

Exit Interview with Joyce Starr, Assistant to Joseph Aragon

Interviewer: David Alsobrook, Presidential Papers Staff.

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Transcribers: Winnie Hoover & Lyn Kirkland

Interview 1, Side 1, Tape 1

Alsobrook: Exit interview with Joyce Star, associate to Joe Aragon, March 29th, 1979, 2:00 pm, in OEOB, room 189, interviewer is David Alsobrook with Presidential Papers staff.

Ok, like I told you the other day, I want to concentrate first of all on your duties here in the White House and, if time permits, we can talk briefly about your work before you came to the White House, including the '76 campaign and transition. Joyce, what positions have you held in this White House?

Starr: Well, I started as an Associate, what I, Associate Special Assistant to the President under Midge Costanza was. That was for, I guess, well over a year. I'm not sure when it began, or when it ended. I know when it began, when I first came into the White House. From there I was transferred to Joe Aragon's staff and maintained the title, however, of Associate Special Assistant to the President. In fact, I never worked for Joe Aragon, I worked with Bob Lipshutz. Even when I worked under Midge Costanza, I worked more specifically for Bob Lipshutz, also working for, when necessary, on certain issues, Stu Eizenstat. I am in a sense in an unstructured position or was in a relatively unstructured position.

Alsobrook: Do you recall that first day on the job here?

Starr: Hoo, boy, the first day I think that, I only recall trying to take an office, that we were all concerned about finding an office that would accommodate ourselves and who would come in and take them from us. I don't remember, because it was right in the middle of the festivities. The inauguration and then the next day you were sort of here but you weren't. I don't remember much more than that.

Alsobrook: So you've been here since the very beginning of the administration?

Starr: Oh, yes.

Alsobrook: Could you tell me what your major duties were when you first came to work here? What kind of things did you work on?

Starr: I was responsible for all, for liaisons to the ethnic groups, the Hispanic groups, the Jewish groups, the handicapped groups and to anybody else that seemed to have a problem. We divided the world into approximately thirty groups. For example: Environmentalists, youth, labor, et cetera, and so forth. Each of us had maybe five to seven areas of responsibility. This went on, again, for many months. I suppose, almost till the time that Midge Costanza left. You have it?

Alsobrook: All right, we were talking a little bit about what your major duties were in the Office of Public Liaison.

Starr: Well, I, the point I was trying to make is that we each were absolutely overwhelmed because we divided the world into so many groups. Apparently it had also been done in somewhat the same fashion under the previous administration, but I do remember very vividly meeting after meeting, staff meeting every week, and usually there were two a week, where we would discuss how heavy our loads were, and re-allocate various groups. It was absolutely impractical, dysfunctional, and non-utilitarian. The purpose of it, the purpose of the Office of Public Liaison at that point was to have wide outreach to America and to sell them on the President and to basically to give them access, although interestingly enough, we spent months arguing about whether our job should be to sell the President or to give access, because were we a PR office or were we a unit that would build confidence simply by assisting?

That broke down even into the question of, if someone had a particular problem, a case problem, let's say, they couldn't get their bills, their water had been turned off by the water commissioner, should we try and provide assistance? We had several- one case in particular but I think there were several, where people were, had died and they needed to be transported immediately to another city and we were asked to have the White House intervene because there were no transport facilities. Very special cases, cancer, et cetera. And, if you could imagine dealing with all organized America, the "association of this" and the "association of that" "in the Jewish community alone there are thirty-four Jewish organizations and any number of sub-organizations. And in addition, being the vehicle for all of these cases. You can understand that we had a tremendous workload and we were all going quite mad, actually.

Alsobrook: Well, how was the work apportioned? You mentioned that there were certain groups you were responsible for. Did you all get together with Midge Costanza and decide, who would do what?

Starr: It was apportioned more on a basis of your own familiarity. I'm a sociologist and I had dealt with Hispanics in this city before I came to the job and I'm Jewish and I had organized the Jewish community for Carter in the campaign. And I had a sympathy for the handicapped, although I wasn't too anxious to get that initially but took it on. I remember arguing over who would take the handicapped. It came down really to if there was any possible link to someone's own background, although there were so many groups that you ended up taking up some for which you had absolutely no background for. For example, I also had not only Jewish but all religious groups. Now I knew n-, I

didn't really, and I still don't, understand the differences between the Catholic organizations and Presbyterian organizationally, not the religion, but, and, therefore, could not really do the job in the right way, especially when you're going, you know at 3:00 you've got a phone call on the, on from the La Raza, the Hispanic group and then at 3:05 you're trying to deal with the American-Jewish Committee. It just doesn't work out very well.

Alsobrook: Did everybody in the office report directly to Midge Costanza or did you report to somebody else?

Starr: To the contrary, we reported through a deputy, and Midge Costanza had three deputies. She went through deputies like water.

Alsobrook: Who were some of those deputies?

Starr: Ronnie Feit (Rona F. Feit), was the first, a woman. She lasted, I don't think, much more than a month and a half. Bob Nastana, which was the second. He lasted a much longer time. He had absolutely no background in government. He was pulled from one of the major oil companies, from a southern division. He was a very terrified man, and was terrified by what he had to deal with here. And then a man named Seymour Wishman who came at the end, and finally he was asked to leave.

Alsobrook: And so, all these various projects that each person worked on, you would funnel your reports through them, to Midge? Is that the way it worked?

Starr: Yes.

Alsobrook: Did you ever have an occasion to report directly to the President? Did you ever meet him?

Starr: No, I have never met him. I met him at a social occasion. I was invited to a Passover, which is a Jewish holiday, Passover Seder at Bob Lipshutz's home and he was present with only Bob Lipshutz's children and myself but I have never been given the opportunity to report to or talk to or meet the President outside that occasion and the campaign where I shook his hand.

Alsobrook: In the Office of Public Liaison, in addition to this work that you describe, did you do any travel or any type of advance work?

Starr: It was initially not encouraged, principally, and I'm, much of this comes out sounding very negative, but it's the truth. You might as well have it. Midge Costanza did not want her staff to look better than she, to look, to have visibility, for example. Secondly, it wasn't encouraged because of the White House was under the hand of Hugh Carter, who was very restrictive on the spending of money. So the Office of Public Liaison was, by and large, basically made to understand they were not to travel. This loosened up on occasion and, eventually, because you simply have to go, to different

communities, depending on what was happening in order to have any credibility with them. You couldn't say, "I'm afraid I'm not allowed to go." But what happened was that a decision was made that you could go if they paid for your ticket. So, only under the most limited conditions did the White House ever pay for anything I did. I can remember, in fact I simply can't remember them ever paying for an airline ticket. They paid for the taxis, but not the airline ticket.

But we didn't go very often, so again, and you see this even today. Now, it will change coming into the campaign. But there is a structural problem in a White House setting. If you, in order to do your job, you simply cannot leave. When you go away for two days, you're gone, you're finished. So that's for the human being who's doing the job. On the other hand, to do the job, you should get out and see America, but if you get out and see America and mix with the people but have no way of communicating back to the President except through any number of layers, it's a wasted effort and all you've done is manage to undermine yourself in attempting to do your job. So it is an absolute Catch-22, which probably can only be satisfied by having a number of people whose job it is to get out and report back to the President and not try to combine it with people like myself, who stay at, who should stay at their desk and do their work.

Alsobrook: So you didn't travel much, but were there memorable trips that you did make? Were there certain trips that stand out in your mind as you think back?

Starr: I traveled to a few conventions but the most memorable was traveling to New York for a wedding of Syrian Jewish women who had been allowed to leave Syria because of the, with the intervention of the President of the United States, on the premise that remaining in Syria they could not marry since there are very few Jewish men in Syria. The Syrians allowed them to leave and this was the first group that was allowed to leave and the second group, within the first, who'd had a wedding. One of the girls had a wedding and Steve Solarz came from New York City, he was the Congressman principally involved, and other leaders, and it was such a happy thing and the way that they... if, when Steve Solarz walked down that aisle, it was as if a god had come to these people and he spoke on behalf of the President and the love in that room was really something very special. It reminded me, because it does get lost in the process of being in the White House, that the people can really feel love for the President and for the political leadership of the country if given the opportunity. Now I was there, but it was, would have been a very marvelous occasion for somebody higher than myself to have gone. But nobody could possibly pay attention to something like that, so where they could have created enormous good will, there simply, wasn't the sense, they couldn't. I mean, they could have but that doesn't come into the thinking patterns.

Alsobrook: In the same way, Joyce, were there certain times when you brought groups into the White House during this period that maybe you experienced this same sort of feeling?

Starr: Always. I have brought more groups into the White House probably than anybody else in the White House. I have single-handedly, without any real assistance or help- you losing you tape?

Alsobrook: No, thanks, I just, I like to check it every once and a while.

Starr: ...done briefings for community people. In my case, they were principally Jewish community, but I did them for anybody who asked on foreign policy issues and they usually included forty to sixty people at a time, maybe a hundred, depending, and I saw the gratitude of these people in being given the opportunity, not to take a tour of the White House, not to be given pomp and circumstance, but to have hard-hitting substantive discussions on very difficult issues, even though they mostly didn't agree. They walked out, I'd say, really reinforced in a sense of identification with their government. But also I will say that, while I reported that to a number of people and kept them informed, that it somehow was lost. It, first, we would say to them, "Your views will be communicated to the President," but their views were never communicated to the President. And not because anybody had hostility, or not wanting to communicate, but nobody believes really the President wants to hear what the community said from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, so in that sense we were being a bit dishonest with them. But they believe it.

Alsobrook: People in the community?

Starr: People in the community. When a senior advisor would walk into the room, as often was the case, because we would arrange for somebody to have a walk-by, a walk-through, and the person would say "We're glad you're here and your views will be communicated to the President." Well, their views were never.... that was, this simply didn't happen. However, the discussions were usually with people from the Department of State or the National Security Council, and interestingly enough, these people took what the community people said rather seriously. I don't know that it changed their specific actions or policy recommendations but certainly I will say, for the Department of State and National Security people that I have dealt with on the Middle East, they have taken into account what public reaction is going to be and they have had, they've been greatly educated, I think, by these experiences with small groups and they're not hostile audiences. They're small encounters, they're free-wheeling, there are no speeches and I think that the Department of State people have been extremely grateful because they, you're not putting them on a stage in front of, you know, two thousand hostile people. You're giving them a small group, and give and take, and they can fight it out and roll up their sleeves, and on occasion they did and so it made, it had, I think, some effect, but on a, it was a surprise. It wasn't supposed to have an effect on *them*, it was supposed to have an effect on the White House. It didn't have an effect, really, on the White House.

Alsobrook: You mention the State Department and you mention some senior advisors who came through, were there other members of the White House staff who would get involved in this particular end of your work?

Starr: Excuse- [tape cuts] Yeah, I think it is important because one of the things I had as a responsibility initially with Midge Costanza was to be liaison with the Department of State, which I really wanted and worked for and it wasn't simply given to me. It was something I really wanted to cultivate because I was very interested in the Middle East and foreign policy issues. So, yes, in my job, in a sense, I've become more identified, many people think I'm on the National Security Council, others think I'm with the Department of State. In fact, the Department of State sent me to the Middle East, to Egypt, Jordan and Israel, resulting from, number one, my interest in all these issues, and two, from a very, obviously from a confidence and good relationship that had been developed with these agencies, with the State Department.

Now, this is important because when people come into a new administration, politically, as I did, they come in hostile to people in the agencies and the hostility between the White House and the agencies was a, and still is, a major source of contention, exhaustion, and undermining the efforts to do a good job and I simply went about it in a very different way, more or less humbling myself before these people and saying that they were the professionals, not I, giving them respect and I, I think, I received a lot back because of it. And always trying to put them in the best possible light regardless whether I agreed or disagreed with their position and I take this as an important lesson, if you're interested in lessons learned from time in the White House.

Alsobrook: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I was going to ask you a question about that, you know, I was going to say, I was going to ask you something to the effect of this experience in the White House, what have you learned about, say, the Presidency and the American governmental process itself?

Starr: Oh, that's such a big one. You should break it down. I'm a sociologist, not an interviewer [Alsobrook laughs] by experience and training, and it's really much too wide a question. I think some of the answers that I'm giving you within the framework of others questions which you're asking, indicate, for example, up until now, you might come to the conclusion, that I believe, for, it would be, take very little effort for the President of the United States to, on a rather frequent basis to make a tour of the old Executive Office Building. He did once go around the first floor and the second floor of the White House. But Jerry Ford, I'm told, could have appeared at any given moment in anybody's office under the previous, under his administration, asked you how you were, and knew you on a first name basis. As far as morale goes for the staff, it's, I think, really quite devastating never to have met the President of the United States, the man you're doing all this supposedly for. He is somebody you see on TV and who may sign your picture for you, and who you may feel sympathy for, but you can't possibly have any sense of who he is as an interactive human being, other than the small circle of people who have met him. Now Jerry Ford was the opposite, so I'm told, and much beloved by his people. And this is important.

Alsobrook: By his staff?

Starr: By his staff, yeah. I don't think that you'd find that feeling here. You'll find respect for the President and the sense that he is a good man. People will always tell you that, inside or outside, but you won't find warmth.

Alsobrook: I guess that touches on the first part of that broad question. I guess the second part was, you're, have you learned any lessons about American government and how it works? The first part dealt with the President.

Starr: Yes. The American government doesn't work. [Both laugh] It... I think most people believe that the way that it works is to be able to put your hands on a position, on a person who has a position of power and if you convince him of your cause, so it will be done. This is not the way it works. It works from the bottom up. In order to effectuate something in the American political system, you must put all of the players into their proper places, convince them that it is in their interest to at least listen to your point of view, whether you're inside the White House or outside the White House, and then finally, when you have the chessboard in place, then to have the stamp of approval or reaffirmation of a senior advisor. For example, like Stu Eizenstat. But, you cannot expect a senior advisor to be able to concentrate on the details of getting a decision into process, and this is the mistake. And since political people come in largely without that experience, at least I- we did, it takes them several years to learn it and in the meantime they're inundated and don't quite know what to do about requests. Number one, whether they should get something done about it. Number two, if they can. And number three, if they try and they fail, it's very bad for their credibility so there's a tremendous fear of taking risks. Does it, I don't think that I'm, oh I am.

