

4-13-94 Maya Miller on U.S. Senate race in Nevada, 1974

4/13/74 - Maya Miller for US Senate (“labeled side B” but actually A I think)

Okay it's April 13, 1994 and we're going to talk with Maya today about the run for US Senate in 1974. It looks like what you did to get these brochure pictures was to go to your friends.

Yes, it does look like that.

Gus Bundy took pictures of you taking notes and talking to them and getting things down.

Yes, Ken had an idea of what he wanted to put into the flyer, and why, and he wanted a rancher like Jim Hollister, and housewives and Indians, and older women.

It looks like he used a medium format camera. Look at this of Maya and the Temptations or the Checkmates. And here's Maya with Harry Belafonte. And Maya and Dick, looking like and old sea-farer. (laughs)

I got into going house to house. And that's one of the recollections I keep thinking about, and find myself talking to people like Emma Sepulveda, who's thinking about running for State Senate. And how I had never been door to door for anything – not for the Red Cross, or Girl Scout Cookies or anything. And I was terrified.

Here's Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial. And Cicely Tyson Herb Caen.

Back to the beginning, how did you make the decision to run?

Well right before that, the thing I remember most is we had gone to Las Vegas for what must have been the beginning of the Nevada Women's Caucus. I had been back in Washington, and on the outskirts of that when Gloria and Bella and Shirley Chisholm and all started that National Women's Political Caucus, whose intent was to get women into political office. An I think that we must have been starting a Nevada Caucus here. I remember that Barbara Bennett was an important new friend out of that. She was a telephone operator and a member of the Communications Workers Union, and really was a gung-ho, down to earth, working woman and feminist. And so she was sort of a new element for me, because before that most of the people I knew were kind of League of Women Voters or artists or academics. But she hooked up with us for this effort. And Nancy Gomes and Mollie Gregory, who was a filmmaker and who lived here on the ranch. They were instrumental in finding a woman to run because it was an open seat. Alan Bible retired and he left this open seat. And the newspaper had touted the fact that it would be a Battle of the Titans. And it would probably be between Grant Sawyer and Mike O'Callahan. And since they didn't seem like Titans to us (laughs)...Especially influential was Nancy's whole totally unconventional cant on affairs, because she had this just wonderfully healthy disrespect for those guys. And she had know many of them in lesser degrees in politics.

She'd been in the legislature?

No, not then. She'd been just a Democratic worker. And her family had been early Democrats from Lovelock, and they were an older Nevada family, and there were a lot of them, so they were well known. And she had known the Alan Bibles and McCarrens. But what we did there was to go down to this meeting where we talked about the possibility of running somebody for the United States Senate. We tried to get Jean Ford to run, or someone of the women who'd been in the legislature, and nobody would do it. And then Nancy and Mollie an all got to talking, and just said they thought I ought to run.

And you were there listening to that?

Yes and you know one of the things that's obvious in retrospect is that it was totally naïve (chuckle) and fool-hardy, but because it was so obvious that the Big Boys in the state had it sewed up – their ideas of what ought to be done. They hadn't decided – Mike O'Callahan hadn't decided and he wasn't letting anybody know. Harry Reid was his IT. Governor then. But the one thing they knew, that one could have guessed if one had thought a lot about it, was that they were not about to let somebody come in that was out of the loop – out of their loop. And that all the things like raising money would be put in the way.

I think you knew that, didn't you, when you started?

I knew that they were opposed, yes. And I also knew that the likelihood of winning was not great. But I also thought – and we all thought -- that it was worth the shot. That it was something that ought to be done. If you wouldn't seize this opportunity with an open seat in a really cheap state to run in, and one where the numbers were possible, that it would never happen. That one needed to do that then. And I don't know whether that was a reality or not but, at any rate, it was clear, too, that the effort was serious, and that it was bold, and that we meant to win – that it wasn't just an exercise in futility.

Well, I think that what you haven't said yet, is that there were no women in the U.S. Senate. So that was a significant challenge for any feminists worth their salt. Also, I remember you saying at the time that running for the Senate was just the same as running for Congress in this state, because each of those is a state-wide race. Then it was, when we only had one Congressperson, so it was relatively cheap.

And one of the things I learned working with the League of Women Voters was what the leverage factor was in the Senate for people in a small state. Compared to California, for instance, where there were like 36 people for every person in Nevada. You had the opportunity of getting to your senator 36 times more. And your senator was just as powerful as the one from California, assuming the same amount of seniority, compared to Congress.

