

Oral History Interview

with

MANNING J. POST

Member, Commission on California State
Government Organization and Economy, 1961 - 1982

October 28, November 11, December 16 and 19, 1987
Los Angeles, California

By Carlos Vásquez
UCLA Oral History Program

For the State Government Oral History Program
California State Archives

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

Oral History Program
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California State University, Fullerton

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Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

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Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

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Interview Time and Place:

October 28, 1987
Post's home in Beverly Hills, California
Session of one and three-quarter hours

November 24, 1987
Post's home in Beverly Hills, California
Session of one and three-quarter hours

December 16, 1987
Post's home in Beverly Hills, California
Session of one and one-half hours

December 29, 1987
Post's home in Beverly Hills, California
Session of two hours

Editing

Vásquez checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the introductory materials.

Post reviewed the edited transcript and returned the transcript to the UCLA Oral History Program with only minor corrections.

Papers

There exist no private papers which the interviewer was able to consult for this interview.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives at UCLA along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Manning J. Post was born in Chicago, Illinois, on January 3, 1918. He was educated in Chicago public schools and attended the University of Illinois, where he studied psychology and economics. His education cut short by the Great Depression, Post at an early age established various businesses, usually while concurrently employed in sales, manufacturing, and other fields.

Post moved to California during World War II and worked as a salesman, account collector, and office manager for a construction project, before starting a used car business. In 1947 he was an associate, then executive producer of "Fireside Theatre," one of television's first dramatic series. Post went back into automobile sales in 1953 when he opened the first Volkswagen dealership in Los Angeles.

He first became active in California politics as an aide to Congressman Ellis E. Patterson and, in 1948, was Patterson's campaign manager in his unsuccessful bid for the United States Senate. A life-long Democrat, Post went on to become treasurer of the California Young Democrats. In 1958 he played an active role in the election of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr., again assisting in the management of campaign finances. A successful businessman, Post also has been a consistent fund-raiser for Democratic candidates in state and national campaigns. For twelve years he was campaign treasurer for Jesse Unruh and, in 1984, served as finance manager in Los Angeles Mayor Thomas Bradley's gubernatorial campaign.

In 1961, Post was appointed to the Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy, also known as the "Little Hoover Commission," by the then Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh. He served on that commission until 1982, with only a two-year interregnum. While a member of the commission, Post directed studies and coauthored reports conducted by the commission on public school districts, agricultural fairs, horse racing, health services, and state fleet services.

I. LIFE HISTORY

[Session 1, October 28, 1987]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Family History

VASQUEZ: Mr. Post, to begin this oral history, would you tell me a little bit about your life history?

POST: I was born on January 3, 1918, in Chicago, Illinois. I don't believe it was a hospital; I believe it was a private residence that I was born in. My mother and father were both Jewish, of Russian origin. Both had immigrated to this country.

VASQUEZ: During what period did they immigrate to the United States?

POST: Sometime prior to 1918, I think. Just a few years before. As a matter of fact, I had an older brother who was born abroad. I was born here, and my sister was born here in this country.

VASQUEZ: So it was after the turn of the century?

POST: Oh, yes. It was in the 1916 area, 1917. They

were newcomers to the United States. They had very little money. My father created some kind of a little family business having to do with leather goods which, I guess, he had been involved with in the old country. The Depression came on very fast, when I was about twelve, thirteen years old. I, of course, like all successful people, sold newspapers [Laughter] when I was a kid.

Politically, my mother was very radical. Politically, she was [Laughter] an extremist. She, I guess, had seen the various injustices under the tsarist regime in Russia. She was very happy to be in this country and wanted to do all she could to correct inequality and [promote] equity and dignity, and all of those things.

VASQUEZ: Was she active in any organized political movement?

POST: Yeah, yeah. [Laughter] I think, in the Socialist party and then the Communist party. But, you know, she was looking for justice and didn't know any better. She thought that the Communist party was a solution to the problems. Her education, of course, was very, very limited. My father, I

think, had gone to the university some place in Kiev, Russia.

Getting an Education during the Depression

I don't think my mother had much formal education. But, speaking of education, her drive and ambition was education. She was the one that insisted that I continue on through the university, because when I got out of high school, things were very rough. I think it was 1936. And she insisted, and pushed. I went to a school in Chicago called the Central YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] College for a couple of semesters, I believe. I had a partial scholarship. From there, I went down to the University of Illinois [Urbana], where I stayed until, I think, 1939, 1940 sometime.

I left the University of Illinois in a pique with them because they wouldn't give me a degree. I think that helped me fight bureaucracy ever since. They withheld my degree because I took a course that was a junior course as a sophomore. It happened to be a course that I got an A in and a course that I've used every day of my life. It was a course in business law. But some

bureaucratic jerk--for lack of a better expression--said, "Well, you weren't qualified to take that course at that time. Therefore, we can't give you credit for that course. Therefore, you're three credits short and you have to come back for another semester." [Laughter] I said, "I've been hungry long enough. No more of this."

VASQUEZ: What field of study did you major in?

POST: I started to go to law school. That was my thought. But, unfortunately, my father died at that time and there was. . . again the Depression. My younger sister was foisted [on me], or given, or I had to take care of my younger sister. So here I was attending the university, supporting myself, and then I had to take care of my sister, who was three years younger than me. And nobody had any money and there was no such thing as money. The tuition at the University of Illinois was thirty-five dollars a year. And with a partial scholarship, you know, you could make it. I couldn't go to law school. That was out at the time. So I majored in psychology and economics. Majored in both.

VASQUEZ: Do you remember why you picked those?

POST: No. No, I really don't. That's before the times they did motivational studies and all sorts of material that would give you a direction or a background. I just happened to pick it, and I think that's one of the fallacies in education now. If you gave somebody a series of tests as we did in the state program that I initiated much later, you would have people who were interested in manual work and people interested in mental work. You would give them a direction to go to, rather than just general [education]. I mean, most young people at my age, they were just liberal arts students and they just picked whatever they wanted to. Which is what I did. Those are the areas I had an interest in.

VASQUEZ: Were you a good student?

POST: Well, [Laughter] academically I wouldn't say I was a good student. I got by. But, remember, I had to support myself and a sister, and go to school. It was very, very difficult in the midst of the Depression. I mean, even to get a a job. They had some student-aid programs where, if you were lucky and you had the capability and the connection, you could get some of these part-time jobs that

paid twenty-five cents an hour. Well, you know, spend a half a day and you make a dollar. You don't have too much time to study if you've got to [secure] food, shelter, clothing, medical, and everything else. Those were very difficult days.

VASQUEZ: Did being Jewish add any constraints to functioning in Chicago at the time?

POST: Well, no, I was in Champagne, Illinois, at the University of Illinois. No, there were a lot of Jewish students. It didn't make any difference. Oh, you'd feel it periodically because there were sororities and fraternities that were Jewish and non-Jewish, not that I could afford either one of them.

The only recognition I had of that was working one summer in Union Pier, Michigan, and there were signs along various clubs and resorts in front, "No Jews or dogs allowed." Well, Michigan, of course, you know, was I believe at that time the home of the Ku Klux Klan. So, it's understandable that [Laughter] they would have that kind of a feeling.

Introduction to Politics at Home

So, the question of introduction to politics

. . . . I mean, [there was] always politics being discussed at the house. All kinds of magazines and periodicals and publications and one thing or another are always there. And politics was of interest, of course. And, of course, that fact that you're still in the middle of the Depression and there were various worker groups who were organizing to do all kinds of things. If you haven't lived through it, you're fortunate. It was very, very difficult times.

I remember periodically a group of people would meet. They were Danish/Norwegians in the area that we lived and they had various craftsmen within this group. If you were a person there that they. . . . If your electricity had been cut off, for example, an electrician would come out and he'd help you get electricity back. He'd just wire right around the meter for you. And the same thing with plumbing. Same thing with heating. You know, in Chicago you had a very wide divergence of temperatures. And when you go into Chicago in the twenties and the tens and the zeros, you could die if you didn't have heat.

So they would just circumvent the control of

the lock in the system which, most people I guess at that time had gas heat. Some had wood heat or coal heat in fireplaces. That's the kind of environment that I grew up in, people were helping others. You hear the term "people helping others" all the time. But they really did. You know, they'd go out in the snow and the cold and cut around some wiring to get you some electricity.

VASQUEZ: It was done in an organized fashion?

POST: Yes, yes, yes. Organized, in the sense that people knowing or people having problems could come to this group and they'd help them. Sure, they broke the law. But how much is a person's life worth? Fifty cents worth of gas if they die of freezing to death?

VASQUEZ: What was the affinity that attracted this group of people together? Ethnicity? Politics? Class?

POST: I think it was poverty. Poverty. You know, you might find a Jewish plumber, a Norwegian electrician, whatever the group was, whatever their proficiencies were, they would exercise them. And, you know, in that particular era, you learned about soup, thin soup. You know, no matter how many people there were, if everybody else came in,

you'd put a little more water in, you've got something for everybody. It was kind of difficult to go the university and attend law school under those circumstances. So I didn't. Obviously, I made very good use of that course in business law, because I use it every day of my life.

VASQUEZ: The politics that you heard around the house, were your mother and father in agreement on their political views, which, as I understand them, were left-wing politics?

POST: No, my father was more interested in survival and running a little business, which had probably an employee and a half, than my mother. . . . But her whole life was politics. Her whole life was wrapped up in people and in helping people and finding people that needed help and helping them. Until she died a few years ago, she was always here in California finding people and causes that needed help. Which is fine, fine.

VASQUEZ: Would you say she was the most influential [person] in your political consciousness at the time?

POST: Yes, I would say that. I would say that very definitely. See, most people at that period in

time were struggling to survive, not to help you or to help him or to help her. Just to keep yourself above water. And, somehow, she managed to keep herself above water but always finding somebody to help. I mean, not a day in her life would go by that she didn't find somebody that needed something. She was a great chiseler. She would call people to help this one, and call people to help that one, [Laughter] she always had a cause.

VASQUEZ: Would you say that she was antiestablishment?

POST: Oh, yeah, I mean that goes with being a radical, you're antiestablishment. You know, why should she be proestablishment if she feels that the gas company is going to deprive somebody of their life by taking away their gas for heating purposes? Yeah, I guess you would call her antiestablishment.

Learning to Fight Bureaucracy

VASQUEZ: The reason I asked, earlier you mentioned the word bureaucracy, that maybe that's where you learned to fight bureaucracy.

POST: No, I learned to fight that on my own. I had a number of problems in kindergarten, grammar school, junior high school, high school, and

college with the established authority. I managed to go by all of them. The dean of the university at one time had me in for a session on a matter that we were discussing. And he said, "You know, you managed to break the spirit of the student code many times. You haven't broken the letter, yet," he said, "but when you break the letter we're going to throw you out of here. But you've been very close." [Laughter] Well, that's all right. That's okay.

There are educators that have more common sense than others. My last year in high school, for example, the principal had me in for some violation of something or the other and really chewed me out. You know, "That was stupid, that was dumb." I was ignorant, this and that and the other thing. And finally he got me into a position where I got him. "Look, if I wanted to really read and study the stuff that you've got here, I could get on the honor roll." He utzed me in--I don't know how in the hell you spell "utzed"--but he connived me into that position. And the next year I did graduate on the honor roll, just to show him that I could if I really

wanted to. Well, that's good education. I think that was a fine incentive. [Laughter] I didn't know until later on that I'd been tricked, but it accomplished what he wanted to do. Well, I think he really thought that I did have some ability but I wasn't using it, I was fooling around.

VASQUEZ: Who at that time, or perhaps later, was your greatest intellectual mentor or person whose thinking or writings gave you direction?

POST: Well, not so much thinking and writing, but whose activities, was Dr. Abraham Sachar, who now is the chancellor of Brandeis University. He was teaching history at the University of Illinois at the time, but he was also the head of the Hillel Foundation, which their student-loan fund made it possible for me, really, to stay in school. And I might add, it's been repaid a thousandfold, but I could go to them if I really was in trouble and I could borrow twenty-five dollars, fifty dollars. At one time, I had, I believe, three businesses going and going to school and supporting a sister with a total invested capital of seventy-five dollars that was borrowed from the university, from the Hillel Foundation.

Getting a Start in Business

VASQUEZ: What kind of businesses?

POST: Well, I had a sandwich business. We bought delicatessen meats in Chicago and rye bread and stuff and made up sandwiches and delivered them to the Jewish sorority and fraternity houses in the evening break, which, I believe, used to be around 9:00 in the evening. That was one business which was good, because all of my helpers could eat. Whatever we didn't sell we would eat. The theory is if you're around food, you can manage to survive somehow.

The other business was selling meal tickets at a restaurant, a restaurant chain down there. You know what meal tickets are. You can get \$5.00 worth for \$4.50 or something. I had the capital. I had about thirty dollars worth of capital which would permit me to float some people to carry it. And then, thirdly, I was working at Chanute air base part of the time and I bought a truck and created a flatbed truck out of it and leased it out to the contractor. Oh, yes, and at the same time when I was doing that, I bought a little, old house trailer and I made a lunch wagon out of it

and set that on the air base there, in the construction area. So, somehow or another, you know, I managed to survive all these things.

VASQUEZ: This is while you're going to the university?

POST: Yeah. Oh, yeah, this is all at school. So you can see I didn't wind up a straight A student.

VASQUEZ: Why were you so attracted to business? Just out of necessity?

POST: Well, when you're hungry, you have to figure out what you can do to survive. I thought the sandwich thing would be a good idea because there wasn't any good deli down there at the university and there were enough Jewish students that could support it. Besides which, you can't really lose too much because if you don't sell the stuff, you can eat it. [Laughter] There's no downside to that kind of a business on the volume that I was doing.

VASQUEZ: So you were able to use Jewish connections and Jewish networks to keep yourself afloat.

POST: I wouldn't say that. The fact that I liked delicatessen food and there wasn't any there, and it just occurred to me one day that there was no way that these sororities and fraternities--and

there were probably eight or ten of them, probably each having fifty or a hundred kids apiece in them--could get something at their evening break. They got a study break at 9:00, 9:30, something like that. They'd have to send out for hamburgers or one thing or another. Which, after a while, got tiresome. So I said, "Well, if I get some salami and some hot dogs and some corned beef and some rye breads and some dill pickles and put together a box of ten, fifteen sandwiches, assorted, and deliver them to the fraternity or sorority house. . . ." Then, of course, we refined it later on where they would call in. They'd say, "We want," you know, "four corned beef, two salami, three of this," or whatever it is. So you had a total package which you delivered. Which is a good service to them. And, of course, in those days, you know, I don't know, sandwiches were a dime maybe. Maybe fifteen cents. But since you didn't have any depreciable factor, because what you didn't sell you'd eat. Because, you know, I had a number of kids working with me and I had a car. I would take five, six of them around to various fraternity, sorority houses and drop them

off and then pick them up and take the second run around. All these were, you know, kids that would work with me and for me and they all got a chance to get a meal afterwards besides.

VASQUEZ: That was their wages?

POST: No, no. I think we gave them, you know, fifty cents or something like that. I don't know. Not very much. You, fortunately, haven't lived through that period. It was very tough.

VASQUEZ: So when you left the university, where did you go? What did you do?

Leaving School and Traveling

POST: Well, I took some sporadic jumps. I took off one semester from the university and decided to go to Florida because I had some severe nasal problems. I had manufactured a car out of two or three cars, so I had a reasonably decent car. I'd gotten a couple of cars in the junk yard and made one good car out of both of them with a little added effort and work and energy, one thing and another.

I went to Florida for a semester, for this equivalent of a school semester. And, of course, I didn't have any money. So the first thing I did was get a job. I stayed at the University of

Miami at Coral Gables with somebody that we knew from some place or another. Anyway, I had a place to sleep. I got a job washing windows. Which is fine. I don't care, you know. So I'm washing windows and the police come up to me and they asked me, "Is that your car outside there?" I said, "Yeah." They said, "Don't you know it's against the law to work in Florida without having Florida license plates on your car?" I said, "No, I wasn't aware of it." I said, "I'm really a student at the University of Illinois. I'm just here for six months or so." "Well, you'll have to get Florida plates." I said, "Well, fine. When I get paid on Thursday, I'll buy the plates. I just don't have any money." Plates were, I think, six dollars.

Well, this is where you get into the bureaucracy. I went home that night and at 2:00 in the morning I was roused out of bed by a couple of policemen who took me down to the station and then transported me down to the jail. [Laughter] Kind of shocking because I'd never been to jail before. I appeared before the judge in the morning and I explained who I was. The fact that

I hadn't been given the opportunity to call because I could have called Dr. Sachar and he would have sent me ten dollars, you know. I had my identification. I had the title to the vehicle and I offered to the judge, I said, "Well, if you won't let me out and you won't let me call, I can't make the money here, I'll sell the car"--I had the title--"I'll sell the car and pay you the six dollars." Well, he didn't. . . . "Back in the slammer with you, buster."

Well, Florida justice was not what we would consider very progressive anyway, in my humble opinion. There was a welfare group there, a Jewish welfare group and some other welfare group, and I asked for their help. I said, "Look, I've got the money coming. I've worked. I own the car. I just don't have it at the moment. Now, if they won't let me out to get the money, I will be here forever. I'll be here in perpetuity. I'll be on the Florida chain gang, and I'm a young fellow. Let me out of here." They wouldn't. They threw me back in jail where I stayed all day. Until the guy that the young man and I were staying with at Coral Gables came and bailed me out.

It seems that when he came home. . . . Well, he had been at home and the police came looking for me. That's after they said, "Sure, you can pay it on Thursday." And this is like Monday. He left a note for me saying, "The police were here looking for you." Well, again they came in, you know. No warrant. Nothing. Florida justice, they just walked into the place and they saw the note, they waited for him, they took and arrested him. Well, because he was aiding a felon, or a lawbreaker, whatever you want to call it. Fortunately, he lived in Florida and his father had some financial and political connections in Florida and he called his father and they let him out right away. But he was a little disturbed not to find me back there at the end of the day and he came and he bailed me out. Otherwise, I would still be there. [Laughter]

Now, you see where you develop a feeling towards authoritarian and bureaucratic operations. That judge was an idiot. You know, I identified myself. I was working. I mean, it isn't that I was stealing. I was working. And I had identification as a student and I had the vehicle

license, the ownership to the vehicle. So, you know, obviously there's a snare here someplace. Let the guy make a telephone call.

VASQUEZ: What do you think the motivation was for this seeming irrationality?

POST: Just didn't give a goddamn. Just didn't give a goddamn. Even the social workers didn't give a goddamn. Nobody seemed to care.

VASQUEZ: What year would this be?

POST: I think 1937 or 1938 sometime.

VASQUEZ: So it was pretty much after the Depression.

POST: Oh, it was still pretty tight at that time. And, as a matter of fact, we did pay the plates and we got Florida registration on the car. A year later, when I wanted to sell the car, we still didn't have the registration from Florida. I had to get a lawyer to write them to get the damned registration after I had paid their lousy six dollars. Of course, without plates, I didn't have the title to the vehicle, couldn't sell it.

VASQUEZ: Did you go into the service?

POST: No. No, I was deferred as a 4-F. So I went in with [the Army] Corps of Engineers and was stationed up in Alaska, for about a year on an

island, building an air base. That was in '41. I came back, came out of there sometime in '42.

VASQUEZ: Went back to Chicago, or to Illinois?

POST: No. I think I went to New York. Or did I. . . .
No, I probably went back to Chicago and then on to New York. I decided then, the rationale for my coming to California is I'd been here once before in the early thirties. The rationale was, "If I'm going to have to be poor and I have to work, I might as well be warm and comfortable instead of cold and miserable." Because the cold in Chicago and Champaign, Illinois, is different than most colds. It goes right through your bones. Bad stuff. And that's the reason I migrated here. Not for the political climate, just that it was warm and sunny.

Getting Started in California

VASQUEZ: What did you do when you first came to California?

POST: Well, the first thing I did was to visit a friend of mine who was an engineering student. Oh, I stayed at a friend of mine's apartment. They were back East, so they gave me the keys and I stayed at their apartment for a few weeks. First thing I did was try to visit a friend of mine, which I

did, which was maybe three or four miles away from where I was staying. And that took me about four hours, five hours to get back home by bus.

VASQUEZ: Is that here in Los Angeles?

POST: Yeah, here in Los Angeles. So the next day, the second day I was here, I went out to buy a car. Which I did. The car was forty-two dollars, I had twenty-five dollars of it. The guy was nice enough to give me a couple, three weeks to scrape up the rest, which I did.

Then what did I do? The first job. The first job, I think, was selling shoes on Hollywood Boulevard. Because I'd always been a shoe salesman on weekends. Wherever I was, well, you could always get a job selling shoes. Done it all over the country. And then I think I got a job as a studio laborer. You know, they were paying very good money in those days, paying one dollar an hour. You had to join the union, but okay.

What did I do after that? Oh, yeah. Then I got a job as an office manager for a construction project in Riverside at a base they were building across the highway of March Air Force Base. It was a base called Camp Haan. I worked on that

project for, I don't know, six or eight months. Some of these things overlap, because on the weekend, I could always get a job selling shoes. So, if I wasn't working someplace else, I'd go in and sell shoes and do whatever you did there. Then that job ended, and that's about the time I got married.

VASQUEZ: What year was that?

POST: 'Forty-three, I believe it was. 'Forty-two or '43.

VASQUEZ: What's your wife's name?

II. PROFESSIONAL AND POLITICAL CAREER

The First Automobile Business

POST: Florence. She happens to be a native, by the way. Native Californian. I worked for a finance and collection agency for a few months downtown near Venice [Boulevard] and Figueroa [Street]. By that time, I had amassed a great deal of capital [Laughter] and I went into the used car business. Little old lot, little old cars. Very little money.

VASQUEZ: In Los Angeles? In the Los Angeles area?

POST: Yeah, yeah. The first one was 934 South Figueroa

Street. The parking lot is still there. It's next to a big building that has a theater and a church and one thing or another. How much further than that do you want to go? Do you want to just keep on the calendar?

VASQUEZ: Well, go ahead, do it chronologically. We're talking about post-World War II. What changes did you see in Los Angeles as a result of the war? Of course, you weren't here before, but you were here to see dramatic influxes of people, different ethnic and racial groups coming into Los Angeles. You were here to see transportation change.

POST: Well, you must recognize, when you're struggling to survive, you don't particularly at that point have the luxury of looking at these things. We knew there was. . . . Sure, subliminally, we know there was an influx of a great number of people from Arkansas and Oklahoma, used to be called "Okies." They would work in the aircraft. . . . Oh, yes, as a matter of fact, I worked in an aircraft plant, too, for a few months [Laughter] at Vega Aircraft, which was then absorbed. It was owned by Lockheed Aircraft Company and they absorbed it.

This used to be a very beautiful countryside, you know. The traffic was light. Everything was clean. You could always see the sky. See, I had been back here in 1934 for a few months, and California was warm and sunny and pleasant and lovely. You know, today it's as bad as New York or Chicago. The weather is a little better but, otherwise, with the traffic problems, with the poverty problems, with homeless problems, with the state turning all the mental people loose on the streets, California ain't what it used to be.

VASQUEZ: How long were you in the used car business?

POST: Well, I was in that until about '46, '47. And then I decided I wanted to do better and I got in the motion picture business. I was an associate producer, I was an executive producer, I was a producer. And then I got into television. I produced one of the first big shows on television for a while.

Producing for Television

VASQUEZ: What was the name of that show?

POST: That was called the "Fireside Theatre" series. I got tired of that. I don't like to be regimented, and working in network and stuff like that, you

have a network that is going to tell you what to do, you have an advertising agency that's on your back, and you have a sponsor. You couldn't really do good, creative work if you've got three people mixing the pot. So I told them to go to hell and I just quit the whole thing. Fortunately, I went back into the used car business just at the, almost at the start of the Volkswagen situation. So I became one of the early Volkswagen dealers, in '53 I think it was.

VASQUEZ: Before we get into that, were you at all affected by the red-baiting and blacklisting of Hollywood producers, writers, screenwriters, actors?

POST: No, it didn't affect me. I think it was a little before my time. I was one of the first members of the Hollywood. . . . What do they call it now? The television arm of the industry, the one that awards Emmys rather than the one that awards the Oscars? I was one of the early members. The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. No, that didn't particularly affect me and what I was doing at the time. We knew about it, everybody was aware of it. But I jumped past one thing in there.

First Experience in Electoral Politics

I met a man who was a member of congress at the time where we lived, Ellis [F.] Patterson. Ellis Patterson and I became very friendly. I became his, I guess, aide. And then he decided to run for United States Senate. So my first real introduction to politics here in California, was in 1947 I think it was, '48, with Ellis Patterson. And then I got involved with the Young Democrats of California. I was the treasurer of the California Young Democrats.

VASQUEZ: At the state level?

POST: Yes. And he ran for the senate. It took a lot of time, a lot of work, a lot of energy, effort. He didn't win, and [William F.] Bill Knowland of northern California won.

VASQUEZ: What was your role in the campaign?

POST: Campaign manager.

VASQUEZ: Oh.

POST: Well, they didn't know very much, and neither did I. [Laughter] Most of my work in political campaigns has been at the financial level. I'm one of the few guys around that they can trust to safeguard the money and see that it is properly

spent, proper authorization, and see that the necessary reports are filed properly. I've done that for presidential campaigns down to assembly campaigns.

VASQUEZ: We'll get into that. Do you raise it as well?

POST: Yeah, yeah. I raise it as well. I contribute, as well. I'm, you know, a three-way loser. I give my money, I get your money, and then I have to manage that money and see that it is properly spent. Which, in some cases, it isn't. And it's getting more and more being, I believe, ill spent, misspent.

VASQUEZ: We're going to come back to that. Why don't you finish the period about the Volkswagen dealership?

POST: Well, it was Volkswagen/Porsche, and then I opened another agency at the same time. Which is a problem, because it's hard to manage two. We stayed there for a number of years. I became very actively involved in '59 in politics again with Jesse [M.] Unruh and the [John F.] Kennedy campaign, Jack Kennedy campaign.

VASQUEZ: Did you participate at all in the [Edmund G.] Pat Brown [Sr.] campaign?

POST: Yeah. Yeah.

Handling Campaign Finances

VASQUEZ: What was your role in that?

POST: Oh, I was probably one of the finance guys. I also loaned them about ten cars or station wagons in the campaign. I used to provide all the campaigns. At one point, we had [Laughter] fourteen or seventeen vehicles out in various campaigns. Which, you know, gets to being expensive, because there's a liability on insurance and repairs and maintenance and, sometimes, they bust them up. In one case, a car was firebombed, in the [Edmund G.] Jerry Brown [Jr.] campaign, which never got out. Anyway, I stayed in that and I got involved in some real estate transactions about that time. And I then had litigation with a factory, Volkswagen and Porsche factories, on their cancellation of certain franchises. We sold out in '75 or '76, we sold out.

Los Angeles's First Volkswagen Dealership

VASQUEZ: What was the name of your Volkswagen dealership?

POST: Europa Motors.

VASQUEZ: It was one of the first ones here in Los Angeles, wasn't it?

POST: Yeah. As a matter of fact, the first one that put

a Volkswagen inside of a building. Most of them were in used car lots or gas stations or one thing or another. We rented a building, punched some holes in it and put some sliding glass doors like this [Laughter] around the corner. Ventura [Boulevard] and Vineland [Vineland] is the first one. First building they'd been in. That brings you up to '75, '76.

VASQUEZ: So there's an old story, or rumor, that you had pictures of ex-Nazi leaders, German leaders, in your agency. Is that true?

POST: [Laughter] Who told you that? Go off the tape and I'll tell you about that. [Laughter]
[Interruption]

Vince did it as a hobby, but he had me do about twenty, twenty-five poses one day. "Why do you need that for?" "Yeah, don't worry about it, you know, just. . . ." Here and here and here and here. And I'll tell you, they were so good, you couldn't tell. They looked great!

VASQUEZ: It was all out of your sense of humor?

POST: Yeah, yeah. They put, you know, a cap on. Oh, they came out very good.

VASQUEZ: All right.

POST: You know, an American would immediately see that, you know, obviously this guy isn't old enough to have been there when Hitler was there thirty, forty years ago.

Introduction to Jesse Unruh and Oversight

Commissions

VASQUEZ: Right, right. How did you get involved in oversight commissions?

POST: Well, I've got to go back to Jesse.

VASQUEZ: Tell me a little bit about how you got to know Jesse Unruh.

POST: Well, I knew him on the periphery, and some of my friends were working for him, but I had never met him. I ran into him at some cocktail party, just in the early, early part of the Kennedy operation. We shook hands and I said, "You know, I've been meaning to get in touch with you." And he said, "It's funny, I've been meaning to get in touch with you." I said, "Well, let's get together." And we did. I was his treasurer, then, for twelve or fourteen years.

Most of those people never had any money. They didn't know how to handle it. They didn't know how to safeguard it. They didn't know what

protections to take. And I'm pretty good at that. So Jesse was going to be elected speaker, but the Little Hoover Commission was in creation at the time, I think, in '61, if I'm not mistaken I have an idea that our first meeting was 1962, and Jesse was not yet speaker. The former speaker, a guy by the name of [Ralph M.] Brown, is the one that appointed me. Now, that was a verbal appointment. I had never even met him. But Jesse said, you know, "You've been appointed." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Oh, you'll enjoy it." I didn't know what it was, and I never met Brown. But Jesse was the incoming speaker and I guess he had a closeness with Brown. So that's where I got the appointment. I never got an official notification. I never got anything on that first appointment. Which is okay, I don't need them.

VASQUEZ: Why did you take it? Your civic duty?

POST: Well, I've always had an interest in government. The thought that you've got an efficiency is, you know, something that in the areas that I worked, people seemed to think I was efficient.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

POST: Well, I guess the feeling I have is if I've been helped, that I want to pay back, reciprocate that help. I've stayed at the YMCA in New York, I've stayed at the YMCA here in Los Angeles, and whenever a call comes out, I'm happy to give the YMCA money. They were a nice place to go to. For thirty-five cents, you could have a shower, a towel, a bed, a place to sleep. It was pretty good.

Involvement in Pro-Israel Activities

VASQUEZ: Were you involved at all in the fund-raising efforts for the creation of the state of Israel?

POST: No, very little. Very little. We've helped them. We've contributed money to them, but. . . . As a matter of fact, yeah, as a matter of fact, I gave them some guns that I had at the time, because I had an associate in the picture business who was very interested in that. Yeah, we gave them some money, gave them some fire arms, one thing or another, but not to any great degree.

VASQUEZ: Has the support for Israel been an important facet, in your political choice of supporting people?

POST: Not really. Not really. I was born Jewish. I

don't belong to any temple. I'm not religious at all, we don't observe any services. We help various Jewish causes, but we help a lot of causes. I am sympathetic to the problem that Israel has. It's a toughie. I mean, I would not like to be there as part of the three million people surrounded by a hundred million [Laughter] people that don't like you. The odds are just a little bit tough. Very tough. I've traveled through there a couple of times. No, I think the United States is the best place in the world to be, and California is the state to be in, and Los Angeles is the best place of all to be in the whole world.

Why Post Became a Democrat

VASQUEZ: Something that I meant to ask you earlier: why Democratic politics and not Republican? Why did you become a Democrat?

POST: Liberal, left groupings? I just wouldn't be happy in that area, although a number of leading Republicans through the years have asked me, "Your thinking is more Republican than Democrat. Why don't you quit and join us?"

