read the headlines about our feuds at City Hall and moan that if only Carl Stokes or Jim Stanton could get along, this city could really move ahead, that Stokes was blowing a great opportunity. How hopelessly naïve! For a mayor to govern, actually govern, he has to have political power over the councilmen. He has to be able to have some effect on whether they can get elected or re-elected, to grant or to withhold substantive favors, such things as new playgrounds and street paving. I was caught in a double bind. I had to use the limited patronage of City Hall to keep the black councilmen loyal to me and independent of the Council's own favor system. But, since most of the councilmen were elected from a small, ethnic, not to say racist base that I couldn't undermine, there was simply nothing I could hold over their heads. The Democratic Party apparatus certainly wasn't about to help.

I had never fully realized how much power those men had. I had never wanted to be a councilman and I never understood why anyone else would. In all my campaigning -- and I believe I had more than the usual candidate's understanding of the issues -- I never pointed my finger at the Council. I accused the mayors. I was following in the tradition of others who also had failed to explain the role of the Council in the decline of Cleveland. I don't recall any mayor ever admitting the extraordinary power of the Council. With a strong leader who can further his own interests by providing a measure of profit or political security, the Council becomes formidable. James V. Stanton was such a man.

In 1963, when Stanton was elected to his second term as councilman, the leadership of the Council, President Jack P.

Russell and Council Clerk Thad Fusco, were under attack by *Press* Editor Louis Seltzer. It was clear that Russell's machine was falling apart. Until Stanton came along, the white West Side councilmen were not organized. Stanton stepped into the power vacuum and put them together. Then he began a campaign of constant harassment at Russell from the floor of the Council. He forced a vote on every issues that could embarrass Russell. He was very effective, and he stood out in a body where the level or performance is routinely dismal.

Stanton was greatly helped by a young Italian, Paul J. DeGrandis, a former councilman with keen organizational mind and sure knowledge of the tough byways of politics. But De Grandis had cast a vote against the Fair Housing Ordinance in 1961, and the black vote in his ward, though small, had been enough to defeat him and elect Michael Fatica. I had advised him against voting that way. I had known both men well. DeGrandis and I roomed together at a National Young Democrat convention. Fatica was an assistant prosecutor the same time I was. DeGrandis had first won for Council in 1957 when Lowell Henry won. We shared campaign tips during that time and expanded our friendship. Henry had confided to me that he and some others had received five hundred dollars for their vote for president of City Council in 1958. That was not new. A favorite City Hall story was about the councilman who had been so tricky he had taken five hundred dollars from both sides; since it was a secret ballot, he figured neither side would know just how he voted. But neither side trusted him, and the agreed that each would have someone sit beside the councilman and make him expose his vote. It worked. One side got its money back, but didn't get his vote. Nothing's worse, the story goes, than a councilman who won't stay bought.

In November 1963 Michael Fatica made the public charge that Stanton had offered him a thousand dollars for his vote for the presidency in Stanton's struggle with Russell. The charges and Stanton's denial were front-page news. In December, Stanton's long time friend and fellow West Side Irishman, John T. Corrigan,

the county prosecutor, subpoenaed Stanton to appear before the grand jury. On Christmas Eve the grand jury cleared Stanton of the bribery charge. He defeated Jack Russell and in January of 1964 was sworn in as president of the City Council.

In February 1964 Michael Fatica was charged with soliciting and accepting a bribe in a liquor license transaction. Corrigan sent Fatica's case to the grand jury, and he was indicted. In December of that year he was found guilty of the charge. Later, I'll discuss Prosecutor Corrigan in greater detail.

For a long time I was unable to understand how a West Side Irish kid could be as street-wise as Jim Stanton at such a young age—he was only thirty when he became council president. He had a sure political sense. He was shrewd and hard and he knew how to count votes; I mean he knew when not to call for a vote that would show any lack of support. Later, as mayor dealing with the Safety Department, I came to see the light. Jim Stanton was the son of a firemen. Police and firemen are good politicians who know how to take care of themselves. They learn how to deal for their own interests in the same way a professional politician does, and they have a similar view of the world. Stanton had also learned from James M. Carney, the developer, who had earlier served in the state legislature. Carney never lost his interest in politics. Stanton had been greatly helped by Carney in his bid for a Council seat and later for Council President.

Stanton grew quickly into an effective and strong leader. He had the toughness that you need when you are trying to hold together a number of men, each with his own little fiefdom, and he quickly found the glue needed to hold the pieces together. He developed good relations with the media, both the editorial offices and the working press. He had a kind of bullying good humor and ebullience that appealed to reporters, and he had a black toady, Jack Oliver, who took the reporters out and fed them and bought them drinks. Stanton worked politics, he spread his base. He gave some black councilmen the same deals that Russell had given, and then he went one step further. He made Leo Jackson, for instance,

chairman of the Urban Renewal Committee, giving him more power to negotiate with white business interests. Doing things like that brought Stanton enormous benefits; some people even thought of him as a liberal. It was a marvelous trade-off, because it was widely felt that Leo Jackson desperately wanted white approval.

Meanwhile, Stanton's approach to legislation proved to be as anti-civil rights and conservative as that of previous Council presidents. Before the 1960s, such things weren't tested. But with the advent of the civil-rights movement, open-housing laws, gun-control laws, and equal-employment opportunity laws, the old white politics was shown up for what it was. In 1961, Stanton vote against a Cleveland Fair-housing ordinance. When fair-housing laws were being considered at the state level, and when the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Acts were pending in Congress, Stanton refused to allow the Council to pass resolutions memorializing Congress or the state legislature to pass them. The Council was forever passing resolutions on Birdfeed Day, Like Your Dog Day and all sorts of nonsense, but as soon as a civil-rights issue came up he would have it referred to committee to die and never be heard of again. In this respect Stanton was worse than any other white Council president had been -- because he was brighter and knew how to do it better.

As we began to prepare for the 1965 campaign, it was clear that for the first time Stanton's interests and mine were on a collision course. Stanton wanted to run for mayor. But he couldn't convince his backers to support such a move. Carney and the other men behind the Democratic Party in Cleveland liked having him in the Council and running the deal. In his two years as president he had solidified his leadership, and he was useful as a whip over Locher. The big guys wanted to keep him where he was. Later, after he found he could not put it together and I was in the race, he withdrew and supported Locher. This was a facility Stanton had that I always marveled at. He would frequently, out of either design or impetuosity, throw out the bitter and personal criticisms of others in public life, get all the benefit from it, and then reverse



his field and support the same men without even generating a public discussion of his perfidy. He was very effective on Locher's behalf with councilmen and in speaking to groups on the West Side. He even put together a group of most of the black councilmen against me.

By the end of the campaign, Stanton and I emerged as the two young politicians obviously on their way somewhere. We had the opposite philosophies of government: he represented the traditional politics, and I represented those fighting for change. Later he was to become the symbol and voice of the white community in its reaction to my stewardship of the city's affairs. It is in that light that our one-on-one conflicts must be understood. Our personal conflict was incidental to the greater function he served.

In January of 1967, Stanton made the unequivocal declaration that he could not support Ralph Locher for mayor. He began cutting Locher right and left for the failures of the administration, many of which were as much due to the City Council's stalling on legislation as they were to Locher's slack administration. I was watching him -- he and I understand each other perfectly. I had a two-way shot. I was still guiding my lawsuit through appeal, hoping to have the congressional district redrawn so that I could run for Congress, but I was also keeping my options open to run for mayor. Stanton was busy generating stories in the newspaper about his interest in running for mayor, stories in which he was glowingly referred to as an example of the fresh, young Kennedy-style politician. He had copied the Kennedy speech mannerisms and the finger-pointing style.

But finally it had to be a question of who had the guts, and that was Stanton's continuing failure in dealing with me. He would get himself into a position that had to lead to a confrontation, yet at the final moment he was unable to take the final step. He filed to run for mayor. The day he filed I made the remark that there were only two major candidates, Ralph Locher and me. Stanton told a reporter, "Stokes is right. There are only two candidates." Two days later he withdrew. That meant two things to me. It meant he

was going to throw his weight behind Locher, and it meant that he didn't have the guts to go out there and try to win the white base, take it away from Locher and beat me. Under the veneer and the gloss, he was thinking timidly like the rest of them. He wouldn't gamble the loss of his Council presidency for the big job.

So he missed his chance. And it was a great chance. Most of the white votes I got would certainly have gone to Stanton. They came to me because Locher was so patently unacceptable. I didn't need that margin running against Locker and the inept Frank Celeste, but against a really tough candidate like Stanton it would have been a different ball game. He would have gotten the newspaper endorsements, the Democratic Party and would have been more vigorous, the political workers within organized labor would have been much more zealous. I won because Locher was such a hopeless cause that nobody could whip up a strong anti-Stokes movement. Stanton was a tough guy, but he didn't have that final measure of guts.

After the election, he came to my office. "Mayor," he began (he always called me "Mayor"), "I want to cooperate. I don't want to be mayor, I like being president of City Council."

I came back to him with the same bullshit. I told him that, working together, we could turn the town around. And, frankly, we could have. I had a considerable degree of latitude at that time, and no Council president in recent memory had the extraordinary control of his membership that Jim Stanton had. For the first six or seven months, everything was fine. It was the honeymoon period when everybody was excited about what they were doing. Nobody was sniping, the media were giving us great support for everything, there was a fine spirit of cooperation all across the city.

I had just put together a group of businessmen to take a look at the city's finances, and appointed James Carney as its chairman. In 1966 the Council had enacted a one-half percent income tax that enabled me, the next year, to run on a campaign pledge of no new taxes. When I got to the Hall and found out how ignorant I had been about the city's true fiscal condition, I did what I had to do. I

didn't mind shifting my position on the tax issue. I had known the city was in trouble, but had thought we would be able to make it for a while before I would have to go for an increase in the tax. I found, however, that things were worse than I had feared. We needed the money right away.

Jim Carney, once he discovered the true needs of the city, went to Stanton for me and asked him to support me and get the Council to pass a half percent increase. By state law, the Council had the authority to take it up to a full one percent. And Stanton was very helpful. When he wanted something to get through the Council, it got through. When he didn't, it didn't.

A few days after Carney talked to him, Stanton cornered me in an alcove just off my office. He said, "Listen, I've got this ordinance I'd like to take through Monday night under suspension, providing for an increase in the taxicab fares."

I said, "Well, gee, Jim, I don't know, you better let me take a look at it."

"Well, what you're going to find," he said, "is that Cleveland's fare are lower than other cities," and he went on to name a few cities, "and unless we do this, they're going to have to cut out some of the areas we serve."

Now, as I'm listening to him, what I'm trying to figure out is Stanton's relationship to McBride, the man who owns the cab company. And I have to think about my own need to get the income tax increase passed. Finally, I had a repugnance to any fare increase, because one of the things I had planned to attack was the cab company's monopoly. As Stanton is talking to me, giving his version of the cab company's needs, these things are going through my head. The upshot was that I said, "Okay Jim, go ahead."

It always happened like that. I would sit down with Jim and talk about the things we needed for the city's welfare, the substantive things, and Jim would sit there agreeing. Any time I came up with important legislation, important enough for me to talk to him about it, he would come back within a day or two with some small, specific piece of legislation that would help some special interest

of his. Well, that's politics, and we moved along. People said, "why don't Carl Stokes and Jim Stanton get along?" We did get along. Stanton's law practice grew and the city got needed legislation.

At this point I should note the occurrence of a calamitous event, the details of which I will discuss more fully at a later time. On Tuesday, July 23, 1968, in the northeast area of Cleveland called Glenville, a band of young, black self-styled revolutionaries under the leadership of Fred Ahmed Evans, engaged in a shoot-out with members of the Cleveland Police Department. During the course of that evening, three white policemen and six black civilians were killed by gunfire --three of the blacks were termed suspects in the shoot-out by the police. Twelve policemen, most of them white, were hospitalized with gunshot wounds. The aftermath of that night was to haunt and color every aspect of my administration the next three years.

Glenville killed much of my public support and gave the non-supporters a chance to emerge from the woodwork. This was especially true in the City Council. The criticism of the administration escalated immediately after the shot-out. Jim Stanton came down on us for not consulting him when we made out decision to keep the white policemen out of the area. The fact was, Stanton was around all day as we were trying to decide whether to pull out the white policemen. He was in our offices twice. He would go over to one of my aides and say, "Well, I guess everything is under control. Anything I can do, let me know," and then he would walk out. He never asked to see me. Now, I understand what he was doing. He'd come over and do that and then walk back over to the City Council side of the building and raise hell about how we were ruining the town. His face livid with rage, he's curse and cast about in a manner to suggest he was almost out of control of his senses, Of course had seen him several times like that, when he came over to the outer office of the administration. Somehow, that side of Jim Stanton never was presented to the public by the media.

It was after Glenville that Jim Stanton turned the councilmen loose. We had to face them every Monday night, when the Council meets. The meetings are televised live on educational television, and the mayor and the entire cabinet attend. The administrative branch has the right to attend, not the responsibility, but there has grown a tradition that the mayor and the cabinet members would respond to questions from the councilmen. After Stanton turned them loose, those councilmen began to use that public meeting to indulge in vitriolic and malicious attacks. These attacks became so bitter and demeaning that I ultimately broke with tradition, rules and the media's delight with the weekly spectacle, and ordered my cabinet members not to attend council meetings.

Through the fall and into 1969, Stanton and I battled each other over every major issue that came up. One columnist described us as two young bulls with the city as the herd. I was trying to put together seventeen councilmen for a majority and couldn't do it. He was trying to put together twenty-two councilmen for a two-thirds majority vote that could override my veto, and he couldn't do it. I had an unshakable block of eight Democratic votes, plus four Republicans, plus an occasional extra vote when either conviction or a favor brought someone into the fold. The effect was a legislative situation that blocked all progress. If I didn't approve of a Stanton bill, I could veto it, know he could not muster the twenty-two votes to override me. But I couldn't work up a seventeen-vote majority to pass the bill he didn't like. We both had purely negative capabilities. In this manner was the city governed.

The single most important legislative accomplishment of my four years as mayor was enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance. That law required any firm doing business with the city to prove to our satisfaction that it had an active and specific program for recruiting, hiring, and upgrading persons from minority groups. Of course that meant mainly Negroes and Puerto Ricans. The new law meant over \$3 million for minorities in jobs previously denied them. Getting such a law passed by our racist City Council was, on the surface, a noble undertaking. In fact,

though, it depended on the curious coming together of one man's naïve idealism, another's hustle, and my eye for the latter's greed.

It was just before Christmas 1969. I had just been reelected, and all the fine rhetoric of the campaign had gone to the media's collective head; just about everybody thought Stanton and I were getting along. We were facing the last Council meeting before the winter recess. This is a kind of wastebasket session, in which a multitude of pending bills are rushed through, more or less without examination. A perfect time to get through a bill that you don't care to have your opponents scrutinize too closely. And Stanton had his own little pet, which we knew perfectly well.

For some months, he had been trying to engineer a zoning change in an area that had once been the city's prize park. Called Euclid Beach Park and fronting on Lake Erie at the city's far eastern tip, the property had held a well-built amusement complex of rides, gazebos, kiosks and concessions, as well as a tree-filled picnic area and promenade along the beach. The park complex had deteriorated over the years and was clearly ready for a new purpose. Stanton had one. He had been trying to get the land rezoned to permit high-rise apartments to be built. We didn't know, in the administration, specifically how Stanton was connected to this potential development, but it hardly made sense for him as a West Side councilman to take such concern in rezoning land in an eastern ward represented by another councilman. I had the Zoning Board disapprove it. This stopped the project cold. To reverse the decision of the Zoning Board, he'd have to get twenty-two votes in the Council. He couldn't get them. I had the lever I needed against him.

About a week before the pre-Christmas Council meeting, I told all my cabinet members to pick out pending bills whose passage they felt was vital to city needs. We ended up with a list of twelve priority bills that had been hidden in various Council committees. The list of twelve bills included one truly controversial issue, gun control, but most of the others had not provoked much public discussion.

I looked the list over and it seemed all right. "is that it?" I asked.

"What about EEO, Mr. Mayor?"

It was a question from my law director, Clarence "Buddy" James. Buddy was no politician. It never occurred to him that an equal-employment-opportunity law was a hopeless cause in our situation. I knew, and just about everybody around me knew, that we had no way of getting such a bill passed. But Buddy didn't know it and he had had it drawn up and submitted to the Council, where it had stuck. I looked at Buddy then and I thought of all that and I thought of what I knew Stanton wanted.

"Damn right," I said.

Clearly it was trading time. I called Stanton, and we agreed to have dinner at Marie Schreiber's Tavern. I told him I could get my councilmen to vote for his Euclid Beach Park rezoning if he could get his majority to pass my thirteen bills. He looked the list over. Gun control stopped him. His leadership was strong over the Council majority, possibly the strongest in the town's history, but it wasn't that strong. He said he would need time to present a gun-control issue. I agreed to that. He committed himself to passage of the remaining bills.

I then explained to my councilmen, before the meeting, that they were to vote for the Euclid Beach legislation even though I had had the Zoning Board disapprove it. I told them what we were getting in the bargain. At the Council meeting that night, our EEO bill and the other legislation passed into law unanimously. I would be willing to bet that not one of those white councilmen voting for it had even read it.

It is said that ours is a government of laws, not of men. I'll buy that.

In the spring, Jack Russell told me that as long as the councilmen who supported me kept attending the Democratic caucus meetings, Stanton had a club over them. The unit rule bound them to vote with the majority. There were twenty-seven Democrats, and the eight who comprised my bloc were always

going to be outvoted by the Stanton people. Russell said that there only way I was going to be able to keep my base was to pull my councilmen out of the Stanton machine, where they were getting chewed up, and sustain them with the administration's sources -- patronage jobs they could spread around, street paving, extra care for their playgrounds, etc. This sort of thing had to be done once they pulled out of the Democratic caucus they would no longer be able to pull off the normal Council-dominated ventures, such as spot zoning changes.

Russell know how this worked because Stanton had done it to him in 1963 when the young councilman formed his own rebel caucus as a prelude to taking the leadership away from Russell. But in that case, Stanton's caucus and the majority caucus were both white, and Stanton faced no danger in having the administration go after services in his ward because Mayor Locher too was white. The differences these men were having were "merely" political; it was in-group fighting that had no meaning to the community at large. But when I pulled my rebel caucus out, it was seen as a purely racial move, and Stanton was able to convincingly say I was polarizing the city. The city was polarized already, and there aren't degrees of polarization any more than there are degrees of pregnancy. In either case you either are or you are not, and it doesn't help the situation to try to blame men who show up long after the deed is done. My pulling out the rebel caucus only made visible the war that had been going on in the closed caucus meetings. Stanton would visit the newspaper editorial offices and deplore the terrible situation I was causing by this open opposition. It was impossible to fight against this sort of thing; there was never an issue to get your hands on, never a specific and public action on his part. He was engaging in a kind of political sniper fire. You keep getting wounded, but nobody can see where the shots are coming from. In any case, the eight members of the Stokes bloc pulled out and were immediately labeled by the media as the "rebel caucus," and by one City Hall lawyer as the "Chicago Eight."



At this point I began to maneuver legislation whenever I could, to require a two-thirds vote. I wanted to put off voting on legislation which would put me in a highly publicized position, until it meant a major test of Stanton's strength. So, when I could have the Planning Commission or some such administrative agency disapprove a bill on technical grounds, I would do it, because then the bill required two-thirds vote, which I knew Stanton could not put together. Most of these votes never came to the floor, but the people who were concerned knew they were there. As the months went by, Stanton's leadership was generally being chipped away. It was not that he did not have solid control of the majority; he certainly did. But when you have a certain power you reach a point where what you don't have becomes more important than what you do have. Stanton had his power, but we began to force people to focus on the power he didn't have—twenty-two votes. And the confidence in him began to wane.

Finally, in October, less than a month before Stanton's certain election to Congress, I pulled it off. I had been waiting for, amount other things, the perfect legislation. I called a press conference and announced that for the first time since my election I was going to use my powers of veto. I knocked down three pieces of legislation and refused to sign two others. Of the three I vetoed, two were Council attempts to rezone areas to block public housing scheduled for Stanton's own ward and another West Side ward. His interests were clearly at stake. The third bill was an attempt by the Council to insert itself into the Board of Control, which made up of the mayor and his cabinet and which awards contracts once approval for the expenditures is given by the Council. Stanton had the worst tactical position possible. He was faced with issues that generated intense feelings, especially among his own constituents. He had to try to override my veto. Everybody knew what the issues between us were, and here we had obviously *the* test of his leadership. And he knew perfectly well there was no way he could get twenty-two votes. He did what he had to do. He brought the issues up on the floor of Council. We did what we had been waiting to do. We

voted them down. He lost. He couldn't get the votes. After that, a whole handful of men who had hoped to succeed him as Council president started sniping at him in the caucus meetings, and his internal control disintegrated rapidly.

A point needs to be made about the war between us, The community at large, spurred on by the newspapers, adopted simple-minded interpretation that if only we would put our personalities and our vanities in the background and get along, the city could move ahead. The newspapers -- and I think particularly of the *Plain Dealer's* simplistically-minded Tom Vail, who in his "Publishers Column" harped on this theme and encouraged his readers to focus on the city's problems as the product of the personal feud between Stanton and me. This is typical of the establishment's refusal to accept responsibility for its own social barbarism. It doesn't take much intelligence to examine the issues over which Stanton and I fought and discover that each involved substantive, basic attempts on my part to bring reforms to provide services to the people who needed them most, the poor and the elderly. Stanton's position on these issues was inevitably to present the most reactionary opposition. I wanted public housing for the elderly and for poor people, black and white. Stanton fought me. I wanted a gun-control law to help us stop the weekly carnage that goes on in Cleveland. Stanton fought me. I wanted to use the actual and potential resources of the city of Cleveland to provide jobs for people who didn't have them. Stanton fought me. Even had we liked each other, as long as he chose to represent the interests of the haves while I was fighting for the need of the have-nots, we were doomed to collide.

# 10

## THE MEDIA

We have allowed two traditional institutions, both intended as our protectors, to develop forms of social and thought control that would have terrified the men who wrote the Constitution. My greatest frustration as mayor of Cleveland came through my futile attempts to reform the Police Department; but that failure cannot be fully understood apart from an understanding of the press. As these two institutions hardened into permanent adversaries, I was forced into a defensive position and was not able to fully exercise the authority I had been elected to wield. When I left office after four years, The Cleveland Police Department was as politically corrupt, as Byzantine in its organization, as brutal in its understanding of the sources of crime, as it was before I came. And, in my opinion, the newspapers were still as reckless, as arrogant and as profane. I mean that literally. To present daily to the public a simplistic, often racist and socially thoughtless interpretation of human events is profanity.

Newspapers enjoy an exclusivity of protection and privilege comparable only to that enjoyed by the police. Policemen are taken from our society of men and given the extraordinary privilege of being able to take the freedom and liberty of their fellow men. Like their fellow men, policemen can be wrong. But there is little recourse for the victims when this happens.

And we give them guns. The police are allowed to carry and use weapons that are not available to other citizens. They are given the right by law to take life when in their judgement it is necessary. And we provide them with so little social education that we have

no reason to suppose that their judgement will be sound. We have in the police an exclusive class, protected by law in their exclusivity and their privilege, and a class created out of the last promising segment of the lower middle class of white America.

The news media are antagonists of another sort. They are more than a random collection of individuals. They are a business institution operated to make money from people who have money. They are a white institution which reflects white racism in its employment and operational functions. Equally important, their responses, their social values, their world outlook coincides with their class position in the economic structure of this society. Their influence is pervasive and they are aware of it. They are often giddy and reckless in wielding their power because they are free from counter institutional assault. It is not so much that they rally to opposition, but that they confuse and neutralize potential allies. To that extent the news media are a constant abrasive. It was only natural that they would attack a black mayor attempting reform.

The point of saying that the pen is mightier than the sword is not that the sword is a less efficient solution to human conflicts but that the pen is in fact a sword. It cuts and it can kill. Several of the writers who covered my administration indulged themselves in a form of steady, slow assassination. The newspapers are protected by our most cherished social contract, the Constitution. They have virtually no limitations. The men who wrote the Constitution never intended that the newspapers would develop into such ultra-powerful institutions. And as more and more cities find themselves with only one newspaper, or perhaps two newspapers owned by the same man, who also sometimes owns a radio and/or television station, they find themselves in fact under a form of shadow government, an unelected, unaccountable rule.

The federal government at least recognized that there is something wrong when the firm that owns the newspaper also owns the television station. The law recognizes that the airways are public and must be protected from abuse by the special interests. Why should newspapers be exempt? Many newspapers have what

amounts to a monopoly as shapers of opinions. Wouldn't it be reasonable to demand of those opinion-makers that the public know what special interest they have a stake in? In 1970 I introduced legislation that would have forced public disclosure of financial interests not only of elected officials such as myself and councilmen, but also of newspaper reporters, executives, and editors. You can guess the response of the newspapers. The level of scorn and abuse in the editorial columns reached new highs. They reduced the proposal to an absurdity. But what is absurd about it? Doesn't the public have the right to know, for instance, when it is reading an article in the *Plain Dealer* about some action of the Cleveland Trust Company that the *Plain Dealer* is up to its neck in financial ties to that bank? Newspapers hold a public trust because they influence the course of government. Public trusts should be accountable to the public.

Cleveland is, or was, the most dramatic example of government by newspaper. Louis Seltzer, the editor of the *Cleveland Press*, determined every mayor from 1941 through 1965. The result was that Cleveland limped into the second half of the century with no one to attribute failures to those actually making the decisions. The watchdog wasn't just asleep, he was working the other side.

When I came into office I didn't underestimate the value of newspaper support, but I also understood that the papers had been as much a part of the failures of Cleveland as had the politicians. Seltzer had grown up with the *Press*, and had turned it into his personal voice. Cleveland had large groups of Eastern European immigrants. He focused his paper on their point of view. As they grew, the *Press* grew, consolidating Seltzer's power not only over the *Press* as an institution, but over the political structure of the city, undermining the normal, and legally constituted, power of the parties. He ran the *Press* personally.

When Seltzer went on a campaign, he determined exactly how everything was going to be played and he gave great editorial support, even putting his editorials on the first page. He had personal contact not just with the men directly under him, but with

the reporters. Those men did what was expected of them. The condition of Cleveland in 1967 reflects Seltzer's lack of understanding of what a city needs to stay alive. But that it was his understanding that in large part got it that way is indisputable. The politicians were all forced to court him. Nobody made a move without consulting Seltzer. If Seltzer didn't approve it, most of the politicians didn't do it. The two best things that happened to Cleveland in 1967 were my election as mayor and Louis Seltzer's retirement from the *Press*.

However, Seltzer's influence did not die with his retirement. The power of the press is shared by its representatives, and in the case of the *Press*, this meant that the top reporters under Seltzer had learned over the years that politicians were as afraid of them as they were of Seltzer. The reporters came to regard public officials as submissive and even subservient to their power. Of course the power of the newspapers is always awesome to public officials, but the power of the Cleveland *Press* went beyond the normal state of affairs. Cleveland's mayors learned a tradition of deference to the *Press* because they were creatures of the *Press*. Clevelanders don't even smile when they describe how former mayors trekked to Seltzer's office before making any major decision. It's not funny. This was one of the traditions I was determined to change.

It was a difficult time for some of the *Press* reporters to adjust to. Paul Lilley was the top investigative reporter at the *Press* and he was always close to City Hall; he knew most of the dirt. He had always been able to walk into the mayor's office when he felt like it and get inside information in those "off the record," conversations that so often compromise the integrity of both the politician and the reporter. He would tell those mayors things they didn't know, and the mayors would reciprocate.

He had visited me early. He started to tell me how he expected to be treated, and I told him I wasn't going to say anything to him off the record. I told him he wasn't going to hear anything from me in that office that I wouldn't say in a press conference.

He looked at me and said, "Well Carl, it just looks bad in the newspaper when the story says, 'When confronted with the accusation that a certain thing happened, the mayor had no response.' I don't want you to be in that position."

"You do what you want to do, Paul," I said, "but when they have read sufficiently that I don't have any comment, they'll know from all that I am doing otherwise that I must have sufficient reason that I'm not going to comment. But if I have to choose between this subtle blackmail of yours --"

"I'm not trying to blackmail you," he interjected.