Right. Congress is something you have to keep running for every two years, and the Senate is something you get in, you have six years. And it has this small states leverage that is built into the Constitution to break the deadlock. And so everything seemed really obvious. It seemed as though this is the time that a woman should run. And it was too bad we couldn't find a woman who had been in office, or who had run for office before. I think now we would make a more careful survey to find that.

That's true. But at the same time, do you think that actually that would have made the difference? that Jean Ford might have been able to win, where you couldn't?

Oh, I don't know.

How long did it take you to decide? And what factors did you weigh?

Well by Christmas I decided. But I do realize that in retrospect we didn't do one of the things that you read about people doing now, and that is sitting down and having a family conclave about it.

Well we were at college. And I'm sure you talked to Dick about it.

Yes, talked to Dick about it. But not very exhaustively, I think. And then it must have been right after Christmas that I went back East. Nancy Gomes and Barbara Bennett and I went back East to a political meeting of the National Women's Political Caucus, and it was those people who were interested most in the politics. So this was a meeting run from the floor, but actually run by other women. But run from the floor by Don.(?)

People from every state?

Yes, well not from every state because they couldn't manage to get there. But we had gone there because it seemed like a good forum to get approval and an early endorsement. And that was the first note of cold, really (chuckles). And that was that at every point. Bella (Abzug) signaled to the woman that was in charge, who was from Arkansas, not to allow the endorsement of me to go through. And finally – and Nancy and Barbara and I had sat through these endless task forces and discussions during the day. And this was the full plenary session when they were making their endorsements. But it was clear, I think, in Bella's mind, that she wanted to be the first woman to run for the Senate.

Was she running that year.

No she wasn't. It would be another 2 years before she would run.

That witch

Well, yes. And finally, we decided we had enough and left. Because first Nancy had proposed it, and they had wiped her out with some parliamentary procedure, and then

Barbara Bennett had gotten up and given this ringing endorsement about how the women if Nevada wanted us to run. And that was swept aside too.

So the National Women's Political Caucus, to their shame, did not endorse the first woman to run.

That's right. Did not endorse. Right. Yeah. In 50 years, in Nevada. Because, you know, we always have this model of Ann Martin who ran 50 years before. But it was true that the Women's Caucus didn't do it, and that was a real blow. And some one of her minions ran after us and asked us – said Bella wanted to talk with us. (chuckle) I can't remember – we must have gone back and talked to her, but the burden of that talk was that I had supported her through a lot of her earlier campaigns, you know with money, and that it was shocking to us. And we had come all this way!

And she hadn't had any excuse?

No. She was just sorry, and never explained it. But it was really disappointing! And it gave you a clue to what you would have to put up with and try to finesse so that you didn't just go and hit your head against a wall.

Had you announced at that point?

I guess I had. I can't remember that. I also had this period in Washington which was different from this trip. And I can't remember whether it was after Christmas, it seems to me it may have been. But when Sandra Kramer took me on and she was a friend of Barbara Bodie's. She was very politically minded, from Louisiana, and she was the wife of John Kramer whom I'd known in the White House Conference on Hunger. He'd been a very prominent lawyer who had formulated a lot of the strategy, and he was a fun and witty and entertaining man, and she was a southern belle, beautiful. But she was very political. And what she did then was take me around, make appointments for me with the heads of all the progressive unions that had voted for McGovern.

Didn't they have a salon, the Kramers, where they would invite – and it became the fashionable thing to go to the Kramers' liberal dinner. They must have gotten to know a lot of people that way too.

Yes. She took me to meet the Electrical Workers Union, and the head of... She was a friend of Barbara's and something of a feminist, she was a southern feminist (chuckle). But that was also revealing to me, going those rounds and asking for money. And nobody gave it. There were various ones like the mashinists. Whipisinger. It was sort of like Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. (chuckle) It was this totally naïve person with a sense of the principles involved and the need to do it and then being introduced to these sort of realities.

Did you come across other positive people in Washington?

Well, yes! For instance the head of the oil chemical workers, and he had all these wonderful maps about Vietnam, showing that it was the oil that was driving our interest. Now he's famous, one of the union people whose name eludes me. But at any rate, that was number 2 activity. And, what Sandra then did was to tell me I needed a campaign manager, and she got Ken to come in and spend some time with us.