VASQUEZ: What did they mean by that, do you think?

POST: Well, I have certain views on bureaucracy and government and social programs, and one thing and another, that in some cases are most closely allied with Republican thinking, than Democratic thinking. I mean, I believe in most of our social programs, but I believe there has to be a lot of enforcement done, there has to be a lot of coaching done, there has to be some supervision. And then there ought to be some penalties, when you can't give with an open hand and not have to slap somebody's wrist once in a while. Because just on the law of averages of a hundred people, you're going to find one or two are dishonest. One or two or three, whatever the percentages are. We don't have any punitive measures. We don't do anything.

VASQUEZ: So you are in basic agreement with the activist government programs of the New Deal, for example?

POST: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure, sure.

VASQUEZ: It was the administration of them that you disagree with at times, is that right?

The Abuse in Entitlement Programs

POST: Well, I think there are abuses on a lot of programs, you know. The one, of course, that the

public is always aware of is the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, with minority kids having kids, and their kids having kids, and their kids having kids, and a whole generation or two generations are living on welfare. That's an abuse. How you prevent it, I don't know. You can't sterilize these people, but on the other hand you ought to have some measure to stop them from this type of activity.

You contribute to taxes, I contribute to taxes, and some kid at fourteen wants to get pregnant so she can have a child or two so that she doesn't have to work anymore. Now, that's an abuse of the process. You know, I have no fault with helping people that need help. I needed help and people helped me, so, certainly, I'm willing to help others. But here where you deliberately go out to get yourself into trouble so that you can be dependent on society for the rest of your life, that's a no-no in my book.

VASQUEZ: Do you think that it comes from people seeing no other way out, seeing no alternatives, either at the home or the socioeconomic setting?

POST: Well, sure, sure. The problem starts with the

home, the problem starts with the family. And the kid half the time doesn't know who its father is or who its mother is. You know, what lessons does it learn? But, on the other hand, we take kids to school and we feed them breakfast or we feed them lunch and we give them something like that. And we train them and we give them some education, some qualities, they go back home and the mother is on dope or the mother is hustling and the father isn't there or somebody else is there. How do you do it? I mean, it's like trying to take a shower and dry yourself at the same time. You can't do it. You've got to overhaul the system some how.

Now, maybe those. . . . Of course, you know, I've had trouble with state agencies. [Laughter] They dislike some of the things I say, but I would say a fourteen-year-old that becomes pregnant and has an offspring, that offspring should not be given back to that person. That should be put into a pool of unfathered kids and maintained by some governmental agency, raised, given proper medical, proper clothing, proper food, proper education. Because they never can get anything

where they are. You're just fostering it again. You're fomenting it. And, of course, you know, the social people say, "That's terrible. You're taking a child away from the mother." Well, god damn it, the mother had no responsibility, the mother shouldn't have had the kid in the first place, the mother has no right to have that kid and ask me to pay for it for the next thirty years or twenty years. We can do better to take that kid away from his hostile environment and put it in a friendly environment. At least we might create a reasonably educated, responsible person. We've got certainly better odds to do it here than we have leaving her with a mother who is going to have another kid, or two or three, because, you know, you get three kids and you got a pass forever. That's terrible. Don't you feel that way?

VASQUEZ: Yeah, yeah. My wife works as a supervisor at the county welfare department and she, as a part of working in the welfare department, is increasingly against welfare.

POST: If she has any social consciousness, she must turn her guts out.

VASQUEZ: Yes, it does.

POST: You know, we just had an all-day meeting the other day at the Community Redevelopment Agency. We approved a \$160,000,000 budget! And I had an earlier meeting at 8:00 in the morning. "Well, we'll take one hundred thousand off here, we'll put two hundred thousand over there." Jesus, that's big money! That's responsible money. One hundred and sixty million dollars is very responsible money, supposedly all for good causes. But a lot of it falls through the cracks.

VASQUEZ: Now, these are views that you've developed over years and years of being on these agencies. What was your view of government and the role of oversight commissions as you began your career in this?

POST: I didn't have an idea of what they did, really.

VASQUEZ: What was your mission?

Working for Good Government

POST: I've always been interested in government, and I've always been interested in the economies and efficiencies of government. I've worked for government agencies and I think most of them stink. I've worked for the [Army] Corps of

Engineers and I saw nothing but waste, nothing but waste. I worked on the Pentagon building in Washington. It was waste. I worked on an air base, you know, here across at March. Waste!

Waste in Government Organizations

VASQUEZ: What is it in large government organizations that leads to that, do you think?

POST: Very simple. There is no penalty or no benefit. I mean, I have met with agencies in government that said, "Look, we've been here before you, we're going to be here after you." You know, "We're not going to pay attention to you." See, there's no way that you can really give somebody a benefit that works hard, and there's no way that you can penalize a person that doesn't work at all.

I mean, I had my first run-in with the Corps of Engineers in Seattle, Washington. I was there for a two-week training period on how to run a warehouse. They gave me some work to do. Oh, by the way, prior to that I was holding down three full-time jobs in Gary, Indiana. Three. You can't believe it, but I'll tell you how. I worked in the steel mills during the night. In the day

time, I worked as a collector for a clothing company, and then I got another job as a collector for a department store. All, you know, different times. You worked a night shift there and then 8:00 you go into one place, 9:00 you go into the other. So I had three jobs.

The Corps of Engineers gave me some work to do. I got it done at, like, you know, 9:30, 10:00 in the morning. Turned it in and the guy said, "Well, when are you going to get started?" I said, "I'm done. You want me to do this, I did it." He said, "Okay, well." This happened for two or three days, and finally they said, "What are you trying to do? Show us all up?" I said, "No, you asked me to do something, I'm getting paid to do it, I've done it. Here it is. What else would you like me to do?" They shipped me out at the end of a week.

Now, I think it's terrible that in war time, a guy is working and getting paid for eight hours of work and he gets his work done in a hour and a half or two hours. You know, to this point in my life, most of the time I eat my lunch and I'm reading something, or I'm on a freeway driving

some place, I don't piss around and waste two hours for lunch. And why should I? I wouldn't know how to fill in. If I've got work at 8:00 and I'm done at 10:00, I wouldn't know what to do from 10:00 until 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon. How many times can you go to the toilet? How many times can you go get a cup of coffee? What do you do?

Prodding Civil Service Employees to Produce More

VASQUEZ: You think, then, that civil service jobs, for example, are poorly planned and poorly regimented?

POST: Yep! I do! I addressed the California State Employees Association once when Pat Brown was governor. I pointed out that I thought that in the problems and the trying times we're having, everybody can work a little harder, just turn out a little bit more. You know, if everybody put in an extra fifteen minutes a day, or took one less toilet break, or didn't start to get ready to leave at 4:30 in the afternoon, fifteen minutes a day with 165,000 employees, you're talking about 40,000 hours of time. Forty thousand hours of civil service time, I think, at that time, was \$18 an hour when you add all the costs. Say \$20 an

hour. Well, god damn it, how much is 40,000 times 20? It's a lot of money.

And that's all I said, and I was very mild. Next day, I ran into Pat Brown in Sacramento, he said, "Jesus, what did you do with the CSEA? They're climbing all over my back!" [Laughter] I said, "Pat, I'm normally known as a very outspoken guy. All I said was I thought everybody could do a little bit more a little better." And, really, that's all that I said. You know, members of my commission that were present said, "You were very mild." I didn't call them a bunch of lazy bastards. I just said we all need to do a little more. And I still think we could. I still think we could.

Working on Different Commissions

VASQUEZ: Now, we'll get into specifics of the work of the different commissions as we move along in the interview. But you've worked on oversight commissions at state, county, and city levels.

POST: No.

VASQUEZ: Aren't you a member, or weren't you a member of the Beverly Hills Traffic and Parking Commission?

POST: Yeah, but that isn't an oversight commission,

that's a regulatory commission. See, they're all different. The Little Hoover Commission was really the only oversight commission. Or the new one that we're now on, the new Senate Commission on Government Cost Control. But they vary. I mean, I chaired the real estate commission for the county.

VASQUEZ: But that's regulation?

POST: Yeah.

Why Commissions Fail or Succeed

VASQUEZ: But I think we can still get to the question that I want to ask. And that is, at the different levels of government, where do you think these kinds of commissions are most effective and least effective, in your experience?

POST: Well, an oversight commission, such as the Little Hoover Commission, with the cooperation of the governor, can do many, many things, but it must have cooperation of the governor and of the legislative leadership. And if they don't have that, they can't move. And I'll give you a real good case in point. I'll give you two cases.

One, I was doing an automotive study and I wanted to get the heads of Hertz and Avis and one

thing or another out to California to meet with us. So I asked, and Pat Brown let me use the governor's conference room in downtown Los Angeles. Well, our request to meet, you know, behind a delicatessen someplace doesn't go very well, but a request to meet at the governor's office to discuss these questions and problems [snaps fingers] didn't cost anybody anything. The office was there, but Pat let me use it because Pat was a pretty good guy.

Now, the other way around. I started to do a study on Medi-Cal drugs, the substitution of generic for the brand-name drugs, and a program wherein the state would send the drugs to the recipient. Let me back up so you'll understand. You go to the doctor, the doctor writes a prescription for you, he gives you a copy of it, at the end of the day they mail it into a state dispensary. And I had a deal worked out with a company that within twenty-four hours they would get it in the mail to you, other than narcotics. That would be mass. Save you time and trouble. It would be generic drugs. It would save us money. There was a saving of maybe--you'll find

it hard to believe--one hundred million dollars a year, if we could put the program together.

This is before they changed the legislation that said they have to make generics available. So I put some people on the subcommittee which I chaired. That's what I would do. I'd create a study, I would chair it and I would get a subcommittee to work. I put Jack [B.] Fenton on that subcommittee, Assemblyman Fenton from Montebello.

Political Interests versus the Public Interest

I went out to his office out in Montebello one day to sit down and go over the program. Now, follow this closely because this happens to be remarkable. I went over the program and he said, "Man, did you realize my finance chairman is a pharmacist?" I said, "Yeah, I don't know that he is a pharmacist, but what difference does it make?" He said, "Look, if this program went, we'd cost him a lot of his business." He said, "I don't want any part of that. I resign from your subcommittee." Huh? Nice? Good? Talking about one hundred million dollars. You're supposed to be representing the entire state of California,

not the goddamned pharmacist.

I called Willie [L.] Brown [Jr.], I sat down with Willie. That's before Willie became speaker, when he was just an ordinary assemblyman. I think he was chairman of Ways and Means or something at the time, whatever it was. I sat down with Willie, told him the whole story. You know, "We got a one-hundred-million-dollar savings here. We can document it. Nobody will be shorted." We even had the provision if you needed the drug, if you're the recipient and I'm the doctor and I said, "Well, you've got to get this drug. I want you to get it right away," then you can go into the pharmacy and get it and get paid for it. But no. But under normal, under 98 percent of the circumstances, it can wait two days. Or, in older people, the medication is the same all the time, anyway. They don't have to go through all the bullshit. And generics cost, you know, 15 percent as much as the brand names. I go in and go over the whole thing with Willie Brown. This is, you know, this is my rude awakening. Remember, I'd been very close to Willie. We were very good friends at one time, before he went power crazy.

He said, "Man, I can't help this program." I said, "Why, Willie?" He said, "Do you realize that 90 percent of the drugs in my district are dispensed through Medi-Cal, and if we went through this program, you would break every pharmacy in my district? I don't want any part of it." I spent a year putting this together. Blew it.

VASQUEZ: Nothing came of it?

POST: Nothing came of it, no. The next year, under Leo [T.] McCarthy or [Robert] Bob Moretti, I think they did put in legislation that the pharmacy could substitute generics with the doctor's approval, with the approval. In other words, if the doctor says you take ABC or generic, they can give you the generic. And then they had to put pricing things on the walls of pharmacies, what twenty-five of the most commonly used drugs were supposed to cost. Now, what do you do? That's the conflict between good government and politics and political hacks. One guy had a pharmacist who was his. . . . You know, the pharmacist is entitled to immunity from any legislation because he was his treasurer. And Willie Brown wanted the support of all the pharmacists in his district, so

he wouldn't go near it. Well, who do you find?
Views on Assembly Speaker Willie L. Brown, Jr.

VASQUEZ: It's ironic, isn't it, that Willie Brown now is calling for megagovernment, part of the problem of inefficiency [he argues] is that government is broken down into so many smaller units and their representatives have to take into consideration those interests.

POST: Willie Brown is a liar. Willie Brown is an opportunist. And Willie Brown is nothing. I've known Willie Brown for a long time. I used to like him. He was a friend of mine.

VASQUEZ: How does someone like that become so powerful in the state of California, then, if he's all those things?

POST: Well, because what is politics? What is politics?

You know, Willie filled the hiatus when my friend [Assemblyman] Howard [L.] Berman was fighting with my friend Leo McCarthy. [Laughter] He went around and he hustled both, and he said, "Look, Harry," "Look, Joe," "Look, Carlos, if you can give me your vote, I'm going to see that you're the chairman of the committee. We'll help that program you've got in your area for unwed mothers

or for abortion clinics, or whatever it is." It's a trade-off. You didn't just agree to vote for him. He traded you something for it. And he went around and, you know. . . . And a lot of them said, "Well, I'm supporting Berman." So he said, "Well, give me your second choice. If Berman doesn't get it, will you give me your vote?" "If McCarthy doesn't get it, will you give me your vote?" And he wound up with enough votes that they're fighting like hell and he snuck in and grabbed the whole boodle and went away with it.

VASQUEZ: So he's good at the political process?

POST: Oh, nobody questions he's good at the political process! There's no question about that. He's good at the political process. Most of the thieves are, or they couldn't be, you know, where they are. But thieves is a word, I suppose, you have to be careful with using. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: How would you--and we get back to oversight and regulatory commissions--how do you compare the contributions, to use that term, of someone like Willie Brown and someone like Jesse Unruh, in the same position of the speakership of the assembly? They're both successful at it.

How Money has Affected Politics

POST: Yes, but with the high cost of campaigning, the situation has changed drastically. I've always been an adherent whenever I've been involved in a campaign, and I have been treasurer of many of them, I said, "We don't ever want to take too many contributions for a person that if there's anything off-color, we can't give it back to them." And I have done that on occasion. I've called you and said, "Carlos, I'm sorry, we can't accept your contribution because you're in trouble here," or "I hear you're going to be indicted tomorrow," or whatever. Now, you know, a thousand dollar contribution to Jesse Unruh's regime was a big, major contribution, but we could always give that back if we had to.

In Willie's, you're talking tens and twenties and thirty thousands, big, big, big chunks of money. And, of course, the cost of campaigning has gone up a thousand percent. It's only because, you know, there's no regulation. These guys keep talking about it, but they won't do it. [City Councilman Ernani] Bernardi and the city of Los Angeles started a maximum campaign

contribution thing, which I contributed to and helped them with, of, I think, two hundred dollars maximum to a city councilperson, five hundred dollars maximum for the mayoral office, and no transfer of funds between one committee and another committee. That's where the big violation comes in. Willie doesn't need two million dollars to be reelected in San Francisco. He could probably be reelected with a postcard campaign. But a friend of mine, [Walter M.] Walt Ingalls left the legislature and he was in Riverside, and a new guy went in there by the name of [Steve] Clute. He didn't know the first thing about campaigning, didn't know the first thing about raising money. Willie paid for the campaign. Doesn't he own the guy? Isn't he entitled to own the guy? He does own the guy. The guy was a nice, clean-cut candidate. He was a Navy veteran with a uniform, you know, and a wife and kids and all of that. But Willie bought him. And I don't mind. I don't know the guy, but I would tell it to him to his face, "If Willie has put up 90 percent of the money for your campaign to put you in office, you owe. You can't turn him down."

California Politics versus Machine Politics

VASQUEZ: How is the different from the political machines, say, of the Midwest or the East Coast?

POST: It's rapidly becoming like that. That's why I'm getting more disenchanted with California politics. I was never a devotee or an advocate of Chicago ward politics; Boston, Massachusetts, politics; Newark, New Jersey, politics; New York politics. They were all, to me, corrupt. But here we had a relatively clean operation.

VASQUEZ: What kept it clean?

POST: The state was new, the state was young, the state was growing. Lots of things.

VASQUEZ: What's happened?

POST: Well, what's happened. Jesse made, I think, the biggest contribution to the state by raising the level of the legislature to a salaried operation. They were getting three hundred dollars a month before that, I think. Well, you know, twenty bucks is a big gratuity to three hundred dollars a month. So Jesse got them. . . . I think the first thing was \$14,000 a year, or something like that. It's now \$27,000. It now comes to about \$85,000, directly and indirectly. Which we did as

a study at the Little Hoover Commission. I went over it with Jesse and he said, "You're low." [Laughter] And we came up with \$76,000 or something. He said it's about close to \$85,000. The fact that he would give the legislature stature and staff. . . . You know, at one time we were known as the cleanest, best legislature in the United States.

VASQUEZ: How long ago?

POST: Not long ago. Not long ago. Within the last ten years, I would say, twelve years. But then you get power brokers in. It was clean under Leo [T. McCarthy]. I think it's the most corrupt now that it's ever been, under Willie Brown. Because right now, if you want to buy the Capitol dome, I can arrange it for you. [Laughter] You can send a crane and lift it and take it away. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: And you attribute this all to one man or one group of men?

POST: No. No, not to one. It's many. It's the lobbyists. Firstly, it's the high cost of campaigning. You ought to put a limit on it. When [Assemblyman] Tom Hayden spends two million dollars to run for an assembly seat, he ought to

be shot. I mean, you set a very, very bad example. You know, those people. . . . Of course, in that case, his wife bought him a seat. And, you know, so, well, your wife buys you a shirt, buys you a tie. You want a seat in the legislature? Sure. He's not that bad a guy, but, you know. . . . I was in Chicago at the Democratic convention in '68 when he was on the other side of the barricades throwing bottles at us. I was the treasurer of the delegation. I had to go down every day.

Controlling the Cost of Political Campaigns

Firstly, you've got to control the cost of campaigns. Then you have to control the amount of contributions. Then you have to limit how much you're going to let somebody contribute. And I'll give you a very good case in point, right on date.

I was a part of the Democratic National Finance Council a couple of years ago. Governor [Mario] Cuomo solicited all of the members to join him in a political dinner in New York at the cost of \$25,000 a table. First year in office. I said, "That's not a contribution, that's a bribe." That isn't good government. Twenty-five thousand dollars a table, you know, to a guy

that's been in office one year? It merely says, "That's an introduction to any department you want. You want to build a road? You want to sell school books? You want to fix the roofs on the buildings? What do you want? That's going to cost you two more tables or three more tables." And for that reason, I won't go near Cuomo. I won't support the son of a bitch. That's an invitation to thievery and bribery.

VASQUEZ: Who benefits from all this?

POST: The incumbent and the incumbent's buddies, friends.

VASQUEZ: How about the monied interests that combine them?

POST: Oh, well, of course, of course. You know, you buy two tables at the dinner, now you've got \$50,000. If you want to talk about renting some property to the state or renting something from the state, or buying some surplus property or selling them school books or desks or whatever, or you want to give them a health program or you want to give them a computer program, or you want to sell them typewriters or automobiles, you're entitled to, god damn it, you're entitled to call the guy that you gave the money and say, "Hey, I

want to talk to the guy in charge of automobiles," or "I want to talk to the guy in charge of buying computers," or "I want to talk to this one." Because I've been in that position and, you know, a heavy contributor, you help them.

Now, in my case, if I would call, I wouldn't say, "Carlos, this is a man that's been helpful to a campaign. He'd like to talk to you about a bid. But I'm telling you now, you treat him like anybody else. He's got to stand right up with everybody else." No, you know, no under-the-table, no side deals.

They don't seem to want to limit the campaigns for a number of reasons. I was a controller of Bradley's last campaign, not this one, but the one before that. We overspent by \$1,500,000: staff salaries, printing, rental of equipment, losing of equipment, all kinds of things, which I could document if I wanted to. Overpaying. You know, when you buy, if you buy \$3,500,000 worth of media time, there's a 15 percent commission and there's 1 percent discount for paying up front. That's 16 percent. Well, if I'm handling the buy, I say, "Look, you can have 4

percent and we'll take the 12 percent off. If you don't want to do it, we'll find another agency that will. Because, you know, we're political, we pay twice as much for political time, anyway." And then, in this case, they were paid retail. We paid cash; somebody made 16 percent. There's a device or company that monitors broadcast time--it costs one-quarter of 1 percent or something like that--but they give you a count, see did you get all the time that you paid for. The people in the Bradley campaign didn't want to do that. They thought that would be too chickenshit, too cheap to question somebody. After the campaign, the FEC [Federal Elections Commission] checked the books and records, and my friend Jules Glazer, who was the accountant for the campaign [Laughter]. . . . We'd overpaid \$120,000 on media, which they had to give back. I want to have insurance on it. When we first . . .

VASQUEZ: But as controller how does something like that get around you?

POST: Because they keep breaking the law, that's all. In the Bradley campaign. . . . I would never go near that group again. They just broke the law in

twenty places, thirty places. They'd open special accounts that I didn't sign on. [Laughter] Oh, it was a disaster. It was a disaster. But the point is, somebody gets 16 percent that should have gotten 4 percent.

VASQUEZ: What broke down? What is breaking down in California that we're going back to this kind of a machine, money, influence peddling?

Campaign Donations and Political Influence

POST: Go back to the cost of campaigns. When you go to spend a million dollars instead of one hundred thousand dollars, you know, your little neighbor contributions aren't going to help you. The five and ten dollars, they're not going to do it. You need chunks, you need chunks of money. All right, now, the guy that gives you ten or twenty thousand dollars, of your million dollars, he's entitled to recognition. And how many of them are willing to do it, like me, for free and don't want anything? I don't buy, I don't sell, I don't deal with the state other than buying a driver's license, and I've got to pay for that, got to pay my taxes. Not many people will.

All the TV people, with all their, you know,

their closed circuit, whatever the hell they call them, their franchises. They have to bid and they have to get placed. You know, it's awful hard for you to sit on a board that's going to award a contract and one of those three guys is giving you twenty thousand dollars for your campaign. Come on! It's awful hard for you to vote against that guy, isn't it? You know, because you're going to run another campaign. If you vote against that guy, you'll never see him again, and he'll tell his friends that you're a deadbeat.

VASQUEZ: So, over time, you go accumulating these. . .

POST: Well, you see, that's perfectly okay if you vote for the guy if he's equally qualified as the rest of them and he's the best bid for the government entity that you're working for. But then if you're a gentlemen, what you should do is tell your other commissioners, "You know, I got a campaign contribution from this man. I want to let you know, and if you want me not to vote on it, I won't vote on it. I think he's preeminently better than A and C because of the following," and you list all that stuff down. But it still goes back to the basic. If you have need for lots of

money for your campaign costs, they're going to kill you. Now, most of these guys don't want to change. You know Tom Bane?

VASQUEZ: I don't know who he is.

POST: The speaker pro tem?

VASQUEZ: Of course.

POST: Do some research. Find out how much he paid his wife to manage his campaign last year, year before. Would you believe something like \$100,000, \$120,000? And he's in a very safe district. Nobody's going to bother him; nobody's going to run against him. Well, that's criminal. To me, that's no different than stealing, and I've told him so.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

III. TENURE ON THE COMMISSION ON CALIFORNIA STATE
GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND ECONOMY ("LITTLE
HOOVER COMMISSION")

[Session 2, November 4, 1987]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

Formation of the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: We were talking about the foibles and difficulties of insuring good government. You served on a very unique and, in many respects, a very important commission, known as the Little Hoover Commission, for two decades. I'd like to deal with that today. What was your understanding of how that commission was formed and why?

POST: The commission legislation was carried by Senator Milton Marks out of San Francisco, who was a liberal Republican who has now, I believe, become a Democrat. The idea was patterned after the federal Hoover Commission to some extent, in that it was to be an oversight commission on government activity. But in addition to being an oversight commission, it would be a nonpartisan commission.

It would be represented by lay members, by legislative members, and by various appointing authorities. The governor, I believe, having

at that original time five appointments, broad-based. Whoever he thought was responsible enough and had sufficient time and knowledge to work in this area, their experience in government was not necessary at the time. The speaker of the assembly had two legislative appointments to make and one layperson. The president of the senate had the same position, two members of the senate plus one lay person. There was a total of eleven members, it being an odd number so that you wouldn't get into a cross-over if you had a problem on a vote. Subsequently, a few years later, the membership was increased to thirteen through my request to Jesse Unruh because of the number of people we had and people that sometimes couldn't attend, and the fact that really we wanted more lay members on. The legislative members, as you know, come into a meeting, go out to a meeting. They've got other hearings. Of a six-hour session, they might be there for two hours. The conscientious lay members would be there through the whole meeting.

It was an open field in that we could look at any area of state government, any division, any

department, just any area that we wanted to look at. And we had the power of subpoena. The only place we couldn't look is the legislature.

[Laughter] They were very smart in creating it. They were self-protected. We could not review anything that the legislature did, which I didn't think is right. But if it's a hands-off situation, it ought to be hands-off all the way across the board. I mean, we could look at the governor's office. Well, if we could look at the governor's office, why then shouldn't we be able to look at the legislature?

VASQUEZ: You were a creation of the legislature.

POST: Yeah. We were their creation, but they didn't want to . . .

VASQUEZ: To your knowledge, what role did the incoming Brown administration have in the creation of the Little Hoover Commission?

POST: Well, let's differentiate between the "good" Brown and the "bad" Brown. The good Brown, [Edmund G.] Pat Brown [Sr.], was very helpful. He met with us on a number of occasions. He would set up a meeting to discuss certain areas that we were looking at, or he would take reports that we had

to make. After doing a study, we would report to the governor in person, if he was available. But he was very supportive, not so much of me, but as of everybody else. But he ultimately became very supportive of me, as well. He, at first, was not supportive of me because I was a Jesse Unruh appointee and, as you know, there was quite a bit of acrimony at that time between the governor and the speaker.

Conflict Between Governor Brown and Speaker Unruh

VASQUEZ: That early in the administration?

POST: A little later on. Not at the start.

VASQUEZ: To what do you attribute that acrimony; what was the basis of that acrimony?

POST: Well, you've got two power bases. And one says, you know, "I'm the governor and I govern the state." And the other says, "We're the legislature, and we create the laws that govern the state." And there has to be a meeting between these two. And strong-willed people sometimes have problems.

VASQUEZ: Some have argued that it was people around Brown that, perhaps--and maybe even people around Jesse--but people around Brown especially, kept

the distance between Unruh and Brown.

POST: I consider that a very valid statement. And if I can digress for a minute, I will tell you of an incident that bears that out more so than any. And that is Senator Clair Engle and Speaker Jesse Unruh were supposed to be enemies because of the infighting between their two staffs. I was Clair Engle's treasurer, and I was Jesse Unruh's treasurer. Now, we three went back to Washington at one time for something or other, and it was my intent to put them together.

And I got them together, and I said, "Look, you're both friends of mine. You're both decent public servants. I think you ought to talk without your staff. You know, your staff is always dinging the other guy." Which is what they were doing. They wanted to keep them separated. By the time we got to Washington, they were the closest and best of friends. And both thanked me for putting this thing together. We were in an airplane, and I sat them down with a bottle of Scotch and I said, "Here, guys, you hear bad things about each other from your people. Well, I know both of you. I don't think these things are

valid. Take a look at yourselves." Unfortunately, Clair Engle shortly thereafter had a problem. He had some kind of lesion in his head. He went in for surgery; he came out a vegetable and died very shortly thereafter. But it brings to the point, the staff say bad things about the other guy and the other people's staff, and there really was no animosity between the two of them. When they finally sat down and talked to each other, fine.

VASQUEZ: Some sources indicate that on Brown's staff it would have been Hale Champion and his political ambitions and his differences with Unruh that kept that going. Who would it have been on Engle's staff?

POST: Oh, I don't know. Look, this is a long time back. I don't know the specific names, but it seems that by carrying bad tales of what somebody else supposedly said about you, you ingratiate yourself with the other person. And it goes that way quite often. I'm not certain, not only in politics but in business, and in corporate activities, as well. I don't know why. I don't think you win anything by it, but obviously people seem to think that they do. Sure, you know, in

the governor's administration the director of finance is a very strong, ambitious guy.

And, of course, there was always the fighting about budget and, you know, about priorities of funding and legislation. It's understandable that you've got two powerful houses and it's a stalemate in some cases. You know, the governor wants some legislation, he can't get it without the cooperation of the speaker. The speaker wants a certain program, but if the governor can red-line a budget, he ain't gonna get it. So, it has to be a matter of cooperation.

The Original Work and Members of the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: Well, let's get back to the Hoover Commission and the support that you were able to garner from the Brown administration. Now Pat Brown came to power with, among other things, a plan to reorganize the executive branch of government. The first report that the commission produced, addressed that topic. Can you tell me about that process?

POST: You're talking about the original agency commission?

VASQUEZ: Right, the report, The Findings and Recommenda-

tions Concerning Reorganization of the Executive Branch of California State Government. Before we do that, as a matter of fact--we'll get to that--tell me about the members of the commission. They're all listed here on that front matter.

POST: Well, [Eugene C.] Gene Lee, I believe, was a professor of public administration at Berkeley, and a very knowledgeable man in government. Milton Marks was the Republican senator from San Francisco who originally authored the legislation. A very dedicated guy. John T. Knox, the young assemblyman--young at that time; he's now a lobbyist--also interested in government and what makes it tick and what makes it go. George Miller, Jr., one very, very good guy who didn't attend many meetings. But for some reason, we became very friendly, although he had a great animosity with Jesse Unruh, because he had other ambitions than Jesse.

I criticized Miller once--you know, just personally--for not coming to a meeting. And he said, "Look, Manny, if you need me on a matter or you need me on a vote, you call me and tell me. But I can't sit there for six or seven hours, I've

just got too many things to do. I look at the agenda. If there's anything that I think I can help, I'll be there." But he said, "If you ever call me and tell me you need me, I will be there." Which I thought was very nice, coming from a senior legislator to a relatively new member of this commission. Sol Price was appointed by Brown. He was the president of a group called the FedMart Stores. He eventually resigned from the commission. He didn't quite understand it, didn't care about it. It was a problem for him to attend meetings because he did not fly and he had a Greyhound bus outfitted as an office and he would drive it from San Diego. He had a driver drive up from San Diego for a meeting and back, which is a long, long way. And, besides, he was running a very big operation. But he was looking for meatier things than the discussions we were having. He just didn't have too much of an interest in it. He's still around, by the way.

Dick [Richard E.] Sherwood, young attorney, bright attorney, I believe with O'Melveny and Myers. Didn't attend too many meetings. Made contributions. In a number of cases, made

minority reports that exceeded in length our whole report. [Laughter] Which we thought was a little unusual, strange, because . . .

VASQUEZ: Was there an ideological difference there?

POST: Yeah, yeah. There were some differences. But if you didn't sit in on the meetings and didn't participate on the discussion, it's kind of hard to come in as a Monday morning quarterback and say, "I differ from this and this."

VASQUEZ: And he did that?