"All right, I'll take that back. Let's just say the subtle suggestion that you are making that I should confide in you at the risk of some negative comments in your paper is a risk I'll take. I'm not going to talk to you off the record, and when I tell you I don't have anything more to say, then your asking the question a different way isn't going to get a different response."

Lilley wasn't the only one. But I am proud to say I never pandered to the news media. I never curried their favor by slipping a reporter and exclusive to win favor with him or his paper or his broadcasting station. I respected the hard-working reporter who dug out the facts on my administration -- no matter how negative these might be. I despised the lazy and personally hostile reporter who took gossip and/or half truths and made feature stories of them.

This is not to complain about the initial coverage my administration received. One habit the media people have, and it is a good one, is to give any new administration -- and this is true at all levels of government -- time to get its house in order. The reporters know where the weak spots are, where the trouble lies, but they don't parade them to the public. At first. This is called the honeymoon. The ending of this honeymoon is gradual, just as it is with most marriages. But with us it was different. Glenville came like the cutting of a leash. In the next three and a half years there was almost no time that one or both newspapers did not have some kind of investigation going that concerned me or my

administration. They never touched me, but it wasn't because they didn't try.

Their desperate desire to get something on Stokes reached ridiculous levels. All through the fall of 1970, Toni Tucci of the *Press* was turning up penny-ante scandals. One time he found that one of the receptionists in my office was on the wrong payroll. We had brought her over from the Utilities Department and never changed her classification. But the *Press* played it on page one with banner headlines as though we were cheating the taxpayers.

More troubling than these sensationalized miniscandals was the tone of the reporting after Glenville. No matter what the story, if I could be at all connected to it in any way, and if it was at all controversial or had any negative implications, there were some reporters who would manage to connect it with me. There was no way to fight against this sort of thing, and it is almost impossible to fully document. When I complained, the reporters involved quickly responded that I was shining over personal criticism. They couldn't understand that I didn't mind personal criticism in a story that was about me as a person, for something I had done, but that a story about a tax issue that attacked the validity of a tax by associating it with me was harmful journalism.

In 1970, when I saw that the city was headed for financial disaster, I set up one of those "blue-ribbon" committees you need when you have to have the substantiation of impartial and expert testimony supporting what you already know has to be done. I had businessmen and bankers study the city's financial position and they came up with certain recommendations. They called for an increase of eighth tenths of one percent in the income tax. I tried my best to get the newspapers and television stations to report on the subsequent campaign for that tax fairly, without associating it with me. Sure enough, by the time the issue was through the Council, the papers had made it "Stokes's tax." They made it so that the vote on the tax was a referendum on me. The merits of the tax and the city's need for it were buried under the paper's personalizing its passage.



Through all of this I found that I couldn't have found a better man for my press secretary than Richard Murway. He had been a prize-winning housing and urban-affairs writer of the *Press*, and then for more than ten years a public-relations counsel for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, which is headquartered in Cleveland. His cool collected, informal way of handling reporters was precisely what I needed, given my own flamboyance and occasionally impetuous angers.

Those first months were amazing. I had set a policy right away that we wouldn't have daily formal news conferences as mayors before me had. I could see how the TV reporters had badgered Locher, making him look foolish day after day. I had no intention of allowing them to jam a microphone into my face every day and ask me what I was going to do about this terrible urban-renewal mess today that had been there for fifteen years. But, as it happened, there was so much going on for those first eight months, so many appointments, new programs and the like, that I ended up having what amounted to daily formal news conferences. We almost always had something to announce. We were working from eight in the morning until midnight or later, seven days a week. As my own pace slowed into a regular schedule I began to see how valuable Murway was, and he turned out to be one of those few people with whom I became truly close. He had the kind of loyalty that can't be bought, an essentially nonpolitical human commitment to me and what I was fighting for. Before he joined my administration, Murway would never have been picked out as a white liberal -- no marches, no sit-ins, no picketing. He was never part of any Movement. And when you compare that with his real and deep commitment, you realize that to use the label "white-liberal" on Murway would be to underestimate him. He just happens to be a fully human being.

When I had a complicated story, I took it to the *Plain Dealer*. I don't mean there is any difference in intellect between the people who work for the two papers, but the *Plain Dealer*, as the morning paper, is geared to more in-depth reporting. They have more time.

The afternoon paper is always short of time and is geared to getting the news out quickly. When we came out with *Cleveland: NOW*, although we told the *Press* it was coming, we insisted that the story go to the *Plain Dealer*. Budget and tax stories were better handled in the *Plain Dealer*. But if we had something we wanted to make sure hit hardest with the actual Cleveland resident, we took it to the *Press*, because it has more actual home readership within Cleveland proper.

City Hall is always the source of sensational stories, but it was also true that I came along in a difficult time for the *Press*, a time that resulted in, I think, less accurate stories than had been the rule in the past. The city was losing population, and the *Press* was trying to compete with the *Plain Dealer* for the suburban circulation, which meant getting editions out sooner in the afternoon for home delivery in outlying districts. That meant earlier deadlines for the reporters, and consequently less time for checking facts.

One thing I learned through my dealings with the newspapers, and with the television stations, is that they squabble among themselves as much as those who are in government. Their internal politics are worse than professional politics because they are not practiced in public. They are shielded by the corporate veil. Their petty rivalries are always causing friction between officials and editors. The latter keep count on how many stories their opposition gets from an administration, and if the balance shifts slightly they come whining. Over the four years I was in office, the relative positions of the two papers changed. The *Press* lost circulation, advertising and its political dominance. The *Plain Dealer* became the largest paper in the state.

Although the *Plain Dealer* is the largest paper, it has never been able to insert itself into a truly powerful position in the city. The man who is at the top of the *Plain Dealer*, Tom Vail, is a patrician who doesn't really care about running the newspaper in a personal way -- at least not beyond having his own picture in it. He has little contact with the people under him and no contact with the

average citizenry. While the *Plain Dealer*, like any large newspaper, has the power to arouse people, mostly in a negative way, and while it can further the careers of certain persons through favorable and certainly less than objective news coverage, the paper still lacks the punch needed to impress or bully politicians and institutions in the way the *Press* once did.

I had to deal with editors Thomas Boardman at the *Press* and Vail at the *Plain Dealer* -- the men at the top. Just as they had to come to me, not to my commissioners, I had to go to them. At times, negative times, this was efficient enough. The man at the top can get his operatives to stop doing what they are doing much easier than he can get them to do something new or against their grain. The actual control of the coverage of events was in the hands of middle-management people, men like city editor Ted Princiotto at the *Plain Dealer* and Dick Campbell at the *Press*. They operated almost without interference. The men at the top can set policy and determine overall operation, but the men who sits at the city desk and selects the news, the reporter who comes in with what he thinks is news, the way he writes the news, how it is rewritten, what headlines goes on the story, what stories are assigned and to whom, the reasons they are or are not assigned -- this is how the day-to-day management of the news occurs.

Newspapers tent to think of themselves as special. They think they are different from and better than other institutions. They're not. They can be as internally corrupt as any police force. As in any other institution, the operation can fall into the hands of persons who know how to grab and hold. If those persons lack a certain understanding of life outside the newsroom, if they are bigoted or just dumb, then it will be reflected in the newspaper, just as control of a police department by brutal, insensitive and bigoted minds results in a certain kind of police department. The individual reporter can be just as undisciplined and corrupt as the individual cop on the beat. Each has been known to take a bribe and give a knee in the groin. Although I, as an elected official, was often unable to make a specific police chief or a particular

policeman perform properly, Tom Vail, and Tom Boardman could make individual reporters or managing editors perform according to their policy. The men at the top can fire reporters, provided they can outmaneuver the Newspaper Guild. Unless the reporter is willing to cooperate they cannot tell him what to write and how to write it. But they can certainly determine whether what the reporter writes will be printed or not.

To understand my feeling about some of the media you have to understand the case of Doris O'Donnell, who in 1967 was a reporter for the *Plain Dealer*. If she had been merely an exceptionally biased reporter, understood by the editors over her, she would have been no problem. Any editor in his right mind would have kept her from stories that involved the police and/or the black community, let alone the more sophisticated problems. But her sympathy for the police view of the world was rewarded at the *Plain Dealer*. Miss O'Donnell regards herself as a friend of the Negro, and to defend her case she will point to stories she has written. I would point to the same stories in attacking her racism. She was generally regarded as the *Plain Dealer's* chief investigative reporter, mainly because she was given the juiciest assignments by the managing editor, Ted Princiotto, who, I have to believe, shared her views.

In 1967 I learned that she had compiled a dossier on me and, after being unable to convince the *Plain Dealer* to run it as a news story, had taken it to my opponent, Seth Taft. Taft refused to use her material. Two nights later the issue came to a head. Each night the *Plain Dealer* assigned a reporter to each candidate. On this night, Doris O'Donnell was assigned to Seth Taft. We were to appear together at one point in the evening at a neighborhood center. Taft made his remarks and left. However, Miss O'Donnell did not leave with Taft, as she was assigned to do. She waited until the end of my remarks. After the question-and-answer period, as I came off the stage and walked down the aisle, shaking hands and singing autographs, a group formed. Miss O'Donnell moved to the

front of the group and said, "Mr. Stokes. I am Doris O'Donnell from the *Plain Dealer*."

"Yes, Miss O'Donnell?"

"You know me -- you can call me Doris."

"No, Miss O'Donnell, I do not know you. I am quite familiar with your articles, but to my knowledge this is the first time I've seen you. I'll call you Miss O'Donnell."

Then she said, as best I can recall, "Well, that doesn't make any difference, but I do want to ask you a question. Isn't it true that you have been married three times?"

As she asked the question, her voice rose. Most of the crowd around us heard her clearly. One man said, "What the hell do we care if he has been married three times. Why don't you leave the man alone?"

"Yes, Miss O'Donnell, I have been married three times," I said, "but twice to the same girl." You may recall that the first Shirley and I were married first secretly, then later in a big ceremony.

At that, we moved on out of the building. But as we reached the sidewalk, she came up again and in a loud voice said, "Mr. Stokes, isn't it true that the man buried in Highland View Cemetery under the name Charles Stokes is not really your father? That, in fact, Charles Stokes was married to your mother but she had you by another man?"

"Well, Miss O'Donnell, you have now gone far enough to demonstrate to me that you have a purpose in these questions and remarks other than news reporting. When you have proceeded to literally calling me a bastard child and defamed my mother's name, it is time for me to take that kind of behavior up with your editor, and I will do that the first thing in the morning."

"That is your privilege," she said, and walked off.

I didn't see her again that night. The next morning I called Tom Vail and asked to see him that afternoon. When we met, he had with him Tom Guthrie, his assistant, and William Ware, the executive editor. They told me Miss O'Donnell had reported essentially the conversation we had had the night before. They said

she was unable to give them any explanation of why she had asked me those questions, nor was she able to account for staying to question me rather than leaving with Seth Taft, as she had been assigned to do. They assured me she would be taken off the campaign and given other assignments. And she was.

"But why did she do it?" I asked Vail. "Why does she have it in for me?"

Vail said he didn't know, but "perhaps she is going through the change."

I then turned to Ware and asked approximately the same thing, wanting to know why, even if she was going through 'the change,' as they called it, I was the target.

"When a woman is going through the change," he said, "anyone is subject to her wrath."

He said it in a light tone -- clearly he did not want to deal with the real issues of his own responsibilities. The important things to note is that none of them even tried to deny that she was out to get me. When the issues was raised again later with these men, as unfortunately it had to be, they gave similar answers, never once denying the fact that it was a personal vendetta.

By March of 1968, Vail and I had established a relationship that included regular almost weekly meetings. Sometimes the meetings would be just the two of us, sometimes the meetings would include my directors or some of the *Plain Dealer's* editors. This gradually became more elaborate, and my summer it had developed to the point of having regular lunches in a dining room off Vail's office. The point was to keep the top brass at the *Plain Dealer* apprised of our programs and problems to see how the paper could help. Police Chief Michael J. Blackwell and Safety Director Joseph McManamon were beginning to have conflicts. McManamon was trying to get started on a reorganization of his department along the lines of the Little Hoover Commission recommendations of 1966 (some of which had been suppressed by the news media when pressure was brought by former Police Chief Richard B. Wagner; more on this later). Then, after Glenville, the

problems became more acute and unavoidable. Vail at one point asked if there was anything his paper could do to help with the police problems. I told him yes -- if he could get someone to really write about the malingering, the continued protection of numbers and policy operators, the nearly complete work stoppage the police were engaged in after the Glenville shoot-out.

I confessed to them that this was the toughest part of city government to handle and that I wanted to try some reforms but couldn't do anything without public support. They all expressed understanding and agreement. Vail suggested that they run a series of articles in which reporters would go out and really talk with people in the community about the problems they had with police and also talk with people in the administration. I said fine, I'd have Frank Moss, a black assistant to the safety director and a veteran policeman, available, because the reporters ought to talk with him and to the people at the Afro Set, a nationalist group. And they ought to talk to the street club leaders in Mount Pleasant and Glenville and to Louise Craig and Appalachian white leaders over on the West Side and some other Spanish-speaking persons in the projects on the near West Side. They agreed to these suggestions and said they'd put a number of reporters on the story. "We'll get this police thing out on the table," Vail said.

The articles were done by a group of reporters, but the group was headed by Doris O'Donnell. It proved to me damaging and vicious. And this came from the top. You had to believe the man at the top okayed this series before it ran. Now, I have no problem taking personal criticism. But when they consciously went to the men whom I knew to be the most blatantly anti-Stokes police in the department, permitted them to spew out their hostilities toward me on the front page, they did a great injustice to the city. It was the most damnable single act I've known the *Plain Dealer* to participate in. Tom Vail knew Doris O'Donnell's personal hostility. The articles had one purpose -- to show the hatred and animosity the Police Department had for Carl Stokes and for what he was trying to do.

I called Vail when the first article appeared, and I asked him why he was permitting this kind of article to be written. He said, "Carl, this is the series we talked about."

"No," I said, "it's not the series we talked about. We talked about your reporters going to sources in the community and getting from them information about the police, what they are and are not doing. There's not one word in the stories from the people in the community. All this is is a sheer late piece, a forum for the police. This doesn't have any similarity to what we talked about. And as I look at the list of reporters who are supposed to be working on it, I know it is not true. I don't see anything in the article that reflects what Bob McGruder knows, for instance."

"Well, that's going to be in the articles yet to come."

"Tom, let me tell you this. This is not what we agreed upon. You are doing a terrible disservice to the city. When you put Doris O'Donnell in charge, you knew her own hostility to me, you knew her close working relationship with the police. I have to believe the person giving direction to this mess is Doris O'Donnell."

"I think it is a good series," he said.

The community, white and black, did not think it was good. The *Plain Dealer* was picketed and angry delegations of neighborhood people descended on Vail's office. Western Reserve University Civil Violence Center described the articles as "effectively keeping the vendetta going between the races."

That was the end of my talks with Vail. I began to realize something. When you have sat with people for some hours, as I had done, and then they come out with this, and you think back to other incidents, you realize you aren't going to prevail over their own personal attitudes and the institutional failures of the newspaper. You stand in the position of compromising yourself if you continue trying to work with them. At that point I began to withdraw. My relations with the media became only what were formally necessary.

This is, unfortunately, not yet the end of the Doris O'Donnell story. Even though she had been taken off covering me personally,



she resurrected her campaign in the city room when she learned I was going to run for reelection in 1969. I don't know whose idea it was, whether hers or theirs, but she left the *Plain Dealer* in September 1969 and went on the staff of the small Willoughby *News-Herald*, in a suburb in an adjoining county. Within three months, she and her husband, Howard Beaufait, who was then a *News-Herald* copy editor, were in the Bahamas, trying to trace me to some shady land deal or tie me in with some rackets figures. Now, the paper she worked for has no more interest in Cleveland coverage than it does in Pittsburgh -- certainly not enough to dispatch two staff members on an expensive fishing expedition fifteen hundred miles away. If either of the Cleveland dailies wanted to spend that kind of money on that kind of snooping, it would be at least plausible, and in fact one of them did, and at the same time.

The *Plain Dealer* sent its City Hall reporter, Bob McGruder, and its then chief investigative reporter, Donald Bartlett, to the Bahamas at the same time that Mr. and Mrs. Beaufait were there. When the *Plain Dealer* reporters returned, they wrote a long memo explaining that they hadn't been able to tie me to anything, and there was not basis for a story. That was true, and subsequent events proved that their investigation had been more intensive than Miss O'Donnell's. On one occasion the two teams crossed paths, although Miss O'Donnell later denied knowing that the *Plain Dealer* was there.

The absence of any evidence tying me to anything in the Bahamas did not stop Miss O'Donnell. The *News-Herald* published a four part series, bannered across the top of page one. The story exploited as its legitimate basis a rewriting of what had already appeared in several national publications, that rackets money was involved in expanding the casino and hotel industry on the resort islands. But then the articles were given a veneer of references to me, insinuating without ever saying so that I had ties to these people and, therefore, shady investments. It was the yellowest piece of nonreporting I ever saw. The articles would repeat rumors

about me and then go on to say that the rumors, although they couldn't be proved, certainly could be true because there was an "avalanche of well concealed real estate transactions" on Grand Bahama. The articles were full of unattributed remarks and 'whispers' none of which went so far as to tie me specifically to anyone or any deal. The sole basis of my association with the Bahamas that they could point to were my two trips there, each for no more than three days, and one trip to Miami in the three years I had been in office. Miss O'Donnell confused my Miami trip with the others and without investigation further assumed it had been to the Bahamas. Without revealing in the articles exactly how many times I had been there, she referred to the resort areas as my "home away from home." I promptly filed a libel suit for two million dollars.

Here are some of the sadder passages from Miss O'Donnell's deposition. She is being questioned by my lawyer, Kenneth Weinberg.

Q. Did you find any evidence that you included in your story that Stokes owns and interest in any business in Grand Bahama Island?

A. Not that I could determine...

Q. Did you find any evidence that you included in your story that Carl Stokes was connected with the Mafia threat that you said runs through the island?

A. No, sir.

Q. Well, then, why was Carl Stokes included in this story at all? I don't understand. If you found no evidence connecting him with the subject matter of the story, why was he put in the story at all?

A. My assignment was to go down and look around, to see where the public officials spend some of their time. He was one of the public officials from this area who spent time down there.

Q. He was the only one?

A. No. There are other people. I could name hundreds of people who were there.

Q. He is the only one you mention in your story.

A. He is a public figure. The other people would not be significant.

Q. As a matter of fact, that was really your assignment, wasn't it, to go down and write a story about Carl Stokes?

A. No. It was to go down and look around the island.

Q. And see how you could involve Carl Stokes in the Grand Bahama?

A. No, that is not true.

Q. That was mentioned, wasn't it?

A. Among other things.

Q. Yes.

A. Because he is a public official.

Q. Right. As a matter of fact, what you set out to do in this story was to get something on Carl Stokes, is that right?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you like Carl Stokes?

A. I have no feeling about the man. He is just another politician.

Q. Have you ever written any derogatory stories about Carl Stokes?

A. I have written news stories about the Mayor as a public official, about his public acts.

Q. If they came out derogatorily, that is not your fault, is that right?

A. The matters and the news incidents fall where they are.

Q. The truth speaks for itself, right?

A. The reporting speaks for itself.

At another point in her deposition she had this to say:

Q. Was there any particular reason for having Carl Stokes's name prominently featured in the first article and virtually ignored in the balance?

A. Well, I think the first paragraph explains it, that this information had been given from many Negroes about his investment in a condominium.

Q. Well, it doesn't say that. It says there were whispers.

A. Well, I am telling you, if you want to call them whispers, you can call them whispers. If you think telephone voices and so forth sound like whispers, I will grant you that these people whispered to me.

Q. Were these anonymous calls?

A. No, sir. I know who the people are.

Q. They are all black?

A. Ninety percent of them.

Q. Were they friends of Carl Stokes?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Were they enemies of Carl Stokes?

A. I would think they know the mayor very well.

Q. Were they people who called you and told you they would help you get Carl Stokes?

A. No sir. They are not that melodramatic.

Q. Would you characterize your articles as melodramatic?

A. No, sir.

Q. Would you characterize them as truthful?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you characterize them as innuendo?

A. I characterize them as writing.

Q. Fiction or nonfiction?

A. Writing. Reporting. Writing.

Q. But you don't care to characterize it as fiction or nonfiction?

A. No, sir.

In March 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court broadened the rule protecting a newspaper from damages for the libeling of a public official. It made our case very difficult to sustain. But the *News-Herald* publisher, Harry Horvitz, did not want to gamble what the court might do. He offered to publish an apology if I would withdraw the suit. On May 25, 1971, the *News-Herald* published an apology that said: "The articles did not state, nor were they intended to convey the impression, that Mayor Stokes had any interest in any real estate or business in the Bahamas

nor that he had any connection with any illegal activities. The *News-Herald* regrets if there were any interpretations to the contrary." They also had to pay the court costs, and the suit was dismissed. Within a few months thereafter, Ms. O'Donnell and her husband left the employ of the *News-Herald* and entered the private practice of selling real estate.

In 1967, after I had been elected mayor, my press secretary Richard Murway said to me, "Newspaper men are cynical, skeptical, but they are less prejudiced than the average white Clevelander. They are going to show their lack of prejudice by covering you and your administration the same way they covered your predecessors." I remember telling him, "They shouldn't do that." The newspapers and their reporters were part of the problem. They had no understanding of how I, as a black man, had gotten elected. They had no understanding of the things I must do as a black man in power. Most of them lived in the suburbs and internally were no more free of racial prejudice and hostility toward the central city than any other white suburbanite. Neither paper had had black reporters covering their beats other than police court. Blacks in the television and radio stations were almost nonexistent prior to my election. No black person was anywhere in the policy-making, supervisory or editorial level of either paper. They had no capacity or experience with which to deal on a peer level with a black mayor. Most newspapermen are incapable of believing that they are something less than perfectly fair. They are so thin-skinned that they will not allow criticism from anyone outside their own ranks. At the slightest suggestion that they are biased, they start shouting that you are challenging their cherished right of freedom of the press.

The power of a newspaper is not only awesome, it pulls itself beyond criticism. Every day in Cleveland, the daily newspapers go into the hands of three quarters of a million people at the very least. The reporters who covered, say, City Hall, sold their point of view, their stance toward Carl Stokes, to hundreds of thousands of people. But when I stood up to criticize something said about me

in the newspaper, or criticized the reporter publicly for making wrongheaded criticism of me, I faced an immediate and unbridled rebuttal, written by that same reporter, maybe on the editorial page. He had access to the weapons. I had only my own news conference, still at the mercy of how it would be reported. You can't fight a power like that. That is, you can, but one hand is tied behind your back.

Reporters know the awesome power that is in their hands. And they know, too, that they are practically immune from effective response on the part of persons they aggrieve. I think this is a dangerous condition for a society to be in. Of course, it would be more dangerous not to have newspapers, and there is the dilemma. I don't have a ready solution to the problems; I only know it is always wrong in a free society for any one institution to be totally free of control.

I recall one day when I was at the *Plain Dealer* to see someone about something and ran into Ray Dorsey, then the paper's chief editorial writer. This was in 1970, when I had begun to fight back against the daily attack by the papers. He wanted to know why I was criticizing the *Plain Dealer*.

I said, "I'm not here to talk about that."

"You know," he said, "we've been with you, and we don't understand why you're criticizing us."

"Listen," I said, "who are you that you can't be criticized, Ray? Now, don't give me a hard time. I think you were wrong in what you did on that last story. When I'm wrong you criticize me, why can't I criticize you when you're wrong?"

"We're trying to do a job," he said.

"I don't want to talk about it," I said. "If we start talking about it, I'm going to tell you what I think about your active soliciting of votes for Tony Calabrese to become minority leader of the Senate."

Boy, did he get red. I had, as we used to say in the streets, pulled the covers off him.

It took me a long time to decide to take the news media on, but once I decided, I never wavered from it and it worked. It worked

for me personally, but I knew it wasn't good for the community. There are natural forces already there, structural inequities that militate against any substantive change under the best of circumstances. Once you take on the media too, it's all over. But when I took the media on, it was a great educational process for people. Once I was able to get my own weekly televised news conference, I was able to run those reporters out there for the public to see. They saw firsthand how most reporters ignored the substantive news and cast about for the trivia, the sensational, and that comment from which they could create a conflict with me and someone else. The black audience could also see that, other than Bob McGruder of the *Plain Dealer*, all the regular City Hall reporters for the papers, television and radio were white.

In getting those televised weekly news conferences I took a page from the book of Mayor Henry Maier of Milwaukee, who got the educational television station to broadcast his weekly news conference. He had despaired of dealing with the press. I went Maier one better. I persuaded the news director of the Cleveland NBC affiliate, WKYC, to give me a half hour. As Murway and I kept watching the news coverage, we could see that we were constantly being covered as personalities, and that the substantive activities of the administration were being ignored. We knew we had to get direct access to the people.

Our half hour followed *Meet the Press* on Sunday and was taped every Friday morning. The impact was great. The ministers in the black community would say from the pulpit that they were finishing early so that everyone could get home and watch the Stokes news conference. It gave us a chance to publicly question reporters like Tony Tucci from the *Press*, and it underlined the personal hostility in many of their stories. Bill Barrett, the television writer for the *Press*, was always depreciating my listen audience, saying the polka program in the same time slot was outdrawing me. Hell, I wasn't having the program for the polka dancers.

I went to the television press conference not just to wage war with the press. In a half hour on television, I could get out what I wanted in my own words. Tell them about the substantive things we were doing. And if there was enough time, the media people could get their shots.

Another aspect of my counterattack on the media was to have the Community Relations Board investigate both dailies to see what their hiring practices were. I showed the community what I charged to be the racist hiring practices of both papers. American newspapers are white owned, white run, and operated for white advertisers and white consumption. They talk to, not with, the black community. When my Community Relations Board investigated the Cleveland dailies, it found that both had less than five percent total black employment, and less than one percent at any capacity above the level of unskilled labor or clerk. If they are not doing anything about providing more jobs for qualified blacks within their own structure, how can they be expected to be doing anything about employment practices in the community at large? How sincere can their crusades be?

The most dramatic example of their attitudes came in their coverage of the riots in the late 1960s. The Kerner Commission report established that the media often contributed to the turmoil, tension and conflict of the riots themselves. Television crews even set up shots of kids throwing bricks. They overplayed, enlarged and often inflamed those tense situations. There was a great ignorance, especially among the broadcast media, about how to handle the reporting of a riot.

Interestingly, the reporters who came into a city during a riot after having seen other riots were much more objective, less inflammatory, than the home-town reporters. I think this goes beyond the fact that the reporters from outside were probably the star reporters from their own newspapers and magazines and that the local reporters were merely whoever happened to be on duty. I believe it is the product of the complicated conspiracy within the local reporter's own mind-his own natural prejudices and his



sympathy for the local police. I believe that one of the least understood sources of racism in the daily coverage of newspapers lies in the way newspapermen are trained to believe in and rely on the police. A reporter's first job at the newspaper is almost always on the police beat. On that job he learns to accept the police version of any incident. More often than not he relies on the policeman's written report. He will occasionally make phone calls to the person who was directly involved, but then only if the crime was sensational, and only if he is not close to deadline. More than that, he develops a camaraderie with some of the police, who are very good at using off-the-record conversations to compromise reporters into not using information that might cast a fishy light on their own activities. If the reporter goes on to cover the courts, he is again usually taking the police and the prosecution view of the world, a view that happens to leave out a huge and rather important chunk of reality.

Keeping that chunk of reality in mind, let us look at how the politics of the police conspire with the politics of the media to keep the people from learning what crime really is and how law enforcement really isn't.

As I mentioned earlier, Cleveland's civic leaders in 1966 established a Little Hoover Commission to investigate every phase of city government. The reports issued by that committee gave a relentlessly dismal picture of waste and inefficiency. With one exception, the failures of the city were laid out in the newspapers, with extended summary accounts of the findings and recommendations. There were twenty-nine reports of all phases of the government.

But one, Report No. 6, on the Police Department, appeared publicly in a curious form. The first chapter laid the ground rules and the terms of the study. The rest of the chapters dealt with recommendations for a reorganization of the department. Strangely missing was the chapter that detailed the current status of the department. Even more strange, one might think, was the fact that no one found this strange.