And so you met Ken Bode there?

And so I met Ken Bode through Sandra. And we talked, and he was just at that point, you could see, where he really wanted to see and practice how it worked, because he'd written the New Rules of the Democratic Party that let in all these others, like women and young people and minorities, that were the "McGovern Rules," that were the only positive thing that came out of the 1968 Convention. And then he'd been in Europe for a year, and he then was just coming back. And he had done some graduate work in North Carolina or something in Political Science, and it was there that he and George Will became good colleagues who enjoyed each other, even though they were politically really opposed. And later on he got George Will to come and visit with me, and Will wrote that "Peace calmed the _____ world (?)" (laughs) Do you remember that?

He must have – it was the 1972 Democratic Convention where they actually tried to apply those rules, didn't they?

Yes, right.

Which were more or less quotas of involvement by minorities and women.

Yes, they were. Right, right. And it was this one that convinced everybody in the Democratic Party that it was fatal because they only carried one state or something like that that year. Massachusetts?

Oh, that was McGovern in '72.

Yes, so what they did in the Democratic Party after that was to actively roll back those rules, wipe them out.

And Ken, when he came to work on your campaign, he was only about 32 wasn't he? Yeah, he must have been. He couldn't have been much older than that. It probably was really good to have someone like that who had never run a campaign – I don't think he's ever run one since! He's very different from the types I see now running, for instance, Jan Jone's campaign.

And he wasn't from Nevada – he wasn't part of the old guard.

No he wasn't. And Nancy had kind of case that whole situation out, but everybody was so tied in with the establishment here that it seemed impossible. And it was really great then to have this fresh, ebullient, and for me great to have someone who was witty and fun and

who knew the national scene and everything. And ultimately it turned out that that was what allowed us to raise the money we raised through direct mail. Because it touched in at a really critical time the possibilities you could see. You can see that in looking through these ledgers of who gave what. I mean they gave from, I think, every state in the union.

The economics of it was that that year was the only year that there was a cap on how much the candidate could spend, and that was fortunate for me because we would have probably materially overspent my money. As it was, there was a lid of I think \$35,000 or something like that. Really amazingly low. And we supplemented that by doing things like housing people and feeding them. And there were volunteer. And then there were young people who were paid a little. Like Jerry Smith and Nanette Falkenberg. And Carol was my scheduler. Those were the people he brought in. And we had you.

And a lot of my friends came and worked in the spring and summer. And the ones from Evergreen got credit for it! (laughs). But I think I had at least one full-time volunteer working there who I had recruited each segment of the campaign.

I think Ken first came out in Feb or early Jan. And I remember I was assigned to LA Vegas, and Marty and I drove down there together. And she was doing some welfare reform stuff there. And we found that house, or Ken found that house, and kind of set up housekeeping. I was living there with Ken and Carol, who was your scheduler, who he was living with at the time. And I think we were the campaign at that point.

Do you remember before that our trying to case out Las Vegas, and our having a date down there and the flights not going out of the airport? And Ken commissioned a little plane and you and I went down with him and Carol. And when we got down there, Nancy had sort of gotten her sister, Leola Armstrong, to get this preliminary little feeling out meeting. And we met them at somebody's house, and there were like 4 people there, and one of them was Leola. But one of them was Renee Diamond, and we sort of discussed what it was like. And they were part of the system, so they knew better than we did, and it was not encouraging, really. And during the course of that meeting, Ken got this mortal blow – a telephone call from the East. That what he called the Irish Mafia, namely Ted Kennedy and company, had put thumbs down on my candidacy because they were so supportive of Mike O'Callahan, who was one of theirs. And I can remember Ken's really feeling – he probably felt the same way Nancy and Barbara and Luanne felt at being betrayed by...Bella.

By the women!

Yeah. I mean he'd worked with Teddy Kennedy and all (chuckle), and sort of counted on having that entrée. But there were, of those four people, the person who really came through was Renée. And it illustrates, I think, the fact that you can't ever tell. (laughs)

Yeah, like that meeting you had here about the Tahoe Park, when one of the few women who came ended up lobbying all the Republican legislators. And Renée ended up being a full-time volunteer for the duration. She was tireless.

And food for all of us!

She's invite us to her house for Passover sader, and give us comp tickets to casino shows, remember? Her husband Leo worked for Slots of Fun. And she would come in the morning with goodies. And she was very positive and cheerful.