POST: Yeah. Maybe he was just having fun, or just growing up like the rest of us did. Roy Sorenson was a very dedicated member, who I think was a member of the national YMCA board or something. He was semiretired, an elderly gentleman. But he attended meetings, he participated in discussion, he was interested. [Vernon L.] Vern Sturgeon was a good guy. He was a Republican senator from Paso Robles, I guess it was, who later on left the senate and became a legislative liaison for Ronald Reagan when he became governor. And he was with him for four, five, or six years. Dair Tandy, who was a member of the city council of. . . . Oh, the dam. Where's the dam up north of Sacramento?

VASQUEZ: Oroville?

POST: Oroville. Yeah. And we had some meetings in Oroville because we were looking at the water project and stuff. Well, let me finish these. Frank [D.] Tellwright was also a senior member. I think he was a retired gentleman from the telephone company. He was one of Pat Brown's appointees. I can't remember too much about Frank Tellwright I don't think he was extremely active.

VASQUEZ: Then there were some other members that came on later.

POST: Oh, well, we've had. . . . Of our original eleven, I think we've had a hundred members.

VASQUEZ: Oh, really?

POST: Yes, yes.

VASQUEZ: Tell me, the lay members, were they for the most part retired people or very successful people that they can afford to do this? Was that the pattern?

POST: Well, I wasn't retired at the time. [Laughter] I was quite young, I guess, at the time. This was what?

VASQUEZ: Early sixties, '61, '62.

POST: Well, it was a long time ago. No, I think it was just a matter of those that would have an interest

in government that thought that they could contribute to government. It wasn't. . . . You know, the compensation was nothing. I think it was fifty dollars a day or a hundred dollars a day, something like that. And a lot of the times we had two-day meetings so that we could get things done. I mean, it was a work group; it wasn't a fun group. That's why some of the people didn't like it. I mean, they thought it's a commission that you go and you fool around. But many, many times--particularly when I was chairman--we would continue through our meetings at lunch and just have sandwiches ordered and brought in and we'd continue. You know, we don't have to go stand in some restaurant and have a drink and wait for this and that and then spend two hours.

Support Staff for the Commission

VASQUEZ: What kind of staff support did you have in the beginning?

POST: We had two people. We had [L.H.] Les Halcomb, Jr., and we had one secretary. We eventually got another, part-time secretary to help. But we did have the advantage in the fact that with our

closeness to the legislature, we could always borrow. We could borrow people. We had a limited budget, so we couldn't hire consultants. We could always borrow consultants from one commission or committee or another, or one department of the legislature. That's where we avoided the straight-line organization chart, but I've never paid any attention to straight-line organization charts. I figure the best way to get something done is to go from point A to point B. And if it crosses over a few lines, that's too bad.

VASQUEZ: Why did you not dip in to the university system for consultants?

POST: We did, in some cases. We did, limited . . .

VASQUEZ: Can you think of any cases where you did that?

POST: Our executive officer was close to the UC [University of California] people, I think, in Berkeley and, occasionally, would give us some people. Then the Coro Foundation would give us some people. As a matter of fact, Vic Fazio, who is now the congressman from there [Sacramento], he was loaned to us for a year or so. A number were. We never had a problem. We could always manage to borrow, beg, or steal whatever we needed

and we proceeded on that basis.

The Limited Authority of the Commission

VASQUEZ: Now, even though the commission was established and had statutory independence when it was created, it always remained a commission that could only offer recommendations. Did that ever bother you? Did that ever frustrate you?

POST: No. No, I don't believe so. Because we were an oversight commission. We did make recommendations in a number of cases where necessary laws were introduced and changed or implemented to follow a recommendation of ours. But we were not the principal authority. We could not make a law, but it was no problem. We had four legislators aboard and, you know, I would come to one and say, "This is what I think we need to do. You know, if you agree. . . ." And we'd go over the thing. He'd say, "You draft a bill and we'll go over it with you, and if you like it, if it does what you want it to do, we'll introduce it and carry it." Which we did.

Partisanship in the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: Did partisanship play a large part in determining who carried what or . . .

POST: Originally, this was a pure commission. There was no partisanship at all. It was a nonpartisan commission. It really didn't become partisan--really, honestly--until Reagan got elected. Then it started becoming a partisan group.

Because, as you know, Caspar Weinberger was appointed chairman of the commission by Reagan. He was what I would call an extremely bad chairman. Because he wouldn't call a meeting. He didn't feel it served any useful purpose to call a meeting unless it were something to rubber-stamp something that Reagan wanted. And I served as vice-chairman of the commission at the time, and I had called an emergency meeting of the commission--which I could--to talk about ousting Weinberger from the chair, because everybody else was interested in doing something. I think we'd gone six months with no meeting. Since Vern Sturgeon was now legislative liaison for the governor, but formerly a member of the commission, I went to him and I told him, I kept him advised as what was happening there. And I told him that we had the meeting scheduled for the following day and what was going to happen, because every member of the

commission was in accord with me, including all the Republicans. So, at that point, Caspar Weinberger was removed from the commission and made the director of finance.

VASQUEZ: He got kicked upstairs?

POST: Yeah, he got kicked upstairs. Well, you know that that does not make me [Laughter]. . . . Well, I don't know. [Laughter] I don't know if Caspar Weinberger should be angry with me or happy with me. He got out of a chore he didn't want and got into a spot that he did want. And we precipitated that particular action. But the original group were a very sincere, dedicated, hard-working group. Then they started moving things around and changing things. And now it's a totally political group.

VASQUEZ: What do you mean by that?

Commission Appointments and Political
Contributions

POST: Well, appointments are made based on--I have to be careful with these words, but I want to say--based on the amount of contribution to the elected appointing authority. Which is a very sad commentary to make.

VASQUEZ: So, just as in the election process that we spoke about last time, money creeps into this as well?

POST: Sure does. It didn't originally.

VASQUEZ: What do you think was the basis for those people in the original group being picked to be put on that commission?

POST: Well, I think they were knowledgeable, and they were probably desirous. I think every one of those people were asked if they would want to go on this, with the exception of me. I was just appointed. And I jumped Jesse Unruh after the first meeting, I said, "Why did you do that to me?" It was very unusual for me to sit eight hours in a chair. I had never done it before, I don't think. And my back hurt, my legs hurt. I just wasn't used to sitting for eight hours.

VASQUEZ: Why was that? Did you not see the legitimacy of such a commission? You've always been an advocate of good government.

Using Expertise on the Commission

POST: Well, that's why I sat through it. That's why, because I was interested in government. I wanted to try and help government, if I could. And I did. My idea of the Little Hoover Commission was

that we use the knowledge and expertise of all the people that were on it in their particular fields. Now, of course, the legislature could recommend a study, the governor could recommend a study, or we could institute a study ourselves. But my feeling was that if you take somebody who has a particular knowledge in a particular field, that you let that person chair a subcommittee in a particular study.

For example, I had Harry Blackman appointed to the commission by Jesse Unruh. Harry Blackman was the founder of the White Front stores, he would know about merchandising and sales procedure and warehousing procedures and all of that. And when we did a study on the General Services Administration, it was a natural for Harry to do that. I did a number of studies on the automotive program in the state government. I worked with the [California] Highway Patrol. Those are areas that I had knowledge in.

VASQUEZ: Fleet services, is that right? You did a report on that?¹

1. Findings and Recommendations Concerning Automotive Fleet Management, June 24, 1963.

POST: Yeah. That's one of the first reports we did.

Division of Labor on the Commission

VASQUEZ: How would you divide up the work? Did you break up into subgroups, working groups?

POST: Yes. Normally, there were two or three subcommittees going most of the time in the areas of study that were approved by the commission. And then a chair was appointed, and the chair would ask, a) for volunteers in a particular study or, failing in that, he would select A, B, or C to serve on the subcommittee. I instituted one subcommittee, and two legislators that I appointed to it resigned immediately when they saw the nature of the study.

VASQUEZ: Which was?

POST: That was Jack Fenton and Willie Brown. It was a study on Medi-Cal and the distribution of pharmaceutical drugs directly, generically and directly to the recipients by mail. It's a program I worked on for a long time. And I could see. . . . It's hard to think of it, but I saw about a hundred million dollars worth of savings annually on this program.

VASQUEZ: You told me about that last time. Both Fenton and

Willie Brown begged off because they had pharmacists and pharmaceutical interests in their district.

POST: Correct. Fenton's treasurer was a pharmacist, and he resigned immediately in horror that we would do this. And Willie Brown just held his head in his hands and said 90 percent or so of the pharmacies in his district are supported by Medi-Cal, and he couldn't do that to them. So I lost two sponsors right away. Not two sponsors, two co-committee persons.

State Efforts and Federal Constraints

VASQUEZ: And what was the upshot of that report?

POST: The upshot of the report is, we found subsequently that in the federal legislation there was a "joker" that prohibited us from doing what we wanted to do, and had been put in by, I think it was Senator Russell Long [Louisiana]. And it was one line, one line that said, "The recipient shall have the selection of his pharmacist, as well as his physician . . ." and so on. And that knocked us out of the tub, you know. We never envisioned anything like that. And it was the last line, I think. It was an add-on. It was one of those

joint conference things, or one of the last-day or the last-minute of the last day. . . . One line! But it destroyed what we were trying to do. And what we were trying to do was, I think, a rational program.

It was all worked out where your physician would examine you and write a prescription for you. He'd give you a copy for your records. He would mail the prescription in to the state, or to an entity that would do this for this state, which would guarantee to put it in the mail, put the pharmaceutical in the mail the same day that it received so that you'd get it the next day or the day subsequent. Narcotics would not be distributed by mail. And if there were an emergency, you could take that prescription in to a local pharmacy, but it had to be an emergency. Now, we would then dispense generic drugs, as per the doctor's prescription, directly to your mail box. And, really, the cost figured like a hundred million dollars a year in saving for the couple of years that we were studying it, until we were knocked out.

VASQUEZ: So you have a case here in which you were trying

to bring about good government on the state level, but the federal constraints got in the way.

POST: Well, that's true. But then, you couldn't knock out the federal constraints either. We tried.

VASQUEZ: Did you?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: What did you do?

POST: Well, I talked to various legislators that I knew. Pardon me a moment.

[Interruption]

I think it was Russell Long's bill, and nobody wanted to tangle with Russell Long. And I'm sure the pharmaceutical industry had contributed enough to his campaigns to preclude this type of situation. Because whether you're aware of it or not, the markup in pharmaceuticals is horrendous. You know, a ten dollar prescription which has to be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist, and so on, the raw material might be thirty-five, forty cents, fifty cents or less. Now, if you deliver generics, the cost can be ten cents instead of ten dollars. Now, you've got some mailing costs and handling costs and one thing or the other. But of the ten dollar retail prescrip-

tion, you might deliver through the state for a dollar and a half, two dollars. That's how we came up with our hundred million saving. There was one residual benefit afterwards. When [Robert] Bob Moretti was speaker and legislation was put in that generic drugs would have to be dispensed through pharmacies as well, and they had to have a pricing schedule in pharmacies. . . . Which they seem to have disappeared, but you know this is some time ago when they had a pricing schedule on normal prescription drugs.

VASQUEZ: So some good came out of all that.

POST: Oh, yeah, some good came of it. And, you know, eventually I believe that's the way it should be. But, of course, I'm not in the pharmacy business [Laughter] and I don't have any people who are in the pharmacy business. But I'm talking about doing a social good for people that have problems, who don't have sufficient funds and, therefore, I think the working public can deal with the pharmacies. But where the government has to give something, the government should be able to give it as its lowest net price.

You know, you want to feed people, you don't

send them a chit and tell them to go into Chasen's and order dinner. If they're homeless people, you provide food for them and you provide it as expeditiously as possible and as cheaply as possible. Not touching the quality, but as cheaply as possible so you can service more people.

The Commission Report on Government Reorganization

VASQUEZ: Let's take another incident, another case in which, perhaps, the reception of the recommendations were more warmly received. Let's take the case of your study of the reorganization of the executive branch of government to an agency system. Do you think that the Little Hoover Commission report helped that along?¹

POST: Very definitely.

VASQUEZ: It was received positively by the administration, wasn't it?

POST: Yes. Yes. It was one that Hale Champion was warmly in favor of, as well. Well, all we were trying to do was to lump the various activities

1. Findings and Recommendations Concerning Reorganization of the Executive Branch of California State Government, December 31, 1962.

together. I mean, you wouldn't have. . . . I'm trying to think of some ridiculous observations. But you wouldn't have, for example, medical [service] tied in with automotive fleet [service]. They fall in different categories and different services.

And it's not perfect. I mean, there's no way that you can make it perfect that everything falls within its group. We've argued lots of times about, "Well, this could be over there, could be over here." Well, sometimes we judged it on the basis that you've got fourteen departments here, and only five of them over here. Now, if this is a question mark, let's put this one over here where's there five. Otherwise, you're totally unbalanced. But there's no perfection in government. There never will be.

The Agency Plan in Subsequent Administrations

VASQUEZ: What happened in subsequent administrations to the agency plan and the efficiency that you saw in that?

POST: [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: You were on that commission for--what?--two, three more administrations?

POST: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, the Reagan administration just didn't pay any attention to it, at all. They didn't care. And I understand the [Governor George] Deukmejian administration is trying to remove it!

VASQUEZ: But didn't Reagan come into office talking about, "squeezing, cutting, and trimming" good government, and cutting costs? Isn't that what the Little Hoover Commission was trying to do?

POST: He came in with all that crap. I have to use the word "crap" because I then have to tell you a very strange story.

When Reagan got in, he organized the great "citizens committee" which contributed money to do a study of state government by some national firm. I don't recall the name of the firm. But in studying their recommendations, I found that this firm had done a similar study for Ohio in the prior year. And they had done one for the state of Washington. We were number three. Now, if you took the cover pages off, the recommendations [Laughter] would all have been the same. We had all three of them together, Les Halcomb and myself, and I said, "This is terrible. These

people contributed three-, four hundred thousand dollars for a study, and if you took off the front pages with the picture of the governor and the name of the state, they're all the same, a lot of platitudes."

Which I believe is what the recent Grace Commission did just last year when they came up with a report. And, basically included, you know, all the good things. . . . Eliminate waste. Eliminate duplication. Increase efficiency. Decrease absenteeism. I mean, dozens of platitudes that don't mean anything! But the Ohio report, the Washington report, and the California report all said the same thing. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Why did Reagan find it necessary to go around the Hoover Commission, or, as you indicated later, put somebody like Caspar Weinberger on there to stagnate it?

POST: Well, he didn't try to go around. It was Cap Weinberger's idea. And Cap Weinberger at his first meeting--and I may be afield--but in his first meeting, he said, "You know, the governor wants to cut the budget and we're going to cut 10 percent off of our budget." And I started to say,

"But Cap . . . " He said, "There are no 'buts' about it. We are going to cut our budget 10 percent." At which point I had to interrupt. I said, "Look. We've returned 20 percent of our budget in the last year! Now you want us to spend more money?" We had a limited budget. I think two hundred thousand dollars or something like that. And we didn't use it. We returned 20 percent of it. "Now, you want us to save only 10 percent of it? That means we'll have to spend more money." And he said, "Oh." And that was the end of the discussion.

VASQUEZ: So he hadn't even done his homework on that?

POST: No, no. He hadn't done any homework at all.

VASQUEZ: So I come back to the same question. Why do you think the Reagan administration saw this commission as either a nuisance or a threat?

POST: I don't know.

Insuring a Balanced Commission

VASQUEZ: You mentioned earlier that it was balanced politically, that the appointments weren't politically motivated. That would indicate to me that it wasn't all Democrats or all liberal Democrats.

POST: Well, it couldn't be because. . . . Oh, maybe I didn't make it clear earlier. Of the original commission of eleven members, there could only be five from one party and six of the other. When we enlarged the commission, apropos of Weinberger, which is why we enlarged the commission, then it was seven of one party and six of another. So, you know, it was evenly spread. And, of course, you know you have got a total of four legislative members and you have two legislative members of the other party. So you really have four of the thirteen. Now, you've got nine others. And those have to be equal, so you've got four Republicans and five Democrats. I don't think they deliberately went to hazard us, I think he just wanted a spot to stick Cap Weinberger in the public eye. And, fortunately, our track record had been good and our reputation was good, so he appointed him chairman. Oh, and by the way, again, which I forgot, when we enlarged the number from eleven to thirteen, we also put the provision in that the commission would elect its own chairperson. Not the governor, the commission would. That was my doing, with Jesse Unruh's

help, was to get away from getting a situation like Weinberger again.

Conducting Simultaneous Studies

VASQUEZ: Going back to the way that the commission functioned, you had more than one study going at once?

POST: Oh, yes. Yes.

VASQUEZ: How many studies might be going on at one time?

POST: Two, or possibly three. You know, we discussed various ideas and said, "Well, it's a good one. Let's go after that, or let's go after it when we get done with study A or study B." Fortunately, we had enough input from the legislature, from our own staff people, from the governor's office, from our members, so we have always had something to look at.

The Press and the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: The press has always shown interest in the commission. Friend or foe? Or can one generalize?

POST: That's a hard question. I can't say "friend" or "foe." If I had to select one or the other, I'd say friend.

VASQUEZ: A critical friend?

POST: Well, a critical friend. But, basically, the

press has to sell newspapers or TV time or radio time. And if it's a nondescript, nonactive body, they're not going to look at it. We are an active body. We're referred to as a very blue ribbon commission of powerful, wealthy people, independent people who take strong positions. And, sure, it gives you something to write about and that's their job. I mean, if they sat in at a normal meeting, we didn't discuss anything, they wouldn't have anything to write about. They'd become unemployed, technically. Then what would they do?

VASQUEZ: So at an important juncture, I would imagine the press was very useful to you. Which means you had to come up with a strategy, or plans as how to use--if I may use that word--the press. Who was responsible for that. Did you have a press secretary or a media person within the commission that worked with them?

POST: Our executive officer did all of that until one point in time when we agreed to hire a press officer on a very limited, test basis. Well, the legislature jumped all over us, the theory being, "We create the law, we get the press, we have to

be elected. You just do your work and recommend it to us." Because I tried to get a budget allocation for a press officer. We called it public information, not press. Public information. We got shot down in a hurry. We got shot down even to the point that Mr. [Nathan] Shappell asked a number of us if we would personally contribute towards a press officer. And we agreed, you know. Okay. And the word came back from the legislature, "Not even with your own money. We don't want you to be. . . . You want to be in competition with us."

VASQUEZ: Is that what they saw, competition?

POST: Yeah. So when we would have a major report to make, we tried to make it with both houses. In other words, get the speaker and get the president of the senate together, and we then are making the presentation to them. Or the governor, if he's available.

VASQUEZ: Was there a time where information or report language wasn't politically viable for either the governor or the leaders of the legislature to release at that time?

POST: We very seldom, if ever, had problems in that area

until my last episode with the legislature on the horseracing study.¹ And that's about the only time it came up.

VASQUEZ: When was that meeting? Nineteen eighty-one, I think it was?

POST: Yeah, but that was, you know, much further down the stream. No, our reports were not politically motivated. They were in the interests of good government. As a matter of fact, the thought came to me the other day, [Laughter] after speaking with you, the people in Jesse Unruh's office . . .

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

POST: I started to say, as a matter of fact, in Jesse Unruh's office, the people in the office used to refer to me as the "good government nut."

[Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Good government nut.

POST: I don't think we ever became a political football, because we would put out a press release and we would hold public hearings, or public announcements.

1. Horse Racing in California: Revenue and Regulations, July, 1982.

And, of course, then we always had legislators who were sitting at the podium with us who also, I imagine, were protective of the particular wording in a recommendation. But not overly so.

VASQUEZ: Did you ever have a case in which legislators, or members of the commission, leaked information that was coming out in a report prematurely? Can you give me an example of that?

POST: Yes. We had one on a study that I was doing on the Department of Motor Vehicles.¹ And a copy of the report, before it was announced by us, got to the director of Motor Vehicles, who, lo and behold, the next day attacked us in the press on recommendations that we had not yet publicly made. So, he got a copy of it somehow.

VASQUEZ: Did that cause any conflict within the commission?

POST: Well, if you can't find out who did it, what do you do? You know, there are many ways. If you use an outside mimeographing service or photostat service. . . . You know, government is. . . . Anyway, somebody, before it became public, got a

¹. A Study of the California Department of Motor Vehicles, May, 1977.

copy of it to the director of motor vehicles, who had all of the answers and all of the criticisms. He attacked us in the press. And when he was attending a meeting that day that we were having, and he had the answer to every question we had. And, of course, all of his backup was very critical of us. [It] happens.

Stages in the Life of the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: If you were to lay out the life of the commission during the period you were there, approximately twenty years, would you mark it off in stages? Are there epochs or periods that it went through? How would you outline the history of the commission? Because I know that you feel that it changed dramatically from its initial mandate.

POST: Well, we always had a good rapport with the legislature. You know, with Senator [James R.] Mills we always had an open door. With Unruh, of course, we had an open door. With Moretti we had an open door. With McCarthy we had an open door. When [Robert T.] Bob Monaghan was in for a couple of years as speaker, there was very little liaison between ourselves and the Monaghan administration. As a matter of fact, Monaghan threw

me off the commission. [Laughter] He didn't throw me off; he didn't reappoint me. He did not reappoint me to the commission because the terms are four-year terms. But, I must say that Moretti followed Monaghan and the first day Moretti was serving as speaker, he reappointed me to the commission.

VASQUEZ: So you were off for how many years?

POST: I think it was two years.

VASQUEZ: Did somebody else take your place?

POST: Oh, yeah. You know, a lot of appointments came on, and a number of them were in error. Reagan's people made the appointments for him, and they didn't even look. In one case, they appointed a sitting judge. Well, a judge can't serve on the commission. In another case, they appointed a lobbyist. Well, a lobbyist shouldn't be serving on this commission. In one case, I think it was Pat Brown, appointed a convicted felon. I mean, they don't do their homework. They don't check these people out. Which you see in the federal government. To this day, they don't check them out. But a lot of people got on and got off, like [Philip J.] Phil Reilly, for example. On this

material you showed me, Phil Reilly was the president of the Philip Morris and he traveled around the country in a private company jet all of the time. He just couldn't attend meetings. Didn't have any time. I don't think he had very much of an interest.

VASQUEZ: Who appointed him?

POST: Jerry Brown. He was a contributor to Jerry Brown.

VASQUEZ: So it seems that, over time, this commission became increasingly politicized because the appointments become more dependent on people's relationships, contributions to elections, what have you, rather than their knowledge of government, their knowledge of efficiency and economy of large organizations. Is that an unfair characterization?

POST: I would say that's a fair, but sad, analysis.
Yes.

VASQUEZ: Did anybody in the commission bring that to public light? Was that ever a discussion?

POST: [Laughter] Yes, it did--once. It did once in speaking . . .

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] I wonder who it was.

POST: You want to go off the record? Turn off your

machine a minute.

VASQUEZ: Go ahead.

Overrepresentation of Beverly Hills on the
Commission

POST: Well, at one particular point in time, Nathan Shappell of Beverly Hills, Manning Post of Beverly Hills, Harry Blackman of Beverly Hills, a somebody else. . . . And I. . . . You know, I said it's sad that you've got all these wealthy, multimillionaire, Beverly Hills Jewish people, it's not a good symbol for the commission. And a couple of others. I don't know, there were about five at that time, and it was just. . . . I remember.

Well, at that particular point in time, it seemed that a great majority of the commission were very wealthy people. And, of course, they didn't have too much interest. Like Brooke Knapp. She'd come to meetings, and she'd sit around, not pay too much attention. Her contribution was probably in the range of 5 percent, maybe 6 percent. But she wanted to be on a commission. And her husband at that time was working for Nathan Shapell, so he got Mills to appoint her, which is a strange commentary. And

then the people in Mills's office called me and said, "Tell us about this gal." I said, "What gal?" They said, "Well, Brooke Knapp. You recommended her for the spot on the commission." I said, "I didn't recommend her. I've never even met her! I don't know her." They said, "Well, Nathan Shapell said that you okayed her and she's good people." I said, "Well, ask me, don't ask Nathan."

VASQUEZ: That was already in the mid to late seventies?

POST: Yeah. She already was on the commission. I mean, she was appointed. But, again, she was appointed to the commission and then they asked me about her. But that's not unusual.

VASQUEZ: You were going to say that. . . . Was there a reaction to rich people of Jewish background?

POST: No, there wasn't to my knowledge. But I'm sure some place along the line, somebody's going to look at that list, and say, "Beverly Hills, Beverly Hills, Beverly Hills, Beverly Hills. Jesus! What is this, a Beverly Hills commission?"

VASQUEZ: Were you anticipating that?

POST: Yeah. But it never happened directly. But I think it would be a valid comment that somebody

could make. You know, how do you get half of these people, or almost half of the commission, you know, being very wealthy people living in Beverly Hills and of Jewish origin. You know, it's. . . . No black, no women. Well, then, we had a couple of women. No Spanish. No Portuguese. No changeover. I mean, it just doesn't look equitable, that's all. And since I was the first on there, I says, "You others can get off." [Laughter]

The Costs and Pleasure of Serving on the
Commission

VASQUEZ: You enjoyed the work on that commission?

POST: Yeah, very gratifying.

VASQUEZ: You put in a lot of hours of your own time?

POST: Thousands and thousands and thousands of hours.

VASQUEZ: Your own resources? Did you ever put in your own resources?

POST: Oh, sure, sure. You know, you can't operate on a state per diem. I think it was fifty dollars a day. You can't stay in a hotel and buy food or take a cab to the airport. Of course, it's a contribution both of time and money every time you go to a meeting. Some, I remember, didn't even

put in their travel expense. Which I did. I felt I should.

VASQUEZ: How many years do you think the commission was a nonpolitical, nonpartisan, effective oversight commission, before it began to be bantered by the political winds?

POST: Well, there's no problem through the Brown administration.

VASQUEZ: The Pat Brown administration.

POST: Yeah, Pat Brown. That was eight years. The Reagan administration, they didn't pay too much attention, but they weren't banging us around. It was really at the start of the Jerry Brown administration, I had differences with Jerry Brown and I had differences with Gray Davis. And they were, very frankly, always afraid of what we would come up with. [Laughter]

The Jerry Brown Administration's Antipathy Towards the Commission

VASQUEZ: Is that what you attribute to their antagonism to the commission? Or was there antagonism?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: How did it manifest itself?

POST: Well, you just couldn't get straight answers.

And, of course, you could get no support. I mean, prior to that, the commission chair could always arrange a meeting with the governor if they wanted to, or with the speaker, or with the president of the senate. Never any problem. Just, you know, the logistics of time. But Jerry was busy flying around some place in the sky and had very little time for the commission. And, of course, Gray Davis did everything he could to block the commission from having access to the governor.

VASQUEZ: I find it very interesting that the two administrations who publicly came to power arguing for economy in government--"squeeze, cut and trim" in the one case; in the other, the "era of limits"--are the ones that seem to have put the biggest hurdles before a commission whose job and commitment it was to find efficiency and economy in government. And the one administration who openly avowed for an activist, interventionist state government in social matters, and spending a lot of money on social programs, was the one that was the most supportive. Doesn't that sound like a paradox to you?

POST: Yes, it does sound like a paradox, the way you put

it. But you have to understand Reagan's philosophy of government. You know, he's a very cool cat. We had a meeting with him, and it was 4:30 and [snaps fingers] that's the end. He's going home, 4:30, you know. We'd stay until 6:00 or 7:00, catch the 7:00 plane to come back. But the governor, he's home: 5:00, he's home. That's finished.

The Jerry Brown administration was different, see. When Jerry ran, I was extremely helpful in helping him get elected. With money, with support, with introductions, with automobiles, and one thing and another. But Jerry Brown has a very short memory, and the day he got elected, he didn't even want to come to a victory party of his campaign people. It's true! He wanted to do things his way. Now, strangely, when he was running and campaigning, he said, "I'm going to work very closely with the Little Hoover Commission. I believe what they're doing is great." And "I find that their recommendations in government are very helpful. They shall be my strong right arm."

VASQUEZ: And he made these public statements?

POST: Yeah, yeah. Made public statements. "Commissioner Post is being helpful," and so on and so on and so on. "I want to work." But the day he got elected, he didn't even want to go to his victory party. He really didn't want to go. He's a kook. And, of course, we had problems with Gray Davis. Because Gray Davis had come to me for help in doing some work on the treasurer's office because he wanted to run for treasurer. And we helped him. We gave him some information, some input and whatever it was he needed. And then Jesse Unruh comes along and announces--I think this was '72, wasn't it?--that he was going to run. And from that time on to this, Gray Davis and I have a very great animosity, because he said, "Well, you tell Jesse Unruh that I've staked out this seat and I don't want him to run for it, because I want to run for it." [Laughter] And I said, [Laughter] "Gray, it's not a gold claim that you stake out, number one. And number two, true, I am Jesse's treasurer and very close to Jesse. But, three, you don't know Jesse. He's going to do what the hell he wants to do, when he wants to do it, regardless of what anybody says. And

fourthly," I said, "I don't think that you have any right to. . . . You know, you want to run? Go ahead, run. He wants to run? Go ahead, run. I don't think you have any right to tell him not to run." And Jesse made it on a very, very little campaign. All he did was a postcard campaign. And I asked him about it, and he said, "Well," he said, "I think I've got a good enough name identification. I'm going to spend \$25,000 on a postcard campaign and if they elect me, fine." And they did.

But since then, Gray Davis and I have been bantered. And then he got into the governor's office. They were afraid to come into meetings with us, because in doing my study on the horse-racing board, I found what I considered some very great irregularities in the governor's office. Which should have been followed through legally, but I didn't bother at the time.

Irregularities in the Jerry Brown Administration

VASQUEZ: What was the nature of those irregularities?

POST: Good thing you asked. The Cal Expo in Sacramento is a contract between government and a private group to run the exposition up there. And there

were a number of bidders, but there was one successful bidder. The fact that that successful bidder had contributed \$25,000 to Jerry Brown's campaign, and had loaned \$25,000 to Jerry Brown's campaign, I thought automatically ought to exclude them from the bid. And it's the only time that we were aware when an applicant for a contract, instead of going through General Services or Finance, whichever one it is, went through the governor's office. The governor's office should have excluded it immediately. But they didn't!

VASQUEZ: They submitted the bid to the governor's office?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: And the governor's office accepted the bid?

POST: The governor's office accepted the bid, but they said they had discussed it with the director of finance, and he had approved it. Well, subsequently, I talked to the director of finance, and he said, "I not only didn't approve it, I told them, 'if the guy has any financial contribution to your campaign, don't make the deal with him.'"

VASQUEZ: Who was the director of finance at the time, do you know?

POST: Yeah, he serves on another commission with me.

[Laughter] I'm trying to think of his name. Oh, christ, I know him as well as I can see him.

VASQUEZ: We'll get his name later.

POST: Oh, I'm embarrassed. I can see his face; I can't remember his name. I can get it for you before you leave. Because he serves, to this day, on the District Securities Commission.

VASQUEZ: So their own finance director gave them good advice.

POST: Yes, yes. But they lied to me. Now, they lied to me officially. They lied to me officially, saying they had talked to the director of finance and the director of finance had approved the deal. And he told me specifically he did not approve the deal, and told them that, if this guy's a contributor of any kind, don't deal with him.

VASQUEZ: Do you think that's the basis, then, of the animosity to the commission?

POST: Oh, no, that was towards the end. That was part of the scenario where Willie Brown did not renew my appointment to the commission because of the horse-racing board study.

VASQUEZ: I'm trying to understand what it is about such a commission that threatens some administrations, in your view.