Alsobrook: You know, you mention your trip to the Middle East. Was this after you'd left Midge Costanza's staff?

Starr: Absolutely.

Alsobrook: When was it? When was the trip to...?

Starr: Last August, August 1978.

Alsobrook: What are some of your recollections of the trip itself? We were talking a little bit about your trip last August. I was asking what some of your recollections of that was.

Starr: The most incredible recollection was when they told me I was going, because I was in Florida at the time visiting my family and I was shocked. I had been initially- oh I'm sorry did you not pick up?

Alsobrook: I don't think I got you on that-

Starr: I wanted very much to go to the Middle East to look at some of these issues because I saw an opportunity to have input on economic affairs, whereas it was becoming

increasingly difficult to have input on political issues. They were becoming too heated. And I'm very interested in the Middle East, which is where I am going. I am leaving the White House to go to the Middle East. So it's very, there's a continuity here in all of this and, if anything, this trip has probably made that possible.

And a colleague of mine who happens to be in the, our representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations was going to the Middle East and since I dealt largely with human rights, he wanted me to accompany him as the White House person. However, when this was raised with the Department of State it made them a bit nervous in the Middle East Bureau, the Near East Affairs Bureau, because we were both Jewish and they felt that it would be somewhat uncomfortable for the Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan, to have two people coming to talk about human right who were both Jewish, not to mention the Palestinian issue. I, of course, really couldn't have cared at this point. I wasn't interested in human rights in the Middle East. I was interested in many other topics. So they called me to tell me I wasn't going with him, whereupon I was quiet and the man who made the call was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East affairs, and he's now Ambassador to Jordan. He said, "But I do have a consolation for you," and I said "What's that?" and he said "We've decided to send you by yourself." And I said, "You're kidding!" And he said, "No, we think that with, you know, the relationship you've established with this bureau, your participation in the economic task force and the consequences of peace, and your interest in the area, we think it would be a very important learning experience for you." Whereupon, I became the *only* White House staffer *ever* to travel, I believe, by myself to the Middle East, maybe to *any* other country. I don't know, but I know for sure the Middle East.

Even at that point, Bill Quandt's assistant, main assistant, Gary Sick, handling the Middle East, had not been to Israel, I don't- He had worked in Egypt at one point. I don't know if he'd been to Jordan, but everybody was really quite amazed because, in addition, not only was the State Department sending me, facilitating it, but they were paying for it! And I'm on the White House Staff. So it was really, the fact of it was quite outstanding. Secondly, I'm a woman being sent representing the White House and the Department of State to Egypt and Jordan. Israel I had been to before, so they knew me and they were familiar with me, on economic matters, asking questions. And it was a pronounced experience to see how they would treat me and they treated me with the utmost respect and equality. If they felt differently they certainly didn't evidence it, but the Embassy in Egypt was initially very anxious to dissuade the State Department from sending me because it was venturing on Ramadan, the major holiday, and they basically weren't particularly anxious to have a White House staffer come out checking around.

When I arrived, there had been a line dropped on the computer informing them of my arrival time, so there was nobody there to meet me so the initial experience was one of horror because the Cairo airport is like none other in the world. It's a mass of bodies. And all the people were coming back for the holiday. So I had to make my way from the Cairo airport to the Embassy and I hadn't a penny, and there was no way, even with all the bodies lined up, to get to the exchange thing. So, my great arrival in Egypt as the representative of the White House was a disaster but because of it perhaps, they felt,

when I arrived at the Embassy, they felt sorry for me and they felt very sorry that the mistake had been made and it broke the ice.

And one thing led to another and I think that we got along very well, but a lesson to be learned in all this is that if you're from the White House going out to any embassy for the American government, there's an absolute element of animosity that should be always accounted for, because the embassy people simply don't want you there, and for good reason. They have work to do, and they don't want to have to treat you like some queen or king, or whatever. They don't, they're sure that you don't know what you're doing and largely they're right. It's true, you don't, because they're the experts, not you. Although, on the other side of it, it's often the case that what they are doing could be done better and they could have great breakthroughs in their respective countries if they had a bit more political risk-taking at their disposal which you do have and they don't. So if the relationships are good, you can come back and bring their messages and perhaps even make a difference.

I went from Egypt to Jordan. I was struck in Jordan by the animosity. It's interesting- this is interesting, I guess, in retrospect, because everybody believed in August of last year that the Jordanians were really quite positive towards the Israelis underneath it all, and it was only a matter of time until everything would work out and peace would come between those two countries first, even before Egypt, but certainly after, or with it. I sensed more animosity in Jordan than I did in Egypt and I was shocked. I kept notes on it. I couldn't believe the hatred towards the Israelis that I sensed in Jordan. And now it's borne itself out. So, that wasn't coming through the cable traffic. That's something that was censored and as a fresh observer you may be able to observe it, to pick up things that the embassy people can't. There should be more interaction between the White House and our embassies, but when there is it's unfortunately done in a negative way so that there's resentment.

Alsobrook: So you feel like your trip was a positive, for you and possibly...

Starr: Well, I don't know. You see, we bring along a lot of the trappings of power and though you, I'm saying all of these things to you, maybe I did insult people or maybe I did act pompous without knowing it, and even trying not to do so, but I think it was a positive. On the other hand, it didn't really make any difference to anybody.

Alsobrook: I'm not sure I follow you.

Starr: Well, I wrote reports about it and nobody asked me to, but I did write reports in the White House and I sent them to all the senior advisors and they were good reports, if I look back at them now, I- And it's not thatIt was be- it's not- it wouldn't have mattered who wrote the reports and who did it, that the system can't accommodate new information.

Alsobrook: So it really can't stand any more information?

Starr: It isn't that it can't stand it, it doesn't know what to do with it, if it has it. In my departing conversations with Hamilton, he mentioned to me that he *had* read my report, and I was quite complimented, maybe he did, maybe he just sort of read it briefly or perused it, but it did go to Bob Lipshutz and Stu Eizenstat. And Stu reads everything so I know that he read it and Bob was very pleased with it. As a matter of fact, Bob asked me, he was so pleased with it, that he asked me to break it down into further summary points. Now, all of that said, it seems, it, he was pleased. Stuart read it and Hamilton said he saw it, but it doesn't go anyplace. It can't make a difference because Stu, Bob, and Hamilton are not making that kind of decision on the economics of the Middle East. In fact, at that time even Bill Quandt wasn't making them. Finally, a new person who's eminently qualified named Rud Poats [Rutherford M. Poats] came in with the National Security Council but when I went on my trip, there was no Rud Poats to report to. Rud came when I arrived back and I said, "By the way, I went on this trip and I think you should know that I have been doing these things," but you will find that there are often many people doing the same things, that don't know they are doing the same things. And it, there's a, it takes years, maybe into a second presidency, to identify those people and once that happens, most of them become neutralized. You can, by the time you're identified as somebody who is one of several doing the same thing, you no longer have any impact because you become then part of a very tight system of control. It's another Catch-22 of the governmental system.

Alsobrook: And you feel that this is possibly what happened with your economic report on the Middle East?

Starr: It would have been very-

Alsobrook: You mean it may take another administration for somebody else to utilize it? Is that what you mean?

Starr: No, not the specific report, but... For example, a staff member goes to three countries that are at the heart of one of our major concerns. Perhaps, and maybe in other administrations, I don't know, you sit down with a few advisors, talk over some of these things, think how it might impact on some future steps. I- You, as a senior advisor take time to ask me what I found. It's not just a written report, you read the report, you have some give-and-take with me. Reflect, there's no opportunity for reflection and it is not the fault of the men involved because I'm naming people who *are* interested, *do* read and *do* care. It's the structure of the process.

Alsobrook: I was going to ask you, Joyce, was there any connection at all between your trip and then the Camp David summit last fall?

Starr: No. It- I can, I could name a connection. I mean, my report anticipated many of the occurrences at Camp David and many of the problems that we had with the Egyptians. My foremost observation at the time was that the Egyptians have an absolutely unrealistic understanding of what the President of the United States could or could not do. Now, that might have been a useful piece of information for the President.

It is not the kind of reporting he would receive from the embassies. They wouldn't dare to say something like that to the President. But it perhaps would have been useful if I was able to say it or if Bob Lipshutz was able, and I don't believe he did, was able to go further than reading it himself and say, "By the way, Mr. President, I have a staffer who went out there who says these people, you know, are absolutely off base when it comes to what you can accomplish and this may be a serious problem we have in credibility and image." It was useful.

Alsobrook: Were these particular issues that this came up in your own mind that you saw this, that you knew would be obstacles at Camp David?

Starr: Sure.

Alsobrook: Can you list some of those particular instances or issues?

Starr: Oh, I would have to go back and look at the documents. But, for example, I've known even from that point that the Egyptians had an entirely unrealistic understanding of what we could provide financially to them, and much of what has happened as we have continued through these months from the fall even until now has revolved around what we will and will not pay and what we can and cannot afford to pay, and the President has gone quite far. Yesterday, a poll of the American people indicated that 70 percent, CBS poll, 70 percent are against major aid to Israel and Egypt. I could have told the President that without being one of those economic advisors, as a sociologist.

Alsobrook: The CBS poll...?

Starr: Now, the CBS poll gives the position of the American people. I estimated that but that has nothing to do with it. I didn't go out and survey the American people. However, it came as quite a jolt to the Egyptians, and it only further validated what I already knew, is that they simply didn't understand the American political scene. Now, if they don't understand the scene, it is quite understandable that they would put certain kinds of pressures on the President which he will find increasingly difficult to deliver. And while they're putting pressures on him, then he in turn must be putting pressures on somebody else or responding to their pressures. All of it made for some very anxious moments between the Israelis, the Egyptians and the Americans. Now, I should tell you that in 1977 I went on my own to Israel and I did it as a vacation, but I spent the entire time, through the good auspices of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, interviewing important figures in Israel and came back with forty interviews and I did detailed summaries on every major political figure that I met with in Israel at the time. The only one I didn't meet, two perhaps, I guess, were Rabin and at that point, Weitzman, but I met most of the others, including the Prime Minister, and I had long, long conversations, detailed tapes and notes, which were provided as a package to Stuart Eizenstat, Bob Lipshutz, and Hamilton Jordan. What that provided them with was an immediate sketch of where each of those people stood on all of the critical issues. Now if anybody, and I did a final summary of that, too. I summarized it in a two-page statement, laying out the key areas, where the key problems were, and what their positions were on those issues. Again, I

mean, I'm not a magician and I'm certainly not a genius. I simply did my homework and I anticipated with good accuracy the major stumbling blocks that we faced going into the next round of the next six months to nine months.

Alsobrook: And, Joyce, you sent all of these materials in with your report, is this what you're saying?

Starr: Sure did.

Alsobrook: In one package?

Starr: Sure did.

Alsobrook: And these are still in the hands of somebody in the White House?

Starr: Sure, but it never reached the President and nobody ever asked me to discuss it or clarify, or to "let's sit down and see what this means." Now, nobody asked me to do it either. I must say it meant initiative but I have a lot of initiative and I thought it was important because Stu Eizenstat and Bob Lipshutz were being pulled into the political process, into the process of the Middle East increasingly with no background. Nobody that was becoming involved in the Middle East, even including the President, had any background on the Middle East except for Bill Quandt, who is a terrific, terrific guy. But if these men are going to have some hand in the decision-making process, they needed to know a little bit more and, I think, I don't know, you'll have to ask them, but they may say to you, if you mention it, that they learned a lot through these reports that I gave them. Secondly, whenever an Israeli, at that time I didn't know the Egyptians, would come to town, of consequence, I would push through a meeting with some of these advisors so that they would have the opportunity to meet them and hear what they have to say. But this was, as I say, I was an independent actor in many ways, doing things that nobody asked me to do but because I thought that it could serve some ultimate good, believing that information is power, and especially if it is the right information

Alsobrook: Now, there is a key point there that you mention, I think is very important, in that, you mention people drawn into the Middle East negotiations who had no previous experience. Were there other people you can list who you feel like would be important in this, who were involved in the Middle East negotiations who weren't necessarily associated with the NSC or State?

Starr: Well, Bob Lipshutz, at the end, has become extremely involved in it. Stu Eizenstat has played a very important role, not in the end and not as far as the Camp David or the signing, but all along throughout the process, trying to be a moderating force, trying to bring reason to bear, trying to take an analytical but sympathetic viewpoint and communicate it to the President. Oftentimes, I believe, going much beyond his own limits in doing so since he does not deal with foreign policy issues. In fact, the first crisis that we faced on the Middle East was a document called PRIM 12 or

13, I've forgotten the exact number, but it had to do with arms sales to, you know, you're nodding your head. You remember?

Alsobrook: I've heard something about it, but I'm certainly not up on it like you are.

Starr: Well, we were putting a ceiling, in that case, on our relationship with Israel, whereas we were not doing so with other allied, so-called allied nations. I talked to Stuart and I remember vividly the conversations with Stuart and Stuart talked at length to Hamilton, so did Bob Lipshutz, but it was Stuart who talked, who did the talking. And then Hubert Humphrey made a plea to the President but I believe to this day that it was because of Stuart's calm reasoning intervention that as little damage as possible was done and not more damage. And it was a damaging, unnecessary event. I've experienced in my course of time at the White House at least twenty-five to thirty serious and unnecessary damaging events that weren't, just didn't have to happen, had somebody outside of the, well, you know, I'm in conflict here because I have great respect for the professionals, great respect for the Roy Athertons (Alfred Leroy Atherton Jr.) and the Sanders and those who deal with the problems every day of their lives for several years. They know their subject. But the question here becomes one of relating to political constituencies, and even when you are talking about the Egyptians and Israelis, especially the Israeli, they're, it's very hard to separate the line between the American constituency and *the Israeli* because there's a great concentric circle here, and therefore it is useful to have people who can bring a slightly different perspective to bear, not at all to undermine the professional but to amplify. Another person who was called on belatedly, and I'm not sure with any... I'm not sure that he was actually listened to, but he was at least given the respect of having been called upon, was Arthur Goldberg. It took a very long time and much longer than it should've, but he did begin by the end to receive telephone calls from the President asking his advice. Now, that could have been *pro forma* but he was asked, and he certainly knew the answers. Nobody could better understand the complicated dynamic than Arthur Goldberg, having been the United Nations ambassador who forged Resolution 242.

Alsobrook: When you say right at the end, do you mean right before the treaty was signed?