Yes, and that's sort of what I remember about the early days of that campaign -- well, all through it, really -- was the amount of good cheer and fun there was. I guess there was a lot of sordid back biting and complaints about one another, but Ken succeeded in keeping that away from me. And that's probably to the good. The candidate has to stay very clear about the objective and not get caught up in these sort of...

I do remember you getting caught up in scrubbing the floor a couple of times, in desperation that nobody else was doing it. And Ken getting really mad that the candidate was reduced to scrubbing the floor because everyone else was too lazy to do the housework. (laughs). But how did things start off? I mean for you, did you get dates to speak around the state?

Part of what I remember that was valuable was Ken's requiring that I sit down and type out a piece -- think out a piece -- on the issues that I cared the most about, and write about them. And so I did that, and in one of the files there is that sort of draft. And those issues had to do with inflation and...

Well, there's a piece here -- "To Maya from Ken on endorsements". I don't know, some of this may have been from him, and some from you.

I guess he gave me these questions. "Nevada has traditionally overcome its small state status by sending representatives to Congress who accrue seniority. Some have suggested that your opponent has more likelihood of acquiring seniority. Are you too liberal for conservative Nevada? What's the difference between you and your main opponents as you see them?" And you wrote out long answers. And here we have Harry's name, so it sounds as though he had maybe become a candidate.

That wasn't till April.

Maybe this is a later piece.

Tax reform was very high on my agenda.

I remember you talked a lot about tax reform and honesty in government. And being an outsider to Washington was a positive at that point because of Watergate. And the Watergate hearings were happening that summer on television. He won the second term

in '72, and then in '74 when you ran, was right after Watergate was exposed, and he was out of there by August, which was right before our election here.

Yes, and he used that. One of the facts that Ken really wanted to present about me was that I was on Nixon's Enemy's List, and that was a big plus. In fact I just pulled up this piece entitled, "Who doesn't want Maya Miller in the U.S. Senate?" How appropriate! And that was one of Ken's I think, geniuses, was to come up with something like that that's really catchy. It's about 8-10 page newsprint sort of tabloid that, I think, he put together early on.

And the first one who doesn't want Maya Miller in the U.S. Senate was Richard Nixon. (laughs) And then, "Maya Miller was named to Nixon's Enemy's List."

And Nixon looks very mean.

Oh yes. And I look very inspired.

And then the second one. "Who doesn't want Maya Miller in the U.S. Senate: Chevron, Exxon, Shell." And this is the beginning of the energy crisis.

Big oil companies. A list of tax loopholes Maya Miller would like to see plugged. I had enough – because of my father being an oil man, I had enough oil stocks to see how they were benefitting by lack of being taxed. And what was needed to plug some of those loopholes. The loopholes were big that had been kept by some of those southern Senators.

And then here we have: "Nevada Power doesn't want Maya Miller in the U.S. Senate."

Oh, yes. I had a very interesting conference with the high officers, the president and vice president, and so forth, of Nevada Power, during which they finally (chuckles), in desperation, asked me, "You wouldn't want the shareholders to have to pay those costs?" I was objecting to all this expansion, and then passing that on to the tax-payers. "But you wouldn't want the shareholders, the shareholders who live in New York."

End Side A

Side B 4-13-94

Maya: Ken Bode (campaign consultant) asked me to write up my thoughts on why I wanted to run. I can remember getting up early in the morning and coming into where I had a lamp and a chair and curling up and doing that really hard thinking about why it is you want to run. The issues that drive you may not be the saleable issues. They may be the ones you just put out for your friends, and your campaign manager, but that he in his judgement, or she in hers, have to decide what you really can go on the campaign trail with.

Well, I think that's pretty clear with your issues. You can't go on the campaign trail saying, "welfare reform" and "poor mothers with children." (laughs)

Yes. But you can say that the big utilities are ripping off the common person, and that's kind of the translation for the public. At any rate, we did do some campaigning up here. Ken set up a sort of skeleton campaign HQ over in a house on our place. And I also recall that Christmas vacation – before we announced, and when I said to you all that I was going to run, and you said you were not going back to school, you were going to work on my campaign. And Eric said, "Well, I'm not." (laughs) But then he did in the summer.