POST: Well, if the administration is confident of what it's doing and proceeds on that basis, they don't have a problem. I mean, we are there to help the administration, not to hinder it. And if we find anything wrong, we're there to tell them what's wrong so they can correct it. But, you know, the Reagan administration was kind of a nothing administration, anyway. You had Ed [Edwin] Meese [III], you had Weinberger, you had [Donald] Regan, and all the rest of them. When Jerry got in, Jerry was unsure of himself. But he was afraid. See, the members of the commission were blue ribbon powerful. Carmen Warschaw was on the commission. I was on the commission, and I had banged Jerry around. Nathan Shappell was on the commission. He didn't want these people on the commission that were not friendly to his administration.

VASQUEZ: There was a generational difference there, wasn't there?

POST: Oh, sure.

VASQUEZ: The names you mentioned, you were his father's contemporaries in politics.

Jerry Brown's Unorthodoxy

POST: That's right. That's right. I mean, we were the "old goats." You know, if you could, "Kill them all off, they're over fifty. Bury them." You know. And, of course, the animosity with Gray Davis which then is reflected [when] we wanted to meet with the governor and Gray Davis said, "Yes." And then he called and said, "No, it's too late. We'll do it another time," one thing and another. And Jerry was going through the crazy. . . . Well, not the crazy period, because all of his periods [Laughter] are crazy. You know, with what he served for lunch, that grass and crackers, or something like that.

VASQUEZ: He drove a Plymouth.

POST: That was a good public relations job. That was a good public relations job. He didn't like it, either. But, he knew it was an image thing. I don't know who put it together, either he or Gray Davis. Because once we were at the Beverly Hills Hotel and when we left together, he had his blue Plymouth out there and I had, I think, a white Rolls-Royce. And he said, "See, if I weren't governor, I wouldn't have to ride in that thing!" [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] Is that right? It's a great story.

POST: Well, the kookie is back now from Japan. He's cut off his beard and he's interested in becoming political once again.

VASQUEZ: What do you think that means?

POST: By the way, the treasurer's name was Roy Bell. Very good guy. Very knowledgeable guy.

IV. SPECIFIC REPORTS OF THE LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

The Commission's Study of the Los Angeles Unified School District

VASQUEZ: In 1981, you were part of the commission when a very critical report was issued on the Los Angeles Unified School District.¹

POST: That's right.

VASQUEZ: And there was a lot of resistance to the recommendations that you made regarding the use of space and a number of other recommendations that you made. But it brings to light the problems of a state commission on government, and the kinds of resistance it meets at the local level. Can you talk about that a little bit, that particular case

¹. A Report on the Los Angeles Unified School District, June, 1981.

with the Los Angeles Unified School District?

POST: Well, firstly, let me say that it's an almost impossible situation to handle these things, because there are 1,056, I believe, school districts in the state of California. Each of them has a chairman and a number of members, maybe five, six members. There's six thousand people that you have to get to agree. You'll never get all the school districts to agree on something. Since this was the biggest school district in the state, we did this. We did a number of school districts and, unbeknownst to the public, we recommended some school districts very highly. We did field trips, we went out and we saw. Some of them were very well run. Maybe by virtue of its size, this school district couldn't be managed efficiently. It's so goddamned big.

And, of course, with all of the computer technology they have today, they can't tell where they're going to need schools in three years or five years or two years or seven years. Which disappoints me. I mean, with all the damned technology that we have, we recommended six years ago that certain schools be closed down, sold off,

and now we need them. I mean, the birth rate, the growth rate, and the teaching rate, they keep changing. But you would certainly imagine that with the computer set-ups we have, we could tell exactly how many we're going to need, how many seats we're going to need in 1988, '89, '90, '91, '92.

Now, I notice the retailers know that. The people that make children's toys know that. The people that make children's clothing know that. Why the hell don't we know that? What was recommended in this report was, in some cases, to eliminate a school. Now, you wouldn't do it normally. . . . But if you say you're in a fully-developed area, it's a high-income area, the children have already grown up--I mean, this is, you know, the average age is forty-five, fifty--now, you're not going to have an influx of growth of this school population in an area like that. So, maybe you can knock it out, close it down, lease it out, whatever. There's lots of ways that you can do it. In some that you don't figure you're ever going to need, you close them down or sell them. In some, you lease them for a period

of a year or two years, saying, "Okay, this is 1987. We're going to get a flow-in in 1990, by our projection. So, therefore, let's lease out the school. We don't want it to sit vacant for three years. Let's lease it out and in 1990, when we need it, people vacate the school. We clean up the school, we service the school, and now we can handle the population properly."

VASQUEZ: You have the physical plant in place already.

POST: Yeah. But, of course, then you have the minority problem and the busing problem. It's a very complex picture. You know, you can have schools that are overcrowded; you can have schools that are underutilized.

But for some reason, these people on the LA Unified School District board, didn't feel, or some of them didn't feel that we were being cooperative and helpful. They thought we were out to ding them. That happened in another situation, which I can give you later. And that happened with the state fairs. They thought we were out to cut the budget of the state fairs. They thought we were out to criticize them. We were just doing a study. And, as a matter of fact, on that study

of the state fairs, we recommended increasing their budget afterwards, after doing a study. So we approached this open-mindedly, you know. See, no problem. But they were very belligerent and very possessive and very protective. And, of course, you know the disaster we had with that school board member that came to a hearing in Sacramento.

VASQUEZ: Roberta Weintraub?

POST: Roberta Weintraub. [Laughter] Roberta Weintraub was . . .

VASQUEZ: Tell me about that.

POST: Well, since you can't use the word fraud--I don't want to use the word fraud--I'd just say she was a phoney. She came up to testify. She knew exactly what she was going to do. We asked two or three questions. She broke out into tears. Very innocuous questions. Nobody was accusing her of raping any children or stealing money, whatever it was. There were some questions about the operations of the schools. Left the hearing room--which, normally, you can't do--but left the hearing room, had a press conference outside the front door. At which point she had stopped crying already and she

was making her statements. You know, a real bitch.

Contemporary Commission Recommendations on
Education

VASQUEZ: Now, recently, one of the problems that you outlined in that report and that you mentioned a moment ago, has to do with the many school districts, numerous school districts in the state. The present Little Hoover Commission only recently, again, reiterated the need to consolidate some of them. And, of course, the superintendent of public instruction, [William] Bill Honig, was dead-set against that. How do you see that debate?

POST: Well, Honig is probably right, as a pragmatic solution you're never going to do it. Because, you know, you're on the school board in Oshkosh, and that's your prestige point of the community, the vice-chairman, you're one of six members or something like that. Along comes a statewide body, they say, "We don't need a separate school board in Oshkosh. You know, we can consolidate seven school boards into one." Now, you're going to lose your position. What happens? You're

going to fight it all the way. The parallel of that is John Ferraro, the president of the city council, has been after me for many years to do a study on consolidating Los Angeles County, eighty-three cities in Los Angeles County. And I won't even touch it. I said, "John, it's impossible." When you've got fire departments, police departments, planning departments, social service departments, they'd lynch me if I even came up with it. I said, "You know, get somebody else. I can't touch it." And this is that kind of monster.

VASQUEZ: The megagovernment notion? Which, I think, Willie Brown has promoted. Without getting into the personality of Willie Brown, is it, do you think, something that in the future is going to keep coming back to us and we're going to have to face, some kind of consolidating of the myriad of local and municipal agencies?

POST: I think it's very necessary, but I don't know how you're ever going to get it done. That's the problem. I mean, the economies of operation would be tremendous if you got rid of. . . . maybe 300 out of 1,000, or 1,050. I mean, the economy or

scale of purchasing of books, of construction, of maintenance, of vehicles, of communication, of disbursement. You know, you've got 1,056 little stores, and all run differently. They don't have to. The recording, the disbursement, the acquisition program, they're all different.

In some school districts, they've said, "Book A will not be used anymore; we're going to use book B." In some school districts, they've done just the opposite. So we've suggested a central book repository, depository of some kind, where if you're district needs, you know, fifteen hundred book B's, you call up and find out, "Oh, yeah, we've got plenty. We've got a lot. We've got three thousand book B's. Fine, we'll ship you a hundred." We own them. You know, that's the difference in point of view between the school district here and the school district there.

VASQUEZ: An argument against that consolidation, of course, would be that you end up with this huge bureaucracy at the top, running all of this centralized purchasing or centralized management.

POST: What's wrong with centralized purchasing? Would you believe I've put together a program for

centralized purchasing of automobiles and motorcycles for the state, for the CHP [California Highway Patrol] that then works with the University of California and then works with the Los Angeles Police Department? There's nothing wrong with it.

VASQUEZ: The question is, does it create a bureaucracy too removed from the point of contact, from the point of response?

POST: Well, that's what they say. But if it creates a bureaucracy, it's creating a much smaller bureaucracy. Because this way you've got 1,056 bureaucracies, very protective of the books they use and the cars they buy and who's on the board and who isn't on the board, what the assessment shall be, what the educational curriculum should be. I don't think the educational curriculum should be that different between northern California and central California and southern California. [Laughter] I mean, these are the eighties. We're not back in the twenties. But I really don't know how you're ever going to do it. I mean, it's such a monster.

The Future of the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: So then, what future do you see for something like the Little Hoover Commission? Do you think it still has value, let's say?

POST: Limited. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Why? Because it is politicized?

POST: Yeah. Because it's totally politicized.

VASQUEZ: What value do you think it will have in the future? Or should it continue?

POST: I hate to say it, but I will. I think it ought to be abolished, based on what it is now. I think it's a waste of time.

VASQUEZ: What kind of oversight mechanism do you think is still possible, or is needed to meet the new conditions we live under?

POST: Well, how about if your first step you'd say, "A political-fund contributor cannot serve on this commission." That might be a start. It would make a lot of people mad at me, but okay. Now, if you wish, you can take the option of getting paid for your time, or if you're a working person, you should be compensated at the rate of salary that you get driving a truck, or doing interviews, or washing windows, whatever you do. Because,

basically, if you look at the list, most of those people are either retired or independently wealthy.

VASQUEZ: So you'd be for putting people on that aren't wealthy?

POST: Yeah, you want a cross-section of the people in the community. You want the cross-section of everybody, but not affirmative action, equal opportunity, all that stuff. Don't say to the thirteen people you've got to have one lesbian and one gay, one brown, one-and-a-half blacks, one Korean. Get people that are interested and compensate them for their time if they can't afford to contribute their time. Don't make it mandatory.

VASQUEZ: Do you think that the oversight commission, like the Little Hoover, at a local level has any value?

POST: Yeah, it would help. It would have value on a local level. As a matter of fact, they were talking about creating one in the city some time back. But the city is so heavily politicized, that who are you going to put on it?

VASQUEZ: That doesn't have some kind of political tie to somebody?

POST: Yeah, who doesn't have an axe to grind. You know, it's difficult.

VASQUEZ: Of what value, or how much value, are people in the field of public administration, Ph.D.'s and such, that are supposedly experts in all of this. Did you find them very useful when you were a commissioner? Did you resort to them much?

POST: No. No, I think the value of a commission like this is everybody has his own area of knowledge and expertise. For example, mine. Mine was in the automotive field, transportation field, the division of highways, the fleet program, the vehicles for the Highway Patrol, all that kind of stuff. Nathan was close with me on the transportation department's surplus land. You know, they had three-, four-, five hundred million dollars worth of surplus land they weren't and didn't know how to dispose of it. Harry Blackman's knowledge was in warehousing and handling of materials and disbursement of stuff like that.

That's the advantage of a citizens commission like this. As I've said, you know, if we have a question of how many yards of carpeting the state should buy, and at what rate they should

pay for it, I don't have the faintest idea in the world. I don't know if that carpet should be ten dollars or fifty dollars a yard. I don't know if it ought to be cotton or wool. But you get somebody, and if you don't have such a person on your commission, somebody on the commission is going to know a manufacturer of carpeting. And you call him in, and say, "Look, we need your help for the state of California. We buy ten million yards of carpeting. Would you serve on a committee? Firstly, do you do business with the state of California? If you do, we don't want to talk to you. But tell us, as a public citizen, what would be the best kind of carpeting to get considering cost, use, the type we need for executive, for public areas, for schools, whatever it is."

And you get two or three of these guys, and you pick their brains.

Using the Symbols of Authority for Greater Effectiveness

When I first started to study the state fleet program, I had the benefit of using the governor's office in Los Angeles. And we called the big

leasing companies in the United States. We called Hertz, Avis, and a few others, had them fly to Los Angeles at their expense. They met with me in the governor's office. They spent two days. They gave me the input and knowledge that I needed. You know, it didn't cost us anything. Fortunately, the governor let me use the governor's office. Now, if I had said, "Meet me," you know, "in the back room of the Hyatt Hotel," I ain't going to get the president of the Hertz out here. But the fact that the request comes from and you're meeting in the governor's office, it adds a certain aura to it, fine. That's the kind of stuff you should do.

VASQUEZ: So, in other words, use the trappings of office for good government?

POST: Always, always. Not only that, then you get the governor to send them a thank-you note for your cooperation with the Little Hoover Commission on this and this. And they may call you again. Hey, it doesn't cost anything. A letter doesn't cost anything. You couldn't get the president of Hertz to fly out here for two days for a five thousand, ten thousand dollar fee. He wouldn't do it. He's

running a big company. But the state of California, the governor's office, yeah, they'll find the time to do it.

I mean, maybe it's a little hokey to do it that way, but I don't mind. I mean, it's a little white lie. The governor doesn't know who the hell it is, I just tell the governor I want to do this, and if he has confidence in me he will do it, let me use his office, and then he will send these people a thank-you [note]. It's nothing for me. But, you know, I overhauled the whole state fleet program on that basis.

Resistance to Commission Recommendations

VASQUEZ: Tell me about that. You were telling me a story once about the resistance of the [California] Highway Patrol to using certain vehicles. What kind of opposition did you have to the recommendations that . . .

POST: [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: . . . ultimately were put into place, weren't they?

POST: Yeah, yeah. But then, they lost. They lost. In looking at the Highway Patrol vehicles, they were Chrysler products. The specifications were fifty-

five pages long. The specifications were prepared by Chrysler Corporation. The specifications were phoney, because no other manufacturer could bid based on those specs. Because what they called for was, I don't know, a 128-inch wheel base, and nobody made it, and there was only a 126-inch wheel base. And neither did Chrysler. What they did was put in an enlarged universal joint in there two inches longer, and now they had a 128-inch-wheel-base car and nobody else made it.

I went further and again, through going circuitous routes through my people in Sacramento, the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles], I find that they had two bidders on the Highway Patrol cars in Sacramento, both owned by the same guy. A little hokey? [Laughter] I got other manufacturers to bid: Ford, Chevy, Oldsmobile, whatever it was.

Oldsmobile bid and won a bid and we saved \$3,600,000 that day on a bid from Oldsmobile. Of course, we simplified the fifty-five-page specifications beforehand and it got down to five pages. In other words, for example, they had an eight-page specification on an automatic transmis-

sion, I said, "What a minute. We don't need eight pages. We say, 'An automatic transmission, sufficient to be used in Highway Patrol purposes, in speeds up to 125 miles per hour.' That's all we have so say." We're not going to tell them how to build a goddamned transmission.

The same thing with wheels. They had three pages on wheels. I said, "Look, we want a steel-reinforced disk wheel. We don't want to kill anybody. And we want it sufficient to do the job that the California Highway Patrol does in the mountains and, everything else." The Chrysler people still wanted the business, of course, and after the second year, the Oldsmobile people said to me, "You know, we're not going to bid on your cars any more."

These bastards would take an Oldsmobile at eighty-miles an hour and pull it down into low range. It would just blow the transmission right out of the car.

VASQUEZ: You mean, the field officers would? The CHP officers?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Why would they do that?

POST: Well, because maybe they had a friend at Chrysler. Maybe the Chrysler dealer in Sacramento was giving them discounts, or whatever. The point is, it didn't work. We're back to Chrysler now. Now, when I went into the motorcycle program, I already had that experience. They had one motorcycle vendor in the United States. That was Harley-Davidson. And we had to change the Buy America Act to permit buying some other manufacturer's motorcycle. We accomplished that by saying, "If there's only one bidder, then you can entertain a foreign bidder, an import bidder." But at that point, and to this day, if you look at the LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] or you look at the California Highway Patrol, they give the officer the option: "Do you want to drive a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, or a Kawasaki or whatever else we get? We get to buy two kinds."

[Interruption]

POST: Motorcycle officers for the Los Angeles Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol, can select the motorcycle they wish. Either the American Harley-Davidson, or the foreign bidder which, I believe, is this year, Kawasaki. That

way they're happy, and they don't bust up the machines. And strangely, in talking to many, many officers, they like the import vehicle better than the American Harley-Davidson.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Session 3, December 16, 1987]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

Insurmountable Problem: California School
Districts

VASQUEZ: When we last spoke, we were summing up your opinion of the reports that the Little Hoover Commission has done, and, specifically, a more recent report on the Los Angeles Unified School District. You were saying that in certain areas problems may be insurmountable. Do you want to summarize your discussion on that?

POST: Yes. I look at it almost as a hopeless problem because of the bureaucracy involved, and the fact that there are 1,056 school districts, each with five or six people involved as a chairman, as a secretary, as a vice-chairman, whatever it is. Now, what you would kind of do is organize something over it, with between six and seven thousand people in concurrence. It just can't be done. You know, if you have seven school districts in an area that really should have one. . . . And I don't know the breakdown, but say that you had school districts by county. All right, if you did that, you can handle them, you can work with

them. But you can't work with all the individuals involved in an institution that big. And then, of course, there's new equipment, new computers, that are not put to use properly in the system. I mean, we have recommended the closure of certain schools, we've recommended temporary schools.

Now, from what I'm told, from the computer revolution we have today, we should be able to tell you, barring changes in location, what the five-year-old, six-year-old, seven-year-old population is going to be in any given area in the state. Merely thinking very roughly, not getting into actual figures, but roughly, in some cases we've said, "This appears to be a growth area. And, therefore, we will not recommend the abolishment of this school. We will, say, put this school on hold for three or five years, or let's lease it to somebody, to some organization, to get some income towards the maintenance of the school so it doesn't run down and be broken up." But, you know, unfortunately, it's such a big problem, at such a tremendous cost, we ought to be able to put it on tape where we could tell in geographic area "seven," that we're going to need

schools for so many kids in such-and-such a time. And I don't see any problem with that. Now, it doesn't differentiate as to white, black, brown, or red kids, but one more push on the computer would tell you that, too. And then, we don't run into the problem that we have today. You know, we're building temporary schools. We should really build temporary schools on wheels, and pull them around from location to location. But that doesn't give you maximum education, or the maximum degree. I mean, you'd like a permanent school building with an auditorium, with a gymnasium, with bathrooms, with a lunch room, and all of that. And you can plan that in advance, if you have the right administration. But I don't think you can do it for 1,056 [Laughter] school districts.

VASQUEZ: Some people argue that one of the recurrent problems in contemporary California politics is the diversity of the state. And, carrying that over to the field of education, some argue that that is what's at the root of the inability to provide adequate, or first-rate education. There are just too diverse groups of people, languages,

and what have you. Do you think that's a valid argument or defense?

POST: No, I don't, because you know that you're not going to have, for example, the Spanish-language problem in the Beverly Hills School District. Whereas, you know that you will have that problem in a predominantly Spanish community. You can figure that out if your intentions are good, if you're sincere in what you're trying to do. And, of course, the constant problem of sufficient, or an oversupply or undersupply of schools, should be able to be covered with computer projections.

I mean, the San Fernando Valley wound up with seventeen, I believe, excess school sites; and downtown L.A. and on the Southside were ten schools short. I don't think that busing resolves the issue. I think busing is tremendously wasteful. It takes two hours of the kids' time. You've got a bus, you've got a driver, you're adding to hazards of the traffic, the noxious fumes, and everything else. If the area demands a school, and the projection says, you know, simply you've got a thousand people here, there are five hundred couples here, in the age

bracket of nineteen to twenty-six, you will assume that they will generate or beget so many kids in such-and-such a period of time, who will then five years later, be ready for kindergarten. Now, you've got a lot of lead time. You could pick up your story from marriage certificates in a given geographic area, and then move forward so you wouldn't be surprised at the last minute.

The other side of the question is, we wind up with surplus schools, for example--and I believe we had seventeen, and I'm talking from record, from history--but seventeen surplus, good schools in the [San Fernando] Valley. You know, big schools, playgrounds, schoolyards, auditoriums, you know, lunch rooms, everything. Late-model schools, air-conditioned schools. Now, if your projection will tell you that you will not need for twenty years. . . . Okay, maybe you can lease them out for, you know, five-year intervals, a five-year, a ten-year lease with options and things like that. But you have to be careful that you don't disband the school and then, five years later on, six years later on, all of a sudden you have a influx of school children of that

particular need, of that particular school, whether it's an elementary school, junior high school or high school. You see, you have to be careful of what you do, which takes a little bit of thinking. But it really is not a very complicated procedure, I don't think. You know the. . . . I'm trying to think of the area there, not Laguna, but a very deluxe area north of San Pedro overlooking the ocean.

VASQUEZ: Palos Verdes?

POST: Pardon?

VASQUEZ: The Palos Verdes Peninsula?

POST: The Palos Verdes Peninsula. We went through that area. Well, I don't think you're going to have a school problem there, because they're older people, they are very expensive homes. Now, older people in expensive homes don't normally beget a lot of kids. And they had some surplus school sites which we insisted that they get rid of.

But, see, again there were complications. The developer or somebody gave them the school site as a school site. Now, to undo a school site and to put it into general public use is a problem. You've got to work it out. Now, maybe

you switch around, maybe they'll permit you to make a public park out of it, or a playground.

You know, a lot of schools in the smaller communities are a focal point. They keep the playgrounds open, which is the only place the kids have got to play baseball or football, or whatever it is. You know, I think schools, like fairs, are misinterpreted. They are used much more than the public thinks they're used. A fair is not only used periodically for an event; it's used all the time. And the same thing with schools. There's no reason why schools can't be. Schools can be used for evening education, they can be used for basketball, football, sports in the afternoon. They should be lighted and heated and protected, because they're an asset of the community. They're shutting down libraries because they don't have the funds to carry them. Maybe merge the libraries with the schools, because now you've got the building, the heat, the overhead, all the items. You have sufficient space. It's part of the educational program. Of course, it isn't as ideally suited as libraries are situated, but I hate to see libraries shut down. I think it's

criminal. I think all you're going to do is wind up with an uneducated bunch of people, and then you have a problem.

VASQUEZ: So it remains a pretty difficult knot to undo?

POST: Well, [Laughter] I don't think you'll ever undo the knot, basically because of those six thousand people involved in the school districts, or more. . . . And it could be many, many more, because I'm only talking boards; I'm not talking transportation division, the maintenance division, the people that paint the buildings and fix them, one thing or another, but I'm talking from an organizational standpoint. And I know they'll scream, but if you had each county represent a school district, now you can get it down to a workable base. Now you have, school district in county B; you have school district one, two, three, or four, something like that. But they're under one operation. And one computer can give you a readout as to how many students you have, what grades they're in, what ages they are, and what your projected future use should be. I mean, any good business would do that. Why the hell shouldn't the school districts do that?

Commission Report on Agricultural Fairs

VASQUEZ: You were also involved in a report on fairs.¹ And we're going to go over two or three others. Keep in mind that what this project is trying to understand, and what you can help us with, is the process by which decisions get made and the process by which government is implemented, or the decisions of government are implemented, and the process by which those decisions are arrived at, involving and including the very human element of the individuals and the players involved.

Now, the fair report, I understand, had opposition to it, in many cases by people who didn't even know what was in it, who saw it as an attack on some of the local fairs, without really looking at the overall report. Can you tell me how that report developed?

POST: Well, the title in the Little Hoover Commission is a Commission on Government Organization and Economy. And we have made reports periodically recommending a decrease in size, a decrease in

1. Report on Local California Fairs Receiving State Financial Support, May 1, 1971.

budget, the change or the abolition of certain divisions, departments, or sections of government. So we got kind of an image of a hatchet man. Now, when it was proposed--and I don't know where it was proposed from--that we undertake a study on the state fairs, it may have come from one of our people, from the legislature, from the governor's office, any one of a number of places. I believe, and I'm not certain, but I believe I was appointed chairman of that subcommittee. Can we take a look and see?

VASQUEZ: Sure.

[Interruption]

POST: We proceeded with a subcommittee study. We were immediately advised to lay off, "don't touch our fairs." We got the message. [Assemblywoman] Pauline [L.] Davis was so infuriated that we would do a study on fairs that she introduced a piece of legislation abolishing the Little Hoover Commission. [Laughter] Or abolishing its budget, one of the two. Now, I've known Pauline Davis for a long time, and I pointed out to her that we were not on a witch-hunt; we were looking to study. I said, "I don't know anything about state fairs,

Pauline. You know, I've been to one down in Indio, and that's about all. Give us a chance. We will meet with you before we come up with a final report, and let us just go ahead, and don't threaten us, because we haven't done anything yet."

Well, we proceeded with a very good subcommittee to study and inspect. We took field trips to inspect, probably eight to ten fair sites. To keep your material short, I will tell you we were very impressed with the function of the state fairs. We were impressed with the fact that they had become the community center in towns that didn't have that, and they were the head of the 4-H and they were the head of the YMCA and they were the head of the Boy Scouts, and the kids could play ball there and they had green space, they had bathroom facilities. We were very impressed with the multiple, extremely multiple uses put to the state fairs.

And, as a result--I'm trying to keep it short--we recommended an increase in their budget. Which they needed. I mean, they were not what we considered originally, but they were a

total, functioning community organization in small towns. In [some] counties, the fair was the whole place. I mean, you know, everything happened at the fairgrounds. There was plenty of parking, and they had the 4-H and they did their shows and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts even did CPR training at them. They were a very valid function of government and needed more support, needed more help, needed more money, which we recommended. Period. And I still say that today.

VASQUEZ: But in the process, people felt threatened by something, by the commission just being involved in investigating, is that it?

POST: Well, yes. Whenever an organization gets word that an investigative body is looking at it, they try to clean up whatever they're doing, no matter how good they are. It's just natural, you know. They're afraid we're going to come up with something and bang them. We know that in doing the studies on the nursing homes.

Commission Studies on Health Programs: The Elderly

VASQUEZ: I want to get into that, into the area of health. Probably no area has taken up more

commission time than the state health programs. And some argue that that's where the commission's impact has been most felt. What's your assessment of the studies and reports that you've done on health programs, and the impact that those studies have had on improving those programs?¹

POST: [Laughter] Well, carrying on with what I was just saying about state fairs, the health industry is more highly organized than other agencies, and somehow every time we went to a nursing facility, it had been advised that we were coming. Because the clients themselves had told us, "We knew you were coming three days ago, because, look, we've got clean clothes and clean sheets. The food is great, the place is cleaned up. We knew you were coming."

Now, in one of our public hearings, I raised the fact that our activity as a state agency is not to be disseminated to anybody. And we talked with the supervisors and suggested that the

1. The principal report in this area is the Study on the Administration of State Health Programs, January 15, 1976. Other, supplemental reports followed in ensuing years.

inspection locations that we were going to look at should not be publicized. And it's a violation of the law for any member of the department to call nursing home A or B or hospital C and say, "Hey fellas, clean it up because Little Hoover Commission is going to be there tomorrow," or today, whatever. And I suggested they enforce that. And I suggested that even further, when their various teams come in in the morning, they then be given the assignment of their work once they get inside and say, "Okay, you will meet Little Hoover Commission at site three, or site five, or site seven." But you wouldn't get that on the Monday of the week so that you would see, "Well, Tuesday, well, they're going to here, Wednesday, they're going to go there." And we managed a number of surprise visits, which caused quite a consternation, to be sure. [Laughter]

I mean, the staff doesn't know what to do at that point. They're not. . . . And maybe the staff isn't there. Maybe the head person isn't there. And, of course, the people have not been cleaned up for inspection and, you know, some of the food that we've seen is not very good. And,

unfortunately, roaches can't read, so they don't know that they're not supposed to be there. I'm not belittling nursing homes. It's a very tough job. It's a tough job that has to be done. You're dealing with the elderly. You're dealing with the sick. You're dealing with people that aren't mobile. They claim the allowance isn't sufficient to handle, or to hire a higher level of person. Most of them are at the minimum level, as far as compensation is concerned.

VASQUEZ: In your findings, or in your experience, at what level would you identify as the biggest problem areas? At the management level? At the staff that implements the policy? At the funding level? At the state level, where the goals and responsibilities need to be clearly enunciated? Where did you find the biggest fault?

POST: You're asking me a very difficult question, because it's a very difficult problem. I don't know of a proper solution to the problem. You don't solve it by throwing money at it, because, how many millions and how many billions have we spent? The management is trying, I think possibly. . .

VASQUEZ: One of the impacts of some of your reports was the hiring of a new director at the state level, at the Department of Health.

POST: Yeah, we've hired a number of directors, and they change and the focus changes. But if you ask. . . . I think most of it is the low level, it's the attitude of the people that are working for those people. Now, maybe if they got more money and better supervision, they would have a better feeling for the people that they have to take care of. In some cases, they're treated as a warehouse, a warehouse for people.

And I don't know if you can get for \$3.35 somebody with some feeling and some compassion. Maybe it's got to be four dollars, five dollars, six dollars. I don't know. But that's where I would. . . . I would like to start with sufficient funds at that level. Maybe you have to have training of these people before they're hired to work in these places. And then you have to give them a compensation and then treat them nicely. And maybe give them a meal a day, or two meals a day, whatever it is. Or provide the uniforms for them. I mean, it's terrible to stuff people in a

bin and say, "You know, that costs us \$24 a day, and that's all you can spend." Human dignity deserves more than that.

VASQUEZ: So there is a problem at the level of funding, that you see?

POST: Well, it's an indirect cause of the funding, because if the board and care home is allocated \$26 dollars a day to take care of you, now they're going to house you and they're going to feed you and they're going to take care of you, they're paying minimum wage and they're not getting very conscientious, very dedicated people.

So, yes, funding is a point. And I'll give you a case in point. I think, they should have a much higher level of funding. Get some training, provide them with uniforms. Let it be a profession rather than just, running a warehouse. It's the attitude of people. Now, we have checked a number of them and, I think, the average--and you can't hold me to the figure; this was done a few years ago--the average cost per person was something like \$24, \$25 per day in a board and care home. The Jewish Home for the Aging took that,

accepted that, but they got supplemental grants from the community. They got charitable contributions. And they were spending, I think, \$30 a day, \$31, a four or five dollar difference. And they were considered the highest quality care home in the state of California.

VASQUEZ: But was that only the money?

POST: The money was a portion of it. It was the people that were there who were dedicated, who wanted to participate, who wanted to help. It was not just a nine-to-five job. Now, I still now keep going back. Money, training, uniform, meals. Get a higher quality person, you get a higher quality care. Maybe it's a little too rough, but they're short-staffed. It's a rotten job in the first place. I mean, it is not a pleasant place. You know, it's depressing. Well, if it's depressing, give them a little more money. Give them a bright uniform. Give them a meal, two meals a day, whatever. Give them a place to park their car. Make it as appetizing as possible to work in an unappetizing environment.

VASQUEZ: Now, some argue that more of the commission's

recommendations hadn't been implemented in this case, because of the high turnover of administrators. Do you think that's a valid observation? And to what is that turnover due?