The report was done by Public Administrative Service, a private consulting, research, and publishing firm in Chicago. The Cleveland study was headed by Dr. George D. Eastman, a senior staff member of the firm and a former police chief of Seattle. As originally done, the report included as its second chapter a fifteen-page indictment of the department as it was being run. It is worth mentioning here that the chapter said Cleveland's crime-reporting procedures were so sloppy and inadequate that it would be impossible to know how bad the city's crime problem was. "The result is that literally thousands of complaints are not formally recorded and many received are not properly classified," according to the report. Even so, while the city lost 5.8 percent of its population in five years, the rate of major crimes rose more than eighty percent. "This is, of course, an almost unbelievable change," the report said. Worse, the rate of clearing up cases through arrests were "so far below national averages that they are cause for serious concern." Vice repression activities, it said, "are not aggressive, consistent, nor effective." Of traffic control, the report said that the city in 1965 "had the worst traffic accident record of many years and apparently, enforcement-wise, did the least about it."

It is said the management of the department was a shambles.

The division's formal organization violates sound organizational concepts in many respects. It is further confused by informal arrangements, power centers, and unusual lines of communications which make the apparent structure of organization meaningless.... Perhaps the division can best be described as a loose federation. Such an organization precludes effective leadership, and encourages tendencies to build small empires, and to create sinecure positions. It promotes reluctance to require competent performance from subordinate officers and wasteful use of sworn personnel for office and clerical assignments.

It added that some of the commanding officers "could not fully define their own responsibilities, let alone those of subordinates." The problems of community relations, the report said,

are so critical in Cleveland that they warrant immediate and serious attention leading to the adoption of new concepts, policies, programs and procedures. Yet, the division

stands aloof from very serious community problems, it is hostile and suspicious of those it is there to serve, and it has no real program directed toward the analysis of these problems, nor for their solution.

The report found that beat patterns had not changed over the years "in spite of drastically changed conditions." It said the patrols provided no real support to the city traffic enforcement needs. Patrol officers on the average took only one enforcement action every two months. "Bureau offices this consistently ignore violations committed in their presence; the natural result is non-compliance and disrespect by the motoring public."

The report stated that "lack of morale and discipline are evidenced by the wearing of untidy, unkempt, and non-standard apparel, officers sleeping on duty in two-man cars and in building offices, particularly in the jail, and drinking in public places while on duty; and improper 'punishment assignments' to certain activities aggravate the situation." It went on to score the promotion procedures, which were based mainly on seniority and marksmanship. I remember that Chief Wagner's reputation at the time as a great administrator came from the fact that he was known as the best shot in the department. The report also showed that the intelligence range of recruits just barely hit the national average, and each recruit class for the preceding two years had included appointees with intelligence quotients at ninety or below.

It is policy, unfortunate enough in this case, to circulate advance copies of such reports to the top people -- the commission, the mayor and his cabinet. Chief Richard Wagner violently objected to the findings of chapter two and reportedly demanded that Mayor Locher and the Little Hoover Commission persuade the editors of the daily newspapers not to print that chapter. I don't know who did what. All I know is that chapter two was not published by either paper.

## 11

## THE POLICE

Ask yourself why the cries for law and order come from conservative whites, most of who live safely in the suburbs. The very people who are least affected by crime are the most vocal about it. It is my people who are most affected by crime. "Affected" means brutalized. Crime's victims are the murdered, the raped, the beaten, the robbed. The black community pleads for police protection, and what it gets is indifference, or patrols by men looking for an excuse to get violent themselves. For black people, the local police are not to be supported, they are to be controlled. I took my election as a mandate to reform the Police Department. I saw as one of my most important tasks the reform of the police, the return to having our police as our protectors, men who would enforce the law, do their job, be responsive to the needs of the people. This great hope became my greatest frustration, my greatest failure.

If Cleveland's Police Department is only an exaggerated version of what is wrong with most big-city police departments, that is because even the minimal controls brought to other cities in the 1960's were unavailable in Cleveland. Cleveland was in the hands of ethnics, the immigrants from Middle and East European countries. Every people has its own view of the world, a view wrought out of the conditions of life. Just as black Americans have a view of the world based on their being colonized within their own country, so the ethnics brought to America a world view based on centuries of the alternating sovereignty of empire and province.

These two world views came to clash in Cleveland -- quite naturally, it seems to me. I don't mean to disparage the point of view of the Middle Europeans; I am not accusing them of being congenitally stupid or lazy or not having rhythm or of eating kielbasi all the time. But I think it is unassailably true that their idea of good government for Cleveland was grossly inappropriate to an American city in the second half of the twentieth century. They had learned to respect and fear the army, and they found it all too easy to transfer that respect and fear to the police in this country. In Europe, they had learned that the symbol of authority was the man in uniform. He was the instrument of whoever happened to be in charge at the time, and he was to be feared and respected. The man in uniform was also traditionally presented as the protector, the bastion against the forces from beyond the border. That kind of respect transferred to city police becomes an aberration. Unfortunately, it happened.

In 1967, when I ran for mayor, I knew about the Little Hoover Commission report, and knew from my own experience about how ingrown, defensive and isolated the department had become. And I knew that it had to become a public issue. I knew that the police, under attack, would resort to seeking public support, and I naively thought that I could, by the force of the rightness of my views, bring the public to support me. Police were no strangers to me. I had worked with them as a probation officer, during the time when I was in private practice as a lawyer, and when I was a prosecutor. I knew the department, knew the men who were corrupt and those who were clean and honest. I knew the gambling joints, horserace bookies, after-hours joints and policy and numbers operators who flourished by paying off the police. I knew the police who cooperated in fixing court cases, those who made a good living referring cases to lawyers, and those who had close friendships with known underworld figures. But there were men in the department for whom I had tremendous respect, and that shouldn't be forgotten. Also, to the best of my knowledge, there hasn't been such depth of corruption in the Cleveland department that its

members are tied to organized crime, the selling of drugs themselves, etc., as has been proven in the police departments of New York and Chicago.

I chose for my security men policemen whom I knew were among the best in the department, real professionals, the kind of men that others in the department would call "all cop." And I never felt more sick at heart than when I visited the wounded policemen after Glenville. Most were men for whom I had great respect; they were extraordinarily fine police officers, and at least three of them I counted as my friends. They looked up at me from those hospital beds with what appeared to me to be withering hatred and resentment. They made me feel miserable. There was nothing I could say to them that would help.

The fact is, though, that our police department happened to be a federation of fellows, some good, some bad, most conservative, some reactionary, but all almost totally lacking in the training in human relations that some departments have at least made a beginning to provide. The most obvious, and to me the most important, failure of the police was in their dealings with the black community. Black people were systematically kept out of the department, since the ruling clique was able to pass on who was accepted or rejected for appointment. The blacks who were on the force were segregated into all-black patrols and were always assigned to the ghetto. And all the police knew that few policemen faced charges or an appearance before the grand jury for shooting a black man while on duty.

After four years in office, I could tell myself that the department was better equipped, had better cars and a better communications system, and that the men had more opportunities for training and education. But that's about all. The indictment of the department contained in the suppressed chapter of the 1966 Little Hoover study is about as accurate today as it was then. The determination of those men to live by the old ways won out, we were never able to penetrate their inward ways, their cohesive hostility to any change.

Part of the problem was a legacy of legal mechanics that grew out of former Mayor Tom Burke's fight with the department. When Burke went after the corruption, the police maneuvered the operational control of the department out of the mayor's hands. Under the guise of keeping the Police Department safe from political appointments, the police forced a public vote on a redefinition of the chief's and the safety director's responsibilities that stripped the director from direct control. As the charter read when I took office, the safety director merely presided over matters of policy. He could make a policy change and order the chief to implement it, but then the chief was free to do as he saw fit. The Little Hoover Commission had recommended that the job be abolished. I fully agreed with that, but, again, I knew that would take change in the city's charter, which would require a vote of the people. By the time such a move might have been available to me, Glenville had already happened, and there was no way I could take those issues into the public arena and win.

Police have an amazing political power, a power that has mushroomed in the last few years with the advent of the big-city crime scare. The mental attitude on the part of the people that gives the police that power is reminiscent of the Cold War attitudes of the American public in the early 1950's, when a politician could be ruined if he got stuck with the label "soft on Communism." I think today's fear of crime, which is also a thinly disguised fear of black people, is very like that older fear of the menace of internal Communism. The police today are able to exploit that fear of crime into public support of themselves as an institution, even when, as in Cleveland, the very things they are trying to perpetuate are the things that keep them from being able to effectively attack crime. Fear is not subject to rational discourse, so legitimate issues of reform can be quickly confused and discredited with an emotionally charged rhetoric of danger.

All I ever asked of the police was that they enforce the law. I wanted it enforced evenly, fairly, vigorously, and with some understanding of the society we have come to live in. I wanted the

hand to come down on all who were doing wrong, even were it someone close to me. To every one of my appointees I gave the same story: "You are going to have the opportunity to do wrong, to make money under the table. If you take it, keep that first dollar and frame it, because when you get caught you're going to taste the full measure of the law." I told the black radical militants: "I want you to work with me, cooperate with me, The extent to which you will, I am going to help you all I can. But when you go past me, you better understand that I am going to step back and you are going to have to face that white cop." And to my police chiefs I gave one basic instruction: "Make your men enforce the law. You do that and you will never get any interference from me."

I was so concerned with the fairness and even-handedness from the police because I knew that law and order was the most sensitive issue for the first big-city black mayor. Even though the overwhelming majority of crimes were committed against black people, and were allowed to go almost uninvestigated because the white police had long ago decided to vigorously enforce the law only when the victims of crime were white, the white majority was afraid I was going to let all those blacks take up guns and run around killing white people. So my first move, on the very night of my election, was to appoint my safety director. Joseph McManamon and I shared a commitment to reforming the department, and I knew his closeness to me. And he was an Irishman. The two of us sat down to pick out a police chief.

Michael J. Blackwell had picked up the nickname "Iron Mike" during probation days, when he led a bunch of theatricalized raids on bootleg joints. He made a great picture, swinging axes against garage doors and barrels of booze. He was the picture of the Irish cop, tall and straight, with a big square bright-red face. When I came into office he had long since made full inspector, but he had repeatedly passed over when other mayors were looking for police chiefs. That, by itself, made me think there was probably something good to be said for him.



But that wasn't enough. There was a lesson to be learned through my experience with Iron Mike. You don't take a man who has spent his life with uniforms, rules and regimentation and ask him to go out and wrench the very system that has given him his living. Mike Blackwell was a good man, but we got him too late. He was sixty-six and set in his ways.

Our first attempt to change things was to reassign the men so that we would have more patrolmen on the streets. The Little Hoover Commission report -- in the suppressed chapter -- bore me out. And later it said, "Almost six percent of the sworn personnel are classified as light-duty personnel. Those on light duty during the study had been so classified an average of more than four years; one has been on light duty for 40 years. Many able personnel are assigned to unimportant duties."

I made my move, and we began to learn the truth of the first two sentences of the last paragraph of the report: "Cleveland must look forward to a difficult period. The exponents of the status quo will be articulate, a period of confusion is inevitable, and some mistakes will be made." Using the commission's recommendations as guidelines, McManamon ordered the transfer of more than 280 men. He created twenty-five new basic patrol zones, taking men out of the Traffic Bureau, the Ports and Harbors Unit, the Task Force (which had developed techniques that honed harassment and brutality to a fine edge), the administrative and technical services, and the Detective Bureau. He also ordered the transfer of some black police to the all-white West Side, and put some police who had been working in civilian dress back into uniform. All this was to be accomplished by December 1, 1967, about two weeks after I took office.

Blackwell was supposed to supervise the transfers, but in fact all he did was sign the transfer papers prepared by the ruling clique, and they made the transfers as awkward, embarrassing and infuriating to the police as possible. They would take a busy intersection where the same policeman had been stationed for years and had become not only efficient but popular, and move the

man out, leaving a wake of angry motorists and pedestrians. They took long-time veterans from the far West Side and transferred them to the far northeast side -- just as white, but ten miles farther from their homes. Men were taken from enforcing traffic laws on the West Side to enforcing rape, murder, and robbery laws in the heart of the ghetto. The department's ability to comply with an order and thwart its purpose at the same time was uncanny. The police began feeding reporters stories about low morale, and insinuations of police problems began regularly appearing on the evening television news and in the newspapers. The public began to be concerned for their safety. That damn black mayor was going after their protection.

Poor Mike Blackwell. I believe his sympathies were with me, but he was simply not in control. A clique of senior police officers actually ran the Cleveland Police Department -- no matter who was chief. (it is a measure of my failure that three years later, when I realized I could do no more, I achieved a measure of peace with the department only by appointing one of the clique, Lewis Coffey, chief.) I had done more for Blackwell than any mayor in his forty-three years on the force. But the clique held more power over him than I. We began to have Blackwell-McManamon feuds, all dutifully reported in the media. The editorial writers were demanding that the mayor step in and put things in order.

When Glenville hit, I saw how hopeless things were. Blackwell had absolutely no control over his men, and in a crisis he had no idea what to do. His loyalty to me during the week of Glenville was great, but it was simple loyalty -- no imagination, no drive. It was a great opportunity to single out the most vicious men on the force and transfer them to posts where they couldn't exercise their hatreds, but he let it pass. Glenville had released all the hatreds, and the men felt no compunction about voicing them publicly. McManamon saw it and made one public announcement in which he said he was going to find the "snakes under the rocks" and get them off the streets.

The day after McManamon said that, Lieutenant Harry Leisman was sitting in a bar about a block from the police station talking to a lawyer and a couple of reporters. It was shortly after Glenville, and Leisman had been quoted in the newspapers as saying that on the night of July 23 he had "shot at shadows."

"You know when McManamom said that about snakes under rocks?" he said that night. "He meant me." And he laughed.

Harry Leisman was no laughing matter. Known as "Harry the Cop." Leisman was the epitome of everything you don't want in a cop. Leisman attributed society's ills to "Jews, niggers and Commies," and could quote at length from the 1928 manifesto of the American Communist Party to prove his points. He pointed with pride to his car trunk containing a variety of weapons. On or off duty, he always carried a private gun in his hip pocket. Harry was perfectly right: McManamon did mean him. Joe transferred him downtown, out of the ghetto where he had been stationed. But it takes more drastic action to rid a department of the Harry Leismans.

McManamon tried his best. I saw the mess we were in and saw no way we could beat the police at their political game. We couldn't break up the clique. McManamon wanted to throw the rules away, beat them and bring them under control. But I had to ask him, "How can we win?" The charter put the operative power into the hands of the chief, not the safety director and not the mayor. We had only one move: fire the chief. I gave McManamon authority to begin looking for a candidate to replace him, but I advised him to move cautiously; we knew about the repercussions that would follow if the men found out about it before it was a fact. I was reluctant to get into public fights with the department, because I knew we didn't have the ear of the media. They have police reporters who work with them every day. They plant stories to their hearts' content. If they found out we wanted to replace Blackwell, I would have taken another beating in the newspapers. My hands would have been tied. Joe and I agreed that we should

try to get a man from within the department -- one that Joe felt was honest and could be trusted.

My next chief of police was widely known as the straightest cop in the city. Patrick L Gerity and Joe McManamon had gone to the Police Academy together and had served together. Joe was very high on him. Gerity had never been part of the clique, and for his rectitude he had been given a captain's rank and a desk in the Detective Bureau and everything was routed around him. No one could say he had ever been on the take. And he was a loner.

Gerity went to work. He transferred Inspector Lawrence Choura and Lieutenant Henry Doberstyn, who, Gerity told me, had given him hell in the past. Within the next week he made several more transfers; within the week after that he somehow got turned around by the department; and within two weeks after that he was holding news conferences giving me hell for trying to interfere with the way the Police Department was being run. I don't know which turned him on more, working with the police against me or seeing himself on television, but whichever it was, it transmogrified the straightest cop in the city into just another politician for the police. For the next eight months we fought almost constantly and in public. It was fast ruining everything I hoped to do in the department. I remember that after one fight there was a meeting of the Fraternal Order of Police, and when Gerity entered the room all the men stood up and cheered him. It was clearly an ovation for his opposing me. A day or two after that he was talking to me and he said, "Mayor, I want you to know every man in that room stood up and cheered when I walked in."

"Gee," I said, "don't policemen always stand up when the chief comes in?"

"They didn't for Blackwell," he said

We had lost him forever -- the loner had found friends.

Meanwhile, all this was taking its toll on Joe McManamon. He had chosen two men, both good men, and they had both turned on him. It was beginning to affect his health. But he never turned away. Right to the last he kept asking me to turn him loose, let him

take on the department. The fact that such a man could not function in the job points up the need to look seriously at the job of safety director or police commissioner. It has no power, only frustration. There is apparently room for only one person between the mayor and the Police Department. He can either be the chief or the safety director. Since we couldn't do that, we tried to do the next best thing -- hire a safety director who would pick his own chief, let them both be from outside the city, let them take over at the same time, and see if we could clean house.

Just at the time that we were beginning to look for a replacement for Joe, Richard Peters, one of my executive assistants, and former editor of the *New York World-Telegram*, read that one of the military's remarkable men, Air Force Lieutenant General Benjamin O. Davis Jr., was retiring. The general had spent part of his youth in Cleveland. Peters wondered aloud whether such a man, a military man, a leader of men, and, beyond that, a black man, might not be just what Cleveland needed.

The possibilities struck me. A military man! A general! Black or no, the police would have to respect him. And, being black, he would have to be the kind of man who would agree with what I wanted to do. In retrospect, I can only say that it was my desperate need that drove me to such foolishness.

I had in my own mind only one memory that concerned him, and that was a memory of not him but his father. I remembered how, when I was young, his father had sent a tremor of revulsion through America's black community by standing up as the nation's first black general and addressing his all-black troops with these inspiring words: "I may be your color, but I am not your kind."

I ignored the memory and allowed myself to be carried into the greatest personal debacle of my career.

I called a local black physician, Dr. Middleton Lambright, who I had heard was a friend of the general. He said their families had grown up together. We said nothing more on the phone, but I added that we would talk more later. I had learned that it was

unwise to conduct business on the phone; I assumed that the phone and my office were bugged by the police. I had been told that Captain George Sperber, head of the Intelligence unit, had my office bugged. I have no way of knowing whether that was true or not, and I never let John Little call in an expert to examine the office. My thinking was that if they were determined to listen, they would find a way, and calling in experts every couple of weeks to debug the office wouldn't solve anything. I simply resolved to conduct my business elsewhere, and in unpredictable patterns.

In this case, I sent Dick Peters out to ask Dr. Lambright to call the general and ask him if he would be willing to talk to us about the possibility of taking the job of safety director. The general said he would talk. Peters went to Florida to talk to him and came back impressed. Next, Joe and Ann McManamon went to interview him and came back impressed. He said absolutely the right things, exuded confidence, saw the Cleveland situation as a challenge, was a great admirer of mine, etc.

Then I did something I had not done before, I left the city without my security men. It was imperative that nobody learn that we were considering a replacement for Joe until we actually had somebody; the police would have become impossible to deal with under such circumstances. John Little drove me to the airport. I carried no bags and paid cash for my ticket to Tampa. After I was on the plane, John Little called the people in Florida and told them when and where I would arrive so that they could pick me up.

When I arrived at the general's office, he said, "I want you to meet my boss." It had never occurred to me he had a boss, but of course it had to be true. There are generals and then there are generals. Davis had three stars, and his boss had four. I was struck by his subservient manner to the white general with four stars, but then I thought, what the hell, I don't understand the military, never have and never will, maybe that's the way things have to be done.

Then we went to the general's home, a very nice ranch-style house. He had an aide (which rhymes with maid), a sergeant, working there, and now I was struck at how authoritative, clipped

and overbearing he was with the black sergeant. I couldn't understand how anybody could take such a tone with someone working in his own home, but again I thought, it's the military, we'll let this one pass.

I patiently explained to him the problems I had been having with the police department, the quandary we were in, told him what I thought the department needed, explained that we wanted to bring him and a new police chief in at the same time, that he would have approval of the new chief.

He replied: "Had a situation like that in the Army, knew how to handle it. Don't worry. Glad to come. We'll take care of it, Mr. Mayor. Great admirer of yours. Delighted to handle this for you. I understand it. Something has to be done, we'll do it." He promised to be in Cleveland by January 31, 1970, the date his retirement became effective.

Talk about crisp. The guy talked like a telegram. Sitting there so straight he looked like he was still standing up, Davis exuded a confidence that quite simply overwhelmed me. Now I knew what a "commanding presence" was. And he was physically perfect for the part. More than six feet tall, slim, fine featured and light-skinned, wavy gray hair, just the sort of appearance to offset the fears of the white police. When I left Tampa I was on cloud nine. I had them now. That damn Police Department wouldn't have a chance.

Now that we had our safety director, we needed advice about a new chief of police. How do you get a police chief without the police knowing about it? Police have what amounts to a national grapevine. We knew that as soon as we started making inquiries about any individual the word would get back to Cleveland. We called in Patrick V. Murphy, later the police commissioner of New York. We sneaked him into town, rushed him to my brother's law office, and later sneaked him back out. He approved of what we were doing and made a pitch for us to get James Ahern, then police chief in New Haven and one of the most outstanding law-enforcement men in the country. Ahern has since left police work,

but he was an exemplar of what a police officer must be in these times.

We contacted Ahern. He agreed to come to Cleveland and discuss the matter. He warned against any publicity that would compromise his situation in New Haven. The night he arrived, John Little and Joe McManamon went over and talked to him in his room. I was to meet him the next morning for breakfast. When I arrived that morning, he told me that he had gone down to one of the hotel restaurants for dinner that night before and that a man had walked over to him there and asked whether he was James Ahern. He had tried to disavow who he was, he said, but the stranger clearly knew him. By the time we finished our breakfast, the first edition of the *Press* was out and there it was, a front-page article about how Ahern of New Haven was in town to talk to Stokes about becoming police chief. That made it impossible for us to talk further. A lousy newspaper article and we lost the chance of getting the best police chief in the country.

In December, I went to the annual meeting of the National League of Cities in San Diego and poured out my troubles to Jerome Cavanagh, who was finishing his last year as mayor of Detroit. Cavanagh was the dean of our breed, the first of the liberal, activist big-city mayors -- a man who had been able to take the reins at the height of the movement in the 1960s and had drawn bright young people to his government. He was in a position to teach the basics to the rest of us. In 1969, though, he was on the way down. His personal life had fallen apart, his city had suffered the worst riot in the country in the terrible summer of 1967, he had been tied to scandal, and he didn't stand for reelection. The mayor-elect, Roman Gribbs, was also at the San Diego meeting. I didn't have to spell it all out to Cavanagh, because Cleveland's Police Department troubles were already known among the mayors. Cavanagh knew how backward the department was and how difficult it was for me to attack. He knew, too, that I needed a new chief who would be clean and tough, a man who could resist the



pressures of the clique. He gave me two names and said both men had excellent records.

I gave the names to Dick Peters and told him to check them out. The first man turned out to be too old, no longer interested in taking a challenge as tough as Cleveland's. The other man was William O. Ellenburg, a police chief and safety director of Grosse Point, Detroit's most exclusive suburb. Until four years earlier, Ellenburg had been an officer in the Detroit Police Department. Peters went to the library files of the Detroit newspapers and found nothing but good stories about Ellenburg, cases he had broken, numerous awards and citations he received, and a story on his retirement dinner, attended by two thousand and presided over by Roman Gribbs, who at that time had been Wayne County sheriff.

At this point in our search, my paranoia left us vulnerable. I was mortally afraid of having the Cleveland police find out we were looking for a replacement for Gerity -- I didn't want any more damn newspaper stories. We had had enough. And I knew that if we started asking around the law-enforcement agencies about Ellenburg the word would get back to our own department with dispatch. The grapevine would kill us. It seemed to me the newspaper clippings, coupled with Cavanagh's strong recommendation, were good enough evidence that we had a good man. Peters talked with Ellenburg and reported that he was eager to take on the Cleveland department, that he understood the needs and agreed that we had to bring in more black police and to work with instead of at the community. Ellenburg flew to Tampa and had a day-long meeting with General Davis. The General phones me afterwards to say Ellenburg seemed to be a good man. That sealed it. I told Ellenburg he was hired.

My package was complete. The public knew General Davis was coming but didn't know specifically when, nor whether he'd be police chief or safety director. On Monday, January 26, 1970, at about 11 A.M. I let the other shoe drop. I announced that William Ellenburg was our new police chief and that he would begin his duties immediately. Earlier that day, prior to the announcement,

Ellenburg and I had met with all the top police command officers and I introduced them to their new chief. They were shocked and startled but understood it was now a fait accompli. Chief Gerity's usually florid face turned ashen.

But when Ellenburg turned in his resignation to the Grosse Pointe mayor, the word began to move around Detroit, and as the reporters at the Detroit *Free Press* got wind of it, and old story about Ellenburg, one that had been lying around just under the surface for seven years, reared its head. Had Ellenburg stayed in Grosse Pointe, had he not been appointed by this black mayor in Cleveland, I have no doubt the story would have never become public.

The source of the Ellenburg story was a notoriously discredited Detroit figure. He claimed that in 1963, seven years ago, Ellenburg and two other Detroit cops had been paid off to allow an abortion operation to flourish in the city. The authorities had previously checked rumors of this story out and, apparently, found nothing, because Ellenburg continued to work for the department for three more years, and retired with honor and a testimonial dinner.

When the story of his appointment in Cleveland started going around, the source surfaced again, telling his story to the *Free Press* and to Lou Gordon, a talk-show host on a UHF television station in Detroit. The *Free Press* people put in a call to the *Plain Dealer* in Cleveland about the middle of the week, and they immediately dispatched Donald Bartlett, then their chief investigative reporter, to Detroit. The Sunday before Ellenburg was to be sworn in as chief in Cleveland, both the *Free Press* and the *Plain Dealer* ran their articles on the charges although they did disclose the doubtful reliability of their source. And that night the taped interview with Lou Gordon was played on the television station.

The most significant thing about all these stories was that there was absolutely no evidence brought forth beyond the bare allegations. The seven-year-old allegations of a desperate and disreputable man suddenly became page-one banner headlines on

Sunday, February 1, just six days after my appointment of Ellenburg. It was one of the greatest journalistic disservices done during my four years as mayor. The *Plain Dealer* broke the story obviously knowing its dubious reliability, since admittedly it rest solely on the word of an alcoholic Mafia informer under indictment. It was pure sensationalism. They could only reply to me that they had a duty to report the news. The other policemen that the source said were linked to Ellenberg and the abortion operation continued to serve with the Detroit Police Department. They served under Patrick Murphy, one of the finest, toughest, and fairest police chiefs in the country, a man who went on to try to weed out the bad cops in the police Department of New York City. It seems obvious that there was no basis in fact for the charges.

That Sunday night I went on television, denounced the *Plain Dealer* roundly and said that until something solidly factual was turned up about Ellenburg, he was going to be my police chief. I told them that following Monday night's City Council meeting I'd go to Detroit and investigate this matter myself.

I was understandably distressed over the entire matter, but even more so because on Monday, February 2, we were having this massive civic luncheon to welcome the General back to his home town and present him to the public as our new safety director. The luncheon went off well nonetheless. Ellenburg accompanied me, the General, and Mrs. Davis to the luncheon. The papers said the Statler Hotel Grand ballroom had never had so many people in it before. The General was absolutely unperturbed over the Ellenburg affair. I swore him in and he delivered a ringing and applause-evoking acceptance speech.

Earlier that morning, Ellenburg had had a press conference to respond to the *Plain Dealer* story. That afternoon, I watched a replay of the conference. The reporters descended on him like hungry mice on a piece of cheese. I knew my trip to Detroit was imperative. I left that night accompanied by Detective Tony Midolo, who had for long been a top investigator in the Homicide

Unit. Immediately upon my arrival in Detroit I called Jerry Cavanagh.

"Jerry I have to talk to you about this," I told him.

"Let's have breakfast downtown tomorrow," he said. "If I have you come out to the house they may be watching."

"I don't care if they are watching you, Jerry. If this guy is all right, what difference does it make if I'm seen coming to your house?"

"I just think it will be best all around if we meet in public," he said.

I hung up. He certainly wasn't talking the way he had in San Diego. I didn't know what problems he had, but he was obviously not being forthright about the situation.

The next morning we met in a Detroit hotel restaurant for breakfast. The newsmen were all around, and while we ate they took their pictures and asked their questions, to which we gave noncommittal answers. Finally they left and I said to Cavanagh, "What is this stuff about Ellenburg?"