But I guess fairly soon we moved the action to the house in Las Vegas. Then I don't know how they got events, you know. The job of scheduler is really an incredible job. IT calls for scanning the paper, and keeping in touch with who's who in the community and knowing the events. And then getting you on the schedule for all those events, and having you appear at different things. And then we did have two media people – Denis Myers and Dave Cooper.

The idea was to get you in the press and make sure the press knew where you were appearing and get you on the talk shows.

Yes, and I think Carol Randalls must have done a lot of that. I wonder who, for instance, set up the Harry Belafonte thing, and the others with show people. I guess they must have somebody who was related to the theater world and made connections. And there was money raising in different places, like those pictures of San Francisco with Cecil Williams, Cicely Tyson and Herb Caen.

I didn't put my head around the money part of it. I had this agreement with Ken about the amount of money that he and Carol would get. And then, ultimately he negotiated that down, because we didn't raise that amount of money, and you have to keep spending. It's a constant rat race of trying to get out enough stuff that costs money so that you can be heard.

I remember the first thing I did in the campaign was walk the precinct where we were living, in some non-descript part of Las Vegas. The campaign was very much focused on walking precincts. In Feb or March we rented an office in Las Vegas. We had these big precinct maps on the walls, and eventually hired a volunteer coordinator.

John something, his father was a famous minister. He had gone to one of the groups in Washington and asked what kind of campaign they could turn him onto that would be a progressive campaign (laughs).

That's good. They sent him out here into the Wilderness. And he was really enthusiastic and got lots of volunteers on board. We had a back room that we all worked out of.

The worst part of it, for me, was going to these events that somebody would have for you, with their friends, and having all the little table things, the cookies and stuff, and then have two people come! (laughs) But the part about going door to door became really exhilarating to me. I got so that I really enjoyed it. And I found out that there are very few people who slam the door in your face.

They were very flattered to have the candidate come. Even the candidate's daughter!

Yes, and I liked the part about handing out your literature to people, like the Test Site workers. We'd go out at 4:30 in the morning, to the bus stops, where a whole busload of them would come, and you got a chance to meet them and give them your stuff. And that was fun. Because part of it is that in ordinary life, especially an ordinary life like mine living out in the countryside, you don't get to meet all those different people. And you don't have any impetus to meet them and greet them, and be pleasant with them, and importune them to vote for you. And that's a real challenge! (laughs)

And I went to graveyard shift changes in the casinos. Those weren't terribly good places to get votes because at that time they were not particularly focused. In retrospect, the places that we didn't do enough work were the sort of the hardest, were in the boonies. We did go out to Elko and to Ely and Fallon and Winnemucca and all, but we didn't really spend enough time there. And one of the things that Ken observed afterward was that people say in those boonies, people tend to go to the primaries. There isn't so much competition as there is in the city or activity, so people get turned onto going and voting. At that time, they were a lot more Democrats.

In Elko, I remember this hall full of people who were Constitutionalists – there was something about the Constitution that was a big, heavy thing out there, and I was on the other side of where the true believers were. And I knew that they hated environmentalists there! (laughs) So the first thing I said was, “I just have to say to you that you are looking at a true environmentalist!” (laughs) And then went on from there.

That's pretty gutsy! Might as well get it over with.

And did much the same thing at a union meeting, where I had to go and where somebody actually did shout out that I should, “go home and make dinner for my husband!” (laughs). But by that time, there was the Harry Reid signboard up everywhere that said, “he's younger, he's tougher, he can't be bought!” (note: Kit remembers this as “He's younger, he's tougher, nobody owns him”)

“He can't be bought,” I think. And at the union meeting, I took occasion to say that I'd seen that sign, and that it certainly was true that he was younger, but I would give them a written guarantee that I was tougher! (laughs) But to talk to big groups of people who were clearly opposed to you is really a challenge.

I think meeting people is your forte. And you almost never meet a woman running for US Senate. And you're a very memorable and warm person. I think Ken said that probably

everyone who met you personally voted for you. So it almost became a matter of how many people could a candidate meet personally!

Well, and I sort of understand that. I can remember when I was trying to decide to run, being on a plane to Las Vegas, and looking down and thinking, "This is not so big, I could walk all of this. But it isn't true – you can't!"

And all those precincts where they have big chain link fences and dogs!