Starr: No, I mean, in the, let's say, he started to get telephone calls... oh, let's see, he came back from Belgrade in March. Maybe by the summer he was getting some telephone calls from the President. I think he did before Camp David.

Alsobrook: Anybody else besides Goldberg that you can think about?

Starr: Another man who's been very significant in the Washington area is Max Kampelman, who's a lawyer with Fried, Frank, Shriver [Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson], or whatever, and Kampelman. Max is a marvelous fellow and he's highly regarded by everybody. He was Humphrey's main assistant for many years and he's simply a man of great prestige. So he's been called upon, but not by the President. By

Stuart, or maybe Bob, or possibly somebody from the Department of State. There isn't a great deal of interaction with the President.

Alsobrook: You mean direct interaction?

Starr: Yeah, I mean you won't go around the country and find people who say, "The President called so-and-so," or "The President had a conversation." The President will have *meetings* with groups of people, but there isn't that sense, as in Johnson or Kennedy, that he will reach out to... For example, there is one man in this country who, I think, more than any other, understands the Middle East and has in every paper he's written, predicted absolutely the dynamic that was in front of us and that is Bernard Lewis, who is a professor at Princeton University. Now, I brought Bernard Lewis in to meet Hamilton Jordan, Bob Lipshutz, Stu Eizenstat, Bill Quandt and others. I arranged a seminar, this was another undertaking of mine. I decided that the White House needed seminars on the Middle East and I would, and I brought in a few professors, and the main one I brought in was Bernard Lewis. Hamilton was just, oh, he was so interested. I did it on a Saturday and it was supposed to go from 10:00 to 11:00 and it went from 10:00 to 3:00 because Hamilton didn't want to go. He ordered sandwiches and then Stuart came in and Stuart went out, and Bob was there the whole time, but it was Hamilton who kept hammering away with the questions. But to have sat down Bernard Lewis with the President of the United States for an evening over a dinner would have been perhaps the most useful thing anybody could have done and they all heard him. They knew he was brilliant, and on the mark, and understood the Arab world. I'm talking about the Arab world and the Arab mind, profoundly so, but there was no initiative to bring him to the President because the President does not give the feeling that he wants that kind of input. I mean, I have the feeling that Hamilton Jordan, when you can get his attention, would like to learn. Hamilton emanates that sense of wanting to absorb knowledge and information. Bob and Stuart are obviously very interested parties. But I don't think that there's a feeling in the White House that "Gee, the President would love to know that." It kind of stops at a certain point.

Alsobrook: Well, this really gets at a question I wanted to ask you, that is, what's been your role, say, since last fall on the Middle East policy? Have you arranged seminars? Has this been one of your major functions?

Starr: No, I ceased to have a role because.... I moved to the economic issues because I was very... well, I was uncomfortable with a great deal of our policy and therefore wanted to stay out of the, stay out of, I certainly, I think of myself as a professional. I'm not interested in being a public relations agent to the Jewish community, although I tend to be somebody they identify as a person they can go to and call upon. I would not for one moment, go before them and explain to them a policy that I did not believe in, but nor would I go out and criticize a policy that I did not believe in because I'm here and it's not my, you know, I think that's *gall*, you know, so I simply moved away. And, it would be, I mean, the process moved people like me away. It simply moved, it went to a much higher level. And that's why I say that when, at the beginning of an administration, whether it be on the Middle East or human rights or domestic policy, energy, when

you're all new, just by grabbing and taking a lead and running, you can do a lot more but when things become, really reach a high intense level, high and tense level, the staffers fall by the wayside who can have any imprint. Then you leave it to Bill Quandts and Roy Athertons and just kind of hope that it will all work out right. Right.

Alsobrook: So you weren't really asked to play a role, say, in Camp David or-

Starr: No.

Alsobrook: -say the, even the logistics involving in the treaty signing, or anything like that?

Starr: Nothing. Nothing.

Alsobrook: Did you serve as a conduit of any sort between people, say, to the outside who had an opinion to voice?

Starr: No, because in, after, when I came back from my trip, it was exactly coincided with the appointment of Ed Sanders to be senior advisor to the President. And Ed Sanders was also appointed to be a liaison to the Jewish community, so he simultaneously absorbed many of the functions that at any rate I no longer wished to perform. So it, they simply had somebody else to do it, even if, whether I wanted to or didn't want to, they had somebody else to do it.

Alsobrook: Joyce, the role that Sanders had, was this similar to Mark Siegel's role earlier?

Starr: Well, Mark Siegel's an interesting story, because, on October 6, I believe, of 1977, there was a major confrontation between the United States and Israel, although now I can hardly remember what it was although I remember that it happened. And Mark Siegel gave a statement to the press which appeared on the front page of the Washington Post within which he identified himself as liaison to the Jewish Community. It was the first time anybody in the White House had heard about it. He was not Liaison to the Jewish Community. He self-appointed himself, but the basic feeling was, if he wants to do that, that's fine. Nobody was going to take it away from him. It wasn't exactly everybody's, you know, dearest dream. So, he became identified in that way but he was really a deputy to the President, I mean to the, to Hamilton Jordan, on political issues, dealing principally with the Democratic Party because that was his background. But now you can see too, from what I am saying, that there were an awfully lot of people sort of engaged simultaneously in things that overlapped and... There really wasn't a lot of competition but it was unwieldy.

Alsobrook: You know, it sounds like there was a similarity between Siegel's role and the role of some people within the Office of Public Liaison, or as Siegel identified his role.

Starr: Yeah well, yeah, there was, it was me. The conflict was with me. But... I don't know, it's another, another entire story. But there wasn't a conflict of hostility. I'm saying a structural problem. I remember walking into Bob Lipshutz's office and saying: "Well, this is interesting. Is Mark Siegel now Liaison to the Jewish Community, because I'm identified on paper as doing this role?" And he said, "Well, if this is what he wants to do," you know, and he says, "He's political and you're substantive." The answer was, "Yes, he's, I guess he'll do this but he's doing it politically and what you're doing is substantive," and I found that that was a very satisfactory answer and also description, because as I've said to you, and that's why I say there was no conflict really between Mark and myself, and I also had great sympathy for what he was attempting to do. I never involved myself with the politics of explaining policy. I tried to work on the policies themselves.

Alsobrook: All right, we've almost come full-circle here. I know you're busy.

Starr: No, it's alright. It's useful, exercise.

Alsobrook: It sure is.

Starr: I'm saying things that are fairly honest, I guess.

Alsobrook: That's good. You mentioned that you were, ok, you left Costanza's office and you were on Joe Aragon's office rolls but you didn't really work for him, right?

Starr: No.

Alsobrook: What were some of the kinds of jobs you had in that office, you know, say...?

Starr: I didn't have any jobs. As a matter of fact, it was the opposite. Poor Joe found himself having to do things for me because he's a marvelous man. And the area we haven't touched upon at all is my work in human rights which absorbed me most of the time. We've talked principally now about the Middle East but when I realized, and I knew from the very beginning, I liked Joe tremendously. That he was so sympathetic and so human. It came to the point that I would go running to him with memos and saying, "Please, you must get to Hamilton and Hamilton must get to the President on this," and on this case and that case, and the other case, and Shcharansky, and so, I think, if anything, I increased Joe's workload. Joe certainly never touched upon mine.

Alsobrook: Okay, you mention human rights. In addition to working with Joe, did you work with Pat Derian or other people in State on that too?

Starr: I had a colleague in the, who, we became friends as time went on, as colleagues, in the Department of State in Pat's office, who was responsible for the area of human rights that I worked on, which was the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which is basically the Belgrade concept. I also went to Belgrade. I represented the White House

at the Belgrade conference at the invitation of Arthur Goldberg. So I've traveled a bit. When you say have I've traveled, had interesting travels, not in the United States, but abroad, yes, and again, the only one to do so. But I did work with this gentleman, his name is Cliff Brody, and we became, I would say, without doubt, more or less of a team. He the State Department, myself the White House, trying to communicate messages of concern, of evaluation, of facts to the senior players.

Alsobrook: When you say the senior players, you mean like the President?

Starr: And that includes, yes, to the President and to all those surrounding him - Dr. Brzezinski, Bob Lipchultz, Stu Eizenstat, Joe Aragon, Pat Derian and anybody else who might be willing to listen.

Alsobrook: And on the other side, say in the other nations, who were some of the principle players that you had to....? You communicated with them too, I assume.

Starr: In other countries? No. No, no, no! In the human rights thing, Pat Derian communicates with the heads of nations, or the President, or Brzezinski. That's interesting. I think that's an interesting question because it breaks down very differently. You simply don't have leaderships in other nations that are involved in human rights. It is *the* head of state.

Alsobrook: Ok, Joyce, you mention Shcharansky (also spelled Sharansky) and so on. Were there other particular cases you were working on that really stand out in your mind?

Starr: Shcharansky is important because when somebody goes back in ten years, if it's not done before, to identify who was involved in this case, they may or may not find out that I wrote the first memo on the Shcharansky case. And my memo went to Admiral [Stansfield] Turner of the CIA. Now, if you know, Shcharansky is accused of being associated with the CIA. So this was an important memo written I assume, I vaguely recall, I guess March 16th or 17th of 1977, and from the very first day, I met, I was the first to meet Avital Shcharansky in the White House and her brother. I received her when it was not, it was simply not a well-known case. I was described in a publication in Israel as the, in Hebrew, I don't know, the "mother" to Avital Shcharansky in a sense, I mothered the case along. But that too is a good example. Having been so involved, so active on behalf of Shcharansky, at a certain point, there was simply nothing more I could do. It was in the hands of several senior players and I have no way, am not privy to, and I have no information about their positions on this case.

[End of this tape]

Joyce Starr- interview 1, side 2, tape 1

Starr: Again, another question of initiative, I did something that the President never knew about, but a few senior advisors did, which was to create a computer list of human rights organizations and individuals in key organizations and to send them every single

week whatever the President said in his press conferences, whatever actions the White House had taken that could be reported, I sent it as a memo: "To so-and-so, from Joyce Starr, you know, the President said today in his speech, ta-da-ta-da, or his press conference..." And I took out little bits and pieces of information that simply would never have filtered down to the community and blanketed the United States with them.

Alsobrook: Well, that probably took a lot of time.

Starr: It was absorbing and horrific. Absolutely horrific. And I had no staff to do it with. I did it all by myself. Which is to say that I believed in our position on Shcharansky, human rights, Orlov, Ginsburg, in other words I felt that it was a very good thing and that the public, we needed their support and the way to have their support was to let them know that we were with them. Now that may, in retrospect, have been the case or not been the case, I don't know, but that's the way I felt at the time.

Alsobrook: So, human rights, this issue occupied much of your time in the last six or eight months?

Starr: Oh, yes. Most of my time.

Alsobrook: Was this one of the issues that probably attracted you to the campaign of '76?

Starr: Not at all. I never-

Alsobrook: How did that come about?

Starr: It came about through an evolution. Because when I was given the Jewish community under Midge Costanza, one of the key concerns of the Jewish community was Soviet Jewry. As I became involved in Soviet Jewry, and met this man at the Department of State named Cliff Brody, who was looking at a much wider question of Belgrade and Helsinki and the follow up to the first Helsinki conference. I began to learn about Helsinki.

And, in addition, one day I went, when Arthur Goldberg was appointed to be ambassador, I went and introduced myself to him at the Department of State to beg him to raise Shcharansky at Belgrade. Where upon he said to me, "Well, now, I think you're going to be my representative at the White House." He being a most charming and delightful personality and a reverent of all structure. And so I came back and said to Bob Lipchutz, "Arthur Goldberg wants me to be his representative at the White House!" And Bob said, "That's fine, no problem." And when Arthur Goldberg, between my interactions with Cliff Brody on Helsinki, because Cliff wanted the White House to pay attention to certain issues, and the Department of State, and be-, with the ambassador now saying "You're my representative," and now finally in May, in February of 1978 he invites me to come to the conference.

All of a sudden, I'm human rights! Not Soviet Jewry. I've evolved to a higher level. Still nobody's ever asked me to do it. And later Bob Lipchutz says to me in response to some

conversation we're having, "Well you are unofficially the person in the White House dealing with human rights." I spent many months arguing that that was not terribly effective, that either I be officially appointed to be, or designated as the person handling human rights or somebody else be officially designated. I actually recommended Joe Aragon. And it's on memos in the White House files because, if you again wish some historical ironies, it can't, it shouldn't escape you that if this is the President's strongest initiative, it's not so, it's unusual that there's nobody in the White House dealing with it. So I dealt with it and the groups across the country know me and they received things from me and they called me. And I, it took a lot of time.

Alsobrook: And you became the human rights person?

Starr: I became the human rights person.

Alsobrook: I'm about to run out of tape on this side, but I've still got about three more questions I want to ask you. It'll take just a few more minutes. I'm going to change tapes.

Starr: No problem.

Alsobrook: Great.

Did you ever have any input on any presidential speeches that you know of? Were you asked for input?

Starr: Oh, yeah. I did have some input, I think a few times. But, the one that I remember the best is when the President delivered remarks at the ceremony honoring the 30th anniversary of Israel. And I drafted the first speech and Stuart drafted the second and that was it. But I did have input.

Alsobrook: Did the final product generally resemble what you had written?

Starr: Yes. And also I had input on many occasions, not *many*, but several that were significant to me, the talking points that he used. This you certainly can have involvement in the talking points the President uses in meetings or speeches, et cetera.

Alsobrook: Were there specific meetings you're thinking about, you know, that you may have sent out a talking point memo or something?

Starr: For example, once he had, most of these, in fact all of these are Jewish, I wish there were more that were other kinds of things, but he had an interview with the Jewish press, a woman named Trudy Feldman, and I wrote his talking points for that. And then he sent out good wishes on various Jewish holidays and I wrote some of the drafts for those. He gave a small talk, we had a Hanukkah celebration at the White House and I wrote the talking points for that for him. So yes, I had input to him.

Alsobrook: I want to talk with you a little bit about the '76 Carter presidential campaign. How did you get involved in that?