POST: I don't think it starts at that level. I think it's got to go back down. You've got to get enough money to do the job properly. Most administrators are trying to do a job. Most of them don't figure they're running a prison or concentration camp; they're running a social program. If you're fortunate enough to have an administrator who has a relative or a parent in the senior citizen category, you've got a lot more input. They begin to see. You know, a supervisor going into a nursing home that his father, mother, uncle, or brother are at is going to see what happens there. I've been very depressed whenever I've gone to these places, whether they're private or public ones. And, you know, it's a bunch of old, sick people. Now, it isn't very happy surroundings. But you can try and make it a little better. Some Christmas decorations, a little party for the people.

VASQUEZ: Another suggestion that some have made--and I

think it goes along with a couple of comments that you have made--and that is that the old age home, or nursing home, should be kept as much a functioning part of the community that those people come from, as possible. So that you have relatives nearby that can visit, surroundings are familiar to these people. And it might take away that alienation that you mentioned. Is that something that you in the commission ever addressed?

POST: Well, you know, they're all different. And, of course, the more highly urbanized an area is, the more expensive land and buildings are and the more that's going to chew up that \$25, \$26 a day.

I attended one outside of Orlando, or in Orlando, Florida, that my wife's aunt was put into when we were there. Now, these seemed to have a lot of amenities, because this was a private one. And its fees were rather substantial. But they had nice grounds. They had pleasant personnel. They had pleasant eating places. They had private, or two-party rooms. They had a lifetime-care program. They had a beauty shop

within the facility, a small library within the facility. You know, it was a big, big building kind of a deal. They seemed to have pleasant, adequate staff. A doctor in attendance.

You know, they're all elderly people who are sick, who have pains and aches. And they complain, you know, they're not being taken care of properly, the food isn't right, they'd like this, they'd like that. You know, these people. . . . This is really a good operation, I think. They even ran a shuttle bus every afternoon from the institution into a major shopping center where those people that were ambulatory could go there for a couple of hours. They could go shopping, do what they wanted, buy something, whatever, and then come back on the bus and come back to the facility, so you didn't have to take a taxi cab. Or you might have a beauty parlor at that location, whatever. It seemed, psychologically, older people liked to have a beauty parlor around. I don't know, psychologically they seemed to like it and they use them. They don't look it, maybe, [Laughter] but they do use them.

But my aunt had--or Florence's aunt--had a

very pleasant, young nurse, who we liked, and we gave her some gifts and stuff like that. And then we found out she was going back to Israel. She had been working there for a couple of years. And I asked her, "How do you get in. . . . You know, you're dealing with old, sick people all day long. It's got to be depressing." And she said it was, after a while. And then, of course, you get into those who are more sick than others, and one is screaming. And then they have a wheelchair parade, and everybody is rolling around in the wheelchair. And then they'd have a television viewing room, and, "You want program A; and this one wants program B." Then you start beating each other with your walking sticks. It's a very tough, tough situation.

VASQUEZ: In the past here in California--and, I think, currently as well--part of our cultural cult is youth. Now, the population, the demographics is changing among at least a certain part of the population. Not the Latin or Asian, but in a certain part of the population you're going to have a higher percentage of the population being in that age range where they're going to need some

kind of care. Do you think that that might change the attitudes and priorities in state funding in the near future.

POST: Sure it will. I get a publication from the American Association of Retired Persons. I don't even know how I got on the list. But they came talking about their political clout. They keep saying, "Last year there were so many millions. This year we'll be so many millions. Next year will be so many millions. Now, if we contact our representatives. . . ." You know, they do a lobbying job. And they do a good lobbying job, and I understand they spend a lot of money on it. Now, [Laughter] you can't overlook that basis of votes if you're running. You know, I think there will be changes made.

Commission Studies on Personnel Management

VASQUEZ: Another area that the Little Hoover Commission got into any number of times--and, at certain times in recent California political history, had been a touchy question--is personnel, personnel working for the state, both in the executive area and. . . . The different manpower management studies that the commission has done,

can you tell me a little bit about that process and how politics may have either impeded or gotten in the way or, perhaps, helped your investigatory process, as well as the recommendations that you put forth in the area of manpower, management and training, personnel management, administration?¹

POST: I don't think there's much of it, and I don't think much of it is very good.

VASQUEZ: Why is that?

POST: Just my reaction to it.

VASQUEZ: You don't think the studies have done any good in making a more efficient use of state personnel?

POST: Well, unfortunately, I feel there are certain attributes that an individual has that you can't force on them. I mean, if you're alert, awake, alive, energetic, desiring to do the job, one thing or another, you do it automatically. Whether I sit you down in a room and talk to you all day and provide you with coffee and pay you for the day so you're off work, and I say, "Look. Let's eliminate waste." Hmm? Great

1. The most comprehensive study by the Commission is Personnel Management in State Service, August, 1979.

idea! "Let's increase efficiency." Wonderful!
 "Let's cooperate with each other." You're not
 going to pay too much attention to that. You
 know, "Let's stop making personal telephone calls
 on state lines, because our capacity is at
 maximum. Let's take three toilet breaks a day
 instead of five or six toilet breaks a day. Let's
 not abuse the system." Well, when you get through
 at the end of the day, those guys, they're going
 to walk out of there, "Who's that nut?" You know,
 "We're going to get everything out of the system
 we can." Which, I think, is a prevalent feeling
 today.

Low Productivity in the Public and Private Sectors

VASQUEZ: Not only in the state of California?

POST: Oh, no, no, every place. Federal government,
 state government. In big companies . . .

VASQUEZ: In the private sector, as well.

POST: The private sector, as well.

VASQUEZ: Some people argue that's why we can't compete with
 other countries, that our productivity . . .

POST: That is partially correct, but not completely.
 Not at all completely. And I'll give you a very
 close case in point. The steel industry was

suffering. I worked in the steel mills at Gary, Indiana, in 1940. Until two years ago, they hadn't modernized, they hadn't changed, they hadn't developed. Japan has got all brand new steel mills and the finest equipment there is in the world. I was working on stuff there that was thirty years old at the time, and that was forty years ago. So how could you keep up?

VASQUEZ: Well, that sounds like the argument that some make, that instead of replenishing and refurbishing and modernizing our plant, we've let our money be used in real estate schemes, in developing buildings that are now empty, in other investment patterns that have not gone into developing the capacity of the country to produce. Do you agree with that?

POST: I absolutely agree with it. There's no question about it. It's just that our tax laws and our legislatures don't do anything about it. In other words, you are licensed as a steel manufacturing company. Now, if you keep your integration to the manufacture, transportation of steel products, to the iron ore acquisition, to ships that bring the iron ore to you, it's all within your operation.

But to build a highrise office tower in New York, which you rent 80 percent of it out, that isn't necessarily part of your function. And you're getting involved in acquiring other companies and using up your cash acquiring other companies instead of putting your money in our own equipment.

Now, there were tax incentives set up. . . . You know, I think Reagan was trying to do that in '81, if he did it consciously or he did it subconsciously or unconsciously, but the theory was that if you acquired new equipment, you could take it and write it off in five years where, normally, you might have a twenty-year life on it. Which is an incentive. Well, now that we got this tax break, let's get rid of these old presses, or this old equipment and get new ones. But half of our failing is the fact that we never modernized our plant.

Germany and Japan were lucky. They were devastated. They were flattened out, so they had to put together something new. They put together the newest new. They didn't rebuild old junk; they put up new stuff. I've been in both of those

countries and I've seen what they've done. Of course, not only did we defeat them and devastate them, but then [Laughter] we give them money to build up and become very strong competitors to us.

VASQUEZ: You don't think it's a mislaying of priorities, and just good, old-fashioned greed, in the last ten years or so, that has got us in part of the position that we're in?

POST: Sure, I think it's greed. I think with a proper administration giving the Internal Revenue Service the right directions. . . . They say if a company strays far from its original objective, look at it closely. You know, we have a problem in this particular area, that we're going far afield. We don't want them to go far afield. Maybe you need legislation in that. I don't know. Maybe you get somebody who is going to jump all over you, and you say, "Free enterprise. If a company in Cincinnati wants to build an office building in Denver, or a bowling alley in Florida, or wherever the hell they can. . . ." But then don't come to government and say, "Hey, we're being hurt." You've got to keep up your quality so that the public will buy your product. And don't just

blame it on the wages in other parts of the world, because wages in other parts of the world are coming up to ours.

VASQUEZ: Or, we're going down to theirs.

POST: No, we're not going down to theirs.

VASQUEZ: [Laughter]

POST: I mean, the new vehicle, the last vehicle to come and go was the Hyundai. When I was over in Korea, they were getting a dollar a day. A dollar an hour? A dollar a day? I think it was a dollar an hour. They turned out a good, goddamned car. Now their salaries have gone up to two dollars an hour. But compare two dollars an hour in Korea to twenty-two dollars an hour in the United States, assuming you have the same quality. Pretty tough. But once you've got it organized, once you've got a product and once you know what you're doing. . . . Now, Honda is building cars in the United States that are equal to the cars that they were building over there.

VASQUEZ: So is Toyota.

POST: And Toyota.

VASQUEZ: And that Toyota model, out of the Milpitas [California] plant, they say is a better product.

POST: Well, so you see, it can be done if you have the desire to do it. Now, you might have to tear apart your assembly line. They've come up with a lot of good stuff that our idiot guys never considered. You know, I've been through the automotive plants around the world. I was involved in that business. In Detroit, you got an assembly line, you've got bumpers. You've got two thousand bumpers stacked up along the production line. Well, firstly, we have to store them. You have to have the space to store them. You've paid for them. Your capital is tied up. You might have a twenty-day, thirty-day supply. You know, the other countries, they get a supply of bumpers every day. The supplier makes them, ships them into the plant. "You're going to need 200 bumpers? You've got 205 bumpers, in case there's anything wrong." So you don't have a big storage, you don't have a big investment of capital. Not only bumpers, it's everything else about a car. But it takes planning. It takes planning, but god damn it, with these computers that you got now, you can plan!

VASQUEZ: But why do we seem to have such an aversion for planning, not only at the national, but at the state level? Every attempt at state planning in this state in the last twenty, twenty-five years, has eventually been undermined. Why do you think that is?

Qualifications Over Representativeness

POST: [Laughter] Incompetency. How do most state officials get appointed? They don't get elected; they get appointed. They get appointed by a politician. Who puts a politician in? Other politicians. Who has friends, whether they're competent or not? Look at some of Jerry Brown's appointees, I think appointed based on the fact they have a prescribed thought of what they want to do, regardless of qualifications. They're trying to show a particular political picture and they need one Indian, they need one Spanish, they need one black, they need two women. They need something like that, and they've got a laundry list and they go out and get them, on that basis.

VASQUEZ: Not on the basis of their competency or training?

POST: No! No. One of Brown's people--and I'm talking, saying this off the record--one of Brown's people

came to me and said, "Do you know an Indian?" I said, "No, I don't think I know an Indian."

[Laughter] He said, "Well, Jerry wants an Indian for this. . . ." Whatever it was, some committee. I said, "Well, I don't know any Indians. But call a tribe! What do you need an Indian for?" He said [Laughter], "Well, Jerry wants an Indian for this particular commission, study," whatever the hell it is. I said, "Well, I don't personally know any Indians. Can't help you."

Now, they could get an illiterate Indian with no teeth that's working as a cigar store dummy, and they're going to put him on because they put a press release on. They've got "Chief Yuck-a-Yuck" or something like that. But isn't that a god-damned way to run government! You know, you're trying to do a program, get the people on that can be helpful to you in the program. And I don't give a shit if they're black, white, green, or orange, male or female or any of that crap. I mean, affirmative opportunity is a fine theory, but when you force it to work, it don't work.

VASQUEZ: When does it work?

POST: If it comes naturally.

VASQUEZ: Everything else in society also being equal?

POST: Well, the fact that you want to have 4 percent, or 5 percent, black medical students, that ain't the way the population works.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

Affirmative Action as Patronage

POST: Law school admissions, medical school admissions can't be forced. But, in some cases, we force them. And, I think, in some cases they can prove that by forcing them, you can have a very poor selection. They don't have the background, the knowledge, or the aptitude to do what you're pushing them in to do.

VASQUEZ: At what point do you try to work out the inequalities--I think you agree there are some inequalities in this society--at what point do you try to work those out?

POST: Well, now you're making me be a social commentator.

VASQUEZ: Well, I'm going to make you do more than that in a few minutes. Let's do a . . .

POST: Well, I'm on the board of a school, Brandeis University, which has. . . . We just had a meeting

the other day. And I've been involved with this school since 1951, or 1950. It's a very high-ranking school. I think we have students from all over the world. I think 47 or 53 percent of all of those students in the school get student aid of one kind or another. We have housing on campus for every one of our students. Now, if they want to go away, they can go away. But it's there. They're selected on aptitudes and on testing solely. And they're getting some absolutely brilliant intellect of a kid, I think out of Chile, with a family. . . .

You know, nobody had an IQ of 20! This kid's got 160, or something. A bright, brilliant kid. You can pick them up all over the world. When the school is advised of them, they send somebody down and offer them a full scholarship: tuition, housing, food, the whole damned thing. Because you're talking about other countries, you're talking about minority groups. You want to help them. But, god damn it, you can't do that by stopping somebody and say, "Hey, Willie Brown sent this guy in, and we've got to take him." Just because Willie Brown sent him in? Well, can he

Speak? Does he write? Does he understand?
What's his IQ? Have you done an aptitude test on
him? What's his scholastic averages? Does he
know anything? Negative on all of them, and
Willie wants him. Stuck him in.

VASQUEZ: Do you see affirmative action as a form of
patronage for minorities?

POST: To some extent, yes.

VASQUEZ: And not a very creative or successful one? Is
that what you're saying?

POST: No, it's not creative. It's not successful.
Willie Brown in the last--something up there. . . .
I think it has to do with the securities business
done by the state through a commission that I
chair, and others under the treasurer's office.

VASQUEZ: What's the name of that commission?

POST: The name of that commission is the District
Securities Commission. They wanted 20, 15 per-
cent of the business to black firms, and 5 per-
cent to woman-operated firms. That's great,
that's wonderful. There aren't any! They're
not there! Now, what are you going to do?
There aren't 20 or 15 percent of black-owned
firms who have the capability and the knowledge

to underwrite securities. So you're forcing an issue, you're forcing something that is not going to be what it's supposed to be. You know, maybe somebody has to go into some other firm or create another firm, but the knowledge, the background, isn't there. And I resent their doing that. Just like I resent their stuffing people into a medical school that don't have the qualifications, because that guy can kill me. And, god knows, they don't have to stuff more incompetents in the law profession. They have enough now. That's just a [Laughter]. . . . That's a pro bono comment.

[Laughter]

The Commission's Study of the Department of Motor Vehicles

VASQUEZ: A social commentary. [Laughter] Another area of California government and California life that gets controversial, and touches us all because the automobile makes so much money for so many, and it affects us in ways that we wish didn't, has to do with the Department of Motor Vehicles and the report, a very critical report, that the Little Hoover Commission wrote. So critical, in fact, that the Transportation Department thought

necessary to respond. Can you tell me about that report.¹ And, as much as about the report, the process by which it came about?

POST: Well, can you play the tape back, because you made a flavored comment earlier about how much money they make.

VASQUEZ: All right.

POST: Well, the money they make I don't think has any difference.

VASQUEZ: I guess what I meant is money made for the state. The automobile is a source of important revenue for the state.

POST: Oh, yeah. Well, the manufacture, the sale, the licensing . . .

VASQUEZ: The licensing, traffic tickets, pollution emission controls, insurance, all kinds of money . . .

POST: The state doesn't make any money on the emission controls. The state makes money on gasoline tax. The state makes money on the registration of vehicles. Instead of a personal property tax, it's on the registration of vehicles. We've

1. A Study of the California Department of Motor Vehicles, May, 1977; A Study of the California Department of Transportation, May, 1977.

proven they don't get enough money for the driver's licenses. We said they should increase the price, but they won't. That's unpopular, because then everybody gets mad at you. You don't do that.

VASQUEZ: Ticketing? Infractions? Court costs?

POST: I don't think that's a revenue measure. I think if you would add up the tickets that we get against the cost of the courtroom, the cost of the officer, his uniform, his gun, the vehicle that we provide him with, the clerks in the courts, the clerks, the bailiffs, the holding cells, the prisons, [Laughter] we don't make any money. I think if anybody did a cost-effective study on that, they'd go three times as high.

VASQUEZ: And the Little Hoover Commission never did that?

POST: No.

VASQUEZ: What was it that the Hoover Commission found about the DMV that got people at DMV so upset?

POST: Well. . . . I've got to take a break here for a second.

[Interruption]

A lot of social issues were involved that had nothing to do with the mechanical registration of

vehicles and driver's license and annual renewals.
That is the function of DMV.

VASQUEZ: Why don't we come back to that discussion after you've had a chance to look over the report again and some of the recommendations, some of the responses that came forth.

POST: Okay.

The Commission Report on Horse Racing

VASQUEZ: Does your memory serve you well to give me some insight into the horse-racing study that is more recent than that?

POST: Yeah, I can give you that [Laughter] without having to read it.

VASQUEZ: All right.

POST: The horse-racing study¹ came up on my suggestion because of the suspicion of dishonesty in the paramutual system. And I was very concerned as to . . .

VASQUEZ: Who brought it to your attention?

POST: Nobody. I read something someplace. And we created a subcommittee. We visited the tracks.

1. Horse Racing in California: Revenue and Regulation, July, 1982.

We found all kinds of laxness that you can't believe. We never could find any dishonesty in the paramutual system, and we involved some people from the from the [United States] Air Force security. I thought there would be some way that some hanky-panky could be done so that you would get a win ticket which would be issued after the race. And they had all kinds of cables and they were lose and I figured you could intercept cables all over the place. We couldn't find anything. We had this guy from air force security who worked with us for a couple of months.

VASQUEZ: At state expense was this?

POST: I think no. We had to borrow. . . . We don't . . . short-circuit the lines. We'd always beg, borrow, or steal somebody. Nobody was going to turn us down. As we got into it, it portended problems. Why? Willie Brown put [Assemblyman] Frank Vicenzia on the Little Hoover Commission, who was certainly not a good government disciple. I mean, he was an ex-lobbyist and, in my opinion, kind of a sleazy character, anyway. He was put on as soon as it was announced that we were going to do a study on the horse-racing board and I was

going to chair it.

VASQUEZ: What was Willie Brown's interest in this?

POST: Oh, you'll find out. Then, the governor [Jerry Brown] was a little apprehensive, because I was battling periodically with the governor. And he had appointed the guy to the Little Hoover Commission who had applied to go on the horse-racing board, we found out. But he said, "You go over to the Little Hoover Commission for a while and keep an eye on Post, whatever Post is up to." [Laughter]

So they got me covered on both sides. Why? There must be more here than meets the eye, because I'm only looking at the paramutual. This is basically what I'm trying to find out, is if there's any dishonesty in this. We visited the tracks a number of times. The counting rooms, unbelievably lax. They have a counting room just full of money, and it's supposed to be, you know, sealed door with a guard and stuff. The doors were open! You could walk in and out. [Laughter] Santa Anita, a big track. You know, the one down here by the . . .

VASQUEZ: Arcadia. Oh, no. The one in Hollywood.

POST: Yeah, Hollywood Park and Santa Anita. We went to both of them. We had to find out all kinds of things. In the midst of it, the ownership of the tracks, the number of racing dates they had, the fact that the racing dates could be transferred from your track over there to your track over here. Then, we met with the horse-racing commission [California Horse-Racing Board], who mostly are involved in the horse-racing business.

And you say, "How can you have a man chairing the horse-racing commission who owns and breeds and races horses?" It doesn't make any sense. And members. As a matter of fact, the guy that they put on the Little Hoover Commission, a man by the name of [Benjamin] Felton, I didn't realize it at the time, and I was looking for members to bring in for the subcommittee, that he was an owner. And, you know, we talked a little bit. Then we find out later . . .

VASQUEZ: The owner of a track?

POST: No. We find out that he owns horses, he breeds horses, he races horses, and he sells horses. Now, I can't put a guy like that on a subcommittee

[Laughter] looking at the horse-racing industry, can I?

VASQUEZ: Well, wouldn't his expertise be in that area?

POST: Sure, his . . .

VASQUEZ: You sell cars, and you were involved . . .

POST: Well, yeah, his expertise would be in the area, but he's got a conflict because he's still in it. I mean, I couldn't be on a new-owner vehicle board and still be operating in the business. Sure I wanted some knowledge and expertise because I don't know anything about horses. So, we see that. We see the change of dates and the indiscriminate use of dates. We looked at Cal Expo, which has horse racing. And we wondered how the lease with Cal Expo had been made, because it didn't start at General Services, the way the leases normally do.

It started in the governor's office. The governor's office pushed this guy, and they pushed [Department of] Finance to give a very favorable lease to this guy who had contributed \$25,000 to Jerry Brown's campaign, and who had loaned \$25,000 more to Jerry Brown's campaign. That's why the governor's office was a little touchy on this

issue. And Gray Davis had worked this out. We had Gray Davis in. Gray Davis said, "Had nothing to do with." They just recommended it to Finance. But why? When did the governor's office get involved with horse tracks? "Well, he just came up to it, you know." No contributions, no. Nothing like that. Roy Bell approved it. Roy Bell was director of finance.

So we asked Roy Bell, and he said, "Not so." He said, "I told them I wouldn't have anything to do with it if the man had ever contributed anything to any political campaign. Let it go back through GSA [State Department of General Service] and do the proper checks." But they approved it based on Roy Bell's approval. And Roy Bell had never approved it, because Roy Bell serves on another commission with me, and I've asked him a few other times. And, unfortunately, we didn't follow. . . . I think it's a criminal act. Because if a guy is giving you a \$25,000 contribution, has loaned you \$25,000, you sure as hell shouldn't be involved in a transaction with him that appears on the surface to be above-board business with the state.

But, the way they spelled it out, the guy was doing the state a favor. There are great humanitarians all around there. Simultaneously, we came across, or we were given a report on the horse-racing industry which was written by some outfit in New Hampshire. It was ordered by the horse-racing board, but paid for by the horse-racing industry.

VASQUEZ: In California?

POST: Yeah. They have an association. And the report was terrible. "Everybody's losing money. The horse tracks are going to go black. They can't make a living. The animals will starve. The workers will starve. And the whole world's coming to an end unless we do something to help them." This is a well-played-out plan, because then along comes Frank Vicenzia, and he puts a bill in the legislative hopper.

VASQUEZ: Who was it sponsored by, do you remember?

POST: Frank Vicenzia. I've got the bill some place. I've got the whole thing. And it refers to this report. Why would you have a place in New Hampshire or some place do a report on California? They put the bill through. The bill passes, of course.

I asked a number of members why they voted for the bill, and they said, "Well, you know, Frank said it was an adjustment in the paramutual handling, or something like." Well, that isn't exactly what it was. But to handle this two billion, two billion dollars, when you turn those numbers a little bit--we're watching this thing--we get the report finally, which nobody wanted us to see. See, nobody wanted us to see it, but we got it. The first year, the horse-racing industry got fifty million dollars more than the prior year. The state got fourteen million dollars less than the prior year.

All right, so like you, I see, now, these people are pigs. [Laughter] They've scammed off fifty million here, but they've shorted us fourteen million. Now, that's not equitable, that's not fair. There's no justification for any of it. And I talked to fifteen legislators I know personally and well, and said, "Did you vote for the bill?" "Yeah." "Well, what was the bill?" "Oh, the bill was adjusting some figures at the horse-racing boards. Nothing major. Nothing." I said, "Did you know that that bill gave the

industry fifty million dollars more and the state fourteen million less?" They said, "No, we didn't read that." I said, "Well, when they tampered with that. . . . You know, a little tamper against two billion. You'd like to have one-tenth of 1 percent of two billion dollars, wouldn't you? That's a big chunk of money."

Well, we write our report, recommending the legislature review what we said were the inadequacies of this piece of legislation. Well, Willie was scared and Jerry was scared, because we hadn't hit on the park there--whatever the hell they call that park--and meanwhile, he's got a guy on either side of me. He had Frank [Laughter] Vicenzia here; he's got Felton over here, reporting back to him all the time. We had a hearing with Vicenzia, an official hearing, and we read him the figures. He said, "Wrong." I said, "These are figures prepared by your staff. These are your figures." He said, "I don't care whose figures they are. They're wrong. I don't care if they're God's figures, they're wrong." And stalked out of the room. Wouldn't continue the hearing.

Getting Removed From the Little Hoover Commission

Now, he goes to Willie Brown and says, "You've got to get rid of that bastard Post." Gray Davis goes to Willie Brown and says, "You've got to get rid of that bastard Post." [Laughter] Because it seems I was coming up for my renewal every four years. So I had a meeting with Willie. Because I was a friend of Willie's up until that point. Very friendly. He said, "Manny, I got to. . . ." He said, "I need Frank Vicenzia's money and vote. And I need Gray Davis's money and vote. And they both want to get rid of you." I said, "Willie, I can prove any statement that's made in that report, chapter and verse. I think it's a little bit raw, you know, that the industry should get fifty million, the state should get fourteen million less." So he said, "All right, let's talk about it." We never talked about it again. Now, I just got a letter saying, "Dear Joe: I'm appointing you to the Little Hoover Commission to replace Manning Post," and he sent me a copy.

VASQUEZ: That's how you you were notified that you wouldn't be back on it?

POST: Yeah, uh-huh. Well, look, I understand the pragmatic politics that's necessary. And Gray Davis had raised a lot of money. I think he gave Willie \$175,000 or something like that. So the price on my head was pretty high. I mean, it didn't come cheap. [Laughter]

But what I wanted from Willie, if we could talk again; he just wouldn't talk anymore and I thought out of friendship I should have it. I said, "Reappoint me for another four-year term on February 1, and I will give you a resignation on February 25 or something, that because of health, business reasons, whatever it is, I can't serve any longer. Thank you." Which would have been the gentlemanly, nice way to do it. So I wouldn't lose face and, you know, have left the commission voluntarily after twenty-two years, rather than get booted out on my ass. But he had sold my spot to somebody, I don't remember who. He got a twenty-five grand contribution. [Laughter] So that's what happened.

VASQUEZ: Is that a continued practice, do you think? A commensurate contribution somewhere down the line is the basis for a spot on that commission?

POST: Yes. Either good friendship or contributions. Now, that's the way it was under Willie Brown and under Jerry Brown. Most of Jerry Brown's appointees were heavy contributors. So were Willie's. See, Willie really didn't appoint me. I was left over from the McCarthy operation. I'd been appointed by McCarthy, by Moretti, by Unruh, and by [Ralph M.] Brown. Did a pretty good job for free, for twenty-two years.

Post's Accomplishments on the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: What do you think was your main accomplishment during this twenty-two year period? We'll balance that out with your biggest failures, too.

POST: I don't have any failures. Yeah, all pretty good. It's hard to say. I don't know what's the biggest accomplishment.

VASQUEZ: Maybe the most satisfying to you in terms of state service, in terms of something that you think will be important for California in the future, or has proven to be already?

POST: I'd have to think about that, because there's an elasticity in government. When you step in, you change and make a program that works, that saves

money, everybody's happy with it, and you go on to the next program, and they snap right back to the way they were before.

They're driving Dodge cars now, the way they were in 1962. We're probably overpaying for them, scamming with them. But, see, the challenge in government is to have enough muscle to get something done. I never had enough muscle. I had enough from Jesse, but I never had enough from the governor. For a very fast example, the Highway Patrol cars are bid in groups of thousands. They're all delivered to Sacramento so that they can have the shotgun installed and the radio equipment and the gun mount and the bumpers. And then, 65 percent of them come down to southern California. The factory will ship wherever we want free. I said, "Why don't we ship 65 percent to southern California and 35 percent to northern California." "They like it that way." I said, "Well, I know, but from an economy point of view, you know. . . ." "Well, it gives us a chance for our new officers to drive the cars from up north down here."

So, I said, "You're driving the cars down,

paying for gas, officers' time, to teach them how to drive a car? I thought they knew how to drive a car in the training." They've got a California Highway Patrol training school up there. "You ever ship the cars by truck?" "No, never ship them by truck. Always drive them down." It's a small world. I have an automobile agency, and I have a big lot next to it that I rent out to a trucking company, an interstate trucking company. I come to my agency one morning, and there are a couple of trucks with Highway Patrol cars on them. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] Now, is this a carry-over from an old way of doing things, or is it just . . .

POST: It's thievery. Thievery. I take pictures of these trucks with the cars on them. We go up north and we have a meeting with a captain of the Highway Patrol. And, again, they never ship cars by truck. And I said, "Well, tell me, how do these goddamn cars get on the truck?" Records don't show it. They don't show any trucking records. They run them through some other thing as parts, or something like that. You see, it's a small world, and if you're lucky, like I am, it

comes right around and comes into your lap. I mean, who would expect the odds that I would happen to have a lot that the trucks with the Highway Patrols would stop. [Laughter] Very red faces. Very red faces. "But you called out, 'No, we never ship them by truck.'" I said, "What is this? Is this a Halloween party here?"

VASQUEZ: Were there any legal actions taken, as a result of some of your reports and some of your findings, of agencies?

POST: You can't fire a civil service worker unless he shoots your head off with a machine gun and then breaks the wall and takes the typewriter and throws it out of the window, which lands on somebody's head. No disciplinary action. You can't do anything. It's sad, but you can't.

Assessing the Role of the Press

VASQUEZ: And, as we discussed before in another session, you were proscribed by your access to the press. Which brings me to another area: How would you assess the role of the press in the twenty-some years that you worked on the Little Hoover Commission? Were they pretty fair to you, do you think? Were they somebody you could count on?

Were they somebody you tried to use?

POST: The press's principal function is to make money. The principal way you sell newspapers is by headlines that attract people's attention, something dramatic, something exciting, whatever it is. If you don't have anything dramatic, exciting to tell them, they don't care. And we did a big report once on division of highways, showing they screwed up this and that and the other thing. Big, big. And we wound up with a front page, full headline on the L.A. Times. Coincidentally, nothing else had happened in the world that Sunday night and Monday morning. I mean, nobody got raped. No car went over a freeway. There was nothing, so we got this. [Laughter] Big headline. Never got one again. Never got one again. And that was a relatively minor thing.

I mean, this horse-racing scam, that ought to hit the press. But the San Jose people and the Pasadena people were sending me material on this all the time. And Dan Walters up in Sacramento was following was following it all the time. But the tracks, I guess, have a lot of influence with

the press, and nobody's going to say anything bad about them.

The Lack of Impact of the Horse-Racing Study

VASQUEZ: What was the upshot of that whole investigation?

Nothing?

POST: Nothing. I think the year later, or two years later on, they modified the figures a little bit so they wouldn't look so bad.

VASQUEZ: And absolutely no one on the commission but yourself was willing to speak to that?

POST: No. Let's see, who was on that subcommittee with me? Well, nobody took as much offense at the goddamn thing as I did. You know, I say, "Look, you let them steal, let them steal properly, god damn it." Oh. Where's the horse-racing report? July of '82. Jean Walker was my [Laughter] sole worker. And I went to her retirement the other day in Sacramento. She's a pretty stand-up gal. She and I only argued about Jerry Brown, who had appointed her. But she was a good girl. She was on the Highway Commission before that. The rest of the people didn't care. She stayed on for an extra year, and finally, Deukmejian replaced her just recently.