I remember Ken being sort of disarmed that there was such a high proportion of Las Vegas with these big sandy yards, with all kinds of burglar alarms and chain fences and dogs. And how do you even get to the front door, you know? And big signs that say, "No solicitors." And also, such a number of people who are sleeping in the daytime. So you had to really be careful not to bother the people who had signs that said Don't Solicit.

I don't think that people like Jan Jones now go door to door. Jan Evans does for her assembly district

I'm not sure that anyone has ever done what you did, in terms of the scope and variety of locations that we covered on foot.

Yes, and I think that because of the great volunteers that you and your friends were, it must have been a refreshing sight, sound.

And there were the women from the West Side

Yes, yes, and you know that year Ruby ran for Assembly. So the events on the West Side were something else again. Both the ones going to church, which I did with Bernice Moten., then the ones with the women from Welfare Rights. I know that Ken was taken aback that they wanted "walking around money." You know the ministers had always had it before. The politicians know where to give the money and they give it to the ministers, and then the ministers sort of dole it out to the people who are willing to go around and get people out on election day and all. That's an old time-proven method of getting out the vote, the vote that you want. But the thing that was a surprise was to have that political power in the hands of somebody like Ruby Duncan. And she had learned that from Harriet Trudell. Who had taught her about the precinct, how you go to the precinct meetings, and how then you go on to the county meeting, and in each of those you have to round up your people to be there. And to have them prepared to be a solid block of votes. And then you go to the state one. And the state one was the big one, when they rolled out the Harry Reid signs. Do you remember that? The State Democratic Convention?

There were these huge signs on either side of the podium, and with music appropriate, they rolled them out, and they said, "Harry Reid for U.S. Senate," and it was his announcement. I think he had not announced before. Everyone was wondering whether it would be Governor Mike O'Callahan, and whether O'Callahan was going to announce at

this, instead of that, he appointed his Lt. Governor. And everyone who knew how to play the game had their accouterment out, their flags and the whole place was a playground with Harry Reid's name everywhere!

How awful!

Yes, and I remember we had some issue having to do with welfare that we had gotten Grant Sawyer's promise to support us in and then he backed out.

That's when I called Grant Sawyer an asshole. Not to his face, but to some of the welfare women. And Edie Katz was right behind me and she just got so irate that I would say that. And then I had to grovel and apologize because I was the candidate's daughter, in order not to start like an international incident.

Yes, I remember.

But thinking back on the West Side. I remember it was around Easter that you actually went to Israel and made a Middle East trip. And then I went to church with you on the West Side. You talked about standing in Galilee. And everyone had the fans from the funeral parlor. But you were so popular among all those people.

You mentioned precinct meetings, which reminded me that I was 18 at the time, and I wanted to be part of the political process, so I went to my first precinct meeting in Las Vegas. And at 8: sharp, they locked the door of these people's house, and actually sent a couple of people away because they got there a couple minutes late.

They had gotten their people there probably. It was a way of controlling the process.

I remember walking precincts when it was like 110 degrees, although we'd try to make it in the early evening when there was a little stirring of the air. But mostly I remember just going to event after event! (laughs). I think Ken kept wanting to connect with casino entertainment people for fundraising. But I don't think we ever did a terrific job of that, but we were on the program of that revue Bottoms Up (laughs).

Breck Wall's Bottoms Up. I think it's still running!

I think it is too! Just a terrible show! And I had to be on the stage at 4 in the morning, or something like that, on a stool. (laughs) And they had a cast party afterwards, with Buddy Hackett. Well, I think that Ken must have thrown himself into that, but wondered what he was doing, really, and Carol too.

As I recall, the direct mail that you did, which was like 100,000 pieces, was one of the first direct mails ever done for fundraising.

Well, it's true that McGovern had raised his money from direct mail. And Ken was very influenced by that. He was impressed by how people responded. And they certainly did.

Looking through these, there were \$25, 35, 50, and then \$200 and \$500 from a New York couple. I think the desire to have a change in the Senate was so great in that period of time. These checks were from Virginia, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Boston. Ken got the lists, I think from the Americans for Democratic Action.

One of the things it taught me was that women don't think big when it comes to giving. Sawyers gave \$500, you know. But here is Barbara Moffett from the American Friends Service Committee, and I remember the day that came in and it was \$1,000, and everyone was so amazed! And Bob Choate, who started Food For All, sent \$1,000. And then this friend of my father's, Stewart Morsehead sent \$1,000, and we were all dumbfounded, and in this little letter he says, "I hear you're a Democrat. Well, OK, you're honest anyway!" (laughs)

We know some of these names, and the other ones – I remember the envelopes coming in and taking turns to open them, because everybody wanted to. They were coming in from all over the country, with your picture, a little drawing of you, on them.