"Hell, that story's been around for years, there's nothing to it." He said.

There was nothing more to say. He had known and hadn't told me about it. The breakfast was over. So was my last chance to get an outside police chief to clean up our department.

I then made the rounds of all the law-enforcement agencies. I talked to Pat Murphy and to Mayor Gribbs, who had presided at Ellenburg's dinner while sheriff, and although I turned up nothing to substantiate the charges, I knew that the ugly aspects of the story would stick to me. I flew back to Cleveland with my mind full of questions, trying to reason out whether I could afford to take both the department and the newspapers over this issue. Fortunately, I didn't have to make the decision. I returned home to a meeting of my closet advisers. We held the meeting at my house. There were about eight of us, including the general and Ellenburg. We discussed the matter for a while and then Ellenburg said he wanted to talk to me privately. We went into another room.

"I could have gone anywhere in the United States." He said, "and this story never would have broken. But you happen to be a black mayor and you appointed me. I have known about this story for the longest time. It never meant a damn thing to anybody, but I don't think you can survive with me here."

A great weight had been lifted. I thanked him for offering his resignation and apologized for having to accept it. We went back into the room with the others and I told them what Ellenburg had said. Everybody agreed it was the right move.

Wednesday, February 4, ten days after his appointment, Ellenburg announced his resignation. I called the general in to talk about a new police chief."

"Don't worry, Mr. Mayor," he said. "Just give me a man. I don't care who he is. We'll get the job done."

The next day we called in Inspector Lewis Coffey and offered him the job, and he accepted. It was the one right move I made. I came to love the guy. With the kinds of problems I had with the department, Coffey was the perfect man to settle things down. He just kept on doing things the way they had always been done, but he wasn't to be drawn into those debilitating fights with the administration. He was a cop, not a politician. And he was a gentleman. He became the fourth and last Police Chief I was to appoint. The political costs of changing chiefs had run their gamut.

I told Coffey to go out and enforce the law and I would not interfere. I resolved to turn my mind to other things. I had the general out there; if any reform was to come, it would be through his doing. I just had to let him carry the ball. But what happened was that after two years of constant fights between my safety director and the Police Department, I found that I had made one of *them* one of *us*.

The signs had been there. First of all, there was my own memory of the general's father. Then when the appointment was announced, a newspaper in Tampa reported that in his two years there the general had never attended an affair given by the black community. Something I didn't know about until later was that

when rumors of his appointment got around, the Police Department people did their own check of his background and told Tom Boardman at the *Press*, "This is the kind of man we can live with." Later, after Davis had left, I received a number of calls and letters from black servicemen who had served with him, and they all said essentially the same thing: We never understood why you hired him in the first place. He never was any damn good.

I should say here that I bear the general no personal animosity. The difficulties we had have to be recounted because they point up precisely the problems with the Police Department. That the general was hopelessly the wrong man for the job I had in mind should have been apparent to me before I ever appointed him. But it wasn't. I kept fixing on the point of his being both a general and a black. It has not occurred to me that success in the military is almost totally unrelated to success in the rest of the world. I came to understand that only as I watched the general in action and realized he hadn't the slightest conception of what civilian life was like -- that authority and power cannot be unquestioned in the civilian world. The military had left him with a catechism understanding of human life. He had to read it from the book. The book gave status, authority, and it bestowed all rights.

The general had quickly demonstrated an extraordinary ability for public relations. He called in Chief Coffey and informed him that not only was the mayor determined to keep out of the chief's handling of the operational functions but the, the safety director, was equally determined to keep out of it. He told the chief he just wanted to be kept informed. Within a matter of weeks, he had arranged his schedule so that he arrived at seven-thirty in the morning, took care of his mail, dictated replies, made his phone calls and was gone by early afternoon. When the weather turned, he was gone by noon to play golf at least two days a week. The police fell madly in love with him.

At first, he had kept an open door. When he discovered that the citizenry included bushy-haired, ill-spoken, angry young men wearing dashikis and carrying absolutely no respect for him, his

position or status, he changed his policy. He was appalled at the very idea of having to listen to people that he would never deign to recognize socially. Jim Stanton loved him, the newspapers loved him, the white community loved him. When it all came down around my ears six months later, Tom Vail's bat boy, Tom Guthrie (who later became executive editor of the *Plain Dealer*), wrote a column about playing golf with the general. Allowing that he didn't want to judge the situation between the general and the mayor, he said that the general was certainly a straight shooter on the course, and such a man is usually a straight shooter in life.

One evening I was listening to the six-o'clock news. Paul Briggs, superintendent of public schools, announced there had been an escalation of violence by adult whites against young black children being bused to school in Collinwood, a predominantly Italian and Slovenian neighborhood. Briggs said the school would not open the next day because the police said they couldn't guarantee the safety of the black youngsters. I immediately phoned Briggs and asked him to meet me at City Hall at 8 P.M., then called General Davis and requested that he and Chief Coffey come to the Hall and also send out police cars to bring all members of the school board to my office. At the Hall, I told all of them I'd be damned if I was going to let the school be closed in my city because the police wouldn't safeguard little black boys and girls from white hoodlums. In their presence, I called Governor Rhodes, related the facts and requested that the National Guard be sent in. Rhodes called me back in fifteen minutes and said there'd be six hundred guardsmen in the area by 6 A.M. Paul Briggs and I went to the television station and announced that the troops would be in Collinwood the next day, the school would be open and the children being bused in would be protected. I then ordered the general and Chief Coffey to personally be on the scene and see to it that the police did their job.

The general said, "I will send an observer, Mr. Mayor."

"No, General, I want you out there," I told him.

"If the observer sees a need for me, sir, I will go," he said.

"General," I said, "there is nothing that it going to substitute for the chief of police, the head of the National Guard and your presence out there."

"Well, if you are insisting that I go."

"General, I am ordering you to go."

" Yes, sir. I will be there, sir."

And he became a hero. There is nothing quite so impressive as that tall, ramrod figure of the general, and there he was, out in the thick of things. The media picked it up, of course, but they could never have know that the general had to be ordered to go out there.

Shortly after that, Kimber Wald, my purchasing commissioner, came into my office and said, "Mayor, did you know the Safety Department was ordering dum dum bullets?" I certainly didn't, but I said I would get to the bottom of it. I called the general in and asked him about it.

"No, sir. Certainly not. Under no circumstance would we use dum dum bullets. No use for them."

I called Kim Wald back and assured him the matter was taken care of and not to worry about it. Three weeks later, Wald came into my office with a requisition form and said, "Mayor, I thought you said that the police weren't going to order the dum dum bullets." He handed me the form and there it was, right in the middle of the department's shopping list, and order for dum dum bullets. I immediately sat down and had -- wrote a note and told a secretary to carry it to the general. It said, in effect: "General Davis, approximately three weeks ago I brought to your attention the fact that it was understood that dum dum bullets were being purchased by the Police Department for general use. I had told you then that the policy of this administration was that the police would not have and would not use dum dum bullets in this city. You are ordered to take whatever steps are necessary to revoke the request of your department for these bullets.

About fifteen minutes later, I was sitting in Dick Murway's office when the general strode in and said, "Mr. Mayor, I have gotten your memorandum and I want you to know I was telling



you the truth when I told you the department was not ordering dum dum bullets. The department was ordering bullets for general use on the target ranges."

"General," I said, "what would they be having target practice with dum dum bullets for?"

"There is less danger of ricocheting when you shoot dum dum bullets."

I said, "General, do you understand that we are not to use dum dum bullets for any reason in this city while I am mayor and you are safety director?"

He went into his West Point act, an amazing sight. His waist drew in, his chest expanded, his chin tucked in, his face went red and he grew about three inches and said, "Yes. Sir." He wheeled and strode out into the corridor. After that, my relations with the general deteriorated.

I was tired of fights with the police, but at this time there just didn't seem to be any way of avoiding them. One of the most important fights -- and one that was still going on last year in Cleveland -- was over the country's new Criminal Justice Center, a forward-looking concept that grew out of President Lyndon Johnson's Law Enforcement Assistance Agency proposals. After Johnson announced the LEAA, New York's John V. Lindsay immediately moved to set up a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in his city, made up of representatives of every part of the justice system. For a time, Lindsay's council was the only one in the country. My law director, Clarence James, came across the concept at a criminal law seminar and returned to Cleveland very excited about it. We sent him to New York to study its systems and then proceed to establish our own with LEAA funds. One of the first study committees we appointed produced the concept of a criminal-justice center in which all the different components of the justice system would be housed and, presumably, coordinated -- the courts, the probation and parole departments, the sheriff, the police and the jail. We went on to lay out plans for the center, came up with a \$60-million bond issue to build it, submitted it to

the voters and, happily, got it approved. But the police did their best to avoid being coordinated. They wanted to keep their own little fiefdom away from everybody else. The City Council had already approved \$10 million in bonds for a new central police station, and we had to decide whether the police would be included in the justice center to know whether those \$10 million would go toward making up the cost of the center.

The issue had to be settled. The general and the police had been meeting, and the rest of us had been meeting. Finally, we had a joint meeting -- the general, Chief Coffey and several police officers, County Commissioner Hugh Corrigan, H. Chapman Rose of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association (our form of Chamber of Commerce), and myself. One of the police pulled out a tape recorder and put it on the table.

"What is the purpose of that?" I asked.

Coffey said, "Well, Mayor, we just wanted to know where everybody stands, and we thought we would have it on record."

"I think that is not necessary in a meeting like this, and I would rather that you not use it, if you don't mind."

Clearly, we were off to a fine start. The police presented their response to a traffic study we had to do on the area of the proposed center. They had earlier advanced the idea that they couldn't be in the center because the traffic was too heavy in the immediate downtown area. We had had a study done which showed that their objections were not without basis. They presented more objections. There was no question in my mind that the police headquarters belonged in the justice center, and there was no doubt in my mind about why the police didn't want to be there. They wanted to be off by themselves. I think of a description of their attitude later given me by George O'Connor, my last safety director: "These fellows are still thinking about the old police days when huge doors would roll up and Black Marias would come screaming out with their lights flashing, zooming off somewhere into the night. They may not have known where they were going, but it was at least out of there." We sat tossing around the police objections, and finally I

told them we would meet again and at that time I would give a definitive answer on the issue of whether to include the Police Department in the justice center.

The next day, June 30, I wrote General Davis a memo:

Our Monday June 29 meeting left me with a difficult decision as to the relative merits overall of the proposed city-county justice center at Huntington Park and the city center only at Payne Avenue. Ignoring for the moment the technical objections as to parking and traffic egress, please give me your personal evaluation and recommendation as to the better of the two sites as it related to the desirability of a combination of functions, facilities, maximizing of man-power and resources, and the more economical approach to the total justice process.

The following day I received this reply from the general:

I regret to say that I am unable to grasp all of the aspects of the proposed city-county justice center at Huntington Park and the city center only at Payne Avenue sufficiently well to give you an opinion as to the relative merits overall. The problem very simply has too many facets that are beyond my ken. My limited view of the problem, which I realize you did not request, but which I offer gratuitously, is that the city-county justice center at Huntington Park should not be crammed down the throat of the police...

This from the man who had been heading the project for us for the last six months. He refused to oppose the Police Department. This avoidance of responsibility was typical of the military establishment in which he had been such a success. His apparent strength had come from the institution, not himself. This big, strong, crisp man, placed in a position of having to depend on conviction and personal strength, had wilted. He was the safety director; if the problem was beyond his ken, who was supposed to understand it?

I immediately called for another meeting of the Coordinating Council that Friday. When we met, I told them that I had reviewed the situation and that my decision was that the best interests of the total justice process required the presence of the police in the

justice-center complex; therefore, the city would build their headquarters within the justice center.

"Mr. Mayor," the general said as he rose from his seat, "do I understand that your decision is to ignore the written objections of the police to this center?"

This was the first of two times that the man totally confounded me. He had an ability to wait for a situation when we were on public view and then take a position so blatantly odd that I didn't know how to deal with it.

"Yes Mr. Davis," I answered, "and it will be your responsibility to see that the Safety Department gives the proper cooperation to the planners of this project. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir. I just wanted to know, Mr. Mayor, that you made the decision against police objections."

The general's identification with the department had become thorough. When a friend of mine in the Service Department told me he had heard that the General had authorized the police to carry personally owned weapons, I called him in, I sent an order. Our relations had descended to the level of my dealing with him as a commanding officer. I sent him a memo:

It has come to my attention that you have authorized the Cleveland police to have in their possession weapons not issued by the department, and [which] in fact are the private weapons of the police. I regard this as a danger to precedent and practice and hereby instruct you to take whatever steps are necessary to see to it that the Cleveland police do not carry non-departmentally issued weapons.

This was a subject we had specifically discussed in Florida when I first interviewed him. You can't have police out there with guns that can't be identified later. When a man is shot, it is of the utmost importance that the police officer at the situation not be using a weapon that is not immediately identifiable. If he does carry such a weapon, he is in fact violating the concealed weapons laws, because although he is authorized to carry a gun, that authorization carries with it the responsibility of the government

agency he works for to make certain that the gun is used only in the line of its own responsibilities. The authorization must be accountable. The abuses that carrying private weapons can give rise to are obvious.

The general immediately hand-carried my memo back to me and said, "Mr. Mayor, I have to confess my being unable to carry through an instruction of yours. I received this memo. There are some very practical things in life sometimes that one has to face. Whatever I tell those police, whether I tell them to carry these weapons or not to carry them, they are going to carry them anyway. So since they are carrying them anyway, why don't we show our cooperation with them? After all, Mr. Mayor, you did have Glenville, you know."

I told him that perhaps at the risk of alienating the department, the lives and welfare of the people had a greater value, that even though it was true that they would carry the guns anyway, if the policy was secure and a man was traced to the use of an unauthorized weapon, we at least had a way of bring him up for disciplinary action.

"Mr. Mayor, I do not agree with you, sir, but your instructions will be conveyed to the police."

The stage was now set for the final act. The general was loved by all the white media, but the *Call & Post* had begun to report some of the experiences people in the black community.

The general came into my office in early July and said that the *Call & Post* was becoming an increasingly difficult factor for him to work with as he was trying to do this job for me. Usually I respond when people say things to me, but I couldn't think of anything to say to that, so I just sat there. He went on to say the paper was creating tensions and made a few more remarks in that vein. Again I sat there.

"Well, Mr. Mayor?"

"Well, what, General?"

"What are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do about a newspaper? Are you kidding? Tell me this: Have they written a story that did not reflect the facts?"

"I think so."

"Show me that story you're talking about."

"Mr. Mayor, if I have to show you the story, then I doubt very much that there is very much you would do."

"General, I think you're right."

"Thank you, Mr. Mayor." He got up and left.

I didn't realize it, but he was building a case. He came back later and said, "Mr. Mayor, I want to talk with you about a few other people who are making it very difficult for me."

He proceeded to name the Cleveland Council of Churches, the Friendly Inn Settlement House (one of a number of neighborhood centers funded by a welfare group), the Reverend Baxter Hill, a vocal militant, and the Reverend Arthur Le Mon, my own community-relations director.

"Baxter Hill," he said, "must go. He makes my job impossible. He is a menace to the community."

"What about Harllel?" I said.

It is important to understand the difference between the two men we were discussing. Baxter Hill was head of a youth group called Pride, Inc. In the middle 1960s he had been president of the local chapter of CORE. He was sometimes loud, and fond of the "shit that's going down" rhetoric. But Pride, Inc. was basically an organization for finding summer jobs for inner-city kids, and Hill had no more real power than the director of the YMCA. Later, in 1972, he was convicted of stealing federal funds that had gone into his jobs program. He was a petty thief. I mention that just to point up the difference. Harllel X (formerly Jones) is a currently serving a life sentence for conspiracy to commit murder. He was a powerful force in the ghetto. Unquestioned leader of the Afro Set, a group so strong locally that they were able to keep the Black Panthers from even establishing a local chapter, Harllel didn't fool around.

"Harrel I can live with," the general said, demonstrating a gross naivete about his subject, "but Baxter Hill must go."

"How do you suggest I make him go?"

"Well, doesn't he have this organization, Pride?"

"Yes."

"Are they not funded by Cleveland: NOW?"

"Either that or the Mayor's Council on Youth Opportunity."

"Then it's very simple, Mr. Mayor -- just cut off his money."

"General, everything I know about Baxter Hill can be summed up in his being vexatious and contentious. But he has been one of those who has been helpful in the resolution of community tensions."

"But he's causing me tensions, Mr. Mayor, and if I'm going to do my job, he will have to go."

"General. What about these others you mentioned. Are they in the same position?"

"Yes, sir."

"What about the Council of Churches?" What do you suggest I do with them?"

"This metropolitan council of theirs, aren't they funded by the United Appeal?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Mr. Mayor, you have some very close ties with heavy financial contributors to the United Appeal, and if you would talk with them, telling them that maybe this is an organization that maybe they shouldn't be contributing to, I am sure they would be responsive to you."

"General, do you realize what you are asking?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, just a minute. The United Appeal is made up of some of the most respected organizations in the city, and when they fund an agency it is only after a very careful review by several agencies within their framework."

"I understand that."

"This metropolitan council is an integral part of a federation of churches that consists of more than seven hundred of Greater Cleveland's most respected, stable Protestant churches."

"That has nothing to do with it, Mr. Mayor. If you make the request, I am sure they would honor your request."

"I'm just not going to do that. That isn't even in the periphery of the kinds of things I am willing to do."

"Fine. Is your answer the same about Reverend Le Mon?"

"Will you please tell me what Reverend Le Mon has done wrong?"

"He's one of the organizers."

"Organizers of what?"

"Of those people out there. And he is directly under your control, Mr. Mayor. You don't have to ask anybody about firing him."

"Well, General, I am not going to fire him."

"Fine. Thank you sir." And he got up and walked out.

It was clear to me that I had a problem. But I still didn't realize what the man could do. One week later I found out. On Sunday I got a phone call from a friend who had been at a party the night before given by Art Modell, the owner of the Cleveland Browns. The general had been at the party and had spoken to several people about resigning as safety director. I couldn't believe it. In the first place, we had an agreement that he would stay one year. I learned sometime in the spring that he had already committed himself to take a job the Pepperdine College in California later that same year, but I still expected him to serve out most of his agreement with me. More than that, I had to assume that if he was seriously thinking about quitting, he would give me an indication. However, I realized I had better talk to him about what he was saying at that party. The next morning I talked to John Little about it and then sent him over to see the general. He returned to tell me that the general had left work, was going to see his dentist, and would be back at 11 A.M. Then I saw the *Plain Dealer*. One of their executives had apparently been at the party, too. The paper banner-



headlined a speculative article, without comment from Davis, that he was going to resign that day. I went in to the cabinet meeting. The general's executive assistant, William Hendrickson, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, came in and handed me an envelope. I opened the cabinet meeting, and as things began to proceed I opened the envelope. In it was a handwritten letter, very short, very devastating:

I find it necessary and desirable to resign as director of public safety, City of Cleveland. The reasons are simple: I am not receiving from you and your administration the support my programs require. And the enemies of law enforcement continue to receive support and comfort from you and your administration. I request your acceptance of my resignation at your earliest convenience.

I called Dick Murway over, handed him the letter and told him to alert the press that I would have a news conference after I talked with the general. We finished the cabinet meeting and then I called in Bill Silverman, Sid Spector, John Little and Murway, and kicked the problem around with them for about an hour. We came to no conclusions. At that time we didn't know how bad it was. Then the first edition of the *Press* came out carrying the full story, with the general's letter quoted in full. Now we knew how bad it was. This damn hero was accusing me of harboring criminals; suddenly all the racist rumors about me were confirmed.

At 11 A.M., Colonel Hendrickson was called over again. Where was the general? Well the general had finished with the dentist and was now out taking his wife to lunch. I wrote out a short message that said, "Dear General, I have read the newspapers. You are requested to be in my office at 3 P.M." then I told Hendrickson, "You find him and deliver this to him."

About ten minutes to three, the general appeared in my office, looking pleased, as if he were coming over to wish me happy birthday.

"Mr. Mayor?"

"General, we have been looking for you."

"Well, Mr. Mayor, I had thought that my letter was sufficient and there really wasn't much need of our talking."

"I just thought that it would be a kind of courtesy that would have been afforded anyone."

"No slight intended. What can I do for you?"

I wish the language had some equivalent for those exclamation points and question marks they used to signal strange moves in the reporting of chess matches. Words aren't good enough at a time like this.

I looked at him a moment and said, "You use some very strong language in your letter."

"Yes, sir."

"I am sure you appreciated the impact it would have in this city on my relationships with the people."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you tell me why you wrote the letter this way?"

"Mr. Mayor, I have told you many times why I wrote that letter that way.

"We haven't had that many conversations since you have been here. Are you referring to the talk we had about the *Call & Post*?"

"Yes, sir."

"Baxter Hill?"

"Yes, sir."

"The Council of Churches?"

"Yes, sir."

"The Friendly Inn?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Mayor, that is just what I'm talking about."

"You are saying that the enemies of law enforcement are these people?"

"Mr. Mayor, they are enemies of mine. Therefore they are enemies of law enforcement."

We went out into the Tapestry Room to face the reporters and I simply turned it over to the general. Bill Silverman had strongly advised me against a public fight with the general. The general handled the questions with the usual stiff aplomb, refusing to

elaborate on the language of the letter. Never in my life was I at a lower point than during that news conference. The general had neatly ruined me. I went out to lunch with my advisers after the news conference. We talked some more about what could be done, but, for the first time, none of the possibilities seemed to make any sense. We were supposed to be brainstorming, but it was all storm and no brain. I told them I wasn't going back to City Hall and went home.

Fortunately, Shirley and the children were in El Paso vacationing. I went home and let solitude do its work. I put on some records and built a fire. It was the twenty-seventh of July, middle of the afternoon, but I build a fire. I respond to a fire in the hearth; there is something soothing and contemplative about a fire that released me from my ties to my troubles. I listened to some gospel music, then to a record of Martin Luther King's speeches. For four hours until after 8 P.M., I sat there listening to records, drinking brandy, watching my fire and turning things over in my mind. Then I just went to bed. I woke up about 1:30 A.M. Something had come to me. I wasn't certain what it was yet, but I sat down with a legal pad and began writing; when I finished I had sixteen pages of legal pad filled (this may sound like more than it was -- I write in a huge script). I went back to sleep until seven the next morning, when I called Dick Murway and told him to get Little and Silverman to meet me with him at City Hall at 8:30 A.M. I had them read my notes and the two-phase plan I'd come up with and asked them if they could agree to that approach. They said they could, so I had Murway cut it down, make it a simple statement, and told him to call a news conference for that afternoon. Then I went for a ride and went to see a movie.

And I had him. Once I understood what my problem was, I knew which way to go. I knew that Ben Davis thought the incident was over, and he was the one who wouldn't be looking for any public fight. But I couldn't let the thing drop with those innuendoes up in the air, feeding rumors. The general knew what he was doing, and he knew he had hit me where I suffered most. The soft

underbelly of any politician's career is the set of rumors or accusations of illegal activity that stick to him. It was particularly bad for me, being black and going further to work with black militant groups than anyone else had. The general's letter, with that key phrase that all the bigots and Stokes haters could react to, had confirmed the rumors and suspicions. Within three days after the general's resignation, I had turned it around. You can go anywhere today, to any black community in the country, and ask for opinions about the general and I think I know what you will hear: the general may be just right for the Nixon Administration, but he isn't right for black folks. And I did it simply enough. The first day after his resignation, I publicly called on the general to name the enemies of law enforcement. He refused, as I knew he would. Whetting everyone's interest in why he wouldn't name names. The next day, I did so myself.

At a widely attended press conference, I spelled out his so called "enemies of law enforcement" as being the Greater Cleveland Council of Churches, the *Call & Post*, Reverend Arthur Le Mon, Baxter Hill and the Friendly Inn Settlement House. The news reporters could hardly believe it. They dashed to find the general. But he had no other names to give them.

The white clergy rose up en masse because they knew the Council of Churches was, if anything, more conservative than liberal and not at all militant. The Baptist clergy knew there was no more gentle and law-abiding member among them than Le Mon. The black community wasn't about to accept this undeserving attack on their only newspaper which had fought their battles for over forty years. Too many black people and United Appeal members knew the Friendly Inn to accept such a charge. And those who knew him only smiled at the thought of elevating Baxter Hill to the level of a danger to law enforcement. Even Tom Vail felt compelled to editorially lament the general's failure to substantiate his charges.

This public mixture of rage, disbelief and scorn was best illustrated when General Davis literally ran down Euclid Avenue to escape an interracial group of women demanding that he retract his defamatory and dishonest statement. Shortly afterwards, the General made a quiet and ignominious retreat from Cleveland.

That same week I appointed a five-man committee to search for another safety director. It was clear to me that the decision on a new man had to be out of my hands. I had brought in the general and Ellenburg, and both had turned out to be disastrous. This time, we couldn't afford the slightest shadow over the appointment. I appointed Judge Perry B. Jackson, and a councilman and three businessmen to search for a man. Three months later they came up with George W. O'Connor. O'Connor was then serving as chief of the police administrator and as an academic. He had a master's degree in criminology from the University of California. With his easy manner and impeccable credentials, O'Connor was the perfect guy to settle things down. It was a shame that we couldn't put his expertise to better use. Although he was committed to the same kind of reforms I had been looking for all along, the politics of the situation had so far deteriorated that he had no room in which to move. Besides, his arrival coincided with the defeat of our desperately needed income tax increase, and his budget was so severely cut that he had to spend most of his time trying to preserve the semblance of a police force. It was not a time for reform.

Perhaps it's not true that I accomplished nothing with the police. I got some black policemen on the West Side where they had never been before, got the Civil Service Commission to revise the hiring practices to bring in better men and to make it more open to black and Spanish-speaking people. And I appointed a black chief police prosecutor, who was able to put a stop to a number of practices that had brutalized the black community. It was no longer easy to get warrants for harassment purposes, nor could police protect themselves quite so easily with counter prosecution when they found themselves in trouble. And every

time a cop shot somebody, his case went to the grand jury, no matter what the circumstances. When the police realize such policies are unbending, they act with a little more restraint.

But it is true that I accomplished none of the substantive, structural reforms of the department that I had hoped for. The department was still, as most police departments, virtually autonomous, without effective civilian control, and building exotic arsenals of vicious weapons. In 1972, as part of its \$360,000 request for ordnance, the department was requesting a supply of the new nine-millimeter machine guns being made by Smith & Wesson. The order also included grenade launchers and dozens of high-powered rifles for shooting long distances. Meanwhile, though I had left them with a brand-new \$6.5- million communications system they had failed to significantly reduce response time. Emergency calls were still not getting through. But no one was attacking the police for it. The mayor, Ralph Perk, was a return to European ethnic ways, sympathetic to the police Department. In fact, seeing how Perk worked with the department, I realized that my own desire to bring it under closer control by the mayor is not in itself altogether desirable. The point has to be, finally, that we need some sort of civilian control that is not subject to the routine pressures of politics. Just how that is to be set up will have to be worked out on a local basis. But the need is desperate. This country cannot afford the growth of an indigenous paramilitary privileged class getting ready for war.

## 12

## GLENVILLE

In the summer of 1971, I asked Sergeant Bosie Mack, a black policeman, to give me an account of events as he saw them leading up to and including the night Ahmed Evans and his band made their attack on the Cleveland policemen and set in motion the destruction of much of what we wanted to do in Cleveland. Mack is a good, experienced policeman. He is not a young rebel in the department. He is a veteran of the force and one of the few black men ever to move up to the rank of sergeant. He can speak about that terrible night with more knowledge than anyone else. This is his account.

STATEMENT BY SERGEANT BOSIE MACK, July 28, 1971

"For a complete story of my involvement in the events of July 23, 1968, I must speak of the days prior to that date. My involvement began about July 8, although I had received information of concern during the preceding week.

"Beginning Monday, July 8, Detective William Taylor and I began an almost constant check and surveillance of the entire Auburndale area. We had received information of an arms build-up in the area, along with information of pending trouble. During our investigation we learned that this suspected illegal activity was under the direction of Fred Ahmed Evans.

"We checked with the apartment owner and learned that Evans and his followers had taken over three of the four suites of the building and were not paying any rent. The property owner wanted them out because of non-payment of rent, taking over of two other suites without proper authority and just plain fear of the persons involved.