Starr: I went to the offices in Washington and offered my services after having done some research on who was who in the Washington office. I wasn't so terribly, I wasn't so emotionally committed, but I thought it'd be good to have a role. He seemed like a good candidate. And I met, they said there's a man coming up from Atlanta that you need to meet. He's very good. His name is Stuart Eizenstat. So I went to a breakfast with this man and several others. This man named Stuart Eizenstat struck me as somebody from almost a different generation even though he was obviously not too far from me in age. He had on a very thin tie, and a sort of outdated suit. He had a tie, I remember that day, that nobody wears and a button-down collar, but he was so intense and honest and intelligent and warm I was really struck by him so that if at that point I was intellectually interested in becoming a part of it, having met him, I was emotionally committed to becoming a part of it. And then, in Atlanta, they brought on a woman named Harriet Zimmerman. I had begun to do some work in the Washington area. As it turned out, and these are the flukes of fate, Harriet's mentor, a person who's taught her a great deal about what she knew, turns out to be the same man who has taught me a great deal about what I know about politics. Or knew at that point. The same, and so therefore he said to her, there's a, and by the way, he was not a Democrat. He's a Republican. But he believes that people ought to be involved in the political process. So he said to her, "This woman in Washington is good, and you can depend on her, she's reliable." She called me, I called her, things went back and forth and eventually she invited me to come to Atlanta to work. It's an accident of history.

Alsobrook: Okay, so you went to Atlanta?

Starr: I was given 24 hours to decide at that point. She said to me, "Look, I must have somebody here, but I know you're a PhD, et cetera, and so forth. However, I need a secretary. And I can only pay you \$500 a month, and you have 24 hours to decide." And I made a very quick decision, and within 24 hours I had changed my life. Now, again, I think the interesting part of this is that when you're involved in campaign activity it doesn't matter where you start, but you must accept, again, humility or the humbleness of the experience because there is no money in campaigning. And certainly, all people are equal. It doesn't matter how many degrees you have if you can't do the job. But within a matter of a month and a half, she found me quite indispensable, because I'm a good writer and can do that. I came down actually as a double-function. One as her secretary and the other as her press person, because she knew that I was very interested in the media. However, I failed to tell her that I had never done a press release in my life. But I easily and quickly identified Walt Wurfel as somebody who had come from Senator Stone's office and I knew Senator Stone was a marvelous man and that anybody who came from his office had to be good, and asked Walt repeatedly how my press releases were going and to advise me. So I became a master at the press release.

Alsobrook: Is that Senator Stone from Florida?

Starr: Yeah. And I told Harriet approximately two months into the campaign that, by the way, when I arrived I had never done a press release in my life. And sort of she looked at me in this state of shock, but what I did in the campaign was to initiate, not so dissimilar from what I've told you about here, an entire PR campaign. Every week I sent out to a master list in the Jewish community, which I put together and put on a computer in the campaign offices, press releases. Every single thing that Carter had done about Jewish issues and non-Jewish issues that might interest them. And I included clippings. I had clippings from all newspapers all over the country because somebody in Kansas never sees the Washington Post, and it's usually those newspapers that carry the weight of what's going on in the political campaigns. So I think we did an outstanding job.

When Harriet Zimmerman and I came on board, Carter was down nine to one against in the Jewish community. When we finished, and there was a young fellow named Mark Sussman (?) who was a marvelous, energetic person that you may want to interview for this whole process, at some point. This was it, this was the staff: Mark, Joyce, and Harriet. Mark is 23 now, so you can image that he wasn't very old at that time. And he was out in the field. And at the end, it was approximately 78% nationally and over 90% in Florida and some phenomenal number in New York, which was the real crux. We did an outstanding job.

However, I must say, we were never thanked. Not only were we never thanked, but, along with everyone else in the campaign, and my severest criticism of the process here would be the way that people were treated after the campaign. All those who had broken their backs were basically told, "Give us your address and we'll get in touch with you. And tell us what you want to do and we'll be in touch." I fought very hard because I lived in Washington and I was not, I was really very stubborn at that point, I wasn't going to allow that kind of treatment. But what you go through in not allowing that kind of treatment can take a lot out of you. Again, this isn't because any person I've named is a bad person or a negative person but there was so little experience in handling- nobody knew how to handle the transition to power. And, as a result, 3/4^{ths} of the people at least who had been so desperately involved in trying to elect Carter were as desperately injured and hurt. I remember a day that one woman said she was prepared to, she felt suicidal, because she had given up her apartment, she had been making as little, she made probably less than I did, for months and months, in her case I think it was almost up to a year at that point. You're half bankrupt and you have no place to go. And you have the humiliation of your friends, and I didn't have it so much because things went relatively, there were some difficult weeks, but eventually they went well. There were many people it went much worse for that were absolutely unforgiving. This is important.

Alsobrook: I want to ask you one specific question about the campaign. There was an occasion there when Carter addressed like a Jewish community group in Miami and I think much was said in the press about the way Henry Jackson offered to handle Jewish groups. And there were some critical comments made that Carter didn't quite handle these groups as well as Henry Jackson. Do you recall anything like that, and perhaps, how would you go into a situation like that and prepare the President for going into a situation where he would have to speak to a Jewish community group.

Starr: In Miami, he didn't, he spoke to the old people, the elderly citizens, and I was there. He didn't do well, he didn't do badly. He did neutral. There was nothing significant about his trip to Miami, but I did arrange and was the coordinator for his Middle East policy address in Elizabeth, New Jersey, which launched him in the Jewish community. It was the beginning. And, if I can only tell you what I did there. I, first we arranged, and that was Harriet, arranged that it would be held in a Jewish community center. Secondly, I sent out telegrams, much to everybody's later chagrin, because of the cost, inviting every rabbi or key leader in the surrounding area. A personal telegram, which was absolutely unheard of in a campaign situation, but it worked. There was enormous attendance. And, understand that at the time, Carter was nobody. So to get them on a Sunday, to come to a Jewish community center to hear this man they didn't like in the first place was not so easy. Secondly, I contacted all of the press in New Jersey and New York. There were personal contacts made to every single press and radio outlet so that there was enormous coverage. And I have all the clippings. It was enormous, it hit the front pages of the New York Times, and the Washington papers, and the New Jersey papers.

And it became the currency of his entrée to the Jewish community, but most important, in all of this, was a phone call from Stu Eizenstat, on the President's plane, even before I had made the calls to the press, saying to me "Joyce, the President may not deliver the speech in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He has a stop before, and he thinks maybe he should do it there." And we had, even at that point, things so well organized I knew it would be a disaster on two scores, one, that at the previous stop he would get no attention, and two, imagine all these people invited, and all the work and there's no President. So I, with great chutzpah, if you the word, said to Stuart, "God, Stuart, that's impossible. I've already invited the press." Which is the only time that I have or would color the truth with somebody that I respect so highly, but I think he was grateful. I think, even later, that he knew that I did, but he managed to get the president there. But you can see it placed on me the enormous burden of getting the press. However, having taken that responsibility, you know, really, that was it, taking on a responsibility, I came through, so... You see, what you had here, Stuart wrote the speech. You had, on the ground, one who really understood the community and also cared about the President. Who combined both and was willing to take risks and enormous responsibility. And in the air, you had one writing the speech and advising the President who had tremendous sensitivity. That speech was written by Stuart Eizenstat and nobody else! If Stuart Eizenstat had been writing the President's speeches and the President, you know, for the next year and a half on some of these issues I don't think he would have faced the confrontations that he's faced.

Alsobrook: You mean other issues, in addition to just some Jewish affairs or anything?

Starr: On the Middle East, I'm talking now. And, but I'll tell you the truth, I think on much more than that, because in this man you have really a jewel. He is a phenomenal asset to the White House and to the American people. He's young. He's about 35 or 36 now, but he's sensitive and yet tough and he's, has an ability to absorb so much

information. And he was next to the president throughout the campaign. He was drafting all of the policy speeches. And now when people say “Well, wait a minute, the President’s positions are counter to what he said during the campaign,” they’re really counter to what Stuart said.

Alsobrook: Mm-hm. This was really the building block, then, for all the other Jewish communities that you worked with.

Starr: Yes, yes,

Alsobrook: As a follow up, did you, were you inundated by correspondence from Jewish people across the country? Who would write the President and they would funnel the letters to Joyce Starr?

Starr: Absolutely inundated. They funneled letters to Harriet Zimmerman and Joyce Starr would answer all the letters. We did it, as I said, with just the two of us. And no secretary. Although eventually we built a core of volunteers, of women from Atlanta, and at half their age I was directing a staff of volunteers. You know, which was, again, I find it unnerving, you know, to be telling these women what to do, but you simply have to do it.

Alsobrook: You were telling me a few minutes ago, Joyce, about the disappointment some people faced during transition. Could you tell me briefly a little bit about what your transition experience was like? Was it just a continuation of the campaign?

Starr: No, I was, they didn’t really know what to do with me, so. They, I wasn’t a lawyer, but it was Bob Lipshutz who was looking out for me so they made me an aide to Bob, or, basically a secretary. Again, with a PhD and having come from a very high, you know, a very high paying job at the National Endowment for the Humanities before I came into this whole process, I was now earning what I earned approximately six or seven years before when I first came to Washington and serving as a secretary. Really! I mean, I might have called myself an aide, but the fact is, I was a secretary. Getting coffee and typing things and occasionally when Bob needed I would serve in his place in a meeting, et cetera, so forth. But he was absolutely new to any such role as having an aide. He’s a lawyer, a Washington lawyer, so he didn’t know how to use one if he had it. So I would say that by and large, not only I, but most of us, went through the transition spinning wheels. There were now, there were people doing policy papers who worked very hard in writing and drafting but again, most of them didn’t get anything or didn’t get what they wanted or their policy papers made absolutely no difference, which is, I mean, there was, I mean- Again, you had an entire system that fed nowhere. I’m sure that many of the decisions that were made, were made as a result, but I don’t think most of them were.

Alsobrook: When you said you were spinning your wheels, a lot of people spending their wheels, what sorts of things were you doing while you were spinning your wheels?

Starr: They were all worrying about what they were going to do after the transition was over. The whole process of transition was trying to find out what job you were going to get when it was finished. Although you did things, I mean, there was work, there were people to see, et cetera. But if you had, I don't remember how many transition people we had, but if most of them were there knowing they were there for three months and knowing that they didn't, had no idea on what was going to happen next. Then that couldn't do them a good sense of security to come into the job every day. If you would go into the cafeteria of the HEW building it was like a morgue. The main preoccupation of all the conversations was, "Well did you hear anything? What do you think? What do you think you'll get? What'd you think *he'll* get?" Moira (?) was like "What do you think *he'll* get? Well he's going to get something." And this was, you know, the social dynamic of the transition, was what people- what would happen when the transition had ended. And for me, you know that, and this may be of some value, I finally had a meeting with Stuart and said, "I think you ought to be involved in ethnic affairs." Although nobody knew exactly what that meant in the forthcoming administration and, but they did finally appoint Midge Costanza, and Bob said, "I've introduced you now, I've told Midge about you, and she's interested in hiring you." But never was it said, "She **will** hire you." Never was Midge told that she must do something, and this was largely, I think, the way it was handled throughout. [Starr is distracted by a noise] Can you hold a second?

Alsobrook: Wrapping up the transition, you were talking about the...

Starr: Ah! Alright, so I was told to call Midge Costanza. I called her and went over to meet her, was very impressed upon the first meeting, because she was energetic and dynamic and finally she made me an offer! She offered me that I should be secretary at twelve thousand dollars a year. And I said that was impossible. I was enraged at that point. After all of it, to be offered, you know, to go backwards seven years professionally, and with absolutely no regard to my professional achievements, et cetera. And she said it was, she couldn't control it because she was given only so many slots at this level. I said no I, no thank you. She called me back a second time and... No, I'm sorry, I said twelve thousand dollars. I'm very sorry. She offered me a job at nine thousand dollars. And, yes, I finally... It was, I mean, it was really awful. It kept going on and on like this till finally I was able to obtain some decent pay level from her, having turned down a job at the White House three times. So I can't say that I was one of the people who was ready to take it at any cost. But again, here you have people moving into the political process, the White House without any experience, any sense of professionalization or professional requirements treating people very poorly, getting off to a very bad start, a sense of tremendous anxiety permeated the White House. The first year you could cut it with a knife. People would come in to see their friends or associates and they would say, "I have to get out of this building. It's just awful." Because there was no sense of what, of control. Everything was out of control. By virtue, I believe, largely, not of ill will but lack of experience. A person like Midge Costanza should never have been appointed to that kind of position. I don't think Hamilton would disagree with that today, but it... The American system is a beautiful one in that people can come from the grassroots with- You don't need a degree to have a good head, you certainly don't. But you do need some experience. And there are people in our system who perhaps haven't gone to even,

maybe, college but they've accomplished amazing amounts and they know life. But this was not true. And a person like Midge Costanza was placed in the White House, affected the lives of eleven to fifteen other people who were, I mean, to give you some bad news for your tape, there were two cases of hospitalization based on what were really nervous breakdowns. I wasn't one of them, you know, but it's unnecessary. Now, nobody could go to the President and tell him that there are people that are collapsing, that are being hospitalized, that are having bleeding ulcers because of this, this... And I don't think Midge Costanza should be blamed for it, or any of these people, because she was as helpless, she didn't have the experience, how could she have the confidence to know, she was out of control herself. She can't be called, you know, people will call her all sorts of names, and this and that, but it's not her fault that she never had the confidence to come in to such a job, and who's going to turn it down? Who would be brave enough to say, "I'm not, I don't, I'm not the right person." So you ought to, whenever you do talk to Hamilton, I think that he would be the most interesting person to talk to about assessments of hiring practices and qualifications to match them. He's seen it from really on the inside.

Alsobrook: Joyce, you've talked about this atmosphere. Has it changed during the time you've been here? You've talked about the early months.

Starr: Well, it went on for really an awfully long time and then there were, as you may remember, the various cuts of staff. Where again, nobody knew if they were it or not, so there was another six months of tremors throughout and now there's Janes Wales, who eventually will leave and you'll interview her and she may tell you she's, that every three months she's renewed. She's never, you know, she's never on for good. She doesn't know if, she never really knows if tomorrow she has a job, although she does know, but she doesn't! I mean, she does a beautiful job and Anne likes her, but there's a sense of insecurity and not knowing that you're on for the long haul, not the short haul every three months. So, when people were caught, this again provoked that same tremendous anxiety. I would say that you don't have it now, because there's no discussions of people being fired, or... And also, they're now gearing up for the next campaign, so those who have made it through basically feel that they'll be pulled into the next stage. But I don't see, I don't have any sense that there's joy either. There's, the anxiety level has gone down, and people have accommodated to their workloads much better. They simply were not prepared for the workloads. People just... I've watched them age in front of my eyes, I've watched them become, you know, absolutely blurred human beings. And old. Old before their time. Takes a lot out of you, to be here.