Well that's interesting. What it led to, actually, the whole business of money, was Sandra Kramer and I goading them into starting the Women's Campaign Fund, so that then after I lost and went back to Washington, I went onto the Board with her. But she had actually started it just before I came back. But it just is clear that early money...

...is like yeast?

Yes, is like yeast. Here is Carol Bernstein Ferry, who usually gives like \$500 to a big group, gave \$2,000!

Did you use that list for the Women's Campaign Fund? I bet this was a pretty hot list.

Oh I don't remember. It was a hot list, yes. We raised something like \$80,000.

That's pretty amazing. And then how did things progress through the summer? I remember having an influx of people out walking precincts in 100 degrees! (laughs)

Yes, we did seem to have a lot of people drop by on their way to California and work for awhile.

End side B

4-22-94 Maya Miller US Senate Campaign of 1974 (wrap up)

Maya: So there are some things having to do with the campaign still yet to cover. One of them was what we did about television and signs and all. It was clear that we didn't have the money for big billboards, and didn't have money for very much TV. But we did just a little bit, somebody did a little piece that had those things in it and it ran maybe a few times.

So a little bit of television, but then radio – we did have radio spots.

And we also had yard signs that they put up around, but it was really a very low financed campaign.

And Ken had a lot of posters that said, “If you care about tomorrow, vote for Maya today,” with a little boy and a Maya Miller for Senate balloon, so there were some fun things like that. And then how about the song that was used on the radio, maybe you could talk about who wrote it.

Well, Janice who lived across the lake and was a songwriter, she wrote this song that I can't remember at all, but I'm glad to know that you can, and that you would like to sing it for us.

I don't know about that. First I think it should be said that Ken had this idea that a song was the thing to raise name recognition and he thought that because of Birch Bayh, who had run for Senate in Illinois? And nobody could pronounce his name and nobody knew who he was. So somebody came up with, “Hey look him over, give him the eye. First name is Birch and his last name is Bayh.” Ken just thought that was terrific and apparently that like carried the day and made a difference in his name recognition. IT was catchy and so Ken really wanted to have a Maya Miller song, so he set out to find somebody to do it. I don't know how he found Janice Gayle. Didn't you have some event at Emily Griel's where they introduced the song to you? I wasn't there but I heard it was terrific. Do you have the tapes of that?

It goes: “Not long ago, the air around was pure and sweet/and the water flowed clear and crystal clear/ and the mountains sang with songs of what this countr needs/ Now there's someone who'll help us get it back again” And here's the chorus: “And then there's Maya, step up and meet Maya/ And shake the hand of one who cares, cares about you!/ Someone for all the people/ Someone to trust in / And what Nevada needs is Maya Miller now!” (next verse) “Lending a hand and caring made our country great/ so a woman and man could keep their family fed/ but the price of food has climbed too high to fill the plate / Now here's someone who can help us stand up straight again.”

I remember it was on the radio quite a bit, because we spent our money on radio time, and used the song. That was one of the fun things that really jacked people up.

There was one other point, about the second Miller, the third candidate.

Maya: Just a little bit before filing ended, they brought in this other Miller who was some sort of jock. He was an entertainment director on the Strip for morels, and that was sort of an old Nevada system for bleeding the vote away, so that voters wouldn't know which Miller was which. I think that was one of the reasons Ken was so interested in making the “Maya” come across so that you know how to pronounce it and you would know how to vote for the right Miller. But isn't it funny that they do that?

And he of course dropped into total obscurity after the vote, I think he got 10 percent.

Because figuring out all those things, what percent you've gotten and what you haven't gotten, was something I couldn't deal with. But they did do some of it afterwards, both down in Las Vegas and up here.

Why don't you talk about the Westside voting? I remember getting out the vote – that was well organized.