Frank Vicenzia, real thief. It's funny how brazen they are. They're brazen! I mean, they've got more fucking guts. They lie to you. I mean, here's a staff guy that worked for a man that I knew, and he swore up and down on the figures that were right, and I said, "They don't make any sense." I said, "You know, I know you're working for Frank. And it's a job, but. . . ." If you confront him with the numbers. . . . Frank Vicenzia has a minority report here, everything we did was fine. You know, the horse-racing industry was in bad trouble. We did some financial studies on their goddamn reports and they were all better than having money in the bank. [Laughter] A very fine investment. I was going to buy stock myself if I bought some stock in one of these horse tracks. But they have a lot of powerful contributors. They're so fucking piggy. There's something in the law that permitted horse racing that said you have to create a charity. And they did for years, and they gave a percentage of their handle to a charity, a couple of million dollars a year, something like that.

VASQUEZ: Do you remember what charity?

POST: It was a general [charity]. . . United Way, or something like that. A couple of three, four, five years ago, just before the study came up, the track in Inglewood created their own charity. They created a charity, put their money in the charity, used that money to clean up the back stretch, to have schooling for kids, medical, first aid for kids, housing, stuff like that. We jumped all over them, and said, "Hey, it's your responsibility to clean up the back stretch. You've got people. You've got three hundred people working. You have to have housing for them, sanitation, water, first aid, schooling. You can't take the charity money and use it for that." But they did.

VASQUEZ: Is that still in place now?

POST: I don't know what they do now. They're just stealing some other way. What always amazes me is they're brazen. They're brazen. They say, "Well, that's a charity. It says a charity; it's a charity. We're helping those poor people. That's a charity. We get the three hundred grooms or something up here during the season. The charity helps them have housing or schooling for their

kids or first aid or a place to cook." Because, otherwise, they'd throw fifteen of them in a room, you know, this size with a dirt floor and no running water, "Fuck you, here. Here's your bowl of beans, and that's it." But [Laughter] to take public charity money and fix up the back side of their track . . .

The Contemporary Impact of the Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: Tell me, from your vantage point, you've already commented on the two Brown administrations and the Reagan administration in relation to the Little Hoover Commission. How would you assess the response or the functioning of the commission during the Deukmejian administration, two administrations--one and a half--where . . .

POST: I can't, other than from what I hear from all the members, that the appointments that Deukmejian makes are bad appointments.

VASQUEZ: Bad in what sense?

POST: They don't have the right feeling for the commission. They don't have the right background for it. They're antagonistic towards the commission. What they are really trying to do is just

derail the commission. Which surprises me. And if I get a chance to talk to the Duke, I will tell him, "I think that's one area that you ought to be careful who you make the appointments. That isn't the place to put your friends, or your buddies or your pharmacist or the guy that fixed your cars, or some law clerk that worked for you. Get some high-quality people that are willing to do that and will understand what it is."

VASQUEZ: Which is?

POST: Well, unfortunately, you have to have people that have some degree of feeling for government, some knowledge. They have to have the economic stature that they can give the time and can afford to do it. Now, I have spent a lot of time. I one day figured that I could have probably made ten million dollars in the time I spent in twenty years on this commission. But I get more gratification by the things that I've done on the commission than by making some more money.

Money. You know, at a certain point you can only eat one meal, you can only wear one pair of shoes. But I would even go further. I would go further and say if you appoint people that can't

economically handle it, then let's make a proviso that we pay them. You know, they've got to hire a baby-sitter. See, we pay transportation and we pay a \$100 per day per diem. It went up from \$50 to \$100. Well, that \$100 covers your hotel, it covers your meals, it covers one thing and another. But if you can't afford to do the day's work and you're going to lose \$100 or \$150, I don't think it's wrong to pay it. If you're willing to sign the statement that, you know, you need the money because of economic purposes, we'll give you the goddamn money. I have no objection to that. But get people who have a knowledge and an interest and a desire.

I mean we've had Brown's people, some guy by the name of Harry Farb out of San Diego. You read about him in the book here. Wealthy little guy. He came into the commission in the first meeting, and he said, "I move the commission be abolished." [Laughter] He says, "You're all right. But the rest of us? A waste of money." I said, "Wait a minute, Harry, you haven't even sat for a meeting. You don't know what we do. Just because Jerry, you know, sent you in here, stop

that bullshit. We've known each other a long time. This commission is a worthwhile enterprise. It does a lot of things for government. It has done a lot of things. Why should it be abolished?" "Well, I don't think you do anything." But Reagan appointed a guy that was a lobbyist. Reagan appointed a guy that was a judge. Reagan appointed a guy that was a convicted prisoner. They don't even qualify. They don't even look and they don't see.

VASQUEZ: Do you think then the first Brown, Edmund G., Sr., was the most responsible in his approach to the commission, in your experience?

POST: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Pat was. You look at that first batch of people, they were all dedicated public service people. There was no cuckoo there. I mean, there were retired guys from the telephone company, from public utilities, from the University of California. Our first chairman was a professor of government administration.

VASQUEZ: Eugene [C.] Lee?

POST: Yeah. George Miller [Jr.], a top-notch guy. A top-notch guy, now dead. Very knowledgeable in government.

VASQUEZ: I think in the first session, we went over all those people, the first batch of people.

POST: [Richard E.] Sherwood, he represents the big law firm here in town. He's the guy that wrote minority opinions longer than the other, than the old opinion. [Vernon L.] Vern Sturgeon, Republican, arch-Republican, but a very straight guy, very knowledgeable guy. He became Reagan's legislative director. Dair Tandy was the mayor of Oroville at the time. Frank [D.] Tellwright was the retired member of the phone company, I believe. Sol Price was the only mistake there, and he's the guy that has the Price stores now. He had the FedMart stores at the time. He was a political contributor of Pat's. But he just didn't care about the Little Hoover Commission. He had to come up on the bus. He didn't fly airplanes here. I mean, he came for awhile, then walked away from it.

VASQUEZ: The next time we talk, perhaps . . .

POST: [John T.] Johnny Knox was a good member then. He's turned into a fluke now, but he was a good member then.

VASQUEZ: What's he doing now?

POST: Practicing law, lobbying. Basically, all the people that leave government become lobbyists.

VASQUEZ: Well, next time we get together, why don't we talk about some of those activities like lobbying and like putting budgets together at the state level?

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Session 4, December 29, 1987]

[Tape 4, Side A]

VASQUEZ: The last time we spoke, we went over some of the more important reports that you were involved in developing for the Little Hoover Commission. I'd like to continue with that today.

POST: Please do.

A More Detailed Discussion of the Department of
Motor Vehicles Study

VASQUEZ: One of the reports that is among the most voluminous of those you were involved with--and also, I understand pretty far-reaching and controversial at the time--was a report on the Department of Motor Vehicles. As you saw it, what were the principal issues involved in developing that report?

POST: When the study emanated from another source completely, I was interested in the Air Pollution Board and the air pollution equipment and standards that they were setting up. They set up some sample facilities or. . . . You know, sample facilities, I guess. Particularly one in Riverside. But as I watched the development of the program, which was way out of kilter because

they had enough lanes to handle half of Riverside County, not just the city of Riverside. . . . They had a tremendous facility and a lot of equipment. But that led us into getting some figures from DMV as to the number of vehicles and one thing or another. You know, the information that we needed, which we subsequently found had about a 50 percent error rate. Which angered us a little bit. You know, we're trying to get some information. We have to have some numbers to go by. The Department of Motor Vehicles has the numbers, but they're so sloppy they can't get them out right.

VASQUEZ: Why?

POST: Bad management. It's been, unfortunately, for many years, a political plum. Now, even as recently as the guy [George E. Meese] just before the last guy, was a brother of Ed Meese [III], the now attorney general of the United States This guy, even by getting Meese appointed to the job [Laughter] couldn't hold the job. Got out in six months or eight months. It is a voluminous job. It covers something like 27,000,000 people, of whom, I think, 17,000,000 have driver's

licenses. Either 17,000,000 or 13,000,000. And then, the other side of the coin is, then it's 17,000,000 vehicles if it's 13,000,000 licenses. And it's voluminous. It takes a lot of work to put the thing together. You got to the point that you couldn't register all of the vehicles and all the driver's licenses on calendar basis, as of the end of December.

VASQUEZ: This was last year?

POST: No, no, no. I'm going back ten years. The numbers I'm telling you were the numbers then, ten years ago. I don't know where they are today. They're higher than they were then. You just couldn't handle the volume, and instead of hiring temporary people for the phasing-in periods, it was set up to divide it into twelve months, if you remember, if you were around at the time. So, one of my vehicles expires in January and I get a renewal. And one in March and one in October, whatever the hell it is. Which is much better, because if you're trying to handle 17,000,000 vehicles, the volume is just. . . . You know, they can't handle it. And the 13,000,000 driver's licenses.

Of course, the legislature likes to throw little additions on your fees, the registration fees. Oh, they'd add a buck here, or something, or two dollars there for something, whatever it is. But, anyway, it's basically a bookkeeping function, with EDS [Electronic Data Systems] equipment and all of that. But the equipment was old. The equipment was not compatible with other equipments. Which is one of the fallacies in our state government that we really never got into--we tried to, but it was just too big to get into--is our electronic data systems are not compatible, one department to the other. So, when you get something from one department, you can't translate that into what you're doing in the other department. We had suggested at one time to select one type of equipment. But, you know, each department wanted that particular brand name of equipment which was not compatible. The loss is the loss to the state. You know, if you've got a department that's running on a hundred million dollar budget, but its stuff doesn't translate into Yugoslavian, and your other stuff is Yugoslavian, how do you bridge it? Anyway, that's what led us in to DMV.

Now, Herman Sillas [Jr.] had just, I guess, a little prior to that, been selected as a political bone by Governor [Edmund G. "Jerry"] Brown [Jr.] [Laughter] to the Spanish community, to be the director of the department. And I had known Herman Sillas for a long time politically, but not in any work capacity. I had a lot of input to the department, and always had, because the former Registrar [of Vehicles], [A. J.] Al Veglia, had been a friend of mine for many, many years.

And as I believe I said when I did the original motor vehicles study, I had to go to Al Veglia to get the list of vehicles owned by the state because nobody had them. Nobody had them in a printed form. But Al ran them through the computer system and gave me a completed list of 23,000 vehicles, which nobody knew of before. They didn't know how many there were and they didn't know where they were.

You know, it's like you see government typewriters have a little number on them, or government chairs have a number. But, you know, there's no way of collecting that information. So even if we owned 380,000 typewriters, we don't

know where they are or who's got them, if they're still in state service, or if somebody took the sticker off and took them home. We don't know.

Anyway, Herman, I believe, was a lawyer and got into the department. We had a number of meetings with him, and he was basically interested in a number of social programs, some of which I object to, none of which I strenuously object to other than the fact that they don't belong where they were. This was not a social agency, this was a work agency. You've got to keep track of all this crap.

Herman Sillas's Administration of the Department
of Motor Vehicles

VASQUEZ: What kind of programs was he interested in as part of the Department of Motor Vehicles?

POST: Well, he started programs that were so out in left field that . . .

VASQUEZ: Was the department's efforts to improve public image by this developing community councils?

POST: Yeah, well, one was community councils, which we felt really was a political toy or ploy for him to have a statewide connection system put together, where he would have his associates all over the

state and his community councils. He had inter-divisional conferences. He had voter registration drives. He had distribution of farm labor ballots. He had women's exchange programs, childcare centers, child-drop centers, consumer education and protection.

The programs had merit, but they didn't belong where they were. His particular job and function was to handle the registration of some 17,000,000 vehicles and 13,000,000 drivers licenses, and collect the fees, and turn the fees over to. . . . Well, some of the fees were split up, because when I instituted the program with the sales tax--which I don't think I've told you about--the registration fee and the sales tax are put in at the same time that a vehicle was transferred. Anyway, our objection was these programs had nothing to do with running the department. We met with him in his office. He had a "paint-a-door" program. He had a "lose-a-ton" program. If you're doing a successful job of running a department, fine, then you can play with all of this.

VASQUEZ: What was the "paint-a-door" program?

POST: Paint doors, make them look nicer. Paint them.

VASQUEZ: And "lose-a-ton" was getting everybody to get into [physical] condition?

POST: Yeah, to lose weight. These, I think, are luxury items that once you're doing your job properly and efficiently and economically, you can start fooling around with childcare centers, farm labor ballots, other social programs. But you can't go to the social programs, which are not in the budget, to the dereliction of what you're supposed to be doing.

VASQUEZ: Is that what was taking place, the dereliction of . . .

The Occasional-Use Tax

POST: Yes, yes, yes. There was no budget for these things, but these things were taken out of active, working budgets. Look, DMV is a tremendous revenue measure, also. You know, 6 percent of all cars sold go through DMV. And then, I don't know if I've mentioned before, but being close to Al Veglia before this time, we had a law changed so that whenever a vehicle, or airplane or boat was sold and had to be registered, or reregistered, transferred, the sales tax would be assessed at that point. And it took a long time to work it

out between DMV and the Board of Equalization.

Originally, when I raised it, the Board of Equalization said, "Well, we want the people to come in and pay the sales tax to us, and we'll give them a receipt. Then they can go over to DMV and give them the receipt, and DMV can collect their fees." I said, "Wait a minute. You're not serving the public properly. Let's work it out." Which we did. We worked it out where at the transfer point of the vehicle, you go into DMV, and you've bought my car, and you want it transferred into your name. And they say, "Fine, the transfer fee is X dollars. And the sales tax"-- and they look it up. They say, "The sales tax on that vehicle is \$310. So give us \$313," or \$316. And then, internally, DMV transfers that \$310 over to the Board of Equalization.

But the Board of Equalization would have liked it, because they could set up more offices and more staff and more bureaucracy. . . . And I said, "We don't need it. It's all there. It just takes that girl who's transferring that vehicle, it takes her another thirty seconds to say. . . . She looks up the vehicle in the book, and she

says, 'You know, the vehicle you're buying is listed for \$3,000, and the tax is 6 percent, so it's \$180.'" Now, at that point, if you wish, you can make a statement it isn't worth \$3,000. It's been wrecked, or it's in pieces, or whatever it is. They will accept your statement. The vehicle might only be worth \$2,000. But, periodically, we'll spot-check this, in the neighborhood, in the car that you said was a wreck and wasn't running; your next-door neighbor is liable to say, "Oh, he drives that car every day. It's fine." Now, you're in trouble. But that's a program that I put in, and it's one of my proud programs. Because you know what that thing, the last time I checked, what it created per year? One hundred forty million dollars, that was escaping, was not being paid.

VASQUEZ: What year did you institute this, do you remember?

POST: I would say it was in the middle to late sixties. But see, that was because of a personal relationship with Al Veglia and a personal relationship with [Richard] Dick Nevins. Because Dick liked the idea, but he said, "We'll set it up and collect it." I said, "Well, you've got to

duplicate a bureaucracy." And then I said, "It isn't fair to the public. You're asking some poor bastard in the public to go over here and pay you. Now he's got to go over there and pay them. It's all the same family. We're all in state government."

Then DMV, when they got to the program, they said, "Well, who's going to pay us for our time? You know, our girl has got to spend an extra. . . ." So we allocated, I think. . . . Because we're talking some very big money here. I think they were allowed \$3 for a transaction for the assessment, the collection, the disbursement of the sales tax. Which was fine with me. But it took a lot of doing. But that's negotiated. That's what I'm proud of, because that's picked up, itself, more than a billion dollars in the state government that would never have happened had I not done it.

VASQUEZ: And the opposition was not so much to doing it, but to running it?

POST: Yeah. Oh, everybody thought it was a good idea. "Let's do it, sure. Sure, let's do it." Of course, the automobile industry didn't like it.

The used car industry didn't like it.

VASQUEZ: What kind of opposition did they mount?

POST: Well, they didn't really mount [any]. The point is, a new car dealer has to pay sales tax on every car sold. A used car dealer can sometimes play games, you see. Because, for example, you buy a used car and you trade in another car. Well, maybe the trade-in doesn't go on the books. And then, you can sell it to somebody else, and no tax. And I, having been in that business, knew what was going on. And I said, "If it's a sales tax on cars, it should be a sales tax on cars, all cars."

The Value of Person-to-Person Transactions

VASQUEZ: Whether it's an agency, or whether it's a person-to-person transaction?

POST: Yeah, yeah, person-to-person transaction.

VASQUEZ: Were there any independent lobby groups, any citizen groups that were against it?

POST: No, no. But then, I think it was Al Veglia's suggestion. He said, "Let's not pick on the automobile industry, because they might think we're picking on them. Let's throw in airplanes and boats." And I said, "Fine." I said, "If I've

got to pay sales tax, everybody should pay sales tax, whether it's a car, a boat, or an airplane." The result was the first year that was in, Al Veglia called me from Sacramento. "We've got the first year's report on what's been generated on your bill, on your work here." It was forty-some million dollars. Forty-three million dollars the first year. But see, cars have gone tremendously up in price in the last fifteen years.

VASQUEZ: And the number of transactions?

POST: And the number of transactions, the number of people, and all of that. But it's just the knowledge a member of the industry can bring to government, and can help put it together. And I don't think anybody else could have, because nobody knew Veglia and Dick Nevins the way I did, that I could get them to do this. Because, you know, most bureaucrats, they're willing to sit down and. . . . I was very happy on that one. It was a good one.

Recommendations of the Department of Motor
Vehicles Study

VASQUEZ: So this report had other goals and other issues that it wanted to address in terms of the

management style and efficiency of DMV, is that correct?

POST: Yes, yes. There was a lot of work that had to be done to bring it up to speed. For example, we had checked with the EDP [electronic data processing] people around the country. In their commercial operations, they had anticipated an error rate of one-tenth of 1 percent in their readouts and all the work that they did. The DMV was running an error rate of 8 percent. Which is [Laughter] a long way from one-tenth of 1 percent. We don't know what has been lost in the interim, because if you're talking about an 8 percent loss on an organization--8 percent up or down, we don't know--that you're talking in terms of five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred million dollars. An 8 percent error factor is just too damned high.

VASQUEZ: Now, was this 8 percent error factor in relationship to the previous administration of the DMV, or was this the first time such a study had ever been done?

POST: I guess it was the first time a study had ever been done. But it was on the present administration, on the present figures. You remember, I

originally told you the reason we started to look at DMV was with reference to the air-pollution-district service stations that they were putting up, or wanting to put up at that time. It was just getting started in that. . . . And the numbers that they had given us were 50 percent wrong.

Now, that's what caused it, really. It started there because, as I can recall--and it's a long time ago--they built a test facility in Riverside, which I watched being built. It was next to an automotive mall. I just. . . . Going to Palm Springs every week, I would check it and see the progress. It had gotten tremendous. Now, based on what they figured the rate of travel per day, per vehicle, would be, it was too big. And it was just a test one. They built another. They built two or three of them. I said, "Well, tell me, if your figures are right on the rate of travel, you've got overcapacity already." And that's the way I picked up the errors in their figures.

In other words, if they were figuring a 50,000-car population in Riverside, it could have

been 25,000, or it could have been 100,000, 50 percent either way. I mean 25,000 or 75,000. Well, if you're building a facility for 75,000, and you've only got 25,000, you've got a lot of waste. I remember they had like six lanes, and each lane was supposed to take so many cars a day. I said, "Well, that's fine. What are they going to do the rest of the year [Laughter] when they get through with it?"

VASQUEZ: Okay. So, what were the results? What resulted, or what culminated in changes, or betterments, or improvements in DMV's operation, as a result of your report?

The Results of a Premature Leak of Report Contents

POST: Well, we had developed about fifty recommendations. How many of them have been implemented, I don't know. Because there was some little hanky-panky going on here. Somehow, Herman Sillas got a copy of this report before we even published it. Herman Sillas--thought I guess that a strong offense is the best defense--came out attacking our report, which had not even been completed yet. But he had a copy of it. You won't believe it, you know, maybe he knew somebody at the

mimeograph plant, or wherever it was duplicated. It was duplicated in probably the state printing office. And they got it, and he came out and attacked us, the Little Hoover Commission. They said, "Condemning me for this and that," and "Look what I've done here and there and there." So it was dilled. How much was done after that, I don't know.

VASQUEZ: Do you suppose he used the same technique of knowing people here and there that you used to get things done?

POST: Well, obviously, somebody that was friendly to Herman Sillas somehow got wind of and/or stole, or "liberated," a copy of our report--which I think was stamped "discussion draft" or "second draft" or whatever it was, because that's the way we did Our first prelim[inary copy] would be a discussion draft. And then we'd have a first draft, then a second draft and then a final draft. One of those steps in between was what he got ahold of.

VASQUEZ: And what he most objected to was the criticism of what you call the social programs?

POST: Yeah.

Computerizing Department of Motor Vehicles Records

VASQUEZ: There was a question of the computerization of files, as well. Is that right?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: What did that have to do with? Did that have to do with uniformizing the equipment used, or . . .

POST: Yeah, that would be the EDP equipment.

VASQUEZ: EDP stands for?

POST: Electronic data processing equipment. You physically can't handle 17,000,000 driver's licenses . . .

VASQUEZ: Was it computerized at the time that . . .

POST: No, it was not computerized. I mean, this was all mechanical, manual labor.

VASQUEZ: Were they moving toward computerizing it?

POST: Well, that's what we thought the emphasis should have been, on computerization of the operation rather than these other social programs, which all had merit. But first. . . You take your basic job first. You have 30,000,000, roughly, vehicles and driver's licenses. Now, nobody can dig through there. If they want to look you up, they're going to start at a letter in the alphabet, and they're going to go through pages and pages of books and

cards. You know, that's out of the dark ages. Today, they should be able to find you by hitting three keys, four keys, whichever way they do it. Or maybe they should even have it to the point that they can type your name into it [slaps hands] and it comes up on the screen. Because it may be for renewal, it may be for a violation, a legal violation. It may be some law enforcement agency is looking for you or somebody like you from a physical description or from your vehicle. You know, we're in the twentieth century; we're not back in the dark ages.

VASQUEZ: So you can't really assess, at this point, or from memory, what benefits might have been derived from your report?

POST: Truthfully, I can't.

The Logic of the State Government Reorganization Plan

VASQUEZ: Hmm. Okay. Let's go on to one of the first reports--not the first report--that the Little Hoover Commission tackled. That had to do with the reorganization of the executive branch of government, the movement towards the agency model. What was the logic behind that?

POST: The logic came from the fact that we had discovered, or it was reported to us, that there were approximately 360 departments, commissions, and agencies in state government. Now, as nice a guy as Pat Brown is or was, he couldn't keep track of them all. He had to have somebody overseeing. So, they tried to break them into bunches, bunches that had an affinity. They wound up with everything to do with health was one.

VASQUEZ: "They" being the people in the administration?

POST: The people in the administration trying to say, "Look, if you have six guys that will be each over a bunch of departments, they can report to you and you can ask questions of them. You can get input and output. But if you've got to go to each department head. . . ." Like, you know, Transportation was Highways, DMV, building of the freeways. Air transport was in that. There was everything within Transportation. Streets, highways. You're not going to get any straight answers, because you're going to talk to a guy you never saw before and he's going to be afraid to talk to you because you're the governor. Now, if you've got an agency head, you can call him and

say, "Hey, Carlos, I want to know why this highway hasn't been built," or "Why this highway has been built," or what's happening with reference to this, that, or the other thing. And you'll get a straight answer, whether it's within Health, or Transportation, or Social Services, or any of the various agencies.

It was not a perfect solution, because they didn't really lump together all of them, but at some particular point in time, you had to say, "Well, you know that agency has only got six departments in it. We've got an extra three of them over here. Let's stick one over there and stick one over here." We've got to get rid of them. They all have to be under one of five umbrellas, or six umbrellas. And, in some cases, they don't quite make it, but they're still going to be there. Now, that's been up and back, up and back with various governors. The head of the agency is a pleasure appointment of the governor. So when the governor changes, he can throw the head of Health out and put in his own head of Health, as Mario Obledo got in. Herman Sillas got in in a secondary capacity, under the

Transportation umbrella.

It was merely a matter of communication where the agency heads might meet if the governor was willing, and they could all throw their problems on the table. Social Services: "We're out of money. We need more money to run our operation." And Transportation comes in and says, "We've got some freeways scheduled. We've got to have some more money for the freeways." Well, the governor is sitting there and has got to say, "Look, we only got so much money. I can't give you all you want for social services. I can't give you all you want for freeways." Although freeway funds are different funds, because they're generated from gas-tax monies and they can't be put over there in social services, or over there or over there. The legislature was smart enough to say, "These are funds raised from highway users and they belong back in highways, building more highways."

V. BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES TO GOOD GOVERNMENT

VASQUEZ: So it has its own fund? It doesn't go into the General Fund?

Self-Perpetuating Bureaucracies

- POST: Yeah, instead of going to the general, it remains over there. But government is a very complex thing. Those bridges into San Francisco were supposed to be self-liquidating bridges. When they paid themselves off, they would eliminate the toll.
- VASQUEZ: The Golden Gate [Bridge] is an example.
- POST: Yeah, yeah, the toll tax. It's never been done. Ain't never going to be done. [Laughter]
- VASQUEZ: It has got a life of its own?
- POST: It's too big a revenue measure. Now, they claim they need the money for maintenance and repairs and all. They have a big crew of people painting those bridges 365 days a year. They paint. When they get through, they start coming up the back. It is a great revenue measure for the state.
- VASQUEZ: How do you assess the advances made in the efficiency of government as a result of the agency system of organizing various departments?
- POST: Well, you're asking for a technical analysis that defies the technicality. All that you can say is you think that you have opened a better line of communication between the workers in government

and the administrators in government. If you have a better line of communication, you have a better feeling for your work. Maybe somebody is appreciative of it. Or, maybe the fact that you've made a report to a governor's board will give you a satisfaction.

Economy and Efficiency in Government

VASQUEZ: The goal is economy and efficiency?

POST: That is what you're looking for: economy and efficiency in government.

VASQUEZ: Has the agency system in the executive branch of government given us more economy and efficiency in state government?

POST: You can't measure it. You assume so, yes. You would assume so. But that doesn't prove anything. Governor Deukmejian tried to outlaw the agency plan of government a few years ago. It was overridden. Ronald Reagan didn't want to bother with it. They thought it was some Democratic device. Which wasn't the case. You know, you're trying to run a tremendous operation.

VASQUEZ: So, however efficient and however logical and however advanced organizationally people may try to make government, there is a point at which the

individuals who are put in the position at the behest of other individuals, is what makes it work or not. Is that what you're saying?

POST: That's absolutely correct.

The Human Element in Politics

VASQUEZ: So, the human element in politics can never be removed?

POST: No.

VASQUEZ: It has to be factored in.

POST: Two or three of the things that I've done that I'm most proud of in government were done on a personal basis. The first time I asked Al Veglia to tell me how many cars, he said, "Well, that would take two days of computer time."

VASQUEZ: Uh-huh. You told me about that.

POST: Yeah, but I said, "Al, I'm doing a study on state vehicles. I think the program we've got now stinks. But I've got to start with some numbers. How many cars have we got? How many cars, how many trucks?" You know, "How many snow plows?" They're also in that thing. Snow plows and road graders and trucks and vehicles. I was only interested in passenger vehicles. You had to do the whole run before you could pull out the

passenger vehicles.

VASQUEZ: And it was based on a personal relationship with him that you were able to get that done?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: What were the other two or three instances?

POST: Well, the same thing with the sales tax, called the Occasional Sales Tax Act. That would never have been done if I couldn't sit down with DMV, Veglia and the people with him, and then sit down with the Board of Equalization and those people, try to overcome their objections, get them all together, sit down and hammer the thing out.

VASQUEZ: On the basis of your knowing all of them, one by one on an individual basis?

POST: Yeah. Well, you know, if you're sitting in front of a bureaucrat and he tells you something, you have to put up with it. But if you're sitting in front of a guy that you know, you say, "Come on, stop the bullshit. We're state government. We're trying to do something. There is a tremendous amount of revenue here. I don't know the amount." I was flabbergasted to think that it was forty-some million dollars the first god-damned year. And the last thing we caught was \$140,000,000 in

a year. That's a respectable sum of money that otherwise would not be coming into government.

VASQUEZ: What's a third example of an accomplishment that you're proud of that comes about as a direct result of knowing the people involved, the players involved?

POST: I can't go back into ancient history and dig up all of this, but I can give you an example. Speaker Leo McCarthy wanted me to set up a commission and do a study on the elected officials' compensation. So it was called a Commission on Elected Officials' Compensation. Okay. And he said, "I'd like you to put it together as soon as you can. We have the appointments made. Tell me when you can be ready." Well, I called one of his assistants and I said, "I don't want to go through GSA, because to get some space from GSA is going to take me six months." You know, you've got to put in a request for proposal and it has got to go through seventeen people and it has got to be initialed and all that crap.

So, the Little Hoover Commission had rented some additional space they weren't using. So I

said, "Can we sublease from the Little Hoover Commission an office and a half?" or something like that. They said, "Sure, we'll okay that. Go ahead." Because we weren't paying very much rent in the first place. Then I called up, and Fred Taugher was Leo's assistant at the time, and I said, "Fred, I've got to put this thing together. I need some furniture. Can you get me some desks, some file cabinets, a conference table and some chairs and stuff like that?" And he said, "Sure, you can have them." I said, "How about for tomorrow?" We had them "tomorrow." We only had an office and a half. We didn't need that much, but we needed a place to sit down. Telephones, the same way. We had juice with the telephone company. [Snaps fingers] We got some phones.

VASQUEZ: "Juice" based on what? Business you had brought in from campaigns, or something?

POST: Well, knowledge. . . . I've worked with the communications people that have come out on the White House stuff and on federal campaign stuff, and they always have liaisons to these campaigns, and I know these guys. And they, of course, are within the telephone company. As a matter of

fact, one of the presidents of the telephone company was an original member of the Little Hoover Commission, one of the retired members. One of our later members was a member of the Little Hoover Commission, as well.

VASQUEZ: What were their names?

POST: Fred Tellwright, I think was the first one. The guy lives here in town, James Kenney.

Getting Around Bureaucracies

Now, in twenty-four hours I had rented an office, I have some equipment in it, I had my telephones coming in the next day, and now I needed some typewriters. Which have to go through General Services, which I know. We'd requested two of them. You know, this is all in a couple of days. So I called Fred Taugher, and I said, "Fred, we have a requisition in for two cockamamy typewriters. Do you have any extras over there? Can you loan me some until we get ours? Because this is a one-shot commission. By the time I get the damned things, I won't need them anymore." So he said, "Sure." He said, "I'll give you two of them and then you assign those that you've got coming to me, because I've got some in my

storeroom here."

See, the legislature squirrels away all kinds of little things. I could always go to the legislature and say, "Look, we need some money to do a study. We need some money for a consultant. We haven't got time to wait until next year. Will you hire the consultant and send him to us?" Well, if you have a relationship with people, they know that you're not trying to get a girlfriend a job, but you're trying to do a job. You know, I couldn't benefit if they paid you and they gave you to me to help me with a study I'm trying to do. Because I had a very good reputation with these guys and they knew me. So now we had typewriters. So, in two days, I came back to Leo and I said, "Now we can set a meeting." And he said, "You're kidding." I said, "No, no, no. [Laughter] We've got an office, we've got furniture, we've got typewriters, we've got telephones. As a matter of fact, we're going to make up some stationery tomorrow with our telephone numbers on it. But not through the government printing office." Because that takes you ninety days. You can go around the corner to some little guy

and you can get them in a day. That's what I mean by cutting, short-circuiting the system.