Alsobrook: Why is it so much more difficult to work here than, say in some other different outfit of government? What are the pressures here that you have that you wouldn't have in, say, State or Defense, or maybe you would have those there. What do you feel about that?

Starr: I haven't had, not- I've not worked in those places, but you're protected there. First they know most of them are either civil servants or Foreign Service people, depending on which agency, and not political appointees. These are all political, most of

them are political appointees. Anxiety usually comes from a number of things. One is lack of confidence in yourself. If you're a Foreign Service officer, you usually have confidence that you know what your job is and that you can get it done. One may question the Foreign Service, but by and large these people are confident in what they do. Civil servants that may be another story, but at least they know they have job security. Here you have people that came in without confidence, they didn't know what it was that was expected of them and how to produce it even if they could find out what it was and nobody could tell them, since senior advisors had no idea. And secondly there was, there's no job security, so that if they risk too much and went too far, they could be axed without any notice whatsoever, maybe a week or two, if it was decided that, you know, if anybody wanted to be kind to them. But, they're completely at the mercy, without job definition. And now that has changed for some people.

I think you'll find it much less so, by the way, on the domestic policy staff. There, although there are obviously frustrations, number one, they knew what their jobs were. They knew what the issue was, and they knew what they had to do, by and large, to get it done. They found out as time went on. Secondly, the feeling for Stuart. [Starr fiddles with her microphone] I was saying about the domestic policy staff that it's my impression, and you'd have to verify this, that they do know largely what's expected of them, but secondly and more importantly, there's a wonderful rapport with their boss. Stuart's not renowned for his management abilities and, in this sense, sometimes his staff suffers, but there's a grand respect for his mind and for his judgment and for the time he takes to pay attention to serious, substantive issues. So for them, I think there was a bit more of a, a protection, but for the rest, we were all, and this goes really mostly through the White House, except maybe not the advance people, but even Fran Bordy's shop, et cetera, subject to public pressures. So on the one hand you had lack of job definition within, you had personal insecurity, and three, you were being pummeled daily by people and always on the telephone. I mean, I began to think that the telephone was an extension of my arm. I was told that, one time, I did have a volunteer for a while who said said that she would have committed suicide had she had to take so many telephone calls per day. Always to be nice, to be, to try to treat people well, which, by the way, was not often the case and people, and I would find that when you did treat them well say would say "Gee, it's awfully nice of you to treat me nicely." You know, as if it was really... Your nerves become shattered by the pressures of the public and they never call up and say, "By the way, there's something I can do for you." They can, reasonably so, only call up and say, "This is what you can do for me. I need this, I need that. By the way, the President would really benefit if only you could get this to him. And, you know, he really should be at our conference and be the main speaker, it would be tremendous for his image." And you simply must take every request seriously, because, number one, you don't have the authority to make the judgement that it's not a valid request, sometimes you do if it's really absurd, but you have to give the people a chance. That, you know, you'll follow through for them. So you follow through, but it's, you know, then you're the one calling the Vice President's scheduler to say, "Now, I've got the United Jewish Appeal executive young executives you see, and they would really like, they're going to be in town, so Mondale won't have to go very far, he'll just have to go over to the Sheraton, and they only want him for twenty minutes, but if he could make an

appearance it would make all the difference in the world.” Which is a speech they’ve given you, now you’ve got to give it to Mondale’s secretary, and all along you’ve got a terrible feeling in the pit of your stomach, because, you know, you know you’re putting pressure on her, and she has to then put the pressure on somebody else, and you’re- It’s constant, constant pressure! And if you don’t have the good will of your colleagues inside the White House or inside the State Department, you’re dead!

Alsobrook: When you’re dealing with these people, Joyce, who call you all the time, do you have the feeling that they believe that you’re speaking directly for the President? Do they seem to hold you personally accountable?

Starr: Absolutely. They have an absolutely inflated view of what you can do, even as an assistant to an assistant to the President. They believe that if you’re in the White House, you can do it. For example, even a very small one, I have a call from somebody who says her boss wants, she hates to bother me, and it’s the second time she’s done it, but if only I could get her the signature of the President for her boss, it would mean an awful lot to him. And I try to explain that I can’t get the signature of the President, or if I can, maybe once in two years. It’s not something, this is a minor thing, having nothing to do with substance. And then it goes from there all the way to arranging for the President to speak. But, they say, “The President promised that he would speak to the Lubbovich (?) in New York City and he promised in 1976, and does you know what this is going to mean for his re-election? And **you** were the one that channeled the promise in 1976, and do you realize what that means for you?!” [Both laugh] You know, two very serious issues, the Zionist Organization of America saying, “How could the President say this about the PLO, he’s forsaken the Jewish people of the United States.” I was just saying about the ZOA, you know, “How could the President- Did you see our alert, we sent it out to our five thousand membership,” and, you know, “We want our protest to go immediately to the President, we want to know what his answer is.” Or the Soviet Jewry people saying, “We sent a telegram to the President on Shcharansky and we haven’t received an answer.” And then you find out that the telegram was lost, and nobody can find it in the White House, and all these people believe that the President actually read the telegram. It came to a point, late in my tenure at the White House, when I would begin to tell groups very honestly, “I want you to understand that if you want to have, to be effective politically, you must realize the President cannot read all of your correspondence. So perhaps instead of writing a thousand letters to make your point, you should write one and tell him how many people you represent. And understand that he probably won’t even read that, but somebody else will, and it will have an effect on the political count. But don’t, when do you think the President is going to sit down and read all of these letters and telegrams?” So your question was about me, yes, but it goes beyond me. They think that everybody here is omnipotent with time on their hands. I don’t know what they think we can do.

Alsobrook: It almost sounds like, from your description too, that American people expect too much out of their President.

Starr: Absolutely. On the other hand, the things they have a right to expect I don't think are being done under this administration. Which is not... There's no lack of access, but there's a lack of personal access. Lack of sense of human warmth access. I don't know how to better describe it. But this President is open, his people are enormously open, I think. Maybe it's closing up now for lack of time and people are tired.

Alsobrook: Is there any way someone could prepare themselves to work in the White House. This is sort of a ridiculous question, but it's based on other things I've already asked you, and you've told me an awful lot about your campaign and something about your transition jobs and what you did here. Were there previous jobs that you've had that you felt like helped prepare you for what you did here?

Starr: I worked with the National Endowment for the Humanities and traveled throughout the country for them, meeting people in small communities, evaluating what was a seven million dollar program, a certain portion of it. So that, one, I had a rather large reservoir of emotional empathy for the people of the United States. And patience, I think. [laughs] I've lost it, it's gone now. But I started out with a great deal of patience and empathy. And a willingness as a... I think because of my own training, the way that I am as a, I'm not a research sociologist, I'm an active sociologist, you know, do interviews, et cetera. So I always know that you don't know the answer. I go from the assumption that I'm going to have to work very hard to learn. And to really absorb the systems going on around me. And that is an asset. Because if you think you know, then you're really dead from the start. But I think that people ought to know the kinds of things, for example, that I'm saying to you, maybe some of us ought to talk about it more or write about it more, I don't know. I- They're common sense to me, it never occurs to me somebody else would be very interested in them. On the other hand, without them, they're only going to go through the same problems and mistakes. There really is no way to be prepared in this country because the country doesn't prepare you to serve the public in a political position. They teach you about government theory but they don't teach you about government bureaucracy. They don't teach you about the problems. What if, for example, you're dealing on Soviet Jewry, and this was not my problem or not the case, but let's say the National Security Council had a staff member who had this set up as his basic province and the guy hated my guts. This would be a real problem in doing my job. So one of the first and foremost things you have to do is make friends with people. You don't have to go out and go drinking with them, you don't have to be friends in the home with them, but you have to be friends and warm. It's maybe more important than anything else you do in accomplishing what it is that you need to accomplish. And if you come in arrogant, as most people do, having come from a campaign and winning, then you're really in big trouble. I wasn't arrogant because for me it was all an accident of fate. I never thought for a moment I was heading toward the White House. First I was going on a campaign, then I was going in a transition, I just didn't think about the future, really.

Alsobrook: Speaking of the future, what would you like to be doing ten years from now?

Starr: It's my philosophy of life not to think about what I want to do ten years from now. I'm leaving the White House to be representative coordinator for the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University. I am going to open offices for them in Israel and Egypt, but be located in Israel. That means that we are the first Washington-based organization to open offices in these two countries, though the office will be situated in Israel, and it's a tentatively a three year commitment for both parties, and I think that's enough to swallow for the present time, in terms of anticipating what the future will bring me. I was offered by Stuart to head up the twenty million dollar program for refugee resettlement. And I turned it down. Because if there's one thing that this job precluded was, and is, the ability to, or the desire, let's say the desire to go into the bureaucratic structure to try and run a bureaucratic program. While it was a magnificent opportunity, and even those I conferred with, first I told him no, blankly and flatly no with, you know, good will, but flatly no, but then I told some people about it who said, "How could you have done that, it's such a foolish mistake, what a fantastic opportunity for such a young person, to head up such a big project, so much money, it'd be marvelous on your resume!" [Alsobrook laughs] This is Washington lingo, "It will be marvelous on your resume," and I said, "Well this may be so, but what about for me personally, what it will do to me," and so, you see, now, I leave the White House knowing that the most appalling thing would be to go into HEW. The most appalling thing. Which would suggest to you that, and I don't think I'm any different than the majority, that what this experience does is preclude talented, knowledgeable people from entering the system. You simply know that you cannot enter the system, it would be insufferable to you.

Alsobrook: You mean, working in the White House is something that—

Starr: Working in the White House, showing you what the system looks like, having to deal with the system, there's no way, I would be really shocked if you did a statistical count. I think you will find, I'd be shocked if you found that the majority or even a significant minority of the people went in the system, unless you're talking about NSC people going back into the Foreign Service system. But you see it. And you don't want any part of it. Which means that instead of improving, we're getting away as fast as possible. We can't take what we know, we won't take what we know, because nobody has the energy left to do it. I'm sure that this is the case. Or the will. But it, if it's more openly discussed, if you didn't go by such a terrorizing experience here, then maybe people could move more easily in and out. If it wasn't "we" and "us," "we" and "them," for example, when you're here in the White House, it's "we" against "them." "We" are in the White House. Then to go to an agency is a terrible thing. Right? It's terrible, it's going to "them!" And you, they're going to take out on you, having been part of "we." So this isn't something that comes very comfortably. It's like going to an embassy and saying you represent the White House and having to watch the daggers in your back. You're really not well liked out there by the American public, you're not disliked, you're idolized. Until they find out that you can't deliver. The American public is another whole question, I really do think, and you did bring it up, that their sense of what they can demand of the President and of the White House is absolutely out of focus. And

always to the detriment of the President, because then he's faced with just enormous unrealistic expectations.

Alsobrook: Joyce, knowing what you do now, would you do all this over again?

Starr: Of course, you never, how could you reject a part of your life? It's a phenomenal experience to, with whatever the frustrations or the exhaustion or the aging process, to learn this about life, to learn this about a part of our system is really something quite extraordinary.

Alsobrook: One final question, now this is for use of a future Presidential library, we need a permanent legal address, if you have one, and a telephone number. You said you were getting ready to go to...?

Starr: Yeah. I'll give you my families.

Alsobrook: That'll be fine.

Starr: They're at apartment 1604, 20100 West Country Club Drive, North Miami Beach, Florida. The phone number is 305-931-2990.

Alsobrook: And if we ever had any problems contacting you, could we contact you safely through Northwestern Alumni Association, or something like that?

Starr: Absolutely not, they have no idea where I am. [Alsobrook laughs] You'd have to contact me through the Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies, which is at 833-8595 within the next three years, they ought to have some idea of where I'll be. Maybe the American Embassy will be able to tell you which country I'm floating in or out of at the time.

Alsobrook: Thank you very much.

[Tape ends]

Joyce Starr- interview 2, side 1, tape 2

Alsobrook: Interview number two with Joyce Starr, April 13th, 1979, 2:00 PM in her office at 1800 K Street NW Washington, at Center for Strategic International Studies, Georgetown University. The interviewer is David Alsobrook of the Presidential Papers Staff.

[Unintelligible conversation]

Alsobrook: Joyce, in our first interview, you mentioned that you had carefully studied all the presidential candidates in 1976. How were you able to reach a decision on Jimmy Carter?

Starr: It evolved. Initially I was antagonistic to Jimmy Carter, particularly because of his Baptist upbringing and something elusive that I couldn't quite put my finger on. However, I had two friends, one whom, well both of them I was very close to who became involved in the campaign. One is an old campaigner. He dates back to the Bobby Kennedy days and Birch Bayh days, et cetera, and campaigning was a lifestyle for him, even though in between he found other positions and he made the assessment that to become involved with Carter could bring him what he had been looking for since the days of Birch Bayh and Bobby Kennedy. Some political position and involvement. He wasn't looking for great status so much as involvement, and, well he wouldn't have turned down the status. The other person was Puerto Rican, and was called one day by the first friend who was in Philadelphia on one of the primaries at that time and asked him to come down. The Puerto Rican made the decision that to become involved with Carter could help him and his community, that to have a foot in the door would mean that Hispanics would be represented in Carter's campaign, so generally it would help his people, whom he was very committed to and more specifically, if he was the one to have his foot in first, then ultimately, as the campaign evolved, and if Carter was elected, then he would be assured also of something much more than he had at the present time. He was working on cities with the National Urban Coalition at that moment.