"Detective Taylor and I made efforts to gain entry into any of the suspect suites, with negative results. Not knowing what was really taking place within the apartment suite, we did not think it wise to force entry until we had reasonable cause. In an effort to obtain the information we considered necessary to force entry, we arranged through Director McManamon for a building and housing inspection (July 17).

"After briefing, the building and housing inspectors made an effort to inspect the building. Detective Taylor, James Draper, Charles Rhodes and I were in the area and kept watch on the inspectors as much as we could. The inspectors were unable to get into the apartments. When we met with them, they expressed fear of returning to the building, although they could not explain their fears. They talked with a male who let them know that they were not coming in. These inspectors were really shook up.

"We thanked the inspectors and instructed them not to talk about what had transpired. Detective Taylor, the other officers and I returned to Police Headquarters. I reported to Captain George Sperber, chief of intelligence. After bringing him up to date on all the information we had obtained and what I thought would happen if this situation were permitted to go unchecked, I requested the helicopter known as Car 1300 to photograph the area during its traffic surveillance flights.

"Captain Sperber said, 'When this administration took over they abolished the helicopter unit. Therefore, we have no way of obtaining photos from the air.'

"I said, 'Captain, Sergeant Lemieux is a member of the Traffic Unit; he flies twice daily; he knows how to use a camera; he can take the pictures during one of his routine flights.'

"Captain Sperber said the helicopter belonged to a radio station and he could not tell them what to do. I got an impression that Sperber did not care what happened. He then told me to talk with neighbors in the area and set up an observation post. I told him that was out of the question. Evan's followers were all over the area and



we did not know who was who yet. Sperber said, 'You and Taylor will have to do the best you can.'

"I then asked for three additional men to be assigned to this investigation. Sperber stated the administration had transferred all the men out and he could not get additional men transferred back in and I would have to do with what I had.

"Taylor and I then went on what amounted to twelve- to sixteen hour shifts watching the Auburndale area and taking care of our regular assignments. We worked seven days a week. On Sunday, July 21, we started hearing the expression 'The pot is going to boil.' We found out that the pot boiling meant trouble, a confrontation of some type with the police. We spent the rest of that day trying to find out about this confrontation."

"On Monday, July 22, we heard about a tri-city riot that was to start on July 24. We learned that the cities were Akron, Canton and Cleveland. It was late Monday night or Tuesday morning when we learned this.

"On Tuesday, July 23, I informed Sperber that the word was that trouble would occur in this city Wednesday morning, July 24. The target area was Five Points. There would be firebombing and a shoot-out. It was not known what was to be torched or who would be in the shoot-out. Evans was supposed to go out of town to pick up machine gun and ammunition. He was to leave about nine o'clock Tuesday night, in his station wagon.

"After I told Sperber what I had heard, Sergeant Ungvary and Patrolman Smith met with him. They apparently had the same or similar information. Taylor and I, having come on the street, received orders to return immediately to the intelligence office. Upon returning, I met with Captain Sperber, Sergeant Ungvary and Patrolman Smith and discussed the situation. Then we all went to Chief Blackwell about ten thirty or eleven.

"Smith and I gave the information to the Chief, Inspector Garey and Inspector Coffey. Blackwell told us to take the information to City Hall -- it was a hot potato -- and see what City Hall wanted us to do about it. I asked Sperber why we should take this to City

Hall. Sperber said because the Chief said so. I argued that this was a police problem and that he, as the intelligence boss, and the Chief should work out a plan to eliminate the problem. Sperber said, 'That's up to the Chief.'

"Then I said to Chief Blackwell, ' I agree that City Hall should be informed as to the situation, but it seems to me that this is a police matter and you as chief of police should handle it.'

"Chief Blackwell said, 'This is big.' That's why he wanted City Hall to know about it and he would follow City Hall's orders in this matter. We left the Chief's office about 12:20 P.M.

"In the Mayor's office about 1:45 P.M., Smith and I again disclosed the information we had gathered. Present were Director Clarence James, the acting Mayor; Director McManamon; Councilman George Forbes; Inspector Coffey; Captain Sperber; Sergeant Ungvary; Detective Taylor; Patrolman Smith; Walter Beach and myself. Part of the information given by Patrolman Smith was that there was a list of persons marked for death when the riot started -- Mayor Stokes, W.O. Walker, Baxter Hill, Patrolman Payne and Earle Brown.

"Director James and the others listened to what was said. Then there was a discussion on ways to avert the tragedy. Since the information was that the action would be Wednesday morning after Evans returned, it was decided to have two roving Task Force cars keep the area under surveillance. These cars were not supposed to stop moving. They were to appear as normal patrol and look for Evans to leave the area in his car and follow same. They were to follow Evans to the highway, then the Highway Patrol was to be notified of the route and directions taken by Evans. The Highway Patrol was to continue the surveillance, follow Evans to this destination or the state line. It was believed that Evans would go to either Akron or Detroit, Michigan. The Ohio patrol and Michigan patrol were alerted to stand by to participate in this plan. Evans, as per plan, was to be stopped in the highway as he returned to Cleveland.

"Inspector Coffey, being the highest-ranking officer present, was told to issue the proper instructions to the Task Force and other Cleveland police he deemed necessary. Captain Sperber was to make the necessary arrangements with the Ohio State Police, Michigan State Police, Akron Police Department and Detroit Police Department and also gather what intelligence those departments might have re this crisis.

"While at City Hall, Inspector Coffey called the Task Force and instructed them to establish a detail on the building located at 12312 Auburndale and keep same under surveillance because there [might] be trouble. Upon hearing this, I repeated to Inspector Coffey the part of the agreed-upon plan for a 'roving patron.' Inspector Coffey told me he was talking to Lieutenant Schemp. 'He is a good man, he will know what to do.'

"I told the inspector that I knew Schemp and that he was a good man and that he would 'do exactly what you [Coffey] tell him to do.' I further stated, 'You told him to put a detail on that address and watch it and that is what he will do.' I further stated to the inspector that if the police parked in the area someone would mess with them 'and when the police take action against this person you will have the start of an incident.' I suggested the inspector have the supervisor of the Task Force come to City Hall or his office and I would lay the whole thing out to them so they would know what they were up against.

"Inspector Coffey again told me that Schemp would know what to do. I then went to Captain Sperber, who was still in the Mayor's office, and told him of the instructions given to the Task Force and asked him to make sure the Task Force knew they were to keep moving.

"Captain Sperber said to me, 'Coffey is an inspector. He knows what he is doing. Who am I to tell him what to do?' I then said to Captain Sperber: 'The Task Force has only a few colored patrolmen and if a car of white policemen park out there, there will be trouble and someone will get killed. I hope to God it won't be a

policeman.' Captain Sperber merely stated, 'Inspector Coffey will take care of notifying the Task Force.'

"I was instructed to make sure the detail at the Mayor's home had two shotguns in the car. I did this and dispatched Detective Taylor to meet the Mayor's plane. I further instructed Taylor to stick with the Mayor. I returned to Police Headquarters with Captain Sperber, all the while trying to get him to do something about the orders given the Task Force. I even volunteered to go to the area myself and make the surveillance. All my efforts met with negative results.

"After this meeting ended, Councilman Forbes and W. Beach told Director James that they would go to Auburndale and try to cool things. They would attempt to reason with Evans. Director James instructed me to take what men I had under my control and secure the Mayor.

"Upon arrival back in town, the Mayor went to his home. The detail of detectives were there on duty. Taylor and I got together and discussed the situation and we both were on stand by.

"I then proceeded home. At about East 147th and Bartlett, a broadcast came over the high band. The officer stated in very excited tones, 'they are coming out. They have automatic rifles. There are about thirty of them.' I asked over the high band in the vehicle I was driving if the officers were sure the weapons were automatic. The answer came back: 'they are automatic. I am an eyeball witness.'

"I then broadcast an order for the police in the area to pull out, to move to a point on the perimeter and get in touch with the Task Force base. This was about 8 P.M. I then heard the sounds of gunfire over the high band and low band. A tow truck was crying for assistance on Beulah Avenue. The tow truck was under fire. Two police cars stated they were on their way to assist.

"I proceeded home, immediately called Director McManamon and informed him that the 'ship had hit the sand,' that a gun battle was in progress on Auburndale, between the Nationalists and police. I suggested he inform the Mayor and I told him that Taylor

and I would be at the Mayor's home in five minutes. I then called Captain Sperber and left word with his wife that two policemen had been shot and the battle was still raging. I contacted Taylor and told him that all hell had bust loose and I would pick him up in two minutes.

"After picking up Taylor, we drive to the Mayor's home. The vehicle was in such bad shape that it broke down in the Mayor's driveway. It refused to start; it simply sat there and boiled. I then ordered the men on detail to give me their vehicle and shotgun.

"I informed the Mayor as to what had happened and where it was happening. The Mayor stated he wanted to go to the Sixth District headquarters. We left his home for the Sixth District. I then suggested that he go to City Hall, and I showed him the list of names of persons to be killed during this shoot-out. I further suggested that at the Hall he would be in position to call his advisers and he would be in position to know what was going on city-wide. The Mayor agreed and we went to City Hall.

"Upon arrival at the Hall, to my surprise, many members of the Mayor's Cabinet and many office girls were there, both black and white, and wanting to help in any way they could to bring the matter under control.

"Mayor Stokes told me to get Chief Blackwell there as soon as possible. A call to his home produced no results. I called the police radio and requested broadcasts for the Chief every two minutes if necessary until he responded. The Chief arrived at the Hall, and I ushered him to the Mayor's office. I heard the Mayor say to Chief Blackwell, 'Chief, I have to ask you as chief and call on all your years as a policeman -- tell me, what do I do?' The Chief answered: 'Back when I took over the Workhouse, I clamped down and changed things around there.'

"The Mayor said: 'Chief, what do we do now?'

"The Chief simply said: 'To tell the truth, I don't know.'

"The Mayor said: 'Chief, we've got to stop this thing. Police and citizens are being shot out there.'

"The Chief responded with some worn out cliches. I walked away feeling sick way down deep. I thought of how from the beginning the top officers did not seem to want to do anything that would prevent this from happening. I thought of how they said, 'Friends of the Mayor are involved,' or 'The Mayor can take of it, they are friends of his.' It seemed as though the top officers of the department wanted some kind of incident to discredit the Mayor.

"On July 25, during what could be called a lull at City Hall, where the Mayor, his assistants and I had been cooped up ever since this thing started, I went to the intelligence office to consult with Captain Sperber. He stated to me that he was writing his resignation. He said it was for two reasons. One was that the Mayor had ordered him to turn over all reports, tapes and statements he had concerning the riot. He said, 'That stuff is all evidence,' and he refused to turn it over to anyone other than the county prosecutor. Then he asked me a question. He asked me if I had done everything I could to prevent the riot. He must have read something in the look I gave him. He went on to say before I could answer, 'we have three policemen dead and several wounded. I feel bad about this. I feel as though there should have been something I could have done about his. How do you feel about it -- the dead men and their families? It's on my conscience.'

"I said, 'Skipper [the nickname I started calling him after he made captain], I am grieved by the death of the officers and I feel sorry for their families. I feel for the wounded, but my conscience is clear. Yes, I feel as though I did everything I could to keep those men alive and uninjured. Taylor and I spent many days and nights out there observing things and we reported directly to you, telling you what the situation was out there. It seems now like no one believed us, as if they were not listening when I spoke. I did not have enough help and couldn't get any from this office. As for the Mayor ordering the reports and other evidence brought to City Hall, I don't believe that. The Mayor is an attorney and he wouldn't do that. Captain Sperber said that he had just received a call from

the Chief's Office ordering him to turn over everything we have to the Mayor's Office.

"I said: 'I don't know anything about that order. Somebody got the order fouled up, but I will check with the Mayor and get it straight.'

"Then Captain Sperber said: 'If you were in my place, wouldn't you resign?'

"I said: 'Skipper, I've told you my conscience is clear and I am not about to quit and I ain't thinking about it.'

"I then returned to City Hall and asked the Mayor about the order Captain Sperber had to turn over the reports, tapes and statements.

"The Mayor said, 'they got it all wrong. Those things are evidence. How in the hell can I order him to turn it over? No one should have access to those things but the police and prosecution. If anyone else gets those things, it will ruin the case when it comes to court.'

"The Mayor then said, 'the office staff is compiling a chronological log of the events relating to the riot. They want to be sure they have a record of what happened and the time and place it happened. For that they don't need the reports or anything that might be evidence. All they want is a list of events, time and places. They don't even need the final disposition.'

"I went back to the intelligence unit and told Captain Sperber what was wanted at City Hall. He said, 'If that's all they want, they can have that.'

"The night the Mayor made a tour of the riot area we came upon some incidents between the police and the residents of the area. The Mayor's arrival on the various scenes cooled things. The residents acted with respect toward the Mayor. This seemed to anger some of the police. They took the attitude that the Mayor was interfering and wouldn't let them do their job. The National Guard didn't want any part of the police action and seemed to try to stay clear of it.

"Many residents expressed fear of the police. They said the white police were angry, out for revenge, and [they] were afraid that the white police would take revenge on any black person they found on the street at night and besides, they said, 'most of the white police are drunk.' That was heard from residents throughout the riot area and the unaffected black community. The entire black community seemed relieved when the order went out to remove all the white police from the affected area and to replace them with black policemen. This order seemed to anger the white police even more. They regarded this as more interference by the Mayor and showed their displeasure by many obscene and disrespectful remarks made over the police radio. The Mayor and the black police were the target of these remarks.

"The black police, though small in number, rose to the occasion. They really extended themselves in their efforts to bring things under control after the first night there were no more deaths, black or white. The second night was relatively quiet. The city was returning to an almost normal state."

[END OF STATEMENT]

In the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4 1968, almost every large city in the country with a sizeable black community had violence and looting of some sort. We were able to keep that from happening in Cleveland. In a way it was unfortunate that we succeeded as well as we did, because it only confirmed the establishments wager that in backing me they were buying insurance. Not that I didn't make a good deal of it myself at the time, taking reporters along with me as I walked the streets, calming people, talking them into cooler emotions. I tried, though to get across the point that the community had calmed itself. If wasn't just me out there; we had clergymen, athletes, street clubs, militants out patrolling, working to keep the lid on. Obviously, they were out there because I got them together to do it, but they were the ones who really handled it. The reporters focused on Carl Stokes, and it set me up for a much longer fall three months later when Glenville broke out. We had out first Town Hall



meeting during April, after the loss of Martin, and I remember two little old white ladies running up to me and kissing me and thanking me for saving the city.

In Glenville I took a step that other mayors around the country would later take when things got out of hand: I pulled out the white police and sent black leaders in to keep the peace. It wasn't a totally unprecedented move in Cleveland, Ralph Locher had pulled out the black police from Mayfield Road when Little Italy faced its school segregation crisis. He didn't want any black policemen up there whipping white heads. But more than pulling the white policemen out of Glenville, I sent in the leaders of the black community to police itself as I had in April. I think that was the most important thing I did, and it worked, at least in the sense of stopping the shooting. There were no more deaths. But it did unleash what had been latent race hatreds that had been smoldering since the election. It meant the end of Carl Stokes as hero. As long as I had been the hero, no one would vent his racism publicly. We had had the city so caught up in working toward solving Cleveland's problems that those who were not a part of the enthusiasm were at least neutralized. All of that ended.

The thing that brought it out was not so much the Glenville shootings as that a black mayor had pulled out the white police. This had clearly been a fear all along, that a black mayor would interfere with the police function of protecting the white community against the black peril.

The decision to make that move was not easily arrived at. On the morning of July 24 I had well over a hundred black leaders assembled at City Hall. We had been up all night at the Hall, calling people for the 8 A.M. meeting. We tried to get a true cross section on the issue of pulling the police out or leaving them in, and we reached no decision then. Most of the older, middle-class Negroes were against pulling them out. The younger, more militant blacks wanted to pull them out. My own immediate reaction early in the meeting was against pulling them out. As it progressed and arguments were made, I modified that position. I knew that I was

the only one who would have to live with the decision and that no matter which way I went I couldn't win. I had to stop this small war going on within my city. I didn't even have confidence that whatever decision I did make would be obeyed by the police. Finally, I just had the feeling that black people were not going to kill black people. And I knew that in that room that morning there were at least two people who knew whether there would be further shooting, because of their own personal knowledge and involvement. That afternoon I called a press conference to announce that I was going to pull the white policemen out and allow black leaders to patrol the area.

Wednesday night they kept their watch in the area. There was some looting, but no more shots were fired, no more lives were lost. The next day I met with the community leaders again, this time in the Glenville area. They told me they had stopped the shooting, they were convinced there would be no return to the warfare of Tuesday night. But they just couldn't handle the problem of looting. Some reported the presence of professional looters and cars from Michigan. They decided they wanted the police and the National Guard back in the area.

On that Thursday night, there were absolutely no incidents whatsoever. The people welcomed the police back. There were reports of incidents that indicated that the police themselves wanted something to happen. There would be people in the streets and the police would pull up and jump out of their cars with their guns out and tell them to get the hell off the street. The people cooperated and moved away despite the provocative behavior of the police.

A number of the people I had talked with on Wednesday before pulling the police out were members of the Police Department, men who were aware of the bitterness among the police over the police over the men who were shot down, as well as the residual hatreds of black residents of the neighborhood. Over and over again, the trusted people in the department I talked with said either

flatly that the police should be kept out or at least that I ought to be very careful because the men would be looking for revenge.

The police attitudes throughout the entire incident and its aftermath were self-protective, corrupt and destructive. A dispatcher would call a patrol car on the police radio to go help someone in the Negro area, and the cop would reply, "Send the nigger mayor to take care of it." All this was reported to me, but it wasn't until two days after the incident that we found time to go after the radio tapes. When we inquired about them we were informed by Captain Sperber that the tapes had been turned over to the county prosecutor for evidence. He brought me a letter written by John T. Corrigan on July 25, addressed to Sperber -- not to the chief of police, but to this captain saying that prosecution of somebody for the homicides of July 23 was anticipated and "it is most important that the chronology of the action of the police department be preserved." It went on to request all police records and radio tapes, to be kept as evidence.

That night and the next, racial slurs and insults were still being made occasionally by the police over the air. John T. wrote another letter to Sperber, ordering the tapes from July 24 and 25 to be delivered to him. Now, John T. had no use for those tapes for his prosecution. During the subsequent trials of Ahmed and his followers, the tapes were never mentioned. It they had been effectively kept out of my hands.

In fact, the police were willing to conspire with anyone to protect themselves. Late Saturday night, July 27, an NBC television cameraman was beaten up. He charged the police with attacking him. The police charged that he was attacking them. On Sunday I held a meeting with the top men in the Police Department. They said they didn't know anything about it. Later that afternoon, at the request of WKYC officials, I went over to the NBC-owned station and listened to the video tapes of the interview with the cameraman, Julius Boros, who contended the police had smashed his camera and beaten him with night sticks. The television-station officials and reporters were furious. They

demanded I do something about this vicious attack up a member of the press. I made a public announcement that there would be a thorough investigation and that the appropriate action would be taken. But the next morning I for a call from James Carnes, then chief police prosecutor, who said the WKYC-TV people wanted to talk to me. I told him to bring them over.

Carnes led the delegation into my office of the top television station officials and their counsel from an established Cleveland law firm. But interestingly, also with them was Milton Firestone, a veteran Police Court lawyer, best known for working out deals with the police and persecutors such as to reduce driving while intoxicated charges to the lesser offense of reckless driving. One of them proceeded to tell me that they had discussed the whole matter and that probably the best course of action would be to have both sides drop the charges. They said they would have Boros sign a waiver of release and the whole matter would be considered closed. Now, Carnes had earlier told me the police had the facts and were going to prosecute Boros. I asked the WKYC people if this deal had been cleared all the way up in their organization. They said that it had.

I hit the ceiling. I was as mad as I ever got, hitting my desk to punctuate my points. "I will be damned if I permit this kind of thing going on in my office," I said. "I don't know whether the police assaulted this man or not, but I know the police claim they have the evidence to convict the man. He, Boros, claims the police brutalized him. You are not going to some behind the doors of this office and think you can arrive at the kind of shoddy settlement that has traditionally been accepted by this city. The police have charged the man, NBC has vehemently denied any aggressive action on the part of their man and in fact said he has been victimized, and, goddammit, nobody is going to come into this office and make any deals. Now, all of you get out go here."

Jim Carnes never said a friendly word to or about me after that. He later told me I had made him look silly. Subsequently, we both agreed on this resignation as Chief Police Prosecutor.

Few people knew that I went into the Glenville area myself Thursday night. In the early evening, Jim Barrett, Bosie Mack and William Taylor, all policemen, were following my car in a tail car, riding some distance behind to prevent someone coming up behind me. Although I had never reacted to threats that came in, they did come in, various forms, every day. When Glenville occurred, the threats escalated to an intensity of violence and obscenity that would be worthless to reproduce here. I was never so glad that my family was out of town, away from the violence that surrounded us.

That Thursday night we first drove to my house. I told Barrett that what I really wanted to do was go out to Glenville. I didn't want anyone to know I was doing it, because I wanted to observe what was happening without the glare of television lights and the presence of reporters. The back-up detail was dismissed for the evening. The security detail at the house were told we were going into Glenville but I wanted no escort. Barrett and I left alone.

As we arrived at the cordoned-off area, we were challenged by the guardsmen. It was a sight that made you sick at heart. As I got to 105th Street and Wade Park Avenue, I saw a half-track with cannons and a couple jeeps with two guardsmen carrying machine guns, and as we pulled up they signaled the car while asking us where we were going. I identified myself, and Barrett took out his badge and pinned it on his lapel so they would see immediately he was a police officer. The guardsmen told me they couldn't permit me to ride into the area, because they felt that some of the men, seeing two black men in a black Lincoln Continental, might let go. A captain with them insisted that the only way he could approve our going in was under his escort. So I had to go in with the captain and two other men, all in a jeep with a machine gun mounted on it.

We got to Superior Avenue and were greeted by a tank. Not a half-tank. A tank. In the center of my city, an army of occupation had taken over. My reaction was a bottomless revulsion, an uncontrollable visceral churning; I was cast down. The streets were

deserted, there was nothing out there but soldiers with guns. It reminded me of Germany. The fear and resentment of the soldiers was almost palpable in its volatility. Even at the checkpoints, with the captain present, they would point those machine guns at the car. I couldn't help thinking, One of these nuts could pull the trigger just because he is afraid in a hostile area -- he really thinks of himself as being in a foreign enemy country. I understand what it must have been like at Kent State on May 4, 1970, when an army of poorly trained, fearful, apprehensive, exhausted young men with inadequate controls met a situation for which no one had been able to prepare them. I understood that night in Glenville that all it would take would be for us to suddenly accelerate the car or make any sudden move and we would be fired upon.

We arrived at 114th and Superior, near a gift shop kept by one of the nationalist groups. I got out and went into the shop. Barrett went with me. They had the news on the television set, reviewing the events of Tuesday night. I sat there with them and explained what that kind of activity was doing in our city. We got pledges from them to help us bring peace back to the community, and then we proceeded down Superior. We came upon a white magazine writer named Jack Skow who was walking down the street. Apparently a white man could walk the street unmolested. He came over and told me he would like to ride with us. He got in and we rode around. We heard a call over police radio that they were holding up a number of nationalists at Eighty-fourth and Superior. That we knew was the Afro Set. I told Jim, "Let's get down there."

When we got there they had Harllel Jones and one of his aides named Shababa and four boys that had to be under fourteen years old. They were all lined up against the outside of the building with their hands against the wall. There must have been twenty police, with all kinds of guns pointed to these six people. I heard what was obviously an agitated conversation coming from the police, something like, "You sons of bitches, one of you move and we'll blow your goddam head off." How the hell were they going to move in that situation? The police had guns pointed not only at

them but at a crowd that was beginning to gather around them. Clearly we had the makings of a blood letting.

I got out and walked through the crowd. The highest-ranking officer was a lieutenant. There were no guardsmen around. I said, "What's the problem?" He said Harllel and the others were violating the curfew. I asked Harllel about it, and he said the boys were in the Afro Set attending a meeting. They had come out in time to get home before the curfew went into effect, but the policemen had stopped them just as they were leaving the building and had been holding them; as soon as the curfew hour passed they had told them they were in violation and they were going to jail. I told the lieutenant that they were only dealing with young kids and a matter of a few minutes' violation.

Just then one of police came up and said they had found a set of brass knuckles in Harllel's car. The lieutenant said this had to be classified as a dangerous weapon.

I said, "Lieutenant, do you mean to tell me that with all the trouble we have in this city you want to arrest him because of a set of brass knuckles?"

He said, "Mayor, this man is violating the law. Are you asking me to not enforce the law?"

I said, "Okay, Lieutenant, have it your way." I told Harllel to go with him. I told him I would see to it that he had a lawyer right away. I told him not to give the police any trouble and he said, "Okay, Mayor," and got into the police cruiser. I then drove the other boys home. At City Hall I personally called attorney Stanley Tolliver and got him to go to the precinct and represent Harllel. We found out later on that after we left the Afro Set office the police went in there with shotguns and machine guns and just shot up the whole place.

The man who brought us to that place, who initiated the shooting, was Fred Evans a hustler who took the Ahmed and was projected by the news media into a prominence that he has never anticipated but quickly exploited. He talked all kinds of revolutionary nonsense purely for the purposes of extorting money.

He was a petty hustler. But the young black kids who were out there believed him. The media gave him nationwide exposure when he predicted the end of the world. He never believed the stuff he fed the kids. And when it got hot in that house on Auburndale, Ahmed surrendered in such a way as to make sure he did not get shot. Once in the custody of the police, with the eyes of the media and the public focused on him, he went right back to his rhetoric.

When Ahmed started buying guns, those kids believed he was preparing for the revolution. But what kind of revolution is it when you get into a house in a crowded neighborhood and carry a hopeless battle with the police? They were fighting from a house from which there was no escape, fighting a superior force, with nowhere to go. I would doubt that Ahmed fired a shot. I don't mean that he was innocent. A jury found him guilty of murdering the policemen and he is now serving a life sentence in the Ohio Penitentiary. I mean he was not a revolutionary. He was a punk. He did not intend that there would be shooting. He just wanted to keep his hustle going. But once you begin a certain kind of activity it can build on its own, gathering momentum. Before Ahmed knew it, his rhetoric had carried him into a full-scale war on the street. At that point the only thing this punk had in mind was how not to get killed. He crawled out of that house after sending out every possible message that he wanted to surrender and wanted to surrender safely. Instead of being considered the hero some try to make of him, he ought to be considered lower than Benedict Arnold.

Now all of the veteran reactionary writers of letters to the editors began to surface. (Perhaps they had been writing all along, but the newspapers, until Glenville, had not been printing them.) Glenville gave them something to hang their anger on. It was clearly a public issue and clearly an issue of black and white. Black revolutionaries, led by an eccentric astrologer name Ahmed Evans, had actually opened fire on the police. It was the first time in this country something like that had happened. This was no riot. It was no festival of looting and burning. It was warfare.



In the aftermath of Glenville, we spent a good deal of time trying to figure out how to recoup the public confidence. We had a poll taken after Glenville, Bill Silverman hired a firm to do a poll of the entire community, and it showed that forty-seven percent of the white people approved of our decision and almost eighty-one percent of the black community agreed with the move. When you couple that with the fact that all of the claims of the businessmen who had stores vandalized totaled less than a million dollars, it seems to me that you can't attack our decision. Look at the extreme damage in other cities -- Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit -- let alone the loss of life, and you realize we really did hold the lid on the situation. And afterward we moved quickly to get federal assistance for the businessmen, we moved to clean up the area, to remove the physical evidence of the violence, and started immediately helping people to relocate.

Nevertheless, not only the Council but all the groups that are normally platforms for racism now went to work on us. The police. The people calling radio talk show. And the business community. The businessmen, against my constant reminder that I was no insurance against violence, had continued to believe it anyway. Glenville was their rude awakening, and when they found out that they had risked an independent mayor as an insurance policy to no avail, they turned away. Tom Patton, the president of Republic Steel, pulled a group of businessmen together, and they called for an audit of Cleveland: NOW! To find out how much Cleveland: NOW! money had gotten into the hands of Ahmed. They found approximately \$6,000 had been paid by his group for salaries which had been verified by the community group overseeing and authorizing the expenditure. There is nothing wrong with a public accounting, but this was clearly a defensive move taken because a fishy light had been cast, not only on Cleveland: NOW!, but on the entire Stokes administration. Many businessmen who had made pledges to the Cleveland: NOW! Program quietly turned their backs, and we could see there would be no support for its continuance. The overall mood of distrust was devastating.