[Interruption]

The Inertia of Government

You're asking qualitative judgments that don't measure. I mean, if you say, "How many feet is it?" or, "How many pounds is it?" or "How many men have to lift how much?"--fine, you can answer that. But you're saying, "Is it more efficient?" You'll never know. Do they make less mistakes? Well, that's something you can figure. But the inertia. . . . I don't know how I managed all these years in government, because the inertia of government is. . . . It's frustrating.

I visited DMV offices up and down the state. I've come in there as a stranger, not as a state official. You don't know where to go, so you get in line. You get in line for fifteen, twenty minutes. Maybe longer. When you get up to the counter, you ask that, and they say, "Oh, well, you're wrong. Not here; you've got to go over there." And then you stand in line over there, and as you get up to the thing, then they break for lunch, or they take their break or they take

a coffee break. I've tried through many administrations to get an information . . .

[Interruption]

And I've tried for years and years and years. I said, "Look, you've got thirty employees here. Put up a stand right in the middle of the goddamn agency. Where people come in by the hundreds. And hang a sign over it, "Information."

VASQUEZ: That's the way it is now.

POST: They've finally done it?

VASQUEZ: That's in all of them. In the last, I guess, couple of years.

POST: Well, they had a new director, a black woman, who used to be a DMV girl in Hollywood, who knew the business. She worked her way up from a clerk to the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. She was a great gal. She knew the problem. I could get along with her fine, because she knew. You know, you've got hundreds of people in there. They don't know where they're supposed to go. One is for driver's licenses, one is for vehicle registration, one is for the driving lessons, one is for violation of this, or violation of that. And they all have got lines. Now, one of these

employees in the middle, that say, "Well, you have got to go to window 6. And you, go over to window 12, and you go over to 3, and let me find out about you, and I'll get the information and tell you where to go." A good gal.

VASQUEZ: I can understand it is difficult to assess qualitatively things that sometimes can barely be measured quantitatively. But let me ask you about one more report that you were involved with.

The Century Freeway

Thirty years ago, in 1958, the state approved a \$2.8 billion project known as the Century Freeway, in which it purchased a \$250,000,000 swath, a 600-foot swath, seventeen-and-a-half-mile-long right-of-way. And in 1981, nothing had happened with the Century Freeway. How did that process work?

POST: Well, a friend of mine, Federal Judge Harry Pragerson, is the one who put that on hold for about six or eight years.

VASQUEZ: How did he manage that, and why?

POST: Well, it was part of a federally mandated program of federal funds which, I think, covers 90 percent of the costs. And then they were getting all

kinds of. . . . Everybody was mad at it. It was going through minority areas. I think there were sixteen little cities involved. "Well, don't go through our main street. Go down our alleys, go down the other way, the other way, this way." You know, it looked like a pretzel. And then the Equal Opportunity people came in and said, "You know, our people have to do 20 percent of this work, 30 percent of this work." One thing or the other. And it just got into a horrible maze.

And then, of course, the social service people came in and said, "Look, you're knocking out a thousand housing units. You've got to build a thousand housing units." And at a point in time, we, the Division of Highway, were selling these houses to clear the right of way. Then, they started raping the houses. They would take the window frames out of them. They would take the toilets out of them. The squatters would live in them, and then the whole goddamn area was mad again at the Division of Highways. You know, you'd seal them off with plywood and shut them up, and people would tear them up and take the plywood, take the toilets, pull the wires out. They

got so bad they couldn't be fixed, so we started hitting them with bulldozers and knocking them all down. And everybody got mad at that [Laughter] because it's housing. And meanwhile, we had mandated--I don't remember the detail, but I think it could be fourteen hundred, or fourteen thousand--housing units had to be replaced. Well, that's a big stock of housing. Now, firstly, you've got to get the land. You've got to let the contracts. You've got to do the design. I mean, first the design, then the . . .

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

Well, the way you replaced the housing stock was by acquiring the land, designing the buildings, letting the proposals. And all of a sudden, you've got another area in there, and they say, "We want minority contractors to do a certain amount of this work." Which slows down your bid procedures. And then you've got to build some more. Meanwhile, where have those people gone who were living there before? They've been scattered around the community. Now, you have to take them in on a basis of priority.

We're doing the same, identical goddamn thing now for Los Angeles Convention Center. And the costs are horrendous, horrendous. Because, again, we have social programs, which I think have a lot of value, and some of them I think are ridiculous. In our particular case with the convention center, if a husband and wife and three kids were living in a one-room apartment--which they do . . .

VASQUEZ: In that area, three or four families sometimes live in a one-bedroom apartment.

POST: Okay. Well, that's even worse. And that's the area from Figueroa [Street] to the [Harbor] Freeway, and from Venice [Boulevard] to Pico [Boulevard]. We have to, when we move them out We have to pay to move them out. We have to put them in not comparable, but proper residences. Now, you've got a husband, wife, and three kids, that takes at least a two-bedroom, maybe a three-bedroom apartment. They were paying \$150 rent over there, for example. And we have got to pay \$600 for rent. We have to subsidize that for five years. That's a pretty stiff bone, you know, for us to bite. And when you make it worse when you say three families

living in there. . . . Now, you take one bit of housing stock, a one-bedroom apartment with three families living in it, now we've got to get three apartments, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, whatever it is. I don't think that's fair. I don't think it's equitable.

Last week, they came up with a new one that I'm really a little bit disturbed about. And I'm not picking on anybody, but we have to maintain the subsidy for five years. Okay? Some of the families have decided they don't want to live in the United States anymore, because they weren't from here originally. They would like to go back to Contra Costa, or Costa Rica, or Jamaica, or wherever. Mexico, South America someplace. We have to give them a lump-sum payment for the five years of rental subsidy, which they can pick up. And a lot of them are saying, "Gee, for \$30,000, for \$35,000, we can go back home to Guatemala. We can buy a house. We can buy a car. We can live comfortably ever after with 35,000 American dollars." I don't think that's fair. I don't think that's equitable.

We said that we will supply them with

replacement housing, or upgrade it a little bit. But, you know, when you have a family that's got five kids--and I don't know what the figures are--but a husband and wife and five kids have got to have a four-bedroom apartment or something like that. We don't even build them in our replacement housing, four-bedroom apartments; we've got to rent it for them. I don't disagree with even supplementing for even five years. But if they elect to leave the country, for us to give them the money to leave the country with, I think is an imposition. I'm sorry, but I would argue that with anybody. I think we're overdoing it.

VASQUEZ: Getting back to the Century Freeway though . . .

POST: [Laughter] Sorry, forgive me for getting on the soapbox.

VASQUEZ: That's all right. There are the observations or the arguments that. . . . Who have been instrumental in stopping the freeway are primarily the more wealthy areas that the freeway would ultimately come through on the Westside. You seem to indicate that it's a whole series of different loci that put up opposition. There are the people living there. There are the interests, the

agencies who speak in their interest. There are contractors who want their piece of the action, and what have you.

POST: Now, your statement was the will of the public . . .

VASQUEZ: I think part of the conventional wisdom has been that it would go through some pretty well-to-do neighborhoods, and that's why it's been possible to effectively stop it. How do you respond to that?

POST: You show me a map and show me a wealthy area in that area that that freeway is going through, with that seventeen miles. I don't believe there are. But even then, if there are, and you compensate them properly, you know you can't stand in the way of progress. You've got a seventeen-mile link, you can't pull out one mile of that link and say, "Well, no, those are heavy people. We're going to leave them alone. We'll stop here, and we'll go around and we'll pick them up over there." You've got to go through. So, only Beverly Hills can stop a freeway. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: That was my next question. [Laughter] How does that process play itself out? How does Beverly Hills manage to stop a freeway and make us drive

all the way around the world to get from the Eastside, or downtown, to West L.A.?

POST: Strictly stubborn and stupid. I was chairing the Traffic Commission in Beverly Hills at the time. I thought, you know, a freeway such as we are used to seeing set up in the middle of Beverly Hills would divide the whole community. You couldn't do that. But if you did a cut, cut-and-cover, or just a cut, then the traffic noise would be sublimated. It would be down below. If you thought you might have an exhaust problem, you could have exhaust fans which would graze it. You could cover every. . . . You know, a bridge across every one of the streets. It wouldn't interfere with the community at all, and you would pick it up at Doheny [Drive], someplace, and take it out as far as Beverly Glen and continue it out. Which I thought was the most logical solution of all.

Stopping Progress

VASQUEZ: So you can stop progress?

POST: Well, you can because every city has a priority and can say, "We don't want you to come through us." But they've worked it out with those other communities. But, you see, in Beverly Hills you

have a state highway going through Beverly Hills. That's Santa Monica Boulevard. And, unknownst to most people, we own fifteen feet north of the roadway. Which, for some reason, had been acquired a long time ago. So we could enlarge Santa Monica Boulevard by two more lanes, if we wanted to. It's choked now.

VASQUEZ: Yes, it is.

POST: I mean, there's no reason why we didn't buy the damned right-of-way, Southern Pacific right-of-way, do a cut, which would be simple. You know, like you've got downtown. You've got a lot of cuts. You don't interfere with the goddamn community at all. You know, I'd even say, "Don't even have an off ramp for Beverly Hills. Have one at Doheny where it starts. Have one over there near Century City, where it ends." I mean, if they don't want us . . .

VASQUEZ: Just make it an artery?

POST: Straight cut. Straight artery all the way through. Now, you want to get off at Century City? Fine. You want to get off at Doheny? Fine. You know, it was just stubbornness on their part, because you wouldn't be interfering

with the local traffic at all.

VASQUEZ: The Little Hoover Commission is really the focus of what we were talking about in this oral history, but you've also served on county- and city-level commissions, either regulatory commissions or. . . . Almost all regulatory commissions.

POST: Or advisory commissions.

VASQUEZ: Or advisory commissions. And the Little Hoover Commission has an aspect of all of these things, doesn't it?

POST: Uh-huh.

VASQUEZ: How would you compare the kinds of problems you run up against in trying to make more economical and efficient government when you're working at the local or county level, and the state level? In general.

POST: About the same. There are always people who have an interest, a selfish interest, in an area that you're trying to move into, which is counter to the public interest. And they have the ear of elected officials. They lean on people, or they beg people, or they threaten people. You know, I'm very unpopular in a lot of areas in government, because of the position that I've taken on

a lot of things. You know, that last Division of Highways sale in Culver City, where we pushed the price from \$6,000,000 to \$31,000,000, [Laughter] a lot of people were very angry with me.

VASQUEZ: In spite of the fact that you got the state more money?

POST: Yeah! But the Culver City Redevelopment Agency was furious. The Culver City city administration was furious. Various developers that were interested in bidding on it, that knew me, were furious. They said, you know, "Where do you come off to pull this stuff? Where do you come off to raise the price? It's none of your damned business." One of them tried to tell me, he said, "Well, you don't understand the business of real estate," which happens to be my field. That's where I make my money, in real estate. He said, "You don't understand it. A little piece of property is worth maybe so much money. But when you've got a big piece, it's worth much less." This was like thirty acres with a mile of frontage on Slauson [Avenue]. It's priceless, really. I mean, I ceded to what they wanted, to get rid of them and get \$31,000,000.

I wanted to go for a public sale, a public bid. And I said, "Let me send out a letter to one hundred of the top developers in the country, in the world, and get them all together in one room at the Beverly Hills Hotel, and let's make a goddamn bid on this son of a bitch." "Well, it will take too long. And you have to qualify them." I said, "What have you got to lose?" I mean, this is the biggest land parcel around, other than the piece that Hughes [Aircraft] has on the other side of Sepulveda. With a mile of frontage? Adjoining the Fox Hills Mall? Now they've put all kinds of office buildings and all kinds of stuff on it.

But they lied. They told me the value was down because the property was on an approach pattern to the Hughes Aircraft plant and, therefore, you could only build a five-story building, or something like that. Well, that's what they told me, so we checked it out. Next time we had a meeting, I said, "You know, you're right. It is on an approach pattern. And according to the law, you can only have a five-story building. However, they haven't used that airport

for years, except for helicopters, and they're waiving their right as an airport because they're going to develop it. So, therefore, your story is a lot of bullshit. Let's forget about that five-story limit, because that limit is how much you are going to pay for the ground." I said, "Why don't we just go public, have a public bid. Why should we argue about it? Let Donald Trump come in, let him bid on it." That doesn't endear me, but that doesn't keep me awake either.

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] Given what you've said up to now, it would appear the Little Hoover Commission was created by the legislature, but it's considered a part of the executive branch. So it would seem to be a bridge between two branches of government. But it seems to have become a bailiwick for one branch of government, that branch which appoints to the commission. Is that true?

POST: Not correct at all. The governor had five appointments. The speaker of the assembly had one appointment, but two legislative appointments. The president [pro tempore] of the senate had one public appointment, two legislative appointments. So you then had an eleven-person body.

Subsequently, I requested the speaker to raise that, with the approval of the original author, who was Milton Marks, who served on the commission with me. See, the four legislative members could never be depended on, because, you know, we had meetings in Sacramento: They have a bill up, they have an appearance, they can't come.

VASQUEZ: But I guess the question I want to ask is whether the function, the original function on the commission, is being lived up to, or whether it has become something that is really used for political expediency or as a reward, and is not serving the function that it was initially meant to. That's what I'm getting from the whole corpus of what we've talked about our last three meetings.

POST: You are, I think, absolutely correct. The commission has been diverted from its original purpose. They're not working on behalf of a proficiency and economy in government. Most of the particular present members of the commission have been very large contributors, either to the speaker--very large to the speaker--or contributors to the governor. To a very limited degree, to the president [pro tempore] of the senate. I

understand from the present members that it's a very cantankerous group that are fighting all the time.

VASQUEZ: Do you think that by this process, the commission's value has basically been mitigated, its usefulness, to the public?

POST: Well, I hate to admit it--but I think you know I'm rather truthful--I think it has outlived its usefulness, and I would discontinue it right now. Maybe reconstitute it at a later time, with new and different and fresh people. But right now, it's a waste of time.

VASQUEZ: There is one area that the commission seems was unable to tackle. One industry--and maybe you have some comments or some thoughts on that--and that's the insurance industry in California. Why is that?

POST: The insurance industry in California constitutes one of the largest and heaviest lobby organizations in California. The contributions to statewide officials and to the local elected representatives is so great that you just. . . . You can't get a bite at them, and just. . . . I've tried many times to do something in that area.

You can't do it.

VASQUEZ: Did you ever propose a study by the commission?

POST: I don't recall that we ever did, in a public session, suggest a study of the California Department of Insurance. But, from my knowledge of government, or talking to other people, you couldn't get it off the ground. It's too powerful a lobby. Well, I bucked up against the horse-racing lobby. Look at what happened to me. [Laughter] They're not at all as big as the insurance industry.

VI. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Raising Funds for Political Campaigns

VASQUEZ: Might we shift ground for a little bit? You've been involved in a number of political campaigns for local, state, and national office. And, as I understand it, the primary function you served in those political campaigns has been either the raising or the handling and dispersing of campaign funds. Is that correct?

POST: Mostly the handling, protecting, and dispersing, as well as raising.

VASQUEZ: What can you tell me about the process that's

involved in trying to raise California money for national politics? Maybe using one example. Were you involved in the [John F.] Kennedy [presidential] campaign, the 1960 Kennedy campaign, in that capacity?

POST: Yes.

VASQUEZ: Let's use that as an example.

POST: Well, national campaigns attract many types of people. The sincere, dedicated people that want to make things better, that's one end of the spectrum. The other end of the spectrum are the people who are involved in business transactions and want access to federal officials, to the White House, to the heads of various departments. The first group don't come up with very much money. The second group comes up with big chunks of money.

VASQUEZ: Would one example be CDC on one end, and I don't know who on the other? Could you give me an example?

POST: Sure. CDC would be good on one hand. They never did much of anything, raise money or anything else. But they had a few bodies around, that they rattled around. On the other hand, you have. . . .

Insurance people are interested. Banking people are interested. Savings and loan people are interested. Aerospace people are interested. And, you know, many others. But there's a nucleus. Say you've got a candidate coming out here that's a good candidate, you like him, and you call a meeting with the savings and loan people, a luncheon meeting, maybe twenty, thirty guys. Same thing with the banking people, and the same thing with the insurance people, and the same thing with construction people.

VASQUEZ: Who orchestrates that normally, in a campaign, in your experience? Who is the orchestrator of those meetings that bring those groups of people together?

POST: Well, the campaign manager would sit down with the finance chairman and say, "Look. We're going to have candidate X out here between this date and that date. Let's set up some fund-raising luncheons or dinners or cocktail parties for all of them." And believe me, they will sometimes have a breakfast, they will sometimes have a luncheon, or two luncheons, one right after the other, in two different places. Have a cocktail reception

late in the afternoon, a dinner. The dinner has got to be the heaviest one, because that's for the heavy contributors because they're going to sit down in a room. They're going to talk to the guy. They're going to have a drink with the guy. They're going to start calling him by his first name.

And then, say, well, this guy could be elected. This guy's elected. He swears allegiance to his early supporters. [Laughter] I just tossed away a very sincere thank-you letter from [Richard] Dick Gebhardt, where I'm one of his early supporters [Laughter] in the campaign. And, "He'll never forget it." If I run into him at a function, he won't know me from a hot rock. [Laughter] It's also a good social place to meet other people. You know, if you're an insurance man, you want to meet big people that have to buy a lot of insurance. If you're a supplier to the contracting industry, you want to meet with those big contractors. That's the phone.

[Interruption]

Some people just like to be around important people.

Attracting Celebrities to a Campaign

VASQUEZ: Now, you've orchestrated the dinners and the luncheons and the rubber chicken and all of that. What's the next step?

POST: Well, every candidate wants to attract some motion picture personalities--actors, directors, producers, singers--because the people like to be around [them]. You get an invitation from a favorite actor of yours to come to a reception at his home, for candidate X. Minimum contribution: \$300, \$500, whatever it is. Well, you'd like to shake hands with this goddamn actor, [Laughter] or singer, you know. You would like to meet this person. So, that puts the thing together.

Quite often you get together a group of name actors, particularly with reference to this new AIDS campaign. You've got ten name actors and actresses that keep sending out solicitations, you know, to help this particular program. I don't know, I don't understand. . . . I haven't even bothered to think about it, why you get all these name actors and actresses involved in an AIDS project.

I mean, there are twenty AIDS projects going

on right now. They don't stop. Every city, every county, every state, the federal government, all the private groups. You know, if you really believe in it and you want to do it, you get the federal government to say, "Look, allocate a billion dollars a year and stop all this chasing around every day and every week." Because I get tired of it. I get all the invitations. [Laughter]

The Role of Finance Manager

VASQUEZ: Now, as a finance manager, you've now gotten a pool of money assuming these events have been successful.

POST: Yeah, yeah, and you'll get a lot of money.

VASQUEZ: How do you start allotting it?

POST: Well, firstly, you give me the money. I photostat each check, deposit the checks immediately. Then proceed to send out a thank-you letter, either from me or from the candidate, thanking them for their contribution.

Now, you've organized a campaign committee, you're qualified to run by state statutes or federal statutes, you now have money in the bank. Now, you go rent some office space. Or it used to be storefront space, but there are no

volunteers anymore, so you don't need a storefront. You can be in an office building. The first thing you do is get some space, and the second thing you do is put in a bunch of phones, which now is very expensive.

Now, you beg, borrow, or steal some furniture. Now, whenever I'd do it, I'd just buy used furniture cheap and dump it after the campaign or try to sell it back to some used furniture guy. Because if you put good furniture in, they'll beat it to death anyway, so you've got beat-up furniture in the first place. As a matter of fact, for many years I used to have a warehouse full of furniture. And I could open a campaign office tomorrow. Just send some truckloads of furniture over, files and chairs and tables and desks and folding tables and file cabinets. Then, all you had to do is turn on the electricity and put some telephones in.

VASQUEZ: But you also had some trailers, didn't you, at one point? Didn't you use trailers?

POST: Oh, you're talking about at the [Hollywood] Palladium, in 1965. Yeah, well, I had done a favor for somebody that I knew in the automobile

business, and he loaned me the trailers at no cost which were delivered to the Palladium site. See, you chisel what you can. As long as it isn't a federal campaign, you can accept a contribution from a company. So they didn't charge me. I think it was a statewide campaign. I probably listed them as a contributor and showed a reasonable value. But sometimes they don't want to be listed because maybe they've got to give it to both guys [candidates]. Maybe they don't want the other guy to know they gave you anything.

All right, well now you're in business. Now you've got your campaign operation. You've got your candidate. Next thing they've got to do is hire a press guy. You've got a campaign manager, you've got a treasurer, you've got a press guy. And now you start lying to the public and tell them what a great guy [Laughter] you represent.

The Role of Campaign Volunteers

VASQUEZ: What about the street-level organization?

POST: It don't happen anymore. It doesn't exist anymore.

VASQUEZ: It's not needed?

POST: Used to. You used to have volunteers. I think the last campaign we [used volunteers] in was Jesse Unruh's campaign for governor in 1970. We had a big ground floor of an office building, and we must have had forty or fifty volunteers in there, including myself, working in it. But that's a lost art. You don't have it any more. Everybody that you get in works, gets paid. The telephone operator, the messengers, the secretaries, the telephone answerers, and all that, they all get paid.

VASQUEZ: Politics, from the way you lay it out in that, is an extension of public relations, rather than public relations being the tool of politics.

POST: Say that again slowly.

VASQUEZ: The way you lay it out, it would seem that politics has become an extension of public relations, and public relations is really the primary goal, the very primary tool of politics. Public relations, media . . .

POST: Well, there's image. It has now become a business where you pay for everything that you get and you're selling a product, or selling a commodity, or selling a person. Which is unlike

any campaigns that I've ever been [involved in]. Jesse's was one of the last. . . . The last one, a couple of years or four years ago now, I guess, was the [Thomas] Bradley [gubernatorial] campaign. Not the recent one that he lost, the one before that. We were in an office building down on Wilshire Boulevard, which I got from the owner of the building at a greatly reduced price.

I don't think there were any volunteers. I was the only volunteer idiot there that wasn't drawing a salary of some kind. There were business groups, or labor groups or union groups that would send somebody over to work in the campaign, and they weren't getting paid by the campaign. They were getting paid by the union group or by some industry or committee or something. But come to think of it, I think I'm the only one that didn't get paid.

VASQUEZ: What did you get out of it?

POST: Well, not much satisfaction either because I was very frustrated in dealing with a lot of those people who considered a campaign a free lunch to get what you can out of the campaign in money, in expenses, in meals, in housing, in

trips. Or to put your boyfriend or girlfriend on a payroll.

VASQUEZ: Is that pretty much the pattern on both the Democratic and Republican side?

POST: I wouldn't know about the Republican side, but I would imagine so. You know, there's not that much difference between people.

The volunteer aspect of politics has gone out of the window. You know, as billboard advertising has been replaced by television, you don't see the billboards anymore. When I first started, a billboard campaign, that's the first thing you had to have for image to bolster your own people and bolster the people that were driving by it all the time. You get two hundred billboards showing in Los Angeles, that's pretty good representation. Everybody starts talking about the candidate who is showing on the billboard. You never see them anymore. You get thirty seconds on television, you reach more people than two hundred billboards. With a crappy message, but. . . . The costs of campaigns have gone up horrendously. They are obscene. They are obscene. Well, Bradley and Deukmejian probably spent in the last campaign

twenty-five to thirty million dollars.

Paying for Media in Politics

VASQUEZ: Where did that money go? Media?

POST: Salaries. Media. Expenses. Supplies.

Telephones. Travel. Hotels. Well, I'll give you a case, you know, if you want numbers. Of the ten and a half million Bradley spent in the campaign-- the one before this last one--three and a half was national media. Three and a half million!

VASQUEZ: In a campaign for governor of the state of California?

POST: Yeah, yeah. Three and a half million against ten and a half million. So now, seven million was spent elsewhere. These people all start drawing down what I consider very, very good salaries.

See, my function in the campaign is to keep the costs down. It's a very simple procedure with me. I say, "Look, if you customarily eat a hamburger for lunch, and we have to go out, we'll compensate you for a hamburger. But don't keep coming in here with steak sandwiches, because you are not a steak sandwich buyer. And when you have to rent a car, you can rent a Ford, a Chevy, or Plymouth. You don't have to rent a Buick or an

Oldsmobile or a Cadillac to go and do your job. If you're used to flying tourist, you're going to fly tourist. I'm not going to okay the first class."

And that's the way you have to treat these people. Because, you know, all of a sudden the guy is driving a Buick and eating a steak sandwich and staying in a \$100 hotel room, instead of his eating a hamburger and driving a Ford or a compact and staying in a \$20 Holiday Inn.

See, they have no conscience, they have no feeling for the candidate. And if I have a feeling for the campaign and candidate, I'm willing to work for him for nothing. But there are very few now that I'm willing to do that for. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Why is that? The quality of the candidate?

POST: The quality of the candidate and the fact that they just don't have the right feeling. I figure it's public money and it ought to be protected and defended. I went to Bradley with certain things that were happening with funds there and he agreed that they were not right, but he said, "Let me get back to you." He never got back to me. I don't want to overpay 400 percent on printing. And if I

see bills coming in that are four times what they should be. . . . Because I'm a bastard. I get a bid on that other job, and if that bid that I get is like \$300, and that bill comes in at \$1,200, I want to make sure we never use that son of a bitch again. But he's always related to somebody, somebody or something, or kicking back to somebody or something.

Political Campaigns as a Business

VASQUEZ: So campaigning has basically become an industry in and of itself?

POST: It's a business! It's a business. It's a big business. It's a tremendously big business. Look what they're going to spend in this presidential campaign next year. A couple of hundred million dollars? Buys a lot of hamburgers. Sells a lot of charm.

VASQUEZ: Take a case in point. I'm not saying you would do it, but just assume that you were [Senator] Gary [W.] Hart's finance manager. What would you be doing right now?

POST: Quitting. [Laughter] I'd have no use for him.

VASQUEZ: But we're talking here about someone who starts off the frontrunner in a preprimary race--the

beauty contest aspect of it--pulls out, or really is pulled out in front by the press, if you want to put it that way, and now has come back in. And seems, according to the polls, to be possibly the frontrunner again . . .

POST: No.

VASQUEZ: What are his prospects going to be for raising money?

POST: No, he's a joke. He's a joke. Nobody is going to pay any attention to him. He's in there, I think, basically, to grab that million dollars in matching funds that he was eligible for. But if he hadn't been a horse's ass, he would have had it a week after he pulled out of the campaign. So somebody should have said, "Look, go take Donna [Rice] someplace for a week [Laughter] and come back and we'll go down with the application and then once you've got the money, you can resign."

VASQUEZ: You think it's as simple as that?

POST: I think it is. In my opinion it is. And the materials that I read and the things that I get, he's not taken seriously as a candidate. But I never liked him anyway. I didn't like him when he worked for [Senator George S.] McGovern.

The Large Individual Contributor

VASQUEZ: Now, at another level, or another kind of fundraiser is the large contributor, the individual contributor. Not necessarily the corporate contributor or the industries, but individuals. In the sixties there was a group that helped raise money for liberal Democrats, known as the "Poker Club." Did you know any of those people?

POST: No.

VASQUEZ: Or how that operated, at all?

POST: Well, don't forget you're talking state campaign versus federal.

VASQUEZ: No, no.

POST: You're only talking state?

VASQUEZ: Right, now I'm talking state.

POST: No, I didn't know that group at all. I probably got some of the money they raised, because I was the treasurer of the Legislative Campaign Committee where these guys would raise money. Probably, it was siphoned into the Legislative Campaign Committee which was under Jesse's jurisdiction.

Jesse would determine that, you know,
"There's a good candidate running here, a good

candidate running there. Or, this guy's going to pull out of the race. This guy isn't going to run again, so let's put a guy there," and would allocate funds all around the state.

Now, maybe part of the Poker Club would come in, as I'm sure they did, and they would say, "We hear Assemblyman so-and-so isn't going to run again, so there's going to be a vacancy there. Let's find a guy and get him to run for that seat." Whether it be an assemblyman or a senator, a Democrat or a Republican. Or, "That guy is going to be in trouble because there's an investigation, so if we start now, when the investigation comes out we'll be ready with our candidate to go in." You know, like the San Diego thing, the mayor and all that. But it has changed tremendously from the sixties to now. Normally, an elected official would have very small fundraisers. You know, \$25, \$10, \$50. Now, everybody is in these \$250, \$500 things.

VASQUEZ: Does that effectively cut out a whole segment of the population from being involved directly?

POST: Sure does.

VASQUEZ: What do you think is the upshot of that?

POST: Well, you're selling the campaigns. You're selling the election is what you're doing.

VASQUEZ: To the wealthy?

POST: Yeah, yeah. Or to the businessmen. Now, I'll give you a case in point. I was solicited by Governor [Mario] Cuomo's people---three years ago I think it was--on the Democratic National Committee level. They were having a fund-raising dinner a year after he got into office in New York. The contribution was \$25,000 per table. [Laughter] Needless to say, I didn't participate in it. It was a sellout. They sold out the house. To me, that's the most corrupt type of politicking there is, because for \$25,000 that doesn't indicate good government, patriotism, or quality of candidate, or anything else. It's an open invitation to bribery. It is bribery. You sit down and you want a contract, you want a bid, you want to build a highway or a bridge or sell books to a school, or whatever it is, and . . .

VASQUEZ: Many complain that's exactly the same here in Sacramento now.

POST: Yeah. Yeah, that's true, it is.

VASQUEZ: Where do you see was the turning point, when it

became that?

POST: I think at the point where Willie Brown came in, it lost any resemblance of being a legitimate government. Willie, himself, told me the reason he had to get rid of me was that two of his heavy fund-raisers were angry at me because of the horse-racing report. One was Gray Davis, and one was Frank Vicenzia. And he said, "I need their votes and I need their money." [Laughter]

VII. JESSE UNRUH IN CALIFORNIA POLITICS

VASQUEZ: Getting back to the question of the legislative funds that you managed for Jesse Unruh to support other Democratic candidates, was it in fact decisions that he made individually, or did he have a brain trust or people around him that he consulted to decide to whom the money should go? Was it one individual's decision?

POST: I would say probably in 90 percent of the time, 85 percent of the time, he made the decision. But I mean not in an imperial way. Jesse was a very careful guy. If he wanted to help a guy in district eight, he would call a couple of people in district eight and say, "I've heard something

about this guy Jones. What do you think of Jones? What's his background? How would you react to him? Would you help him?"

Now, you get a good feel because he had somebody in every little hamlet in the damned state of California that he could call. Always did. As a matter of fact, every place in the United States. Because sometimes we would ask him a question on this, "Who have we got in Minnesota? Do we have anybody in Indiana? Do you know so-and-so in Texas or Kentucky?" He always had somebody.

VASQUEZ: And who would keep track of all of that? He, himself?

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Is that right.

POST: You see, he was head of the Legislative Leadership Conference for years. That's a pretty good place to start. You know, if you've got the speaker in each state, even if you don't know [someone], when you want something in North Dakota done, you call the speaker of the legislature in North Dakota, who is your buddy and who looks up to you, and you say, "Harry, I've got a question, or problem, there.