I rejected both of their involvements and was very antagonistic, but little by little began to examine the premise that if you had a foot in the door, so to speak, it could be good for the larger concerns that you have and for your own future more directly. And I began to look at it as a research project, and I began to examine, not telling either of these two people, I began to call up and see who was involved. For me, the issue was the Jewish Community concerns. I was very strongly, I won't say I was involved, I was not involved with a single Jewish organization, which distinguishes me from other people whom I have talked to about this subject. I never had been, was not, and probably won't be in the future. I'm non-organizationally oriented but I had spent several months in Israel in 1973, before the war- after the war, actually, although I volunteered during the war. And I was a volunteer in Israel during the war and came back very concerned and determined to do something in that area. Several years of frustration, not finding a way to do it. So I began, as I said, to examine this premise of involvement, and saw, that perhaps this was the outlet, and both seemed to feel and I did respect their judgment, that Jimmy Carter in a substantive sense, had much to recommend him *vis a vis* the other candidates. I don't remember the sequence exactly but I think about that time that Hubert Humphrey decided not to run. And then people like myself were freed up from an emotional affiliation with Humphrey. I was an intern on Capitol Hill when Humphrey was Vice-President, so while I thought he was a bit emotional, he was much beloved by me as everybody else.

Now, eventually I went down to headquarters one day with one of these two friends who had meetings there. He thought I was just going along, not for anything in particular, and I used that occasion to talk to people who were in the headquarters. This was in Washington and one of the people there was Peter Bourne. And Peter had worked with me, not directly, but we were both at the Drug Abuse Council. I don't know if Peter's

mentioned that to you and I told him I wanted to be involved in the campaign. There was also another gentleman and he played a significant role although I've now forgotten his name, but he at that time had the status of head of the Jewish desk. He came from Connecticut, I believe, and he later went down to humiliation in the campaign. For some reason, he was, he had some fight with somebody. I don't remember who or for what. He was a much older gentleman, had devot- had volunteered his time, not much older, much older than me, and had come on to the campaign as a volunteer to coordinate Jewish affairs from Washington. But as I said, he had a falling out. I'm trying to remember now, exactly with who. Something tells me that it had to do with Robert Abrams who was in New York and a close advisor to Carter. That he and Robert Abrams were somehow in a clash with each other. But at that time when I approached him that day in his office, he was very excited because, it's hard to believe it now, but nobody of Jewish orientation wanted anything to do with the Carter campaign. So when I walked in, although I had no real Jewish background, I had, I was anxious to participate, I told him that and I had a PhD. And I, you know, talked as if I was knowledgeable, which basically I wasn't. [laughs]. He had at that time only two people with him, both of whom were under, I think, 21. One was named Sheldon and the other was, somebody whose name I'm not remembering and he also went off into obscurity. And Sheldon was a young hyper-kinetic child who was bright but you couldn't even sit him still in a chair long enough. This was the whole extent of Jewish support in the campaign so I must have looked quite good to him. And he said, "Well, there's a young man, there's a man coming to Washington next week and I'd like you to have breakfast with him." That was Stuart Eizenstat. And I went to breakfast with Stuart Eizenstat and I suspect that his response to me was good and, because, then I was asked to do a little bit more. I don't know if you want me to carry it further but I can, if you want me to go further, with how, with what happened next?

Alsobrook: Sure, go ahead.

Starr: I was asked to develop lists of outlets, newspapers to focus on the public relations angle in the Jewish community. So I began to compile press lists of Jewish press in different cities, and major media outlets, major and minor, and to determine what Carter could do in these various cities *vis a vis* the Jewish community. Which local radio station was in which major Jewish community and could there be a broad-based campaign to get to people. We were looking at, how do you call it mailing lists, bulk mail...but there's a better word for it, when you send, I can't remember it.

Alsobrook: This was when you were still in Washington, right?

Starr: I was still in Washington. It was now May perhaps by this time. I guess I went in to the headquarters in April. It was now May. Right. And one day I received a call from a friend of mine who had been head of the Jewish desk under Nixon, who then was employed in the White House under Nixon, in the emer- as head of the Emergency Preparedness Office. His name was Larry Goldberg, a very close friend of mine, although a Republican. And he said, "It turns out that the Carter people are bringing somebody on board in Atlanta to head up Jewish affairs and she's a very close friend of

mine and I told her that you're okay." This was Harriet Zimmerman who later took over the desk. By now this fellow in Washington, I guess, had somehow disappeared. Harriet came on board. We met by telephone and I began to do some of these things for her.

Alsobrook: Still in Washington though, right?

Starr: Still in Washington.

Alsobrook: Can I ask you a question about Harriet at this point since you brought her up? Why was she brought in to head up this particular office?

Starr: That's a good question. Harriet had just, had a divorce, approximately a year and a half two years prior, maybe less, maybe even less than a year and a half. She met, as a divorced woman from Boston, a divorced man from Atlanta, Georgia, and took the leap and married him and relocated in Atlanta after spending her whole life in Boston. The Carter people were searching around in Atlanta for somebody to coordinate these issues. The people that were searching were Bob Lipshutz and Stuart Eizenstat. They met Harriet, I believe, at a party, and they learned that she had extensive activities, background in Jewish activities. She knew all the organizations. She knew all the people. And she was moneyed herself, so she had the time and interest and she was looking for something to do. So they basically brought her on board. It was really a fluke of timing and situation and their own lack of knowledge of people that were active in the Jewish community. Its probable Harriet Zimmerman would have been the last person in terms of the hierarchy of those who are, or were honchos. Harriet wasn't among the top 15 Jewish honchos in the country. When you compare them bringing on a Harriet Zimmerman to the position of a Max Fisher there, it's a very broad difference except that she was an ideal candidate because what Harriet understood was the grass roots. She had been active in grass roots Jewish politics in Boston. You could say even radical politics. She herself had gone back for a PhD to Harvard in her early forties, involved in a lot of different things. So she understood the grass roots. And Carter was grass-roots oriented, not oriented toward the elites. Afterall, he had to be because the elites wouldn't look at him. So they found the proper combination in Harriet.

And Harriet learned that there was a woman in Washington who was anxious to help. And turned out her best friend, one of her best friends knew me and vice versa so we made contact by telephone. We didn't meet until, I don't believe Harriet and I actually physically met until Elizabeth, New Jersey. When she went out to Elizabeth first to check out the scene and apparently they decided they wanted to use Elizabeth as a major campaign stop. Harriet went out there and investigated and saw that there were the facilities and the ability, the community being as close to New York as it was. And they had a major synagogue but not a community center. This would be a perfect location for a major Jewish event for Carter.

And I received a telephone call, not from Harriet, but from Phil Wise, in his deepest most Southern accent saying, "Joyce, I heard that you might be willin' to come to New Jersey. We really could use your help." [both laugh]. And the call came in some very early hour

of the morning. It was probably my first close experience with such a thick Southern accent. I thought this must be some kid, I mean, just an eighteen-year-old kid. Who is this guy? But he was very sweet, very humble, by the way, which he continues to be until to this very day, very humble and unassuming. He was from that very moment until today. And, Harriet, of course, had recommended that he phone me. So I landed, I picked myself up, and within I guess another two days was in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Now, here entered another figure. His name is David. I've since repressed David's last name, but perhaps you know it? Maybe you have it on your...?

Alsobrook: Did he work in the campaign?

Starr: David Berg, here we go, David Berg! Yes. Well, David had come to the attention of the Carter people through a man named Alan Rudy. Alan Rudy was the past president of the executive, of the executive division of the- hold on.

Know where I was?

Alsobrook: We were in New Jersey.

Starr: No, no I was, I was saying about David. Oh, that Alan was head of the Young Leadership Division of the United Jewish Appeal. The young leaders are the *crème de la crème* of the United Jewish Appeal men's division, the younger, under-forty, I believe, and the up and coming leadership. And I guess, because Alan Rudy was a southerner, somehow he knew people like Bob Lipshutz, and others and maybe Stu. There was some connection there that I can't quite recall.

He had recommended David Berg, so Harriet had the two of us coming to New Jersey. We landed and met each other, sort of, you know, parried about determining if the other was somehow reliable, or could be trusted. I remember arriving in headquarters in New Jersey and nobody was there to meet me or to tell me what I was to do. So I sat for several hours and I distinctly recall the feeling of being very much out of place since everybody in that shop they called headquarters was considerably younger than myself. I'm 34 now so I must have been, I guess, 31 then, and they were on the average 18 or 19, and Phil Wise *looked* like he was 18 or 19, I still don't know. He's actually not that very old now, so he couldn't have been very old then. And they were all very much to themselves. They were eager. They needed help but you certainly didn't get the feeling, walking into that office that anybody was glad you were there. To the contrary, you were, a distra- not a distraction but an extra object, you could say. So I waited and waited and Harriet didn't show up for hours. But eventually she appeared and whisked me off. Harriet will always be remembered for rushing in and out of doors. And she's a tall woman, and... not terribly tall, but she's about 5'8", 5'9" and big, and dark haired, et cetera. She has that Loretta Young, except with more force, you know, coming in and coming out, making entrance, always has a huge purse with her, et cetera and so forth. And I'm diminutive. And therefore there was a tremendous contrast. When I met her, I was shocked. Because we were a definite physical contrast, not to mention that David Berg was also very short. So here were these two little munchkins with Harriet.

[Alsobrook laughs] And, she rushed us off to a dinner which her husband attended. And he was, I would say, not bored, but a bit irascible, because all of a sudden his new wife of only maybe months or a year's duration was busily engaged in running all over the country for somebody named Carter. Even though he was from Georgia, I don't think that her husband or people in Georgia had had such a positive experience with Carter so they had dubious feelings at the time. I don't think, remember his expressing that but he was a bit agitated. And we began to conspire about this great event that we were going to have and how to put it into effect. And basically, Harriet said she had to move on. I don't remember where she was going, to some other city, but she left it with David and I. Well, this became... I remember David and I running all over town, stimulating press and making the right contacts to get good participation in the event.

But I also remember it, beyond that, it was a time of great turmoil within the Carter camp. I distinctly remember David, although to this day I'm sure that Bob Lipshutz doesn't know it, speaking about a need for a coup. He was speaking actually about Bob but I don't know why. I've since forgotten, although at the time I remember thinking to myself, "This is not a fellow to be trusted, this David Berg." I began then to feel these mixed feelings about him which, by the way, then were borne out by later events. He made a great deal of trouble in the campaign. From almost that time on, he was a source of discomfort to a great many people. He eventually had to leave the Jewish desk. Stuart took him on, this was during the campaign. He was given a good task during the transition and then given nothing. Little by little, he was eased out, you could say. I remember one of his problems. He became very close to Barbara Blum. You see, there were all these various themes in the campaign, and Barbara became very close to Jack Watson, and Jack Watson and Hamilton were eventually having some discord, so, the "ins" were in and the "outs" were out. But at the same time at any rate, I remember that, here was a campaign that was, at best, loose. There was nothing tight about it. These people in New Jersey had literally no sense of connection to the Carter people. They didn't- nobody was even sure who was the Carter people, you know? And we all began to learn names. So-and-So was important and So-and-So wasn't. And so-and-so, like Phil, had been Jimmy's Sunday school student, and there was a fellow, I should remember his name. See if he's here someplace. He stayed in Washington, but in the campaign- so he wasn't here this phase. His wife was, had cancer. He was the treasurer and he was a major fund-raiser. A very nice fellow. We thought that he was *the* main fund-raiser. Our perception was that he was *the* main fund-raiser. He wasn't.

But, there was a little community unto the east coast, another little community unto the Midwest, another going on in the South. I hadn't even met Tim Kraft at the time. So this more or less put into place our involvement. Now I mentioned to you that I did put into effect all the arrangements that Harriet had ordered. Contacting the press and eventually I took, I did a very dramatic thing and that is that I sent out telegrams. And this could have cost me my participation in the campaign because I decide- I made the judgment that the only way to get the people to the event was to do something dramatic that made it appear that we were in a position, a good position and that was not to hope that they would come but to send them personal telegrams. It cost over \$1000. I don't think I had asked the price when I made the decision to do it. When I learned what it had cost, after

it was well on its way and the telegrams were already rolling, I went into a terrible panic. And I recall having shared it with David Berg and then forever ruining the day because I was sure that he would hold it over my head like the sword of Damocles. Had everything fallen apart, I would probably have had to pay that amount out of my own pocket. Because it was a success thereafter questions were raised but nothing at a terribly serious level. Somebody later asked me about it and I told them that I did it, and, alright. A thousand dollars was a great deal of money at the time. [Laughs] I didn't know it, but it was. And I sent the telegrams. Now, I also told you, and I think that this came after the telegrams, which is why I did it, that Stuart called from the plane and said, "Joyce, we're thinking, the President is considering giving the speech at the stop before Elizabeth, New Jersey." And I said, "But that's impossible, Stuart, I've already alerted all of the press." I believe that the motivation for saying this was that I had already sent out a thousand dollars worth of telegrams and I took it upon myself to have the responsibility for getting the press. I don't know, you look like you wanted to stop me.

Alsobrook: Go ahead.

Starr: So Stuart, I think, was actually anxious to have it in Elizabeth, to have it go ahead as planned. He believed it was a good decision, regardless. And, so he, "Oh, well, if that's the case, we'll go along with it." I mean, it was that easy, a turnaround in his response. I hung up the phone and I thought [sighs] "A crisis averted!"

Alsobrook: What did you recall about the actual delivery of the speech?

Starr: Alright, so, then the major event was being held, and rabbis came and lay leaders came. And I don't remember so many lay leaders, I remember a lot of rabbis, but... It was a Sunday, and it was a pleasant day, and the place was in turmoil. Carter arrived, and he came in through the back door. And I stood on the stage, watching him. I don't believe I had ever seen Jimmy Carter before that moment. That was the first time I saw Jimmy Carter. I had only seen him before in the press, in the papers. He came in with a yarmulke, and he sat between the appropriate rabbis and was very studied and calm. His delivery was actually very good. I felt, I remember only what I felt. I felt very warm towards him. I felt a connection, having worked so hard to put it together. And there he sat, not very far away, and he has the ability to relate personally, to look around and relate personally. He doesn't use it often enough but he certainly has it, and he definitely had it then.

His speech was magnificent. I read it over last night before you came and I was shocked at how magnificent that speech was. And while it was so strong with its commitments and avowal to future commitments to Israel he did leave himself some leeway for such delicate questions as the Palestinian issue and negotiations with the Arabs, but the point is that Stuart, as far as I know, and I have never been corrected in this, wrote the speech.

Alsobrook: He wrote this on the plane?

Starr: Yes, my understanding is that Stuart wrote the speech on the plane.

Alsobrook. And you hadn't seen a draft of it before it was given?