## 13

## DISILLUSION

Much of the hurry I was in, the reason I did things so quickly, was because I knew I wasn't going to be in City Hall long. I knew the things I had to do were not going to permit me to be around long and so I had to move fast, before the day when that white person out there who was part of the majority suddenly understood what was going on and turned to use his majority against me.

I knew that it had to mean something to be Carl Stokes, not just black, but black in a predominantly white city, and black with style, with charisma, and with a hard sense of my own priorities, an unwillingness to depart from the path toward what I thought ought to be done in the town, knowing that I could use the process to get things done but that as I exercised the power there would be a reaction that did not occur to whites who had broken through. As you try to go ahead, you keep asking yourself, How long am I going to have to do these things, how much can I do before the combination of all these events come together and make it impossible for me to govern as I want to, as I perceive it has to be done?

By the time I took office I had been in Cleveland long enough, had been in politics long enough, and had certainly been black long enough to know that they would be coming after us, but I did not really understand the sophisticated ways it could be done. I had expected the critical surveillance and weighing of actions. I had not anticipated the lengths people would go to.

Read the history of Tom Loftin Johnson, the man now revered as the greatest mayor in the history of Cleveland, and learn what happens when you fight the power structure. A wealthy man when he went into office in 1901, he is praised today for what he achieved, but few remember he was defeated for reelection, broken financially and physically. He died less than a year after he left

office, disowned by the establishment from which he had come. He fought both of the political parties and was at sword's point with the newspapers of his day for almost the entire eight years he was in office. Looking at his career, you have to realize that whenever you go up against the established structure it is going to be self-destructive. It happened to Carl Stokes between 1967 and 1971, but it also happened to a wealthy white man over fifty years ago. The attacks, the antagonism and the hostilities may vary in approach, but they come to anyone who works at government as we did.

I am sure they would not have acted as they did if I had not governed as I did. When I talked about commitment to housing, they thought it was something a politician said to get elected. The same of the poor. Politicians have always used poor people, black people, to get in, and then gone ahead to do it as it was always done. Even the poor people didn't really expect me to do anything. They had always been made promises that were not kept. When I got in, I tried to do what I had said I would do. But my actions brought down the attacks of those who felt threatened, or who were deprived of something they had always had.

And those who had always been on the outside didn't believe it, either. They forgot the campaign, the tough days they walked the streets, telephoned, gave up their nickels and dimes, because they had always done that and never got anything for it. When the jobs and opportunities began to flow it was like a child who suddenly is given an opportunity to buy all the clothes he wants, to be able to stay up as late as he wants, or not to go to school if he chooses not to. Many people were ready for the responsibility; some were not. They had never been in positions not just of responsibility but subject to such close scrutiny; consequently there were holes, and they were unable to provide the kind of protection to their own jobs and ultimately to me that veteran political appointees understand. Here is an example.

In our earliest days at City Hall there was no one with more political savvy than Geraldine Williams. Her devotion to the

administration and the things we wanted to do was unsurpassed. We were in office less than a month when she blundered. I compounded her errors with a mishandling of the situation, and those who were ready to attack the infant administration had a field day.

I had named Gerry as one of my administrative aides. Nine days after we took office we learned that the *Press* had been checking into complaints of Sunday liquor sales at the 32 Cedar Club, a private club owned by Gerry's ex-husband. Gerry had been the secretary of the club. It had been a meeting place for us for a long time, and much of the 1965 campaign was planned and run from there. I had told Gerry before I appointed her that she must be free and clear from the club. She assured me that she was. When we heard that the state Liquor Department had the club under surveillance, I called Gerry in. She swore to me she was completely divorced from the club.

We heard no more about this until after I had left for a vacation in January. While I was in the Virgin Islands the *Press* broke a story saying they had linked my aide to a "cheat spot." Dr. Clement and Paul White phoned me and told me what the *Press* had. I told them to have Joe McManamon get the facts. Two days later they phoned to tell me that McManamon, with the help of a handwriting expert, had determined that signatures on permit applications from 1967 back to 1952 indicated that Gerry was still with the club. More, the club minutes submitted after the story broke appeared to be new minutes, trying to establish a prior resignation by Gerry. All of this was known to the press.

Meanwhile, I was weighing the need to keep my administration above reproach and feeling that by acting decisively when something like this would come up we could prevent attacks. So I said, "Okay, she has to go. Inform her."

I really regret the way I handled the situation. Apparently she did lie to me; she was with the club, and she made it worse by dummifying up the minutes. But what had she done wrong or in dereliction of her duty with the administration? The stories did not

say she was at the club selling liquor on Sunday. The only thing she did wrong was lie to me. She had done nothing in her role as an employee that warranted firing, and certainly not firing by long-distance telephone. But in an atmosphere of panic over this, the first attack on the integrity of the administration, I overreacted. If the same thing had happened later in my administration, I would have gone on the counterattack, asking why this spurious, yellow-journalist attack, trying to discredit my administration. I would have asked what illegal act she had done. When I think back to the nights in 1965 when she and I worked alone making signs by hand in that very club or in my law office, I wish I could undo what I did. I lost probably one of the four or five most trusted and loyal people I have ever had around me in public life.

We all live under power trees. That's where the goodies grow. We all have to decide whether we want to accept what falls from the trees and is left there by someone else or whether we shake the tree and get our own. There is one problem: those trees belong to certain people, and if you shake the wrong tree, they come after you. And that is what happened to Carl Stokes in Cleveland. Efforts to physically assassinate me were successfully warded off, but there was no way to ward off the systematic and determined campaign to assassinate me with rumor, conjecture, speculation, insinuation and indirect charges that I had no defense against.

For decades the city had been raped through the system that made it possible for Jim Stanton to casually tell me one morning,

"If I don't make fifty thousand dollars a year, then something must be wrong." Why? How could a full-time Council President make fifty thousand dollars a year? If what he said is true, then despite the technical legality of however it is done, such a system is reprehensible. That is why so many of the attacks on Carl Stokes by some commercial, business and political interests should not be looked on as simple racism. Rather, it was the economic reaction of those who had been displaced from the goodies they had enjoyed for so long from those previously running the city. They had to believe I was now dispensing the goodies and getting the

return. Accordingly, I was investigated by everyone from Cleveland's lowliest Polish housewife to the highest agencies of the United States government: my own Police Department, all the Cleveland-area papers, the strike force set up to fight organized crime, the Justice Department, the Internal Revenue Service, were all in Cleveland and anywhere I'd ever been, investigating me because of rumors, allegations and accusations.

On April 29, 1971, three and a half years after I took office, the *Press* headlined a story "U.S. Finds No Misdeed by Stokes." The story read as follows:

A federal investigative agency has found no evidence of illegal activity by Mayor Stokes since he took office, The Press learned today.

The investigations were made by the Justice Department's task force on organized crime, whose chief is William J. Tomlinson.

The task force has authority to investigate complaints about alleged corruption by public officeholders as well as organized crime involving racket figures.

Its investigation of Stokes, based on complaints funnelled to the task force, was fruitless, The Press learned.

Investigators could find no evidence to substantiate the complaints. Task Force investigators, it was learned, were conscious of the possibility that some of the complaints were inspired by persons who dislike Stokes for personal or political reasons. I took power and gave it to unsophisticated people is they don't know how to protect themselves if they have done something wrong. They don't know how to take care of themselves like the white guy who has been taking money for years but also maintains a cash reserve to pay councilmen, police, prosecutors, legislators, and sees to it that money gets into a mayor's campaign. But few persons stop to think that a black man who understands all of this so well also understands not to do it. That's what they can't get through their heads. They know I've been down the road. I've watched money change hands in this society from level of the blackjack dealer who greets the vice squad at 3 A.M., cuts out

some money and says, "Fellows, go get yourselves a drink," all the way to the legislature where some of the most respected big businesses in this country pay for representatives' hotel bills, guarantee five thousand dollars for a reelection campaign, provide prostitutes and interest-free loans for automobiles and homes. I've seen it all. But you don't have to be a chicken to know what an egg is.

Beyond the question of doing wrong and knowing or not knowing how to cover it up was the question of just what is wrongdoing. Practices that had been going on for years were suddenly being investigated during my administration. When so-called scandals did occur, blacks or people identified as being close to me could expect the full attention of the county prosecutor. Things that were not crimes were made to seem like crimes to discredit my administration.

You have to keep in mind the great power of a county prosecutor. He can do almost anything, from wiretapping to surveillance to the getting of records. And he can intimidate. He can get people indicted almost at will. A county grand jury relies almost exclusively on the county prosecutor or his assistant for direction. Since the grand jury sits in secret and its procedures are never subsequently available to public scrutiny, the information given to the grand jury is whatever the prosecutor wants to present. He may not be able to convict you, but he can sure as hell get you indicated. And even if he can't prove the case, the public stigma of the indictment is enough. I had to go against him because I was fighting for what we had labored so hard to put together and whenever there was a blemish I knew the only way to clear it up was to force the issue to an ultimate conclusion. I hoped that the people understood that you can't fight a man like the county prosecutor unless you are clean yourself.

John T. Corrigan became Cuyahoga County prosecutor in 1956. He owned his election to a newspaper strike. Corrigan was running against Robert Krupanski, a Republican who had the support of both newspapers and looked like a sure winner. He had come out

of Cleveland's West Side Irish ghetto, where racial hostilities and prejudices are part of the West Side Irish-Catholic heritage. Corrigan is personally honest, and it is hard to criticize honesty. But I happen to think there are things you do and things you don't do that can reflect on your consistency. To my knowledge, Corrigan has never investigated the activities of the Democrats who have dominated the county commissioner's office for decades and handle budgets twice the size of Cleveland's. As far as I know, he never investigated the activities at City Hall until the Stokes administration, yet nothing happened during my two terms that did not happen long before I got there.

In 1970 when we told the top men in the County Democratic Party that we wanted black Councilman George Forbes to be a vice-chairman, most of them agreed except Corrigan. He alluded to some corruptness on the part of Forbes and declared Forbes was not going to be an officer in the party, and the others fell into line behind him. They could not buck him, because he could turn loose his office on any one of them and make life very uncomfortable. Two years later in 1972, Forbes aligned himself with the white Democrats, and John Corrigan supported him to be one of the three county co-chairmen of the Democratic Party. In April 1973 the white Democratic councilmen voted for Forbes to become the first black President of Cleveland's City Council. Had Corrigan's opinion of Forbes changed so profoundly in three years?

The three men I appointed to the Civil Service Commission -- Jay B. White, Charles L. Butts and Marvin Chernoff -- understood the need to get more black policemen on the force. The commission gave its first recruitment test October 16, 1968, to almost twelve hundred applicants. The criticism had started even before the test was administered. The NAACP had sponsored a three day course giving tests similar to those that the applicants would actually be taking. This was attacked by those who just didn't want any more blacks on the force. Then immediately after the test there was criticism by some that it had been too easy, that the Stokes administration was out to lower the standards for getting



onto the police force. But when the results of the tests were examined, a startling 41.7 percent pass rate was revealed, the lowest pass rate anyone could recall.

Meanwhile, the commission was preparing a promotion exam to be given November 16. My three members, in designing the test, made an effort to take it beyond the traditional simplistic test of the policeman's memorizing the Ohio Code and the city ordinances. After complaints from the Fraternal Order of Police, the commission postponed the test, first until December 14, then until December 21. That test was to be nullified after Chief Gerity charged that "proper security was not maintained." His original charge was that there was cheating, but that reflected poorly on the policemen taking the test, so he changed it to a security failure, to make it reflect poorly on the commission. The commission gave another promotion exam January 23, 1969, after which the FOP filed suit in Common Pleas Court asking that the commission be enjoined from using the results for departmental promotions. The case was heard in March by Judge Thomas W. Mitchell, a visiting judge from Jackson County. Judge Mitchell nullified the results of the exam, stating that the test was unreasonable, not practical and not related to the positions sought. He also called on Corrigan to have the grand jury investigate possible violations of the law in connection with the January 23 test. At that time I praised Judge Mitchell's action and urged Corrigan to go forth with the investigation.

There were reports that twenty-one policemen had purchased the exam and the answers. The prices quoted ranged up to \$1,500. A white police lieutenant, John Apanites, produced a copy of the exam paper and claimed that a policeman's wife had given it to him. Obviously there was some wrong-doing and it involved more than the failures of Stokes's Civil Service Commission. White policemen had been cheating.

In May the grand jury began its investigation into the two promotion tests and the appointment test for new policemen. Corrigan and his assistant George Moscarino carefully orchestrated

the proceedings, stretching them out over months, leaking information that would indicate wrongdoing on the part of certain blacks, Stokes appointees, and, by implication, me. Meanwhile, we were unable to put needed policemen on the streets, so I was getting the crime-in-the-streets bit on the other end.

After months of investigation, the grand jury returned with three indictments. Jay B. White, the president of the commission, who is black, and Charles L. Butts, the secretary, were indicted on several felony counts, and Lieutenant Apanites was charged with lying under oath about where he had obtained a copy of the January 23 exam. He had maintained he got the exam from the wife of a policeman but vowed he would go to jail rather than reveal who the woman was. Despite the indictment, the newspapers pictured his criminal act more as an act of chivalry than anything else. It was Jay White and Charles Butts they kept in a criminal posture.

The whole involvement of Jay in this made me sick. When he or other blacks I had brought into City Hall let themselves get mixed up in things like this I would sit and think, The sons of bitches, here I am trying as hard as I can to put something together for all of us, and they go and get involved in something like this. I would feel so helpless. I had known Jay a long time; we grew up together. I had talked specifically with him, as I talked with others I appointed to significant positions, saying, "You are going to have great latitude, and persons are going to try to influence you and literally want to purchase favors from you. You will have a chance to make money, but I want you to understand, I can't stop you from taking a dollar but if I find out about it I will be harder on you than anyone else." I wanted people to understand that when I told them don't do something they shouldn't do it, or at least, if they did, it was their baby.

However, I did not want my people singled out for persecution for something of which they were merely a part. The whites always managed to extricate themselves. On two occasions I managed to persuade all three television stations to allow me to go on at a

prime time to pressure Corrigan to go after everybody. For all practical purposes, he had already maligned and prosecuted the black community. Along with the actual indictments of Butts and White, Carl Stokes was indicted in the public mind. I was fighting desperately the tradition of blaming black people while white people benefit. It is like the numbers game, where whites benefit from the numbers and policy exploitation in the black community, yet when one talks about numbers and policy the onus is on blacks. The same thing was happening here.

I challenged Corrigan. I watched the newspapers play up the way he ridiculed me, saying I ought to go back to law school after I told him to push the investigation. I talked to Tom Vail, William Ware, and Tom Guthrie at the *Plain Dealer*, explaining to them that it was my belief that white policemen had benefited from these examinations and we must press Corrigan to continue his investigation. They agreed and did nothing. I told Tom Boardman and Herb Kamm at the *Press* that this was an effort on the part of John T. Corrigan to malign the Stokes administration and black people, that he must be urged to go forward in the investigation to reach the men who initiated the whole thing, who had been getting the tests over the years and getting the promotions through the use of stolen and purchased tests -- the white policemen. Everyone would sit there and agree with me and say that something must be done, and then do nothing.

Meanwhile I was being urged by the black community to stop pressing for further investigation. They were fearful that more black people would be involved. Yet I had to stand above this,

because I understood better than they did that you are not going to get equal justice in the United States until you make those black people who are doing wrong pay for it and at the same time get the white people who are in there with them.

All this time the reaction from the white community was that I was trying to cover up for the black people and attempting to shift blame to white policemen. Corrigan was selectively releasing the

names of the other blacks suspected of some involvement, and the media was playing it up.

I had Sergeant Mack conducted an investigation, and it indicated that about twenty-seven policemen had been in possession of those tests. They were almost exclusively white policemen -- some of the worst white policemen and best-known racists in the department. Many also happened to be members of the vice squad in East Side areas where they were selling protection to policy and numbers people and to operators of after-hours places. These were the kind of men who apparently knew how to get the tests. When you look at the manifest evidence that there was something wrong, and finally at the recommendation of the prosecutor, that White and Butts plead guilty to the misdemeanor of destroying public papers (felony charges were dropped), then you know a deliberate decision was made on the part of someone not to continue. While Jay was eager to plead to a misdemeanor, the pressure was on Butts, who saw no reason to plead guilty to any charge. He admitted destroying the papers -- answer and identification sheets used in the exam -- but he did it at Jay's instruction, and the papers were not connected with the commission of any crime.

Early in 1971, the prosecutor's office and the media combined again to give the appearance that I was personally involved in something illegal. Following a series of *Press* articles, five city employees and eight employees of private trucking firms were indicted by the county grand jury on the largest number of counts I've ever known anyone indicted on in the United States. There were 476 counts of defrauding the city through contracts the Utilities Department independently let to a trucking company for hauling sludge from a waste-treatment plant. The charges included conspiracy to defraud the city, larceny by trick, forgery, falsification of records and a couple of counts relating to a black employee who used city lumber in repairing the side of his house. The charges carried a potential of hundreds of years in jail.

This time, Corrigan's operative was Assistant Prosecutor Charles Laurie, a man with a burning desire to be elected judge and a reputation in the black community of being one of Corrigan's most biased prosecutors. (Fortunately, the voters thought the two things didn't go well together and defeated him in his election efforts.) One of the black city employees Laurie was prosecuting came to my office and told me he'd been advised he could avoid prosecution if he'd "just give up Carl Stokes." "But to do that, you'd have to lie," I told him. He agreed and went on to defend his case. (I can't vouch for the truth of this story but Laurie's hostility toward me is well known.)

A year after I left office, the highly publicized case of 476 serious criminal indictments of Carl Stokes's administration strangely melted away. All charges against two of the city employees and three of the trucking-firm workers were dismissed; and the remaining defendants were given money fines. No one was jailed. The man drawing the heaviest fine, \$3,500, for what the judge must have thought was the most serious violation, was the black city employee convicted of using city lumber.

While I was fighting these battles with the county prosecutor's office, trying to protect the administration and the things we wanted to do, I was facing other fights too.

The suburbs around Cleveland have grown in population and resources and in leadership people who reside there, leaving the central city with its dwindling resources, its ever-diminishing tax base, its high concentration of the poor, the elderly and the politically impotent. As mayor you are in control of territorial boundaries, but you have nothing with which to sustain yourself. You cannot look to the people in the central city, for they have more needs than they have resources. You cannot look to the people in the suburbs, because that is why they are out there. You cannot look to the state, because the legislature is controlled by a suburban-rural coalition. The central-city representatives in the legislature are a minority group, whether they are black or white. Then you have a governor who responds as most public officials

do, in line with our whole theory of government, and that is that you please or appease the majority. The majority is not in the central city. The only recourse is to look to the federal government, not just for resources to pay the operating costs of government, but in order to enforce the things that mean life or death to your city. That government is the only one that can reach the suburbs, make them part of a health or transportation or air-and-water-pollution control system, make them help support the city. The federal government is the only source that can provide the money while providing protection against a complete takeover of those systems by suburban people, with their built-in hostility toward the central city.

It is not just the drain of financial resources by businesses and industries that are locating outside the city, it is the drain of human resources. When the interests of the city come into conflict with the interests of the suburbs, you find this great wealth of people of substance able to articulate and fight for their position, whereas in that central city you almost literally have only the mayor and his handful of City Hall people. The suburbanites mouth slogans about the need to save the city and they are always there to tell you how to run it, but their first and final loyalty is to the place where they have chosen to move their families, invest in homes, have their children educated, and be safe.

The basic understanding of the needs of a city like Cleveland, and the reality that the central city has some thirty percent of its tax duplicate exempt from taxation, makes it obvious that you are going to have to expand your tax base to fiscally survive. The federal government is more and more understanding of that need, but it also understands you cannot have cities as total welfare clients; that you also have to get people out to where the jobs are; that health factors know no boundary lines and must be treated on a regional basis or area-wide basis, and so must water pollution and rat control; and therefore it must help the cities, but to do it realistically by combining them in some formal way with the ever-expanding, greater population outside the central area. The

government's present effort to do this is in creating area or regional councils composed of the central city and the areas immediately surrounding them. But the antagonism between these groups is intense.

The lineup of forces in this battle between a city and the surrounding area can be seen in our fight NOACA (Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency). In that body Cleveland, which has twenty-five percent of the population of the seven-county area that is part of NOACA, was being given some fourteen percent of the representation on its board. There you had county commissioners, mayors and city managers from seven counties, all of them basically one of mind, against one man from one city who understood that once such a council of governments is formed, the federal government will not spend any money in that area that does not go through the council. If you are not represented adequately in there, at the beginning, obviously your interests are not going to be protected. NOACA was determined that the central city would not be equitably represented. The issue was joined. I had a City Council so dedicated to diminishing the political presence of the mayor that paradoxically they were part of those calling for acceptance of lack of representation of their city on a board that has to be against the interests of their constituents and themselves. Extraordinary. Eventually I had to go to the federal government and explain to both the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission how federal dollars were being used by an organization that was fostering blatant discrimination in housing. The federal government decertified NOACA as the agency for spending money in northeast Ohio. That is the kind of protection that only the federal government can give.

It is worse for a black mayor, but it is tough for any mayor who has a real commitment to his city. At one point, my successor, Ralph Perk, was tempted to talk about the suburban noose that strangles the city. Word got out that he was preparing to deliver a speech along that line, and the newspaper reaction to it sent Perk

scurrying for cover, denying he planned to make the speech and blaming his aides. Perk knows they are out there and what they mean to the city. But when the powerful people who live in those suburbs prepared to come down on him, he ducked and ran. Mayors must fight for cities today in a way that has never been necessary before. It is a fight for the survival of the city and its people. The alternative is to give away the sewers and the water, give away control of your sewage treatment system, give away control -- and control sounds bad, but we are talking about protection of the interests of those who have the ownership, the use, and the need of these things -- to those who will use them for their own benefit, not the benefit of those from whom they are coming. My prediction is that Perk will be unable to sustain these fights. It takes too much personal commitment and acceptance of the costs you have to pay, politically and personally.

Many of my dreams had died when one stupid, phony so-called revolutionary had decided to shoot it out with the police one night in Glenville. Some six thousand dollars of Cleveland: NOW! money had been allocated to Ahmed Evans and some of his followers as part of the summer employment program. We had spent over five million dollars in other badly needed community programs without a single bad incident. The positive aspects of the program were forgotten after Glenville, and soon it became increasingly burdensome for the trustees to get the business community to honor the pledges that had been made.

I knew enough about the people of Cleveland to know that what we had lost would never be put together again. I knew that from then on it was going to be tough going to get any kind of positive response out of the business community, the City Council, the media and most of the people. Fear, hatred, all the emotions that had been pushed to the backs of people's minds for almost a year, were now going to come forth.

I approached the 1969 mayoral election with mixed emotions about running. When John Little and Sidney Spector came to me about organizing a \$100-a-plate dinner for me, I told them it was



all right but I wanted them to understand that there was no obligation on me about running again.

I went to the dinner still uncommitted, still undecided. I sat there until about 11 p.m. and then got up from the table and went into a back hallway. I had the security men keep everybody out and I just walked around back there, trying to figure out what I could do other than run. People thought later on that it was the fact that two thousand people paid \$100 a plate that caused me to decide to run. That was one of the least considerations. Most of the people who brought those tables were people who could afford it and were there for calculated political reasons. Most of them assumed their presence would redound to their benefit when it came time to award contracts. The only reason we had an extraordinary mixture of people -- welfare mothers, black militants, others who could not afford to pay a hundred dollars -- was that we made people who could afford it buy tables for those who could not.

The real reason I decided to run was that I could not conceive of anyone who could take over the city. I kept asking myself was there anyone who could continue what had been the crucial battle with Jim Stanton and those he represented in the city and in the Council, or with the newspapers and their continued contribution to the resistance to change, or with the business community. I asked myself, Is there anyone to fight for the guy in the street who needs a decent home and is the victim of this class and race struggle? Is there anybody who can demand a response and make it difficult not to respond? The answer always came back no. There was no one who could win and who was more concerned about producing than about being liked. At midnight I walked up to the microphone and declared I would run again.

It was that night that I really began to think seriously about an organization. I realized that after close to two years in office I had not prepared anybody or anything to carry on. I went on to defeat Ralph Perk and win reelection in November by twice the margin

that I had won in 1967, and early in February 1970 I organized the Twenty-first Congressional District Caucus.

The Caucus's name and its membership boundaries cam from my brother Louis' congressional district. The concept came from Charley Carr and William O. Walker. The motivation came from my wanting to leave my people a vehicle to continue the political thrust I had taught them and to leave my brother a solid political base not dependent upon my presence and muscle. All black elected officials who had been loyal to me were named to the executive board. A number of ward leaders were also elected to the board. Later, we expanded the board to include ministers of different faiths and civic leaders. Louis was chairman. I was honorary chairman. We were organized. We found a home at the Club Center on East Eighty-ninth Street at Quincy Avenue, a large neighborhood meeting center owned by Walter Burks, one of my later appointees to the Civil Service Commission. Reception from the community was wonderful. From four to six hundred people turned out at meetings. There was great pride in being a member of the Caucus. It added another dimension to the political growth of Cleveland's black people and came to serve as a model for the nation of organized black political power.

The Cuyahoga County Democratic Party gave us our first confrontation. In May 1970 the party held its first county convention to elect new officers. Charley Carr attended Bert Porter's policy committee meeting a few days prior to the convention, at which they were determining what slate of officers to run. Carr proposed George Forbes for vice-chairman. John T. Corrigan led the opposition to Forbes. They decided that a black should not be named vice-chairman, because he could succeed to chairman. They created a special vice-chairmanship for a Negro and agreed to elect Dr. Kenneth Clement to it. Dr. Clement accepted it. I rejected this proposal out of hand when Carr reported back to me. It was preposterous in 1970 that a Democratic Party group would be creating a "Negro" position. In addition, we had just defeated Dr. Clement soundly in his primary race for U.S.

Senate; we had backed Howard Metzenbaum, a liberal Jewish lawyer, and thrashed Clement five to three in his own ward. Clement did not carry a single black ward in Cleveland. We destroyed him and the myth the white media kept alive of his being a black leader. This was the first of several instances to follow in which the black community learned to discipline its errant members.

We called a meeting of all black councilmen, ward leaders and precinct committeemen for the same Saturday morning and the same time the Democratic county convention was being held. We boycotted the convention and declared that the Caucus and its members were no longer part of the regular Democratic Party. We would be free agents, and nonpartisan, supporting candidates of either party, depending on what their election meant to the black community.

The two white daily papers assailed us unmercifully. White Democrats who had been enjoying free black votes for years wrote letters of outrage to the papers. White West Siders who wouldn't let a black person live on their street bemoaned this political self-segregation by the blacks. White liberals who had their separate Americans for Democratic Action chapters and New Democratic Coalition clubs mourned over our action and demanded our return to the party. But the black people understood it and gloried in this new political independence.

The result of every election from that time on depended on what the Caucus with its great solidarity in voting did. Any candidate, black or white, campaigning in the black community had to answer the question "Is the twenty-first District Caucus supporting you?" If not, he lost his audience.

We had great victories. We controlled virtually every City Council and state legislative seat in the district. Our people followed us as we swung our votes to Republicans over Democrats, occasionally a white man over an underserving black candidate and in September 1971 we soundly thrashed mayoral candidate City Council President Anthony J. Garofoli, who had the

endorsement of the county Democratic Party, organized labor and the *Plain Dealer*. With his ethnic background and those endorsements, Garofoli would have been a tougher opponent for the black candidate in the general election than James Carney. That and our other victories and what the Caucus was all about are well summed up in a *Plain Dealer* editorial of September 30, 1971:

Mayor Carl B. Stokes and his 21st Congressional District Caucus won a momentous victory in Tuesday's primary elections.

It is they who capsized the Democratic organization and nominated James M. Carney for mayor. They got out a near unanimous bloc vote for him in the biggest surprise in Cleveland's political history.

But also they were invincible in every Council contest they got into. They plowed Democratic regulars under. Examples: Warren Gilliam, in midtown, Mrs. Mary E. Yates in Glenville, Clarence R. Thompson out near Lee-Seville. They either won or put into the November runoffs their entire slate, including a former foe, Ceasar Moss, and others brought into line and then approved.