How have you been? Why don't you come to Sacramento, have dinner with us? By the way, tell me what you know about Joe Gonzalez." Or Harry Smith, or whoever the hell it is. And he says, "Well, I don't know the guy personally. He comes from the town of Yuck. But the mayor of Yuck is a friend of mine and his name is such and such. I'll call him and ask him to call you, and he'll tell you all about the guy because he knows him." I mean, Jesse had an espionage network all over the United States. And he had a computerized mind. He would know the name and the title of the guy.

VASQUEZ: And, in fact, even when he was getting the most severe criticism in the state of California, wasn't he held in great regard by most legislators in other parts of the country?

POST: Legislators, educators, politicians. He was very highly respected in the Orient, because I attended an international conference with him in the Orient. Very highly respected. And, really, he was a class guy, certainly by comparison with the garbage that we have now. [Laughter]

[End Tape 4, Side B]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

Views on Jesse Unruh and California Politics

VASQUEZ: You were saying "Jesse is a class guy." That may mean any number of things to different people. Was he known as someone who was very loyal, and expected loyalty.

POST: Correct.

VASQUEZ: It is argued by those close to him that, in fact, he was very honest in contrast to the image of him as a corrupt, power-hungry politician.

POST: Wait, wait, wait, wait. But "honest?" You're talking monetary honesty, or philosophical honesty?

VASQUEZ: Philosophical honesty, at this point.

POST: Okay.

VASQUEZ: Or both.

POST: Or both. Let's say both. I would say he was honest in so far as funds were concerned. Well, basically, he entrusted them all to me. [Laughter] Because my position is, there isn't enough there for me to bother to steal. I've got more than there is over there, so I'm not going to bother to steal that. I don't need it, and I don't get paid for it. The only thing that I can get out of it

is satisfaction, getting something done. That's all that I get out of it. I would like to see the California legislature composed of men like Jesse Unruh. Then you would have an honest, decent, hard-working legislature.

Now, that doesn't mean they don't drink, and that doesn't mean that they don't smoke, and that doesn't mean that they might not fool around, or get in trouble once in a while, in some innocuous thing. But they're human. And that's what you need. Now, they're out-and-out thieves! Out-and-out thieves. You know, I don't want to go to talk to any of them anymore. There are very few that I still know that I can talk to, you know, without getting hit up for money. And they know me. There's nothing that they can do for me personally. I don't want anything personally.

VASQUEZ: There is the image of Jesse Unruh as a very arrogant, power-thirsty individual. And, on the other hand, some people say, "Well, he had a program. He had a vision. He had an image of what he wanted to do and he steadfastly stuck to it. That's what people misinterpret as arrogance." How would you assess that?

POST: Arrogance is hard to describe. If you take pride in what you've done. . . . The [Rumford] Fair Housing Act¹ which he put through, the Credit [Reporting] Act² which he put through, those are landmark legislations, landmark work. He got them through. I asked him once about a particular bill which I thought was important. He said, "Manny, of all the people that I work with and helped up here. . . ." He said, "I don't go to my people very often. I only go to them if I really feel something is important. I let them go whichever way they want. I'm not going to go bother them. But every once in a while, I will go to them and I say, 'I need your help on this. I want your vote.' And then they had better not turn me down." Which I think is equitable.

You know, there are four thousand bills that go through in a year. If your benefactor and friend and supporter and the guy that appointed you the chairman of a committee comes to you once in a while and says, "This is a bill that I feel

1. Rumford Fair Housing Act. A.B. 1240, 1963 Leg. Sess., Cal Stat. 1853 (1963).

2. A.B. 500, 1959 Leg. Sess., Cal. Stat. 201 (1959).

is important"--for whatever the reason may be--
 "I'd like your help on it." Well, you owe it to
 him.

VASQUEZ: When he was turned down, was he vindictive?

POST: Yeah, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Give me an example.

POST: I can't think of an example at the moment. But
 he was a tough guy. He came from nothing. No-
 body handed him anything. He was loyal to his
 friends, and he was just as loyal to his enemies.

VASQUEZ: He was consistent?

POST: He was consistent, right.

Jesse Unruh and Governor Pat Brown

VASQUEZ: I know you have read [James M.] Jim Mills's new
 book on the Unruh-Brown years.¹ Do you think
 Mills has provided a fair balance of a treatment
 of Pat Brown and Jesse Unruh?

POST: It is relatively fair, but I must say it is
 probably more slanted toward Jesse because he
 was a friend of Jesse's. And, obviously, if
 you've read the book, you know Pat Brown jerked

1. A Disorderly House: The Brown-Unruh Years in
 Sacramento. Berkeley: Heydey books, 1987.

him around a few times and did what he could to hurt him. So it is only natural that the book would be slanted towards Jesse and away from Pat. Now, Jim told me last week that he had spoken with Pat, and Pat took exception to my quotation back in 1966 outside of the [Hollywood] Palladium. But I was there.

VASQUEZ: This has to do with whether or not Governor Brown would support Unruh for governor in 1966?

POST: Yeah, he said, "Next time is your time."

VASQUEZ: For governor?

POST: Yeah. Because you know Jesse was wanting to run then, and Pat talked him out of it and Pat ran for reelection. But two times, and he said, "Next time is your time." Well, he didn't support him the next time. Now, he even told Jim Mills what I said isn't right.

VASQUEZ: But you still stand by what you said?

POST: Yeah, I stand by what I said. I always do, you know. Jesse can't be there to say it, but he was there and I was there and Pat Brown was there. But Pat Brown is getting a little fuzzy. You know, Pat is eighty-three, eighty-four. Pat always was a little bit fuzzy. Really. You

know, I was Jesse Unruh's appointment to the Little Hoover Commission. But, on a number of occasions, Pat would introduce me to somebody as his "best appointment to the Little Hoover Commission." And I would always [Laughter] say, "Pat, I'm Jesse Unruh's." He would say, "Well, you're a good appointment anyway." He liked to take credit because I did a lot of good things for the Little Hoover Commission.

VASQUEZ: Well, those are some of the characteristics of Governor Brown that people are beginning to focus on. I know it is difficult for you, because I know you were friends with and were respected by both men. But there is the question of whether or not Jesse Unruh took credit for Pat Brown's ideas, or whether Brown took credit for Jesse Unruh's legislative capacity. Which do you think it was?

POST: Well, I don't know, unless you specifically refer to a particular thing. Because if you are talking about subject A I can't go back twenty-five years and say, "Well, no, that was Pat's idea. He copyrighted that idea, and Jesse rode on it." Or, "That was Jesse's idea and Pat swiped the idea."

VASQUEZ: Some of the legislation in the area of higher

education, some of the measures dealing with civil rights, for example . . .

POST: Civil rights was all Jesse's stuff. Jesse came from such humble, humble origins, that he was fighting for them. Pat didn't have it humble. Pat had it pretty well made most of his life, like that little punky kid of his. You know, he has never worked a day in his life. I'd like to see him out with a shovel digging a ditch. And, by the way, he [Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] wants to come back.

Thoughts on Governor Jerry Brown

VASQUEZ: What do you think that means?

POST: He's tired of playing Zen Buddha and he wants to come back. He called a friend of mine last week, and they were supposed to have a meeting this week. And he said, "I'd like to talk about reentering politics." I told my friend, who is a good friend of mine, but even though Jerry double-crossed him on an appointment to the [University of California] Board of Regents which he didn't get. I said, "Well, whatever he decides to run for, I will be on the other side, supporting the other guy, whoever it is."

VASQUEZ: You feel that strongly about what? His capacity, or lack thereof?

POST: Yeah. His lack of decency, his lack of integrity, his lack of. . . . Look, I'm one of the first guys that started with him. Which was unusual, because being an Unruh guy and supporting a Jerry Brown, that's kind of a conflict, a little bit. But I'm supporting Bill Press [for United States Senator]. Bill Press is young, knowledgeable, interesting, has some recognition.

I don't think he's going to make it for the U.S. Senate, but next time around. . . . You know, Abe Lincoln ran three times before he got elected. Jesse ran three times before he got elected. So, you know, you've got to try and help. They've got to be young, because they've got to be able to go through a couple of, three or four series. I wouldn't start helping a guy that is sixty-years old because, you know, by the time he gets elected, he's going to be ready to die.

VASQUEZ: That's what they said about Ronald Reagan.

POST: [Laughter] Well, that was a bought deal. That is what they wanted. They wanted a deadhead up there that they could push around and tell what to say

and give him a script and say, "Here, read it."
And he did.

No, I am very, very pissed at Jerry Brown because Jerry Brown, if he had been a man instead of a roach, today he could be a viable presidential candidate. Young, bright, intelligent. But no loyalty. No honesty. Nothing.

VASQUEZ: You think that is what hurt him politically? Or was it his image as the "California snowflake?"

POST: Yeah. Well, Jerry Brown renounced his supporters the day he got elected.

VASQUEZ: You told me that.

POST: The day he got elected. Not a week or a month or a year later, the day he got elected. The day he got elected he didn't want to go to a victory party that the staff and everybody was having for him. How do you like that? When he got sworn into office, he didn't arrange to have a Highway Patrol car pick up his mother and father and bring them into the swearing in.

VASQUEZ: As I say, there is a very thin . . .

POST: He didn't want to share the spotlight . . .

VASQUEZ: Is that what it is?

POST: . . . with his father and mother. Without his

father's name, this kid couldn't make a living.

VASQUEZ: Well, his antipathy with his mother is very public.

POST: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Is that the kind of thing that even hardened political analysts get turned off by?

POST: No, no, no. Well, look, you have a loyalty to your father and your mother, and there is no reason to fight Bernice. Bernice is a nice, sweet old lady. She's his mother. She's almost eighty now. What are you going to give up? A little bit of yourself by saying, "Thank you Governor Brown, and my mother, Bernice Brown"? What does it cost you?

But he is the kind of an ass that when some kid, sick in the hospital, wanted an autographed picture of the governor, if you remember. . . . He didn't want to bother! No! What does it cost you to autograph a picture and send it to a kid in the hospital? That is how rotten and small he was. He is chicken.

You know, he drove my car all through his campaign. Finally, the campaign was over and he won. I said, "Bring the car back." He said,

"Well, I need it until we get sworn in in January." I said, "Hey, [Laughter] you've had the car since last January. The new ones are coming out. I want to get it sold before the new ones come out here. This is now October." Or November, whatever the hell it was. I had to threaten to repossess the car from him before he would bring it back.

VASQUEZ: That's a great story.

POST: It's true! He would tell you he did his first campaign driving around in my Volkswagen.

VASQUEZ: What more would you want to put on the record about Jesse Unruh? I know that you have a lot of insight into the man and the political style that he represented, and also the ideals that he represented. I think that James Mills's will not be the last book on Unruh. In fact, it will probably generate a whole series of other writings on Jesse Unruh.

Jesse Unruh's Greatest Disappointments

POST: Well, I would say I was disappointed at his funeral, because they all visualized him as a saint, the saint he never was. Never was a saint. He was a good politician, an honest politician, and

he had ideals. He stuck with them, he stuck with his friends, he stuck it to his enemies. He was just a good guy.

I wouldn't call him a saint. You know, I'm not going to put the halo on his head. Which they did. Everybody. There were eleven people talking at his funeral, and I thought I was in the wrong place. I mean, they're making him "beloved," "father." You know, this, that, and the other thing. Bullshit. He was a guy, and he lived life to its fullest, and he did.

VASQUEZ: What was his greatest shortcoming?

POST: Whew! Now, that's a dirty one to throw at me.
[Laughter]

VASQUEZ: What do you think his greatest disappointments were? Let's handle it that way. Not being governor?

POST: Well . . .

VASQUEZ: Was it as important as people make it out to be?

POST: He got short-tracked. The fact that he was born poor and penniless and didn't have shoes to go to school was a start. But here, we had the most popular president of the United States. Jesse is the top point-man with the president. I've been

in the White House with Jack Kennedy and with Jesse on a number of occasions. Anything happening in the western United States, President Kennedy would call Jesse Unruh. Anything Jesse Unruh wanted that the president could do, he would do. That is pretty heavy. It is, because I've been in the White House with Jesse, and the president has come by and he said, "Hey, I didn't know you guys were here. Come in, I want to talk, if you've got the time." Now, here is the president [Laughter] saying to Jesse Unruh, "If you've got the time, come in. I want to talk to you." How do you like that? Nice guy. Got shot out from under him.

Okay? That's when [Eugene] Gene Wyman turned his back on Jesse Unruh and snuggled up to Pat Brown. A number of other people did the same thing. They said, "Well, now, Jesse doesn't have a base." Okay. Along comes [Senator Robert F.] Bobby Kennedy. We're going to make Bobby the next president. Got a campaign going. Again, I'm the treasurer. We got the thing going. We got it moving. We win the California nomination. Bang! He gets shot out from under Jesse. You know, it

kind of takes your guts out, doesn't it? Kind of make you get drunk, do all kinds of crazy things. Talking about [Edward M.] Ted Kennedy. Let's drag him in. This schmuck has to get nailed with this stupid thing at Chappaquidick. [Laughter] How many times do you get up to bat? He was up to bat twice, with Jack Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy. And those were his kind of guys.

VASQUEZ: Why?

POST: Why? Because they were loyal, if anybody asked Jack Kennedy anything about California, he'd say, "Talk to Jesse." Anybody who wanted anything from California, he'd say, "Talk to Jesse." And they did. I mean, it was total loyalty and warmth and friendship. Jack Kennedy was an unusual guy. You'll never find another one like him. I mean, you're sitting in the White House, and he puts his feet on the desk, takes off his shoes, "Tell me what is happening in California? What about this guy? What about that guy?" You know, this is the sitting president. This is not some councilman in downtown Los Angeles. Anything in California or this part of the country went through Jesse.

Now, you take it all away. See, the whole

world could have changed. If they hadn't killed Jack Kennedy, Jesse would have been the next governor. Because, you know, you're not going to go buck the White House on a deal like that. You promise Pat a job, a Supreme Court appointment or some bullshit. Get him out of the way. He was up to bat once; he was up to bat twice. Maybe up to bat a third time with Ted Kennedy. [Makes slapping noise] Gets into the campaign against Reagan. We were pretty goddamned close, considering, you know, they had thirty times the money we did.

You know, all the heavy guys here in Los Angeles and the state of California, they wanted a dummy up there. They wanted a governor that would do what they wanted to do. Just like they wanted a president that would, you know, do what they told him to do.

VASQUEZ: Were they afraid of Jesse?

POST: Sure they were afraid of Jesse. But, of course, they were Republicans and Democrats. . . . Look, they didn't like the [Rumford] Fair Housing Act. They didn't like the Credit Reporting Act. Those were really not meant as antibusiness ventures.

They were meant better as equitable measures, good government measures. You can't charge people 25, 35 percent interest a year. They do that in Mexico, they do that in South America, they do that in other countries. We don't want to do that here. You curtail retail buying. You're better off if you've got it down where people can buy and pay at a reasonable rate and pay it off and buy another thing, one thing or another. And the Fair Housing Act? You know, who can be against it?

VASQUEZ: The voters of California turned against it.

POST: Well, was it the voters? Or was it the property owners?

VASQUEZ: The real estate lobby?

POST: Or the real estate lobby.

VASQUEZ: Who do you see--or do you see anyone--on the California political scene that you think can generate the same kind of dynamics in a liberal Democratic agenda as Jesse Unruh?

"Poverty is a Great Teacher in Politics"

POST: I don't see anybody like that because. . . . I think you have to have the temperament to do the job, like the temper of steel. . . . And, of course, a lot of people would disagree with me.

But I don't care if they disagree.

I think poverty is a good teacher. It tempers the steel. It gives you a sense of values. It lets you understand. You know, my daughter has never had poverty, so she doesn't know what it is to live without a new car outside and a swimming pool and heating, clothes and money. You know, she doesn't realize there were times you turned the key and never knew whether the car would start or not. How many times do you go out not knowing if you're going to have a flat tire or not? Now, you've got to break your knuckles to change the spare, if you've got a spare. Poverty is a teacher. Poverty tempers you. I don't see anybody on the scene.

[John R.] Garamendi is an ambitious guy, but he's a wealthy guy. He can't have "simpático" with the other people. You know, I tell my daughter she missed a lot by being born in an affluent society. I often say that the poor people have got so many things to look forward to that a wealthy person doesn't. You know, the fact that you've got new tires on your car is a big achievement if you're poor. It's nothing to me now. It

used to be a lot. My wife has never had to worry about tires on the car, or battery, or whether the car ran or didn't run. Or if you want to buy some shoes, or buy some clothes, whatever that is.

But that poverty tempered Jesse. I don't think he ever forgot it. That's why even though he dealt with people, that he had to deal with, lobbyists for contributions and stuff, he never really went into any rotten deals, like Willie Brown did with the horse-racing board. I mean, that was a rotten deal. He sold out \$50,000,000, and he didn't get very much for it. And the state lost \$15,000,000 or \$14,000,000, and they got \$50,000,000, and none of the legislators knew what the hell it really was. They didn't even know what they had voted for. They were going to adjust the formula, as I told you.

The Quality of California's Legislators

VASQUEZ: Do you think that the quality of legislators in the state of California has declined in the last ten, fifteen years? And, if you do, what do you think the cause of it is?

POST: [Laughter] Well, it is Jesse's fault, basically.
[Laughter] But he didn't do it deliberately. He

increased their salaries. So, instead of a part-time legislature, he envisioned a full-time legislature. And then he said, "Instead of having to take hand-outs from lobbyists and other people, you can have a staff. You make the determination. If somebody tells you about some legislation, you have got your own people that can research it and review on it and tell you if it is good or bad or not. You've got somebody to work with you. Now, you've got a salary that's a living salary. You've got a per diem that is tax deductible. You've got a decent office and you've got three, four, or six on staff. You've got a field office, where you can represent your constituency." But they keep raising the salary.

VASQUEZ: How does that yield us poorer lawmakers?

POST: Well, because now they're executives. You know, their salary today is the equivalent of, maybe, \$100,000 direct salary. I don't think they're worth it. They have lost the touch, the feeling of representing the people. And I'll give you a case in point.

When I helped [Los Angeles County Supervisor Edmund D.] Ed Edelman get elected to the [Los

Angeles] city council, for the first six months he was personally checking every complaint himself. He was driving down every alley on the westside when people were complaining about rubbish and trash and potholes and stuff like that. He has graduated since, but he still has that feeling of representing the people. These guys don't represent the people anymore.

This is a hundred grand a year. You've got staff and you've got postage and telephones and an automobile. It's a pretty good place to be. Now, you want to go back again. It's only two years. So, you know, after the first six months you say, "I like this." Now, you better start planning to raise some money. Now, the guy with the garbage pickup problem isn't going to give you any money.

The guy with the pothole in front of his house isn't going to give you any money. Where are you going to get the money? Now, you've got to start playing the game so you can have \$50,000 or \$100,000 in your campaign account, so next year you can start running because you like it up here. Good job. Good place. There are a lot of side

benefits. You're invited to all the parties. You don't pay for your meals, because somebody is always buying you a meal, buying you a drink.

There are all kinds of women around that, for some reason, are enthralled by power. You know, [if] you're the speaker, automatically, you've got twenty broads that will jump in bed with you. I don't understand it. But it's there. Some kind of a psychology that I can't quite understand, because there aren't enough political groupies around that really care.

You know, my houseman, what does he care who the speaker of the California legislature is? It wouldn't mean anything to him. He probably doesn't even know his name. So now these guys have got to go raise \$100,000 or \$200,000 to run. Now, you're not going to get \$200,000 from \$10 contributors. So, maybe you've got a political action committee that wants you to vote on something, and you've got a big contributor that wants you to vote on something. There are all kinds of them. Now, you're in business and you want to perpetuate that business. That is the problem. Every one of those bastards is in busi-

ness and he wants to perpetuate it. And he don't give a damn.

I mean, I know a lot of the guys that voted for this Frank Vincenzia legislation. I said, "How could you put your name on something if you didn't know what it was? Just because Frank Vincenzia told you? I mean, come on! The guy used to be a lobbyist. He's a sleaze bag. He's a slime ball. That should tip you off that if he approves of something, something has got to be wrong with it. You all just voted for it because Frank said it just an adjustment and . . .

VASQUEZ: What kind of answers do you get to something like that?

POST: Don't get answers. Don't get answers. "Well, you know, Frank is a regular guy. He always buys people drinks and booze, you know, and stuff like that." And they like him. You know, he's a whore. He's a lobbyist, was a lobbyist. But still a lobbyist. As a legislator he was a lobbyist. "Jesus Christ," I said, "You look at the guy, you know he's sleazy, if you know the guy at all. Anything to do with the horse-racing industry ought to give you a big, fast red flash:

'Hey! What's going on here?' You know, liquor, horse racing, insurance, finance. Let's look at it. You all just went right along and you voted for this goddamn thing?"

I rode with six of them to San Francisco once. Five of the guys. . . . They all had voted for the bill. I said, "Do you know what the bill did?" "Well, no. But Frank had said, you know, [makes mumbling sounds]."

VASQUEZ: Would you like to say who they were?

POST: No, no. That doesn't make any difference. I'm sure it was an adequate, fair sampling. Or even better than a fair sampling, because I knew most of these guys and they were decently good guys. I mean, they weren't sleaze bags like Frank Vincenzia, in the first place. You know, if you had been around there, you would know the good from the bad. These were all pretty good guys. And they still took it. Now, I'm sure some of them said, "Frank, yeah, sure. Listen. How about some tickets to the ball game?" Or, "Can you get me a car wholesale?" Or, "Can you get me a car?" Or, "Can you get me a broad?" Or, "Can you get me" god knows what. But these were all good guys,

and they didn't [know]. . . . "I would be ashamed," I said. You know, I never put my signature on a report unless I was clear what it is there, so that if you jump me, "Why did you say that?" ten years, fifteen years later, I might not have a recollection, I might have to read it, but I. . . . I wouldn't sell my approval. I would rather abstain from a vote.

VIII. POST'S PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT

VASQUEZ: Succinctly, could you lay out your philosophy of government, of good government, as you see it?

POST: [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: How do you think you were able to serve that being on the Little Hoover Commission? And how were you not able to?

POST: I think "good government" is a fantasy. I don't think we're ever going to really have good government. We might have better government than we have today.

VASQUEZ: But, what do you understand by "good government"?

POST: Good government is dedication, integrity, and honesty. Now, if you make a mistake honestly, I don't fault you. But if you make a mistake

because you're incompetent, because you're lazy, because you're a thief, because you got paid off, then I have to fault you and I'll want to throw you the hell out of office. You don't belong there. You're elected to represent the people.

Unlike Jack Fenton and Willie Brown, who both refused to serve on a subcommittee with me because it would offend their financial contributors. Which surprised me. Well, Jack Fenton is a sleaze bag. He's like Frank Vincenzia. He used to be a lobbyist, too. But Willie I thought more of. And Willie said, "Gee, you know, you'll hurt all the pharmacists in my area. Because, you know, 90 percent of the drugs that are prescribed and sold are through my local pharmacists. And if we go with that program of yours, you'd hurt these guys. Most of them would go out of business, probably."

VASQUEZ: Back to perpetuating oneself in office?

POST: Yeah, yeah.

VASQUEZ: And the public be damned?

POST: The public be damned. Well, you know, I'm not one to protect Willie Brown, but I can see that there was more validity to his statement than to Fenton's. Fenton said his treasurer was a

pharmacist and he couldn't do that. But what do you do in a minority area if, in fact, 90 percent of their business would be taken away if the state supplied the pharmaceuticals instead of the people going in to buy them?

I mean, you've got to give a little humanity there. What do you do with these people? You know, they're all little people. They've got their money tied up in a store and a lease and they're selling drugs--pharmaceutical drugs, legitimate drugs--to the local people. And here you're going to take that business away from them by supplying the drugs, the pharmaceuticals, to these people instead of letting them go in and buy them? There was a little humanity in what Willie said--and god knows, I don't want to protect Willie for anything [Laughter]--but there was none on the other side.

Now, I don't feel that you should take the salary and the benefits and the sick leave and the retirements and the medical [insurance], and everything that you get with it. They're pretty good jobs today. You know, when Jesse got in, they were getting \$300 a month, or something like

that. He got them up to \$18,000, \$20,000, \$22,000, \$25,000, you know. Then there is the federal-exempted money. Then the cars. . . . It's a good job. But, unfortunately, in two-year terms, you've got to start raising money the first week you're in office. Which you do. Get elected, the first thing you do is have a deficit fund-raiser. First thing. And it's good justification, because you just got reelected, you're hot. The people know you're going to be there for two years. So they might as well buy you for two years. They get a full two years. It's true. I've talked to people, on senatorial stuff, and I said, "Hey, your contribution, divide that over six years. This guy is going to be there for six years, so it's not so much. You'll have entree."

VASQUEZ: You do it early?

POST: You do it early. Get in there early, and, you know, if you wait, there are three years gone, you only have three more years. Get in there early. You've got all six years to ask for something.

VIII. POST'S PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Post's Contributions to Good Government on the
Little Hoover Commission

VASQUEZ: How do you think your tenure on the Little Hoover Commission helped bring about good government?

POST: How it helped me?

VASQUEZ: How did it help the people of California?

POST: Well, it made all these things possible that I couldn't do were I an ordinary layman in the street. I mean, fortunately, most of the areas that I worked in are areas that I had a background in. And that's where I think the strength in the Little Hoover Commission is. You take people from industry who can afford to give you the time, and have the knowledge. Look, my background, other than motion pictures and television, was strongly automotive. So a lot of the things I did were the fleet services, the Highway Patrol, the Division of Highways, the resale tax, all in that area.

Now, if you've got another guy in that that was a builder--which we did--he could look and see where we're buying and what we're paying and why we're overpaying for what we're getting. Another guy, a friend of mine that I got on, was in the

white goods business [Harry Blackman]. He was formerly the owner of White Front stores. So he would be able to say, "You're buying a thousand refrigerators for this hospital," or something. "You're paying way too much for them."

VASQUEZ: How would you respond to the criticism that by doing that, you're really going to get people on commissions that are nothing but looking after their own interests?

POST: Not looking after their interests, looking after the state's interest with reference to their industries. At one point in time, the Highway Patrol said that the reason I was banging them around was I was trying to sell the Highway Patrol cars. And I said, "That's great. When you see a highway patrolman driving a Volkswagen down the street, that's when I'll get off this goddamn commission." I said, "Come on, I don't have any conflict [of interest]." I handled Volkswagens and Porsches. They can't afford Porsches, and they're not going to be driving Volkswagens. So you've got my knowledge. You've got my expertise. You've got my connections in the industry. You've got them all for free. I can't bid

on your stuff." You had the Buy America restrictions at that time. I couldn't bid at all.

VASQUEZ: How do you insure that happens with all commission members? Or can you insure something like that?

POST: You can't insure it. I think you have to deal the cards the way they fall. But everybody has knowledge and expertise in a particular area. They have to. You know, maybe you've got a guy that's in insurance who can maybe head up a subcommittee on insurance. If he's not afraid. Normally, if he's got a background in insurance, he's got an insurance agency, he isn't going to buck them. He's afraid. But I've never been afraid. I tell the factories to go screw off. I don't care. They can't touch me.

But somebody like [Harry] Blackman knows all the major manufacturers. You know, he said, "What's this bullshit? You're asking \$400 for these refrigerators." He said, "You can bid them in a hell of a lot better than that. Now, you get us a decent bid or we're going to three other suppliers." Somebody else was in the carpet business. Their father was in the carpet business. We buy a lot of carpeting. Lots of it. I don't

know anything about carpeting. I don't know if this crap is \$10 a yard or \$50 a yard. I don't know. But if I'm doing a study, I'll find somebody who will be honest enough to tell me if we are overpaying; are we underpaying; are we bidding with the wrong company?

See, I believe in open bidding because if you say, "Hey, I need a hundred thousand yards of carpeting, grade X." Your big carpet guy has got five of them. "Come on in. I want you guys to to bid on a hundred thousand yards of grade X carpeting with a guaranteed payment by the state of California, so you don't have to be worried about getting screwed out of your money." I have to be careful. I have to know the business, because the five guys that I call might be cousins, brother, fathers, son. I don't know. Now, we know what collusion is. But if these guys are regular buddies all the time, they're going to sit down on a golf course, or a lunch room, or a hot tub sometime and they're going to say, "Hey, I want to bid on that goddamn stuff for the state. What are you going to bid on? You're going to bid \$30? Well. You're going to bid \$32? Well. Maybe I'll bid \$29."

[Interruption]

". . . my turn. Next time, you bid it. Next time, you bid it." That's collusion. But, you know, I can't go into every bathroom in the country and figure it out.

VASQUEZ: Except know your business.

POST: Except know your business, because I caught them doing that. Did I tell you that I caught two Chrysler bids for the Highway Patrol were owned by the same guy?

VASQUEZ: Right, you told me that once.

POST: Yeah, well. But you've got to know. You've got to know where to look. Al Veglia found it for me. I said, "I don't understand this thing. Because this guy won the bid, and this guy lost the bid. Now, this guy is supplying the cars on this bid." I said, "I don't understand how you do that!" [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] So it comes down to the human element in politics, and people knowing one another. Down to people.

POST: Well, I would say a lot of the things that I did in government would not have been possible without the people that I knew in government, or the

people that I knew when I went into government as a member of the Little Hoover Commission.

They didn't want us looking at them too closely. You know, it was, "Keep away from them, if you can. Don't let them come look at your shop. So help them and get them out of there." And then people knew that I was associated with Jesse Unruh. That's a pretty good opening, a pretty good calling card, particularly if I went to a legislator to get some information or something and I may have signed a check to his campaign from the Legislative Campaign Committee. Well, sure, I'm going to be treated with an open door. One little anecdote I'll give you. I was carrying something--I don't remember what it was--and I had to show up before the Ways and Means Committee, or Rules Committee, whatever it was. [Robert W.] Bob Crown was the chairman of the Rules committee. I had all this material, and I practiced ahead. I had it all down. I had two brief cases full of stuff. I don't know what it was anymore. But I get up there, and Bob Crown says, "Before Commissioner Post starts, let me tell you Commissioner Post is a very arduous,

hardworking member of the Little Hoover Commission," and so and so, and so and so, "and I move that we approve his request unanimously." [Makes snapping sound, Laughter] I haven't said a word.

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] That does say something about you, doesn't it?

POST: Haven't said a word. I see Bobby Crown that evening, and I said, "Bobby, what did you do?" He said, "Why? Did we do something wrong? Didn't we get you what you wanted?" I said, "Yes, you did. But Bobby, whom am I going to tell this whole spiel to? You know, all this information I've gotten together." He said, "Manny, let me tell you. You never know what's going to happen. I got you what you wanted. You won. Be satisfied. Because if I had let you talk, somebody would raise a question. And then somebody else would raise another question. And then somebody would get into a pissing contest with the second guy, and that would be the fourth guy. And I might not have gotten it out for you. You won! What more do you want?" And I've never forgotten that. But I said, "You know, I did all this work."

[Laughter] "I've got to tell this to somebody."
I don't remember what it was.

But that was another one of the hits that Jesse got. You know, Bobby was his close buddy. A hard-working guy. Loyal guy. Worked out in the gym with Jesse three times a week. Jogging at six o'clock in the morning, got hit by a car and killed. Uh-huh. Jesse had misfortune after misfortune piled on him. Because he was a good, strong right-hand guy.

VASQUEZ: All right. I want to thank you very much for participating in this program, and I'm sure that this will be an important addition to the series of interviews.

[End Tape 5, Side A]