Starr: No, I hadn't seen a draft of it. It may be, I've since read, as I said, knowing that you were coming, that Henry Owen was Carter's Middle East advisor during the campaign but I don't think Henry Owen was advising him at this point. I don't think Henry Owen would have come on board yet because it was still rather early. It was June and again, Carter didn't have much credibility. I believe, and you'd have to ask Stuart, that Stuart wrote that speech. It was... Had Carter remained consistent to the wording or the premises of that speech, and maybe in his mind he did remain consistent with the larger principles, but that speech was impeccable and it, yet balanced. Impeccable and yet balanced. In light of that speech, the problems he later had with the Jewish community and with Israel are quite shocking. In light not only of that speech but then, when you go back and you- and I did. I've looked at all the campaign statements between June and the election. And I don't think in modern times a candidate has shown stronger commitment to Israel, a candidate, a more eloquent commitment, not only to Israel by the way but also to the issue of human rights and Soviet Jewry. The Slepak telegram, mentioning-

Alsobrook: I'm not familiar with that.

Starr: He did send a telegram to Slepak during the campaign when Slepak and his colleagues were abused and beat up. And this became a great source of controversy last year for us because when Slepak was sent into exile, Carter did very little. We can get into that at some later date. I have the telegram and I can read it for you, into your-

Alsobrook: Sure, we'll do that when we do our interview-

Starr: I can give it to you for your files. Exactly as I said, I have it here.

Alsobrook: You know, this particular speech, you know, as it was delivered, was it essentially the same as that text there?

Starr: It was exactly that text. We then, we put it into these, this was Stuart's idea to have these little briefing packages.

Alsobrook: Did this become sort of a format for the type of speech he would deliver before Jewish groups?

Starr: Yes, much of it was later called, in each later speech, maybe not the exact words, but the concepts became... remained.

Alsobrook: What were some of the themes that would appear again and again? You touched on them earlier, about his commitment to Israel for one thing but were there certain specific themes that appeared in speech after speech after this one was given?

Starr: Face to face negotiations. That... One thing that I noted in many of the speeches is a... continued referral to defense- offensive arms to the Arab countries. He said he would never sell offensive arms to Egypt. A strong stand was taken, perhaps not by Carter, maybe later by Ed Sanders, but certainly it represented Carter. Ed Sanders came on late in the campaign as an advisor, against the sale of... I'm trying to recall, again, I have it in my notes, of special system to Saudi Arabia. I don't remember what it's called, but it was a military system of some sort, I don't believe it was aircraft but something else that they called "lethal". So he talked about not sending equipment to the Arab countries. He talked about the boycott, a great deal about the boycott. It was a major theme in the campaign. The survival of Israel, the security and survival of Israel and his assurances that he would never balance that survival or security for oil, and that we would give oil to Israel at all costs under his administration. We would continue, the flow would be continued, but in addition our policies would never *ever* be construed to, in such a way that it would threaten that survival or security. He talked a great deal about face to face negotiations, perhaps I just said that. Keeping the Soviet Union out of a settlement. Note, he says here, "I do not believe that the road to peace can be found by US-Soviet imposition of a settlement." Well, in October of 1977, with the announcement of the US/Soviet agreement on a comprehensive settlement, this went up in flames.

Alsobrook: Were there certain things that you and the campaign staff learned in this particular episode that helped you in later addresses far as..? I was curious if there was anything that you and the rest of the workers, campaign staff, learned, you know, say, in terms of personal experience from this particular episode in terms of advance work and so on in preparing for later events of a similar nature.

Starr: I suppose, but I can't attest to how much others, outside of David Berg and myself, learned.

Alsobrook: How about you?

Starr: I learned a lot but then again I wasn't used in later circumstances except for August 30th.

Alsobrook: That's really the next question I wanted to ask you about. I want, can you tell me a little bit about the Jewish Leadership Conference in Atlanta?

Starr: I will but let me say that, there was, in other words, although I had done all this advance work, that skill or that experience was never put to work again. Nobody was really, there was nobody to look around and say we have someone doing advance, now we use them again on some other occasion. They did have an advance team for Carter and they tended to rely on that small group of people. Now, the August 30th thing was much later and I think we should work up to it. Because, by then I had been invited to come to Atlanta.

Alsobrook: Alright. Let's get you down to Atlanta. I know we have interspersed a lot of things.

Starr: But let's, let's, going to this event in Elizabeth, New Jersey, alright, let's just finish with that. As I said, many of the things that Carter said that day have since, maybe are open to question or haven't been validated by events, and I don't say that in a negative way, just simply that, a lot of these things are no longer current, but that's true on any particular issue, but I must say that he was very warmly received and projected very warmly. That when you put Carter in a Jewish crowd, at least during the campaign, the response was very positive. I think very positive. They, and, that... His religiosity, once they met him, was not only not a handicap but it became a benefit because what they didn't, what they couldn't trust at a distance, they could use later, not use, but, psychically, to incorporate it as a validation of their own religiosity, to the extent they were religious. The Orthodox Jew could appreciate the Baptist Carter. So, I don't think that, I think that little by little, this fear of him on religious grounds was frittered away and it was the major fear.

Alsobrook: Do you think events like the Elizabeth, New Jersey, speech contributed to this?

Starr: Oh, absolutely. I can show you the press that we received on it. I saved it. It was phenomenal. It was the front page headline, I guess I did my job well, it was the front page headline of all the major newspapers in New York and New Jersey. And then it was carried by the Chicago papers, and Los Angeles papers. It was front page all over the country, because we invited the wire services and they came. So, it was his first and largest, and one of his largest, I would imagine... I don't know of another event during the campaign that obtained him, as a single event, this kind of press coverage. Nationally, maybe, perhaps his interview with *Playboy* but as far as going before an audience and getting press, this one was, you know, major banner headlines: "Carter says: 'Hands off Middle East.'" Fantastic banner headlines. Like this: what's that? Five about inches? Five inches of headlines in some of your New York papers. That's a lot of headlines if you compare it to any newspaper today. You're not getting that. It was consequential because he went out there and took a stand about Israel. Really took a stand. So...

Alsobrook: Of all the things he said in that speech, and you mentioned some of them a few minutes ago, which one do you think appealed the most to Jewish voters? Was there any one thing about the speech, or was it just his dedication to Israel?

Starr: I think it was just his continued reiteration that he would never sacrifice Israel to any number of situations, oil, strategic, et cetera, he didn't use the word strategic, but that was the basic concept. I won't, this country will not go down because of other interests. We will never play these off one against another. So, Elizabeth ended and I went back home. And then the convention. And I was not asked to come to the convention. Nobody, I guess nobody was really asked to do anything at the convention except those who were handling the convention, but everybody ran to the convention. And the same friend that had gotten us all into this ran to the convention, said "You must come. It's the event of a lifetime. If you don't come you'll be so disappointed for the rest of your life."

Harriet went, Sheldon went, I believe, and others went, and Mark Suskind went and met Harriet there, but I didn't go because I felt that, I hate to be a hanger-on, and just to go to be seen. Whatever would happen to me would happen for good or for bad even though I did want to be involved. So I didn't go to the convention. It was a mob scene. They always are, and I was very both, I felt strongly but I was also angry at my own doggedness because it would have been nice to be there. But I just am against that kind of participation, so I didn't go.

And then I waited and I waited to be asked to do more. June went by. I would write Harriett notes in July saying I'm ready to help. I began to think about how I might afford financially to separate somewhat from, I was working then for the National Endowment for the Humanities as a consultant, to do less in order to do more in the campaign. And eventually one day Harriet called me up and she said, "Well, we're putting together our Atlanta staff," and she'd been working there already for Bob Lipshutz in Atlanta along with the other people. Some cramped headquarters in Bob's office space. You know that?"

Alsobrook: This is at Colony Square? Is that the name of the place?

Starr: No, you know, the first office was in Bob Lipschutz's law office building. They, Bob's, in Bob's building they found cramped, small quarters. They crammed everybody into them. And by the time I got there they had Colony Square, but the initial offices were in Bob's building and everybody was frenetic and crazy. And one day Harriet called and says "You have twenty-four hours to decide."

Alsobrook: And this was after the convention, right?

Starr: Yes. This was now August, so July went by, and I believe I landed there on August 9th, something on that order. So that... she said, "You have 24 hours and I can only offer you \$500 dollars a month and basically you'll be a secretary." Well, I certainly agonized over that, but I leaped. I did it. I decided just to take the chance as life offers you new experiences, why not? So, I arrived in Atlanta Georgia, within, I had 24 hours to decide and I guess three days to get there. I, by Sun- She called me on a Wednesday and I was there by Sunday. And I stayed at her house. I didn't have a place to stay. And I went to Colony Square, saw the headquarters. And the first person I met was when I walked on the twelfth floor, a fellow said: "Hi, my name is Bill Simon." Another young cute kid who later turned out to have major responsibility for all the paperwork going to the President. Grew up a lot over the years, I would say. Although he, I don't mean grew up in a mature way because he certainly was mature then and very warm. And we settled in to office territory. Now, Sheldon had come with. Sheldon had been down in Atlanta. Harriet had also given him the opportunity and he was there before I was and he was *angry*. When I arrived he told me how awful everybody was, and how ill they had treated him and how everything was terrible. And I didn't want to hear it. And then he talked about David Berg and how David was trying to run things, and et cetera and so forth. So I walked into a situation that was rather, that had potential for explosion. 'Cause I didn't trust David and Sheldon was, as I said, hyper-kinetic, and

nobody in the campaign seemed to be connecting with this little Jewish division, sort of off in space. But I sat it out, and sat down and even though it was years after I'd done my dissertation, et cetera, so forth, I began to type letters for Harriet. That's what I was doing. Except that then within a day, she- or two days she was saying, "Would you *write* the letters, again to *write* the letters?" And then by the second week, Sheldon wasn't doing his work so I took over and did Sheldon's work, and David was never there because David didn't want to work. David wanted to be out and have exposure, so eventually by the end of the second week, the only one who was sitting there working was me.

And approximately, at that time, they brought the arrival of Mark Suskind, who turns out to be another *mignon*, as a friend of mine would say. Harriet had all these little people working for her, you know, another, you know, diminutive figure. And he's just had, I think, his 23rd birthday, so he was twenty and he was going to be our field coordinator and go out and do all the grass roots field work. Another hyperkinetic, lovely, wonderful, sweet person, but hyperkinetic. That put a lot of energy in one room, I must say. There was a great deal of chemistry going on. Nobody had a sense of what should be done, and I began to direct and Harriet would say to me, "Tell me what you think we ought to do," and say to Mark, "Tell me what you think we ought to do." So Mark and I began to write memos to Harriett. I would focus on the press and public relations, although I knew very little about it. Mark would focus on grass roots organizing. He had some background, in fact a great deal of background, I think, with Humphrey's people. You'll have to ask him, I don't quite remember. And the whole orientation of the campaign staff which was all on the 12th floor, I guess it was, of Colony Square was to contribute memos saying what should be done next. We would have weekly meetings and we would all sit on the floor of one of the rooms that had no tables in it, and therefore could accommodate all these bodies sitting, and we would have a round of discussion. Each person would say what they had done, and what they think ought to be done, and how it ought to be done, and what the priorities were. And I located some memos. We would hand in weekly a memo which would go through Rick Hutcheson, even then, always the... what do you call it when the person is, the sphinx, a nice person, but a sphinx, no emotion, just there like a computer. You would hand it in to the computer. You would say where you think Carter ought to be over the next month, which events in your community he ought to attend and it's a priority and then there was a woman who was later fired, whose name I don't remember but you might, who made those decisions. She was off by the time of this list. By August 24th I don't think she was still.....

Alsobrook: Were these meetings, Joyce, of just your staff or the whole campaign staff?

Starr: No, the whole campaign. We would then incorporate with the whole campaign staff sitting on the floor and making these decisions.

Alsobrook: Weekly, you say?

Starr: Yeh, weekly, maybe more if there was an emergency, but...

Alsobrook: Who usually ran these meetings?

Starr: Rick. And there may have been somebody else but I don't remember. I remember Rick. I remember that it was really a big thing if you got to attend. I mean, you had to be the head of a desk to go to the meeting, but maybe if the head of the desk wasn't there, you got to sit in.

Alsobrook: So, if Harriet didn't go you went?

Starr: If Harriet didn't get to go, I could get to go or maybe Harriet could get to take me with her, but it was already breaking down to hierarchy. It didn't take very long and you had this hierarchical sense and everybody sat around in the room and you could say, anticipated the other, each anticipating the other sort of trying to feel out who are these other people. I would say very little warmth. I mentioned to you that it's my image, it's a myth perhaps, that there was always a great deal of warm on campaigns, camaraderie, coalition, not there! There, there was a coolness that pervaded. It was really pervasive. A few people were close, like, perhaps, I guess, Tim, Pat, and Hamilton, there was a few people who were close with each other, but when you sat in a room you certainly didn't feel, "These are my friends, these are the people I'm going to be working with really hard this summer and into the years to come." I don't believe you'd, that there was suspicion, it wasn't the sense that this one is going to try to take my territory, none of that really, just a lack of camaraderie. About the closest people became was the night of the debates. That seemed to stimulate some coalition of emotions, but much beyond the debates, I would say no.

Alsobrook: What do you remember about the night of the debates, indicated there was a camaraderie there?

Starr: First, everybody was waiting to cheer for their questions, or answers, that they had provided Carter on particular questions. We were holding our breath. There was actually a lot of tension but when he did well, we felt, we were cheering and cheering for each other. There was beer that night, that night there was beer provided and pretzels and potato chips, food of some limited kind. And, so it was a bit of a party. But I remember not feeling at all a part of the people that were there and I would hesitate to say that I don't think many people felt a part. You were just there as an individual. Your desk was an individual desk, your office, I mean, the community affairs desk, the Jewish Community Affairs desk. That was it. You that know I didn't know who Hamilton Jordan was until weeks into my stay in Atlanta. I kept seeing this young fellow, I may have mentioned that to you, in a blue jacket running around, and thought, "He's nice-looking and young, another 18-year-old." [Alsobrook laughs.] It was only weeks later that someone said, "You know that's Hamilton Jordan?" and he used to come right by our office every day because he was working, I guess, with Becky at the time. She was doing things with him, Becky Hendrix, and she was located right outside our office. So every day he was going back and forth and I still didn't know that that was Hamilton Jordan.

That, I mean, I may have been less sophisticated than most perhaps, but in other words there wasn't an occasion where it would be very clear who was who and what was what.