Thus the Stokes-21st district Caucus party humbled the Democratic party. Mayor Stokes and his group showed up the party's weakness. They taught Democrats, political prophets, newspapermen and poll takers some lessons in political strategy.

In City Council the Stokes group seems sure to control a much firmer block of votes, at least 11, possibly 14. All will owe more now to the Stokes-21st District Caucus, which hand-picked and then backed them.

This makes the Stokes-Caucus group into the real opposition party, the only real second party in Council. It could control 40% of Council in Challenges to the bare 17-vote majority which the Democrats will manage to muster.

Anyone who calls the upsets of Tuesday's primaries fluke or a mere trick is refuted by the ward-by-ward vote on the East Side. It took long, deep, thorough work to produce big, solid votes for caucus candidates in wards which, to complicate things further, had just been redistricted by the Democratic organization.

The party led by Mayor Stokes and the 21st District Caucus has proved what an important force it is in city's most politically conscious residents.

My second term was almost total war between the mayor and the Council, between the mayor and the newspapers, between the mayor and everyone. I took my cabinet out of the Monday night City Council meetings because I refused to follow a tradition that merely allowed councilmen to attack and impugn the integrity of the chief executive of the city. I was determined that the bigots and the haters in the Council were not going to get away with what they had been getting away with in the past. I attempted to make them recognize the administrative branch of the city government as the equal of the legislative, not the whipping boy. I took the city's black population out of the Democratic Party because the party refused to recognize and reward blacks for years of service and votes. I went after the newspapers, challenging them as no one had done before on their racism and their reluctance or inability to understand the needs of a city and actually work to solve problems, not mutter about the evils of confrontation. I took the city out of NOACA because that organization was working against the interest of Cleveland. I fought for an income tax increase against people who were thinking they deserved more services for less money.

All this time everyone was digging in, determined that there would be no change that would benefit black people. I became the focus of affection and anger, depending on which side of the river you lived on. The presence of Carl Stokes began to override all other considerations. Activists just attract a certain amount of hostility. Add to that the reaction to a man who carries himself a certain way, who ostensibly lives a certain way, and you can see that Cleveland was not about to love me for very long. The way I dress and the fact that obviously

I am hip, that I obviously understand things -- this disturbs some people. People wonder, How did he learn those things? How did he get hip? How does he understand these things without

having done them? I know of no one who can attest to any swinging life style of Carl Stokes. If I had publicly lived like Adam Clayton Powell the speculation would make more sense. I hate to protest so damn much, but I hate paying so much for something I am not enjoying. Now, if you say to me, "Stokes, have you ever gotten away?" -- well, sure I have. But now I only wish I had to the extent I've been blamed.

I have a style for politics. Unfortunately, I pay an additional price because people really think that the guy who swings so well out there on the platform, kisses the girls, jokes around, has to be doing a lot of other things. Those trappings help you get to the mayor's office, but they don't help you once you are there. There are people who understand the level of mentality in Cleveland and who know how to use those things against you.

Politics requires that a man compromise with the existing conditions. But the problems in Cleveland and the other large cities of this country can no longer afford the luxury of compromise. I choose not to compromise with those who went to keep the system running as it is. For four years in Cleveland those who did want to keep the system running the same old way knew they had to fight me and beat me. Civic leaders, especially newspaper editors, were constantly writing their hands and prattling about the evils of confrontation politics and the need to avoid conflict. Problems come from conflict between the haves and the have-nots. They were exacerbated by the city government that was resistant to change and people who refused to respond to overall city problems.

I have my way of fighting, and I understand it. I understand that if you have a sore that is festering under the scab, the only way to treat it is to pull away the scab, give the sore some medical attention, some light and fresh air, and let it heal. To believe that because you do not disturb the scab or because you wrap the sore in a very fresh, sanitary, pure white bandage you are healing the wound is wrong. You can't treat that sore unless you expose it. There is no way around it. You must grab the scab, pull it off, and

expose the sore in all its ugliness, its rot, its stench, its own kind of sickness. That is the way I approached Cleveland politics and national politics.

But in the process you can survive only so long. You disturb too many things. You take a councilman who is close to you and who for years has enjoyed the production of the police for his numbers and policy operation, and you tell him this battle you are in does not permit him to go to the police chief and seek the protection he had enjoyed for the operation he had made money off of and the police have had made money off of. You can't fight for reform in the Police Department and at the same time be involved with them in the protection of numbers and policy. There is only so long that you can hold that man. He is following you because he has to, not because he has committed to your philosophy of government or to you or to things you want to do for people. Or take the councilman who used to make money on zoning changes. This man has learned to sustain his family's style on additional sources of income. He can't live on \$12,500 a year. But when he joins you in a fight against the president of City council, he can't get his zoning legislation passed; he has to forgo that income. There is only so long you can hold him. It is sheer economics. You realized after a while that it will be only so long that you can pursue the fight with the confrontation of issues and uncompromising position. You know at the same time you were making the fight that someday you will have to give it up and get out or stay there and be defeated in what you are trying to do, and you must never let those whom you are fighting have that victory. I was fighting on many fronts, and that alone took its toll.

I knew the end was coming. It never diminished my struggle, but I had to carry two diametrically opposed positions -- I had to fight them and I had to get out. Sometimes one position would start to temper the other. I felt the city was entering a period when there could be no more change or movement; the need was for someone to hold what we had won until the mood changed and someone else came along to build on it. I wanted it to be a black man.

I had sought out Arnold Pinkney, my black former administrative assistant who was then president of the School Board, and asked him to run. But I couldn't put it all together for him. He had no base of his own. The black ministers didn't like him and wouldn't support him. Community leaders active in the fight for better schools had been disappointed in his service on the School Board. He had no white votes of his own to go with the November 1971 general election. Second to Ralph Perk, the man I had twice run ahead of.

I had decided as early as October of 1970 that I would not run again. At that time, no one else knew it, not even Shirley. It was February before I talked with her about it. I have never let the media in on my personal life. I have never talked about the threats and the fear I used to have about my family and their welfare. The cost my children had to pay at school each morning was great. Each day Carl Junior had to answer for my actions as reported on the nightly news broadcast or in the morning paper. It took a terrible toll on him. The same was true of Cordi each morning when she got on the school bus. And my wife.

On several occasions men with guns appeared at City Hall and at my home. The most frightening incident occurred one day after a black youth had stabbed a white youth to death at 110th and Woodland. The black youth had escaped, and the neighborhood was up in arms. As always when violence threatened, I personally went into the area. The white boy's father confronted Tony Garofoli, the councilman from the area, and me on the street in front of a grocery store. He wagged his finger in my face and said "You're responsible, Stokes. These black people are running around here killing people." It was summer and the street was packed. This was formerly a heavily Italian neighborhood and was now heavily Appalachian. There were some poor Italians who had not been able to move out. The blacks lived nearby in the projects. This fellow was doing all he could to get a rise from me. The ingredients for a real riot were there.



I took the hand he was waving in my face and said, "You don't have to put your hand on my face. I came out here to talk with you. Just talk with me. I am the mayor of this city and I am here to find out what happened." I spoke in a calm voice. I understand fellows like that. I understood the response he wanted to evoke and I wasn't going to give it to him. At the same time, I wasn't going to let him humiliate me there. I could go only far in handling this, and I was not going to do it at my total personal expense. We just let him talk it out. I then told everyone that the Police Department was doing all that it could and we had confidence that the young fellow would be found, at which point it would be a question for the courts. We told them we were leaving and in order for us to leave the crowd would have to stop aside. We did not want to get the police involved in getting us through the crowd.

The crowds parted and we got back into the car. Tony was absolutely white. He was trembling. He said, "Mayor, I am not going to run again. I cannot handle these people."

I ordered the area cordoned off and put it under a curfew. When I got home there must have been seven police cars in the street. The house was dark. A policeman came up to me and said, "Mayor, we got word that some of the 110th and Woodland people are coming up here."

I said, "Well, if they're going to do that, let me go inside and get prepared for them."

He did not understand that, "No," he said, "we don't want you to face those people." I wasn't talking about facing them at all. I was talking about going into the house to get something they would understand when they got there.

"That's all right. I don't intend to talk with them," I said.

"Mayor, would you do this for us? We have already asked your wife to turn the lights off. Could you ask your family to lay down on the floor?"

I said, "You have to be kidding."

"No. We don't know what's going to happen here. We have three more cars on the back street."

I went into the house. Then occurred about three hours of the damndest period of my life. All around my house are policemen

with rifles and shotguns. I could hear the walkie-talkies. The house is dark. Shirley, six months pregnant with our third child, is lying on the floor with our two children and my sister-in-law, Doris Sitgraves, from El Paso. I'm sitting downstairs. We could hear the crowd as it came from 110th Street. There were more than two hundred of them, a committee of my neighbors. The police laid down a smoke barrage on them about three hundred feet from the house. It drove them back. The family is upstairs now, scared. The children are frightened and don't understand what is going on. The yard is filled with police to protect me, not from foreign enemy but from the mob of people who live twenty blocks away from me. I am the mayor, and my family is hiding on the floor in a dark house. I have been out riding the area to see that there will be no disturbances and I get home to find the disturbance at my own house. My house is under siege by a gang of white hoodlums. That is the kind of experience in which your family pays a cost they never asked for. They didn't run for mayor. Yet they must endure all of this. Families always get sacrificed, but if the other factors are different, then perhaps you can hold out. But when you reach certain conclusions about the other part, the personal and family considerations only propel you toward what you know you have to do. Leave.

In March of 1971, after talking it over with John Little, I called W. O. Walker and Charles Lucas, veteran civil rights leader, over to my house. I had relied heavily on Lucas's counsel when I was in legislature. I explained to them I would not run again. Both said, "Carl, you cannot do that. We don't have anyone who can hold what we have and can pull the black community together behind him and keep up this fight." I knew I had the support of the black community and a sufficient number if the white community. The problem went deeper. The decision had to be made not to whether or not I could get reelected, and this is hard to explain to people, but on what being reelected would mean. Being reelected has to mean an opportunity to affect change. If that opportunity isn't

there, then being elected mayor of Cleveland would have no significance.

For months before I announced that I would not run again I had been trying to tell my people that should prepare for the day I would no longer be around. I told them of that importance of the organization of the 21st District Caucus and the movement we had started must not depend on one man. None of them wanted to think about it. None of them wanted to think of a time when I wouldn't be here.

I happen to understand why Adam Clayton Powell didn't campaign for Congress the last time his name was on the ballot. What is it that you would ask of Adam? The one thing he did most wrong in his career was to exercise raw, naked power in a white society. He didn't sublimate it. He didn't disguise it. When Adam died, a nationally respected daily newspaper carried an editorial comparing Adam to Martin Luther King. The editorial concluded that Martin had left a great contribution to mankind whereas Adam had responded to the grossest of the things in the white man's world. Well, if doing like white folks in the highest positions of our country do isn't right, what standard of human behavior do you have? He did it like Huey Long did it. Like James Eastland does it. Like Ronald Reagan does it. But Powell had declared himself a black man who understood power of black people's needs and exercised it. You cannot compare the contributions of an Adam Clayton Powell and a Martin Luther King. Their contributions are in different areas. King stirred the conscience of this nation and gave all of us -- black and white -- moral courage. Adam left a legacy of laws that will benefit old people, working people, black people, for generations to come. The man passed sixty pieces of the most vital social-welfare legislation, affecting minimum wage, health standards, education, civil rights, but he was destroyed by white racism and black indifference.

Carl Stokes could have been mayor of Cleveland from now on, with flamboyance and fun and being a good nigger; and if riots happen then give them hell for having riots, and cooperate with

Jim Stanton. There is no telling how wealthy Stanton and I could be. Or I could have been like former Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze. One night at dinner he said something to me that I will never forget.

"Carl," he said, "are you enjoying the job?"

"Sure, Tony. It's got its tough moments, but I enjoy it."

He said, "I notice all the big businessmen coming up here to shake your hand to make sure that you see them and that they see you. Well, go out of office at twelve o'clock and try to call one of them at twelve-five and see what happens to you. Your call won't get through."

"Tony, I understand that."

We talked some more and then got on the subject of the increase in the income tax that was coming up for a vote. He said, "You know, in nine and a half years I wasn't able to get a tax passed in this city. Don't let it bother you. If they don't want it, don't give it to them. If they want to cut back on services, go ahead and cut back."

"But, Tony," I said, "the town can't survive like that."

"Right," he said, "but that's what they want. Always give them what they want."

But I am not built in the way that I can "give them what they want." On Friday, April 16, 1971, I invited to dinner at my home those who had been my closest advisers and supporters. After dinner, I told them I would not run again. Leaving them briefly, I went to the WEWS television station, where I announced my decision to the city.

Interestingly, as close as I had guarded my intentions about running or not, we found out the next week that my ten-year old daughter, Cordi, had predicted over a month previously that I would not run again. Mrs. Feder, Cordi's English teacher, produced a theme paper Cordi had written on March 10 which, after predicting I would not run for reelection and would return to the practice of law, stated:

My father has worked a long time and people do not respect him. He tried his best but people always blame him saying the streets aren't clean and silly things like that. But mostly what the paper says about my dad is not true. I think my dad will be smart not to run again. Besides, my whole family will have more time to be with him.

I have always understood the depth of this country's hostility and resistance when it comes to dealing with the basic functions of the nation. When you start dealing with the real change you are talking about interfering with those who are in possession of something. Power never gives up anything without a struggle. You can get laws passed. You can get expressed and resolutions and even condolences in the proper cases on matters of human concern. But when you start dealing with the basic fundamentals of housing and schools and jobs, then you are talking about fundamental change and you are dealing with a resistance that is not going to yield peacefully. How do you deal with it? There is only one way: power against power. That's what I did. I took the power of mayor's office and a solid constituency and went head on against those who didn't want the poor in their neighborhood, were determined to exclude blacks from jobs and new economic opportunities.

But I knew I couldn't survive. And when I talk about going against those in power, I don't mean just the newspapers and the business and industrial concern; I also mean those who are in possession, the middle-class people who have the jobs, who live in the neighborhoods with the nice decent housing and the recreational areas that are well maintained. I am talking about the people who have and who are not willing to give up what they have. You have to make them give it up. You are asking for a struggle. Out of that struggle the cutting edge has to be blunted, dulled and even sacrificed. That's what happened to Carl Stokes in Cleveland. I accept it. I'll go on the next thing and let someone who is constitutes differently from me come back one day and begin the process again. Someone will come, I don't know who it will be. But someone will come.

## 14

## PRESIDENTIAL MATTERS

On Lincoln's birthday in 1961. President Kennedy had a cocktail party in the White House for black leadership around the country. For this party, the Kennedy's used the entire first floor, putting a bar and a buffet in every room. When the President and the First Lady made their entrance, they began to circulate among the rooms, shaking hands with everybody. When Shirley saw what they were doing, she left me and went to the room where the Kennedys were at the time and maneuvered herself into a position to shake their hands. As soon as she saw which room they were headed for next, she would circle the entire floor and get into that room from the other side and shake their hands again. She did that all around the building. She came back to me and says, "Honey, just now I shook his hand, and you know he said, 'I remember you!'"

"Hell," I said, "if I had just shaken your hand six times in forty minutes, I would have remembered you, too."

I had no particular love for John Kennedy, but Shirley certainly did. She was in love with both Jack and Jackie, as were many black people, and she got what we all at that time so badly needed: recognition.

My own national recognition came in somewhat different form. Although as early as 1965 I had become a national celebrity of sorts because of the extremely close mayoral race in Cleveland, it was not until after I was elected in 1967 that my voice began to mean something.

There are two organizations that serve as the voice of the nation's mayors: the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities. A quick glance at the two might leave the impression that they exist only to provide mayors a few days away

from home a couple of times a year. In fact, though, the two organizations exert a great deal of influence on federal domestic policy, and their position papers on major issues are important. The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the smaller group, about 750 strong. It is limited to mayors. The National League of Cities includes most of the smaller-city mayors, council presidents, and representatives from county and even state governments. The annual meeting of the league usually draws about five thousand members. Both groups are usually dominated by the mayors of the biggest cities, a group that by the late 1960s was so homogenous in its political philosophy that it was almost a clique. Chicago's Richard Daley, Henry Maier of Milwaukee, John Lindsay of New York, Thomas D'Alessandro of Baltimore, Joseph Alioto of San Francisco, Atlanta's Ivan Allen and Detroit's Jerry Cavanagh -- these men formed a central group whose most colorful and persuasive spokesmen were Cavanagh and Lindsay. They were all progressive, activist types, all bright and most young. It was an exciting time to be a mayor. As bad as things were in the cities, it seemed that there were some able men who understood the problems and that something could be done that would make a difference.

Boston's new mayor, Kevin White, Pittsburgh's Pete Flaherty and I were warmly welcomed by the clique of big-city mayors, and each of us soon moved into leadership roles in both of the national groups. From the group of mayors and their organizations came the national thrust for revenue sharing, welfare reform, a guaranteed minimum income and tax reform.

We formed what came to be known as "the Mayors' Traveling Road Show," which used as its prime drawing card the media's fascination with charismatic John Lindsay and his 1972 Presidential intentions. With the media in tow, we'd travel the slum and blighted neighborhood of one of our cities, pointing out the vacant houses, the unemployed men standing on street corners, the closed health centers and the insufficient and inadequate recreation areas. Then at a later press conference, we'd explain in detail our

lack of local resources to create jobs, build housing, provide adequate health care and educational and recreational facilities.

We took the "road show" to Washington, where we testified before congressional committees, had three meetings with President Nixon, and had two turbulent sessions with the Democratic leadership of Congress, whom we accused outright of failing to use their power to help the cities. The strategy worked. National sentiment and political support was built up. President Nixon and members of Congress raced one another to introduce revenue-sharing and welfare-reform bills. Tax reform was placed on the front burner.

Though John Lindsay was our most valuable public-relations gimmick, he was not well liked by most of the mayors. Envy counted for part of the hostility. But Lindsay himself was responsible for the general dislike. He played the elitist and dilettante role at most of the national conferences. He'd fly into town, deliver his main speech, and fly out, leaving the grubby and tedious work to the other mayors. He always carried his New York entourage of assistants with him (which never included a black man), and whatever social time he had he'd spend with them rather than with the mayors. He got his comeuppance for that kind of behavior at the December 1969 meeting of the National League of Cities in San Diego. Lindsay ran for vice-president of the league against Mayor Richard Lugar of Indianapolis and was soundly defeated. It was no contest. Part of Lugar's big vote was due to President Nixon's support, but most of it came from the hundreds of small-city mayors who felt this was their chance to get back at Lindsay for what they felt was an Eastern Republican, white Anglo-Saxon privileged arrogance. Henry Maier and I had warned Lindsay that this was going to happen. But he insisted that we nominate him for the office, so we did. He lost. The next year, at the league's meeting in Atlanta, I was nominated for vice-president and elected unanimously. No one thought I was a WASP elitist.

A national voice is sometimes, though, a voice in a void, through nobody's fault but the damn media. At the 1968



Democratic national convention I was staying in a suburban motel with a swimming pool, because I had taken my family, and I was spending part of each day with my kids. About six o'clock the night of the nominations, I got a call from Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey's campaign adviser, Bill Connell. He said that the Vice-President wanted me to be one of the nominators, to make a seconding speech.

I said, "I'm not even coming down to that convention tonight -- I'm going to watch this one on television."

He said, "Well, it's what the Vice-President wants, and he asked me to ask you."

"I don't know," I said. "The convention gets under way at seven-thirty, doesn't it?" He said yes, and I said, "Well, hell, it's six o'clock now and I'm well over an hour from the convention and it's rush hour. I don't see how in the world I could get there."

"Will you talk to Senator Fred Harris?" he asked.

I got on the phone with Harris and he said, "Carl, we'd like awfully much for you to make one of the nominating speeches."

"It's just so late, Fred. When did you guys put this together?"

"It's been a hell of a fight putting votes together. We haven't had time to even think about what we would do once we got them together."

Hubert Humphrey was a great friend of mine. I believed in him, I believed he could beat Nixon. I agreed to make the speech and hastily changed clothes, and Sid Spector, John Little and I started down to the convention center. We got there just at seven-thirty and went to Humphrey's headquarters above the arena. I talked briefly with the guys and they told me to keep my speech to three minutes. I went over to a seat and there was Julian Bond, writing his speech for Eugene McCarthy.

I said, "Well, Julian, we'll each have one going." He said, "Yup." Julian was making the nominating speech for McCarthy. So we came out. San Francisco's Mayor Joseph Alioto nominated Humphrey in a very fine speech, and the delegates went into their demonstration routine, with the horns and rattles and what not, and

then I came out. I launched into a fervent speech on behalf of my man. I wasn't talking to the few thousand in the arena. There were more than twenty million Americans watching this on television, and I was trying to reach them. People of all walks of life, all colors, were watching and listening to Carl Stokes. I was determined to reach into their hearts. When it was over I got back into my car, and they told me as soon I was got on the podium the cameras had switched to the street action outside the arena.

I worked hard for Hubert Humphrey in 1968, both at home and on campaign trips to San Francisco and Los Angeles. When Nixon was elected, I stated that the election was over, we had a new President, and we all had to help him. I received a call from Daniel P. Moynihan, telling me he was considering going with Nixon to the White House. I suggested to him that the President-elect should meet with the big-city mayors and let us tell him some of the things he needed to know about the cities. We had to live with this man for four years, I told him, and we should get off to the right start. Moynihan said, "I think it's a hell of a good idea. Let me get back to you." He did call back, and we arranged a meeting at the Hotel Pierre in New York. I then turned to Pat Healey and John Gunther of the National League of Cities and Conference of Mayors, and we put together a list of mayors for the conference.

A group of us, mayors of small and large cities, had the initial meeting with Nixon one morning in December. We met in a small sitting room in the President-elect's beautifully decorated penthouse apartment. We were with him for about an hour and a half. I sat next to him and was surprised at how fresh and vigorous he looked after having just gone through a tough campaign. The talk was very general, he could make no commitments, he hadn't even been inaugurated yet. We made it clear to him that the men there reflected the leadership of the mayors of the country. After some talk about general problems that affect all of the nation's cities, I told him that there are some unique problems that the twelve to fifteen largest cities have that differ not only in intensity but almost in kind from the problems of smaller cities. I urged him

to schedule a full-scale conference of big-city mayors, men who could bring these special problems to him. He said, "Well, I think I understand generally what you men have told me here today, and if there are no objections, we can plan for that meeting on the largest urban centers with what you think are the unique problems." The problems of America's smaller cities had pretty well been spelled out, so there was no objection to the future meeting on bigger cities. With that we closed, and he graciously showed us out.

Nixon is a very disarming man. What you may have read about his being a good listener is quite true. Some people can look like they are listening, but they are really not. At no point where some response was indicated did I not find him coming in with a reaction. He seemed to me inordinately at ease. If I were approaching Presidency and had just come through a tough campaign I'm not sure how liberal with my time I would be, but he seemed to have no problems. I was impressed.

We had our meeting in April in the Cabinet Room of the White House. I was sitting immediately across from the President, to the right side of Vice-President Agnew. Dick Lugar sat next to the President. Some distance down the table sat John Lindsay. On the other side of Agnew was Dick Daley, and Joe Alioto was next to him. For about an hour we talked about what I thought were the unique problems. For instance, I went into the subject of Glenville. No small cities had had the kind of guerrilla warfare we were facing. Lindsay detailed the ambushings of police in New York. We talked about the problems we were having in dealing with state legislatures controlled by rural interests and our need to bypass them and go to the federal government for help. But more than anything else we talked about the black-white confrontation and the terrible class struggle going on. The people with enough money to live on but not enough money to enable them to move out were pitted daily now against the ever-increasing numbers of very poor. The movement of the black people into the formerly Jewish neighborhoods and the clashes between what had traditionally been allies in the civil-rights struggles were occurring more and more

often. Jews had been important in the fight for open-housing laws and equal-employment laws. Suddenly those very laws were the source, legally at least, of the clash. The blacks were moving into the Jewish neighborhoods because they were the neighborhoods economically closest to them. And the economic competition was creating great hostility among the classes of people, even within minority groups themselves. These problems just don't exist to a significant degree in little towns.

The President's responses generally were of the type to elicit more information. He did not try to profess knowledge or understanding of the problems, he seemed to want to learn. The man impressed me as a guy who really wanted to understand what we were saying. He asked a lot of good sound questions.

Then came the interesting part. We had talked for about an hour, none of us felt rushed, and at the point at which he asked to be excused we really thought we had got the basic issues on the table. He asked if we could continue the discussion with Vice-President Agnew, and we all rose and he left. Now, I had led those mayors there. When I walked with the President to the door, I was able to see the press room outside. It was as if they were in tiers. There is no press corps in the world like the one in Washington.

I went back into the room. Vice-President Agnew suddenly stood up. Up to that point the whole meeting had been conducted comfortably, with everyone relaxed around the table. Agnew launched into a fifteen-minute set of remarks, some of which were even facts, based on his own experience putting through a revenue-sharing tax plan as governor of Maryland. But he went further. He said something like "Carl, you and people like Lindsay and Alioto are going to have to at some point stop trying to understand these people and start doing something about them and put some of them in jail and do whatever else is necessary." He said the same thing in two or three different ways about housing and welfare, mixing in a few good things he did do as governor to give his diatribe a patina of authority.

We endured that for fifteen minutes. Then I said, "I've talked enough today gentlemen, but I assume there will be some responses here." Joe Alioto stood and gave the automatic mayor's response that we all shared. Agnew then retorted, in a sense putting Joe down, and that's not easy to do. Joe was one of the brightest people in the room, but he refrained from indulging in a head-to-head clash with the Vice-President.

But there was one man in the room who was ready, and that was that blue-eyed, white wavy-haired patriarch of the Old South, Ivan Allen. I saw in that moment what writers mean when they talk about his eyes flashing. Allen stood up and with the protection of a couple of centuries of American tradition behind him said, "Mr. Vice-President, I came to this meeting concerned about my city. But after listening to you here, I am now worried about my country. Everything we have said here has gone in one of your ears and out the other. You have no more understanding of what we are talking about than the man in the moon. I think this meeting ought to adjourn right now."

Agnew's face flushed bright red. Very angry, he told Allen, "Don't tell me I don't understand, you're not listening. The whole trouble is you people think you have the only approach and it is the right way and that is what has gotten this country into trouble." Then he went back over his remarks about people not obeying the law and what not.

Here I am trying to keep order, saying, "We ought to let the Vice-President talk." But by this time Tommy D'Alessandro wants to take him on. Lindsay is enjoying the whole thing, sitting back with that bemused smile on his face. Alioto was really quiet. He had been very much the gentleman and he had been handled pretty roughly. As far as Ivan Allen was concerned, the meeting was over. He sat down, did not look at Agnew or anybody else. He had said his piece. He had said that as far as he was concerned the meeting should be adjourned and he had personally adjourned it for himself.

I then told them I thought we had met sufficiently and we weren't going to get much further. I thanked the Vice-President for being candid with us and sharing his views and said we would take only a few minutes more with the press officer to work up a statement for the media. The Vice-President went around shaking everybody's hand, including Allen's but Ivan wasn't really in the room. Amazing. You can do that only with a certain kind of security.

The press secretary then came in and asked if Ivan Allen and I would come into the President's office. I asked Allen and he said certainly he would and I told the fellows we would be right back. We went down the hall and into the oval office. It was late spring, but he had a fire going. He was seated at his desk, working. We sat down in front of this desk and he said, "I've just been informed about what occurred in the meeting after I left. I want you to know I am very distressed about it. I think that probably it was the result of misunderstandings of positions on everybody's side, because I know of the Vice-President's concern for local government. We all have a big job ahead of us and we want to do it together. I know you gentlemen are going on to a press conference; I don't think it would help the causes of any of us if we had things like this spread across the front pages. I just wanted to know if you felt in your judgement this had to be discussed before the press."

I said, "Mr. President, I think that Mayor Allen has to respond to that."

Allen then looked across at this man who, when compared with Allen's lineage, is an immigrant, and said, "Mr. President. Are you asking me not to say anything about the discussion I had with the Vice-President when I go out to the press conference?"

"Well, Mayor Allen," the President replied, "I just don't see how that would help the causes of any of us. I just thought I would raise the issue with you."