Do you remember going around with a loudspeaker through the neighborhoods, and playing the song and having your friends with you? Ruby and all her friends? Bernice Moten took me to the churches, and that was interesting. The ministers were the traditional way people used to get the vote of the black side, but Ruby, under Harriet's instruction, had learned the system, the old precinct, county, state system and the way to get out the vote, so she constitute the only threat the preachers had ever had. This one minister was hovering too close to the ballot box for Bernice, and he did something to her, called her some name, I think a "whore", and she then went home and got the broom she keeps beside the front door as her weapon, and brought it back and used it on him to sweep him away from getting too close to the ballot box. The next day her mother called first thing from Arkansas, and said "Bernice, what's this I hear you threatening an officer of the Lord with a broom!"

Well I'm sure you carried the Westside.

Yes we carried the Westside. They said what we got was 37% of the vote and that was respectable. But then there was the terrible thing like the election night party. I'd been up here just before and had gone through a casino or two up here and at the lake and it was pretty depressing. At any rate, we lost, and then the question was, "What's the aftermath to that?" And it was to actually clean up down in Las Vegas and move up here. But the good thing that we did, that I thought was important, was when we got up here Ken organized a whole mailing to try and pay off the \$20,000 debt. I thought that was really honorable, and the amazing thing was that we practically did, we raised just a little bit less. It's a fair thing to do to the people who contribute to you and I'm sure that these lists must have been from those who had already given. It acknowledged the defeat but added up the positives. A very good thing to do. Then the Harry thing. Ken and I had to get together with Harry in order to support him in the general election, that what Democrats do.

Why was that important to Ken?

I can't imagine. I think he really wanted a record of having played it straight.

Was he also concerned about Paul Laxalt?

Actually, we did do a release or two that had to do with Paul, but it wasn't directed toward him. I think it was important because he was hooked up with the Democratic Party, and he had an investment in these new rules that brought in all these new people and this was a piece of practice that he wanted to have done. I guess doing it properly involves acknowledging defeat publicly the night of the election and having it over and throwing your support behind the Democratic candidate.

Which you didn't do that night, did you?

Oh, no, no, not that night. In fact for me it was a, I thought, in a way, Ken, I think, was interested in following the protocol so that these people that he had written up the rules for and that were let into the Party would just be anarchic, but they could be organized into forces would change.

So do you remember meeting with Harry?

Oh yes, it was right here. We talked and he showed some interest that afternoon, in, I think he had read the polls about the black community and thought that he really needed to understand that community. And he was interested in what I had to say about the maids in the casinos. He said he'd been to many of the casinos on the campaign trail and that he never would have thought about those people, and of course those people were Ruby. And so to his credit, later on, he accepted Ruby's invitation to be on her board, Operation Life Board, when it had become a community development corporation, when it was trying to do these capital building operations, and Harry served on that. It was quiet most of the time, and at one very critical point he served them well I thought.

Since then he's shown himself to be an environmentalist, I mean since he's been in the Senate. He's gotten quite a reputation what with the Truckee River Water Project and the Pyramid Lake Indians, trying to settle all of that. Did you have any indication of that at all when you met with him?

No no, he had a complicated family, but as far as really understanding the environment, or thinking about it positively, unlike Paul Laxalt. My theory about the environmental policy of the Truckee River Water Project is that is a democratic issue that he inherited from Alan Bible. Alan Bible kept going throughout his life his unadulterated respect and devotion to keeping the water going to those farmlands. Because of this democratic issue, I think that Harry, also because he was from the south it make it easier for him to take the heat and to be for the people.

The election night, the general election, I did go to the Democratic headquarters, and there was a tape and everyone was watching the returns. And so there was Landra, Harry's wife, sitting all by herself. If he'd been winning they would have been all over her, and so I went over and spent the evening chatting with her. It was the most forlorn atmosphere, you know, all these big signs on the wall. I think that was the end of the Senate campaign. There were all sorts of reverberations afterwards, little ones, like getting to do the weekly program on CBS with Frank Farenkoff, and people who stop you

in the market and thank you. And of course lots of psychic results that hang on. It was a really outstanding effort and one that I don't regret at all.

Did you feel that it had kind of gotten you into the nooks and crannies of Nevada that you had never explored, into places like the casinos?

Yes, the casinos and Las Vegas. We spent very little time in the rural communities where there wasn't a big vote, and I had been to a lot of those when we had first moved to Nevada, did a lot of exploring. The thing that I did get acquainted with was the streets and the Test Site and the casinos and the air-conditioned life of Las Vegas. It would've taken a long time to have gotten that much glimpse, the people that come forward to support you. They give you massages when you're peaked.

And I remember for years after, people were always encouraging you to run again.

END