"Mr. President, I am not going to promise you what I will say or not say. I am really not sure myself. The only thing I can say to you is that Vice-President Agnew seriously concerns me."

"Well gentlemen," the President said, "I just appreciate your having come in here and I hope we will all continue to have our minds on our central problem, which is trying to bring some relief to the cities of this country. As we have indicated, we expect to have more meetings of this kind."

We got up, shook hands and left.

I didn't know what the hell to do next. We went back to the room with the mayors. We explained that Agnew would lead off in the press conference. I would make some remarks and then we would throw it open to questions.

We went out. Agnew opened things and made a point of saying, "Now, of course there were some matters on which we had basic fundamental disagreements. There are some feelings the mayors have that I don't share and there are some that I have that they don't share."

Whatever else he had to say, the first reporter who asks questions is going to zoom in on that one. I didn't even get a chance to make my remarks. As soon as Agnew finished, the press jumped in on those disagreements. Agnew fudged on the issue and said, "Well, they concern all kinds of things. After all, I've been a local government official and I have my own ideas about revenue sharing and about law and order and such things." The can of worms was thus opened, but he did not dig into it.

Then the fellows turned and said, "Mayor Stokes, can we ask you?"

I stepped up and they asked me about those areas of disagreement. I said, "I think the Vice-President has fairly well delineated the areas." Pure crap.

Then a fairly alert reporter said, "With whom was he disagreeing?"

I said, "I wouldn't call it a disagreement that relates to one specific individual; we're just talking about difference in philosophies of government." All the time I am thinking, Should I let this exchange between Agnew and Allen really come out? Finally I just figured that a headline that said Allen had called

down the Vice-President would only alienate a President who had no real allegiance to any of us in that room. Apart from the mayors of Phoenix, Wilmington, Indianapolis, and New York, all of us were Democrats. And of course the mayor of New York was no friend of his. I decided that unless Ivan Allen insisted, I wasn't going to let him get to the mike. He was standing next to me. But he chose to keep his own counsel.

Normally, I wade right in. I like to put a man up front, make him have to live with his attitudes in public. But here we had been able to get Nixon to do something that could mean a great deal to the big-city mayors, most of us Democrats, most of us from cities that voted against Nixon. To let that impact with the President degenerate because of Agnew seemed irresponsible.

Subsequently Nixon introduced his revenue-sharing bill and gave us the specific authority to write the formula for it. The welfare reform bill was written right in the White House, not at HEW, and he brought our people in on every stage of it. When we were having trouble getting HUD money released (this was especially true for Joe Alioto, who had some low-income housing programs that were stalled), we went right to the White House, and he did release it.

I am an issue-oriented, confrontation politician -- that is the only kind of substantive politics there is, as far as I am concerned -- but a public fight with Agnew would have served no purpose. Allen's remarks reflected what all the rest of us in the room felt (and it was great that it was Allen, not somebody like me, who chose to do it -- there are things we can do to them, but there are other things they can do to each other), but Agnew just wasn't the right target to take to the public.

Nixon's strategy in his first term was to introduce bills that were personally repugnant to him, knowing he could depend on conservative Democrats to block action. They would ruin his strategy on any day they chose to pass his welfare-reform bill or revenue sharing. But he knew he could depend on them. And when they didn't pass the legislation, the responsibility was on them, not



him. On the other hand, I've watched him go outside a conservative's ordinary approach to foreign affairs. Richard Nixon is a master of the art of reflecting the wishes of people, of ascertaining the significance of what they feel and want or think they want and then joining them, appearing to the head of the phalanx. It's a comfortable kind of politics. It is also the kind of secure comfortableness that led to Watergate and the other abuses of power that Nixon voters let us all in for.

My kind of guy leads by initiative. Wayne Morse, George McGovern, Hubert Humphrey, Birch Bayh -- these men have taken personal positions that make no sense as reflections of the general feelings of their constituents. These are leaders. Thomas Kuechel of California was another one. Eleanor Roosevelt. Michael V. Di Salle. One of the tragic failures of the Ohio electorate was the way in which they rejected Mike Di Salle. I mean to except the Kennedys from this group of leaders. I think that so far they have been shallow manipulators.

I never felt John F. Kennedy was a substantive man. He never had the commitment to social programs that his Democratic predecessors had or that Lyndon Johnson subsequently demonstrated. I know of nothing in his record to distinguish him. He used the liberal and minority groups but was never truly their friend. History will hack away at his legend until the only thing left is the realization that he was the first of those of us who have learned to use the media well. He and Bobby gave us a bunch of racist Southern judges. It took him two years to sign the executive order on housing. A. Philip Randolph had to marshal the famous march on Washington before Kennedy would introduce the civil-rights bill. He escalated the war in Vietnam. As a Senator, he ducked being paired in the voting censuring Joseph R. McCarthy.

Kennedy was a hawk, a Cold Warrior. He, too, was a dilettante. When he became President he tried to work his programs into law with the same methods he had used to get into office -- public relations. It didn't work. Kennedy was disdainful of the Congress, contemptuous of the men who served there, and he surrounded

himself with men like himself, and so the style of the conduct of business was arrogant, often supercilious. And Congress, since it wasn't being appealed to in the traditional manner, through the trading of favors, the calling up of old debts or the creation of new ones, sat on his hands. It didn't actively fight him, it just did nothing. The public were the losers.

People don't seem to remember that just prior to his assassination, Kennedy was at an absolute low. He wasn't getting legislation through. He was tremendously unpopular. Even the liberals had been turned off. The Kennedys understood the use of the executive power outside of dealing with Congress. They brought the steel industry to its knees and they used the Justice Department ruthlessly. In order to "get" James Hoffa, they were as abusive of the Constitution as any of the Watergate conspirators were. I have to believe that he understood how to deal with Congress, but he didn't care to pay the price for those things, and I take those things to be the things that mattered, the domestic issues.

Hubert Humphrey is not well thought of since his years as Johnson's Vice-President, but that man was for so many years so far ahead of this time and yet had such a wealth of ability and drive that he was able to survive some of the most virulent attacks ever directed at a public figure. From 1946 to 1958, good men, I mean very good men, had to endure that sort of thing. He was an extraordinary mayor in Minneapolis. What happened to him? Perhaps it is easier to understand what happens to a man who wants a job like the Presidency very badly if you think about the extent to which you can humble yourself when you want a certain woman with whom you happen to love. When you have been and are a person of vision and of desire to do it your way, and it becomes so consuming to you that you begin paying prices (and you always pay price when you want something that others must give), once you start paying prices and move toward the goal, the more prices you are willing to pay, the less observant you become of how the prices are getting higher. Like water through the river,

the level stays the same, but the water is ever new, ever different. For the introspective man of integrity it is comforting to believe, "If I can just get there, then I'll be able to turn around and do the things I want to do." but you can't. Those prices are irretrievable. It's pitiful. You must never want something so much that the essence of it becomes just being there, getting it. The process that occurs with an obsession to rule or to won or just to belong can cost too much and when the cost is too great, the achievement is empty. In Hubert's case, he paid the price and still didn't win the office.

## 15

## THE FUTURE OF BLACK POLITICS

Shortly after the Hough riot in 1966, the local civil-rights and community groups practiced a bloodletting secession on the black councilmen. They held a meeting in the auditorium of the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, in which they seated the black councilmen in front of the audience and let the people get up one by one and verbally flay them for their lack of backbone, for their toadying to the local Democratic Party leaders, Bert Porter and Jim Stanton, for their tacit cooperation with the police who were brutalizing the black community. It was a long and humiliating evening for them, but it was merely the community's general attitude made manifest; the traditional black politicians in Cleveland had come to be held in contempt by their own constituents. Their constituents knew that most of them were just padding their own pockets and doing nothing of substance, knew that they were tied to the graft at City Hall as well as to the vice on the street.

Four years later when we formed the Twenty-first Congressional District Caucus, the executive board marched into the general meeting room and the crowd stood and cheered in a great display of unity and pride. Both the politicians and the people had come a long way in a short time. I would occasionally remind those councilmen of that long night in 1966 and remind them that, insofar as they stood up with us and fought the racism in City Hall, in the Council, in the Democratic Party, in the business community, in the newspapers, they had gotten respect, they had achieved a dimension with their people that was the complete reversal of the old image. They finally learned that what the white press called defeats were usually victories in the eyes of their own people.

We had brought the movement into politics and politics into the movement. In many significant ways, 1966 was the turning point. The civil-rights movement evidenced its era was over when Martin Luther King, Jr., went into Cicero, Illinois; its fire was picked up by the nationalists and its substance carried on by the discovery of black politics. The two were destined for conflict -- a clash that I fear has reached dangerous proportions.

The ability of black politicians to work for the interests of black people will not survive an association with extremism in a country headed on a conservative course. The forces of reaction are too great. If 12 percent of the people were physically to confront the other 88, challenging their control, they would be doomed. We have not begun to see the kind of repression this country could mount against its dissidents. I am talking about systematic, government-controlled violence. Terrorism.

At the national convention of the NAACP in 1966, I made a call for coalition politics and took on the volatile issue of black power. I rejected separatism as self-defeating; there is no way my people can develop economic independence as a geographically separate, quasi-sovereign people within the bounds of the United States. I told them that the way to better jobs, schools and housing was through the political process. The civil-rights laws were on the books by that time. The time for marching was over, I told them. It was time to move in, time to quit throwing rocks at the ripest apples, time to move in and politically shake that tree. In another speech that year, this one to the NAACP in Akron, I said we had to translate our fervor, our vigor from civil rights into the hard, practical struggle of regular politics somewhere within the prevailing political system. We could no longer afford to let the choice of candidates within the Democratic Party fall to men who did not have the interests of black people in mind.

In both of those speeches I outlined the basis for a coalition of blacks, poor whites, Puerto Ricans and liberals, a movement politics that would pull the professional politicians, the street-club president and the NAACP board member into an organization that

would hold force. Four years later, I was able to demonstrate that it had been done. We showed the Democratic Party that we were united and strong and that it could not operate without us. We went out and endorsed my old Republican opponent, Seth Taft, who was then running for county commissioner. We got behind him and beat the white Democrat in our heavily Democratic county. The next year, in the mayoral primary, we set up a strong campaign against Anthony Garofoli, who was Stanton's hand-picked candidate, and we beat him. We did it mainly to prove to the party that it could not operate without us. We were organized and we were disciplined, and we would not give quarter. We had had to create the Twenty-first District Congressional Caucus so that we could translate what had become personal loyalty to me into a pride of association with a political force that could prove itself in the arena. We did it.

Talking like this about the success of my own coalition politics in Cleveland, it all sounds very crisp and neat, easily translated to other cities, other situations. That has, unfortunately, not been the case. Since 1965, black people have been going through a state of confusion about what road to take, how to combine civil-rights goals with political methods. During all that time I was attempting to give other men in other cities the benefit of my understanding. I am afraid the lessons seldom took hold. The others often didn't have enough political experience to grasp the active principles of power politics.

In the spring of 1966, comedian, civil-rights activist Dick Gregory and went to Newark, a city with more than fifty-five percent black population, to help the campaign of Kenneth Gibson, a trained engineer who had never done anything political in his life. The civil-rights groups were for him, but the incumbent, Hugh Addonizio, had one of those traditional, corrupt political machines that seem to be indigenous to New Jersey -- a machine that had demoralized and neutralized most of the black population. When the oldest and most respected black politician in Newark declared for Addonizio, Gregory and I tried to put the heat on him. But

there was no heat and he knew it. The people neither understood nor cared what the issues were. We met with the black leadership and we called rallies. We were lucky to get a hundred people to show up for a mass rally, most of them already committed campaign workers. I tried to give Gibson some basic lessons in the principles of organizing, but there was just nothing in his background to prepare him for it. He is personally not built for the business. He went on to lose.

I mention this story because the very next year, all the Black Power people -- none of whom had been there to help in 1966 -- descended on Newark for the first National Black Power Conference and tore the town apart, screaming about how they were being excluded from participation in government. There were no Imamu Amiri Barakas, no Stokely Carmichaels around in 1966 when the city could have been taken peacefully, without violence and before a second four years of neglect, deterioration and decay had made it almost unrehabilitable.

Baraka has since told me he hadn't thought politics were relevant in 1966. It is unfortunate that he hadn't listened to Malcolm X, who, two years previously, had advocated ballots over bullets. It took his own arrest during the riot, the death of twenty-four black people, and over twenty million dollars in loss of housing for black people and the stores and businesses that once served them, before Baraka learned the relevancy of a process to gain power that ethnic minorities have used in Newark for over a hundred years.

I have much more respect for the people from Gary, Indiana, who came to Cleveland to learn from my 1965 campaign. Four men who identified themselves as black businessmen from Gary approached me early in the campaign. They told me they had this young fellow, Richard Hatcher, they wanted to run for mayor, and they wanted to learn how we put a campaign together. They went around and talked to most of our people, attending meetings, gathering material. I told them about how to deal with the white population (this wasn't so important in Gary, with its

predominantly black population, but they still had to contend with a vitriolic and racist local Democratic Party chairman). On election day they returned with some eight or more workers and assisted us at the polls. They helped and they learned. In 1967, when Hatcher ran for mayor, they put together a smooth operation that elected him handily. The lessons are clear.

By early 1969, a certain tide had turned, and I found myself in the position of having to do the reverse of what Martin Luther King had wanted to do in Cleveland in 1967. We had had Glenville, and my fights with the police were widely known. My star had been tarnished among just those people we had to treat most delicately, the marginal white voters. In Los Angeles, Thomas Bradley, a black, was running for mayor against the white incumbent, Sam Yorty. Now, Los Angeles had a black population of only eighteen percent. The matter was delicate in the extreme. Bradley called and wanted me to come out and campaign for him. I said that I would do anything he wanted, but that he should weigh carefully what would happen if I came out. There is no question but that my appearance would have helped solidify support in his black base, but there was also no question about what Yorty, a shrewd demagogue, would do with it among white voters. Bradley hadn't thought about it like that. He finally agreed that I ought to stay away, and I did. Even so, Yorty managed to drag Cleveland and its black mayor in as an issue, and he hurt Bradley with it. Yorty cried, Watts, Glenville, what next? Bradley was not able to get out from under the blanket of white fears. He lost. But he learned.

In 1973, Bradley conducted a low-key campaign in which he did not use any black leaders from outside Los Angeles -- as I had counseled him in 1969. When Bobby Seale, fresh from his defeat for the mayoralty of Oakland, gratuitously endorsed Bradley's candidacy, Bradley quickly moved to publicly reject Seale's endorsement. He didn't want to do it. But he had to if he wanted to keep those white voters whose fears he had so carefully allayed



over the four years. Bradley went on to swamp Mayor Yorty with almost 50 percent of the white vote. He had learned the game.

By 1970, I could see the writing on the wall. In 1967 it still seemed that the cities could be turned around; three years later the economic tide had turned and we were headed for even more problems than before. Our lack of resources, the high crime rate, the seemingly inexorable slide into decay and deterioration, the continued desertion of the cities by even the marginally affluent, the increasing unemployment and labor problems -- all these things were making cities virtually unmanageable. I could see that, for at least the time being, during a disastrous economic slump that was eroding our already pitiful tax base, the managers of cities could barely hold their ground.

Richard Austin, a very nice, clean-cut black gentleman who had been serving as Wayne County auditor in Michigan, wanted to run for mayor of Detroit. Jerome Cavanagh had thrown in the towel and announced he wouldn't run again. Austin called and said he wanted to come and talk to me. He came down with his wife and his campaign manager. They were obviously intelligent, decent people, so I advised them to stay out of the mayor's race. Austin had been serving successfully at the state level without having to grapple with the grit of social problems. Decency and intelligence don't win the battles in the jungle of city politics, and I could see that Austin was simply not cut out for jungle fights. It is perhaps a sad admission, but I know that to really understand the ingrained problems of cities, you have to have been part of them, not just the victim or the product of them. You are fighting everything, your own people, the white people, the police, everyone who wants to keep the status quo.

I told them to stay out, but I was talking to a wall.

"You see that Jerry Cavanagh is voluntarily not running, don't you?" I said.

"Yes," Austin said, "but we don't think he could win if he did run."

"That may be true, but he doesn't have to voluntarily step down. He could run and lightning could strike and he could get re-elected. But do you know of a man who has been a mayor in the country who knows cities any better than Jerry Cavanagh?"

They had to say no.

"Don't you think that if he had the grandest riot in the history of the United States, with damages in excess of fifty million dollars, a city that is obviously going downhill, spreading slums, increasing unemployment, doesn't this tell you something?"

I had to talk to him like that. He was not really a politician. He wanted to be mayor for the honor of the thing, and I knew it would turn out to be just the opposite of honor.

He laughed nervously and said, "We are sure all of that is true, but we're in this race to win." If there is a political phrase that is overused by losers, it has to be that one.

But I saw that I wouldn't convince him, so we spent the next hour talking about how to get institutional help, how to get ties into the Polish community that is so big in Detroit, how to approach the white working class, which could probably be done only through organized labor, taking advantage of its traditional strength and fairly liberal tradition. He indicated Walter Reuther was behind him, Leonard Woodcock was with him, and a black labor group, survivor of the old Negro Labor Council, was behind him. We talked for a while longer, we took some pictures for the media, and he went home to be defeated.

I later learned that they didn't even do the basic work in the black community. Some 57,000 registered black voters had stayed home on election day. It was the same thing that had happened in Newark in 1966, the same thing that had happened in Atlanta in 1970, when Andrew Young ran for Congress. Young had all the support of the SCLC and Julian Bond, and they still left 52,000 registered black voters at home. You can't do that. When I ran in 1967, although blacks made up less than thirty-eight percent of the population, we were forty percent of the registered voters, and we voted forty percent of the final vote.

Dealing with social activists in a professional political world has been a continual problem. The 1968 Democratic national convention saw the appearance for the first time of a national black political caucus. Congressman John Conyers from Detroit, Mayor Hatcher of Gary, Harry Belafonte and Mrs. Coretta Scott King were running things. They had put together a review board to examine the Presidential candidates, and the caucus was in process of determining which way to go. They asked me to come in and give a little speech.

I went into that room filled with some four hundred black people and received a terrific and loud welcome. I could have kept that spirit alive. No one asked me any questions, and all I had to say, "Brothers and sisters, I'm glad to see you all here; we gonna raise hell and we gonna win." There would have been a lot of yelling and hollering; I could have put the soul shake on Dick Hatcher and left in a roar of euphoria.

But that isn't how it happened. For me, politics is a business, the most vital business there is. I couldn't indulge in playing at politics in order to get my picture in the newspaper and that sort of thing at the expense of leaving the vital decision of the Presidency to somebody else. Now I was talking to the black people many of whom had been in the forefront of the civil-rights movement. They had paid their dues, and they knew what was going on in America. They were willing to keep up the fight, in their way. But they were not politicians. They still were clinging to the memory of the early 1960s and their marches. I was trying to tell them the hard reality we had right in front of us.

I told them that anything they wanted to do by the way of collective strategy on the Vice-Presidency, I would be with them all the way. But I said, "You cannot play around with the Presidency of the United States." The country was in a terrible uproar over Lyndon Johnson's handling of the war in Vietnam, over the cities being burned, the campuses being torn up, and I said we could not add to this disastrous situation by the way of some self-indulgent frivolity over the office that would make the

difference about what happened to the poor and the black for the next four years. The most important thing to face was whether the Democratic candidate was a man who could beat Richard Nixon. I told them that I was going to support Hubert Humphrey as hard as I could, and that they should think very hard before they chose to go with a candidate who could not beat Nixon. I reminded them that mayors like Dick Hatcher and I would have had no viability at all as young untrained managers of government had it not been for the support and assistance of President Lyndon Johnson. That was it. I repeated my pledge to go along with a strategy on the Vice-Presidency and walked out, accompanied by a shocked silence and scattered applause.

Richard Nixon did win, and by a margin so small that black people, had they been solidly behind Humphrey, could have reversed it. I think the men and women in that room have to carry part of the responsibility. Richard Nixon's election was as much a product of their failure to get the black vote out for Humphrey as was the actual vote by Nixon supporters. We could have beaten Mr. Nixon in the black neighborhoods.

In 1970, Louis Harris did an opinion survey for *Time* magazine to determine which black leaders were most respected by black people at large. The top two were organizations, the NAACP and the SCLC. I was next. No other single man was as respected by the people. To deserve that respect has meant that I have had to take positions for my people and advise them in ways that were not always popular, even with them.

The role I played in 1972 at the National Black Political Convention in Gary was necessarily negative. Before the convention, I wrote to the leadership around the country, some eighty people, that I was irrevocably against any endorsements of candidates. This, admittedly, was to stop them from joining Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm on her ego trip in the Presidential primaries. The view prevailed, but it was a rough fight. I looked at the situation we faced in 1972, and it was exactly what it had been in 1968. We faced the probability of four more

years of Richard Nixon as President. Yet many people were still out there playing games.

Shirley Chisholm got less than 1 percent of the popular vote. She couldn't even elect all her delegates in her own district. But attention to the real issue had been diverted. Richard Nixon was reelected-once again with an abysmally low black voter turnout.

I have reached the point of our most tragic and terrifying dilemma. Before laying things out further, let me back up and come in again from another angle, so that the local situation in Cleveland can come to be seen as merely exemplary, or a model of the situation I see facing us all. I am trying to avoid here letting anyone take an easy view of what conspiracies are.

Glenville, bad as it was, was a rhetorical prelude. Ahmed was a loud neurotic who enjoyed having followers. His actions were serious just to the degree that he was incapable of being serious. The actions of July 23, 1968, were foolhardy, suicidal; only an adolescent could have thought different.

When General Davis had told me that he could live with Harlrel Jones but that Baxter Hill had to go, I was confronted with a man who was supposed to control the peace-keeping function but who didn't know a dog from a wolf. Harlrel Jones (later Harlrel X) was a dangerous man who knew just how dangerous he was, a man who had learned to talk softly. He had his power in the ghetto, and he learned at some point -- earlier than Huey Newton -- to stop talking about hating white people or talking about burning down the courthouse and using guns. He learned that if you mean it, you don't broadcast it, you are only inviting persecution. The threat of violence from Harlrel was truly dangerous because he was committed to revolution. He was disciplined in the way that Bernadette Devlin and the Irish Republican Army are disciplined. Men like Harlrel are not to be understood in the simple-minded sensationalism of crime journalism, but in acknowledging the abiding and deeply personal willingness to die that is common to the real leaders of any oppressed people.

I mean the tradition of the Molly Maguires, formed to overthrow the oppressions of the coal-mine managers, or the Mafia, originally formed to keep a semblance of economic vitality in occupied Sicily. And I mean heroes like Patrick Henry, whose famous cry has lost so much of its meaning that it can be presented to schoolchildren as the remark of a patient martyr. The real import of Henry's remark of "give me liberty or give me death" is that a man willing to die for his freedom is willing to kill for it. Nobody ever presented Patrick Henry as a pacifist or as suicidal. We have in this country a peculiar facility for blunting the edges of our own most important truths, not wanting to face the fact that they may have to become actively true again. On Independence Day we do not remind ourselves of the Declaration of Independence, in which Thomas Jefferson wrote that, when institutions fail, the people have the right to overthrow them. We are reminded of that other, seemingly immutable document, the Constitution, which for seventy years held a provision counting a slave as two thirds of a man.

With a different orientation, Harlrel could have been a great leader in this country. He was absolutely without fear, and his amazing self-confidence, combined with his brilliant leadership abilities, could have brought people together for reform and mutual growth. He was absolutely, totally respected and feared in the Hough and Superior Avenue areas of Cleveland. He would walk up to a crowd on the edge of a fight and say, "Listen, brothers, we're going to stop this," and the people would stop. I never heard him raise his voice. Everybody knew the Harlrel did not play games. I regarded him as a valued ally.

People who do not live under the oppressed conditions of the ghetto simply cannot comprehend the force such a man develops, nor can they understand that that man has to be understood as a member of a social force, not as a criminal. All the Irish in this nation who stand up for the murders, the house burnings and the shooting of police going on in Northern Ireland, paradoxically turn around and demand of their councilmen, police, and other elected

officials that they put a stop to the black nationalists in America. They are wholly unaware of the irony of their position, an irony that masks a dangerous ignorance. The nationalists finally recognized this, and we find their leadership now telling the white media that they are through with violence, that they are going to urge their people to go into politics. What they are really doing is going underground. A movement like the Irish Republican Army can disappear because its members have the sympathy of the people and because they all look alike. The only way the black nationalist movement could survive was to become invisible at least among black people.

This is the place we have come to, this is where the black movement that split off from politics after 1965 has led us. There are people taking up arms, disciplining themselves. I even sympathize with them. I see the same things ahead that they do, and I am frightened and desperate over the direction I see this country headed in. But I can't take the step they have taken. I know that sometimes, to protect your people or your movement or to enforce discipline, you take a life. I am as capable of killing as they are. When I made the decision all those years ago to go back into Jinx Green's cheat spot in Toledo, I knew that he had said he would kill me, and when I shot him I wasn't shooting merely to wound.

What I am saying is that there is nothing in my own personal makeup that would make me shy away from violence just because it is violent. If I honestly felt that terrorism, the killing of selected people, would result in victory, progress or advancement, I would have a gun in my pocket right now. Although I know that the entire history of our country is a history of violence, of revolution, of a willingness to give up and take life for survival and change, I don't believe it will work for black people in this country. The nationalists have gone underground, preparing for the eventual creation of a black nation. They are preparing for the historic violence that goes with such struggles. They have learned not to telegraph their intentions to the white community, and have

learned that ultimate declarations require a much more sophisticated approach than the emotional rhetoric of the 1960s. No one should be surprised at this; it has happened before in other times, other places. America is going to have to work through it.

My fear comes from knowing the massive retaliatory powers of this country. This country knows how to defend itself. If it takes pogroms, there will be pogroms. If it takes concentration camps, there will be camps. Genocide practiced by a government is not impulsive or emotional. It is systematic.

The other side is going underground, too. If we could point to a Hitler and say, "He's the problem," it would be so much easier. But there is no single leader, no known organizer of a national conspiracy to oppress black people, just as there is no key figure in the nationalist movement. We are not talking about national moods. Look at the number of police in American cities who were slain last year, not accidentally killed trying to arrest someone, just systematically killed. Look at the number of bombings. Each bombing is an isolated incident, but together they number in the thousands. This is an expression of a change that is coming over the country faster and faster. In Cairo, Illinois, in 1972, police and blacks were in open warfare almost daily. The police are amassing arsenals suitable only for war. The U.S. Supreme Court is dismantling the protections of persons accused of crimes. Reactionaries are being elected mayors of major cities -- Philadelphia, Minneapolis and perhaps New York this year (1973).

What does it mean for the black politician? When Baraka, Roy Innis and other nationalists can use decent politicians like Richard Hatcher and Charles Diggs to take over a national black Congressional caucus, we can see that the signs are bad. These men are not idealists. They learned their lessons in the street, as I did. I know they are not playing around. Can regular, traditional politicians move far enough to the left to satisfy the new discipline that is forming? Even if they could move to the left, could they still function in the government? I don't know. I do know that these things are happening. I am loath to respond to what the nationalists



are doing. For reasons not even clear to me, I have reached this point, and I will not take the next step.

Politics is no box of Crackerjacks, it is not candy and popcorn and free prizes. I hope I have given a sense of some of the agonizing a politician goes through, and a sense of just how empty the big status-carrying positions can be. I would like to think I have helped people who are developing interests in government understand better how it works and how it fails. Ideally, this book should help prepare some people for a life in politics and should keep others out of the arena. There are a lot of people in politics who should be barbers or machine operators or schoolteachers, people who could make solid contributions in other lines of work. I have watched Politicians ruin people. An unfortunate legacy of the excitement of my early campaigns was that a couple of solid businessmen, white liberals, were seduced so far off track of their lives that they lost themselves. The glamour and glitter of campaigning, especially for a cause you believe in, can go over to an obsession with campaigning itself, and that can be ruinous. The fact is, politics is one of the most serious endeavors on earth. It changes the lives of people. This is something I think I can truly say I never forgot. I knew that the burden of my conduct in office wasn't sustained by me, it was carried by the people who had to have jobs, or welfare, or low-cost housing. Just as I have watched white liberals lose their sense of the realities of political consequences, so I have seen black leaders believe their own revivalist rhetoric and lose themselves-and our people-in playacting, while the real politicians were setting fire to the stage.