Alsobrook: The question that I was really leading to, at one point, was exactly how did the, your office fit into the overall campaign structure? You made one comment that seemed like you were sort of, off by yourself.

Starr: Physically we were off by ourselves actually. There was a huge room, and in this huge room which would be maybe seventy feet, let's say, in length, the size of a house, maybe smaller not the size of a house- a small house in length. You had every desk, you had desks for every state and region. You had all the state coordinators or regional coordinators. I guess, some were state, some were regional, I'm not sure, but they had to do with the country, the global, you could say. Then there was a whole back series of offices. And in one of those offices you had Pat Caddell, in one of those offices Hamilton Jordan. Another office you had the labor people, Pat Derian. And then you had another big office, maybe half the size of the one outside that accommodated, maybe less than half, all of the ethnic groups. Initially, we were the only ones in it. Then as the campaign evolved from August on and they became aware that they needed to respond to Catholics, and to Protestants, and et cetera, they began to bring in some more people. I guess at that, no, in that office there may have been one other person at the immediate time we entered and that was Tom Tatum who headed up the urban affairs and he had all the mayors and governors and he was a very quiet person, very nice, very quiet person. He sat at his desk on the telephone all the time. You hardly if knew he was there. I remember one occasion where I had a huge battle with somebody on the telephone, and I was screaming at them and I sat right in front of Tom Tatum, my desk was directly in front of his. I got off the phone and I turned to him and said: "Tom, I'm really sorry. I feel embarrassed that you had to hear that." And he said "Hear what?" He was that much off in his own world. So Tom was a non-present presence in that room, but the rest of the room was full of people that were working on ethnic, Greek. Alex was in that room and Terry Sunday.

Alsobrook: Alex who?

Starr: You know, I just found this card today. You know, maybe I put it in my purse.

Alsobrook: That's OK.

Starr: Well, he's not on this list but he's somewhere in my purse. [Alsobrook laughs] He handled the Greek affairs.

Alsobrook: It almost sounds like the Office of Public Liaison under one little roof.

Starr: I said that the seeds of the Office of Public Liaison were established in that room, chaos. What happened was back in Washington, Geno Baroni, head of the Center for Ethnic Affairs, made contact with the Carter people and said "you'd better get somebody down there to handle the Catholics and the ethnics," and eventually convinced them.

This is another whole story. I'm not sure of the evolution of it, but Terry Sunday and Vicki Mongiardo would know because it was their story. And several weeks later, Terry, having worked with the Conference of Bishops, I believe it is called, for 10 years, showed up, and Vicki Mongiardo, they came together, and Vicki is an ex-nun. And she'd been working with Geno at the Center. So Geno knew Vicki and Geno had placed Vicki and Terry in our campaign. They arrived very late, late relative to the campaign because they didn't show up, I think, till the end of August by that time. Let's see, this is dated August 24th and they are listed, so I guess they came the third week. I'd already been there several weeks before they came. And Harriet, of course, and I had been working various rates for months. So now, they're just beginning to look at Catholics and ethnics and with only 2 people and whatever volunteers they could muster. And all of us fighting for telephones and typewriters and it was a mess. I mean, if you had your own telephone and typewriter, you were doing very well. That was a big status symbol. I don't remember filing cabinets, but- yes, we all had filing cabinets. I kept mine in my desk. I lost the train.....

Alsobrook: I was really getting at also, how was your office organized, you know, within this overall outfit? You mentioned some-

Starr: I was saying it was outside, so physically it was outside, and physically we were all together and ethnically, we were all ethnic and everybody else was basically white Anglo Saxon Christian, Protestant or Catholic or Baptist, so I say white Anglo Saxon Christian and we were, although Terry, of course, and Vicki were Catholic, in a sense their orientation and the perception of them was ethnic, and we, of course, were ethnic and Tom somehow was in with us, which was... And he was a quiet person anyway, so had he been in the middle of all the rest of them he would have been a quiet presence and Alex was a professor of history, I guess, or something or other at some local university. He certainly wasn't the mettle of these young kids. You know, he wasn't a mixer with them. It just didn't mix. So, basically, those of us in that room didn't mix, and then I would propose that those in the other room didn't mix very much either, although they were more of a mix. If they all went out drinking and did all that, I don't know it. I'm sure that a few went with each other, but... Basically, it then became I hung out, as they say, to the extent that anybody went out, with Vicki and Terry and Tom. This became the friendship group. Now, we didn't go out very much. People worked from 8:00 in the morning until midnight.

I remember entering headquarters and the first person I saw in headquarters was again Phil Wise, and you can see I feel very warmly towards him, particularly, and he said, "By the way, you better bring your clothes in because you aint going to be going home." [laughs] And he was right! [Both laugh.] I did have my apartment within a block and a half, a very cheap place, \$135 a month. Walt Wurfel, I convinced him, I met him quite soon, within a day or two, and I convinced him to take space there because I wanted to know that there was a man in the building. I was so frightened. It was awful, awful, quarters for anybody. And I must say, and I was certainly not alone, you had all of these young kids living in terrible places and one girl finally was raped where she lived. She was raped, I remember. They were living on nothing, really nothing and very committed.

And the other thing I remembered is that Carter never came to headquarters. He never came. He came at the end when he had been elected, he made a tour of the headquarters. But we waited and waited for him to come and there would be various rumors that he was coming. Ah! No, it wasn't when he was elected, he may have come then too. He came when he came to Atlanta for our event on August 30th, he did make a tour of headquarters that day. He never came again. Until, I guess, the end of the campaign, when he may have. But I do remember, because he was in Atlanta, he went to headquarters. But that was it. You had no sense of Carter. Mrs. Mondale came. I don't know if Walter Mondale came. I don't remember him coming either but I might not have been as aware, because his staff was a floor down, or maybe it was two.

Alsobrook: All here in the same building then?

Starr: Yeah, the Mondale's people were in our building and they were on the same floor with, I believe, with Stuart's issue people. I think we had two floors, but maybe there was a third and they were in the middle.

Alsobrook: Well, you know, as far as coordinating the whole thing, Hamilton Jordan, I guess, was called the campaign coordinator. Was he the one who sort of ran the whole show there? Or were there a lot of people running the show?

Starr: You didn't know. I mean, you never had any sense of this is the person that makes decisions. It was the same as it was in Elizabeth, New Jersey. There were vague rumors that Hamilton makes the decisions, and then there were vague rumors that it was really so and so, and Tim is very powerful and Tim and Hamilton are close or Tim and Hamilton are not close. It was a rumor mill with no sense of where the coordination was coming from, except that Hamilton had an office by himself, and that you saw that people wanted to get to Hamilton, and that when they were called in by Hamilton, decisions were made. But there wasn't a sense. There was never, you know, staff meetings at which Hamilton presided. And there certainly wasn't an interaction between Hamilton and the general staff. Maybe Hamilton and Tim, Hamilton and Harriett, Hamilton and Tom Tatum, but not "We are now having a meeting of all the heads of the various departments."

Alsobrook: And during this time, Stuart Eizenstat was traveling? Right?

Starr: No, no, no. No. I think we should get to Stuart. Stuart was down, as I said, a floor or two and I seem to recall it was two, with all of his issues people. Now down there each issues person.... well, most of the, the ones with the heavier burdens had their own small office. Stuart had his own small office and Al Stern sat in Stuart's office and directed traffic in and out of Stuart's office and worked on issues with him. Al was marvelous in the campaign. He had come from one of the universities in Michigan, I believe, Detroit, and always had a sense of humor and a calm about him and, of course, was, I guess, even then he must have been in his fifties. He's in his fifties, I think, now. So he was older He and Bob Lipshutz, you know, that was about it.

[End of tape]

Joyce Starr interview #2 (continued), tape 2 side B

Starr: And then there were little desks that some of the people working on issues had two, but that was run very methodically. Down there, there was method. People knew what they had to produce, they had deadlines, there was even, I believe, a computer of some sort. And they produced these little issues packets, and they made everything look nice, and there was a fellow who's, Steve Travis was down there organizing everything. He's still organizing information for Carter. He's still now working with information. And he did a nice job. And if you had to get messages to somebody, you knew the computer was down, the teletype machine was there. It was run like, more or less, like an office. Whereas upstairs there were just phones going off the hook, and people were very frenetic and jangling, and nerves were tense. Downstairs nerves may have been tense, but it was run quite similarly to the way Stu runs the shop now.

Alsobrook: But as far as being, say, in direct contact with the President during the campaign, Jordan was the one who had the hotline to the President, but did Eizenstat have...?

Starr: Stuart traveled with him. When he traveled, Stuart traveled with him.

Alsobrook: Jody Powell travel with him too?

Starr: Yeah. Now I never saw Jody.

Alsobrook: He was always with the President.

Starr: Yeah, and you know, I didn't meet Jody until last year? For the first time. I met him on the day of all of the trials of all of these people, Slepak and Shcharansky, et cetera, because there was a big meeting in the security room of the NSC downstairs in the basement of the White House, and he attended and I was there. We were there to listen to something, actually. And he walked in and I said, "I'm Joyce Starr." You know, but it wasn't atypical that I would have been involved with a party of people at that point for 2 ½ years and never have met Jody Powell. It wasn't actually strange, it was just a fact.

Alsobrook: So that was the campaign headquarters. Was there anything else about it that stands out in your mind? You described the frenetic activity where you were. And then you described the issues.

Starr: Of being a bit more organized.

Alsobrook: What else do you recall about that experience?

Starr: I can see it very vividly, actually, right now, I really can see it so vividly. The countdown to the election became a significant period because its, the first blow came

with the, the real blow, came with the Carter interview in *Playboy* magazine. The morale went so low. It was very serious and people felt betrayed. There was a real sense of betrayal there.

Alsobrook: OK.

Starr: And there was a feeling of, “Why did this have to happen, and why weren’t the people with him smart enough to keep it from happening?” And then we learned that, in fact, they had recommended the interview. First of all we were outraged generally. I don’t, most people throughout the headquarters, the whisper was one of outrage that Carter did the interview with *Playboy*. Why on earth would a man like Carter do an interview with *Playboy*? And then when we learn his own advisors told him to do it, we felt really betrayed. Why are we working so hard when he has such bad advice, basically was the feeling.

Alsobrook: What was the reason for the interview?

Starr: Because they thought it was good for him. They thought that it was useful that he get that kind of exposure, because he was viewed so much as a narrowly religious person. Too much for the average American. Too un-American. But then, we learned even further to our outrage, that he had a chance to, not erase, but delete from his interview the statements that he made about lust in his heart. And he chose not to delete them. He knew, in fact, he said them after the interview was over, but on the record, as he was walking out of the room, I believe. Something that simplistic. And allowed them to be—
\, I think that the author, who’s name I’ve forgotten, but you may have, showed it to Carter for his evaluation before he published it and he let it stay in. Even if that didn’t happen, certainly Carter didn’t have to say it. It wasn’t something that anybody forced out of him. He did it because he felt like saying it. And it set off a series of questions after people had worked so hard for so many months to establish his credibility, here he is talking about lust in his heart. I mean, it simply, it raised questions about the man that were unnecessary, and that was the feeling, why?

Alsobrook: So this was a period of low morale.

Starr: Yeah, very, very low morale, and that continued really into the campaign and I will say that, to quote somebody and I’ve forgotten who, “We didn’t win the campaign, we simply didn’t lose it.” Because at that point, we were approximately twenty points ahead of Ford, and by the end, we won by only a few points. So all that happened simply, was that our margin kept going down, and his didn’t go up. We really didn’t *win* the campaign. No. I will go back to the August 30th event. Harriet decided that the way to consolidate Jewish support for Carter was to organize from the various states, what she viewed or called grass-roots leadership. Rather than bringing in the presidents of a conference or the presidents of Jewish organizations, our campaign would differ, in that we would go to the leaders of the various communities, for example, in Washington we invited Max Kampelman, with Fried, Fride, Shriver [Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson], I have it right here, Max is a good friend of mine, I have the envelope

someplace. At any rate, he's a very renowned person, highly regarded. Mike Eisenberg, very active with the ADL. Paul Berger, with Arnold & Porter. Names that are not known by every Jewish American, but in their own community they carry a lot of weight and respect. And Harriet was able, through her many sources, to identify these people and we put together lists. And then we put together a second list. And then we put together a third and a fourth list. And eventually we had a country wide list of significant Jewish leaders. And we invited, I guess maybe close to 150 of them to Atlanta, and over 70 came. And it was a very big event.

Up until the last minute, I think even a matter of days, we weren't sure Carter was coming. It was so difficult to convince the Carter schedulers that anything was a priority, you were competing with everybody else. And we certainly, as the Jewish Community Affairs division, did not have high priority status or credibility. And eventually, I guess Harriet went to Bob Lipshutz and said, "It's *either or*. I mean you, this event is an *either or* event, and if we've gone so far as to try and schedule it and get people down here, and August 30th seems to be the best weekend; it's before all the September activity. If we fail to come through, or look foolish, you might as well forget it." And I, perhaps she even threatened to resign, I don't know. But I know she put herself on the line and said to Bob, "This is an *either or* situation." We had, in other words, to spend that much energy on begging for his presence, finally achieving it. Harriet put together a marvelous day. Tim Kraft addressed them, Pat Caddell addressed them, Stuart, and Bob Lipshutz. Pat Caddell talked about his sale of Cambridge survey results to Saudi Arabia, which had been a major, caused a major outcry in the Jewish community, they were furious at that. And he said he had sold them nothing that he hadn't sold anybody else. That they simply bought what was available to the public at large. There was a feeling live and let live. Nobody wanted to make too big a problem over this. But, I don't remember what Tim talked about, but Stuart talked about Carter and his commitment and... I would almost like to go to the notes, because I found something that Stuart said that day.

Alsobrook: You want to do that?

Starr: Yeah, hold on a second. I can't remember actually the gist of it, but I remember that Stuart went in front of these groups and basically said that Carter was absolutely sincere and absolutely committed to all the concerns that they had.

Alsobrook: I just wanted to make sure that yours was on too.

Starr: Yeah. Stuart went very far, and I would like to find that. It's in my records. Very far, in light of later events. Carter spoke, and answered questions, and was well received. It wasn't dramatic, it wasn't received dramatically, but warmly.

Alsobrook: In other words-

Starr: He didn't come in with fire and ice. I would say absolutely not.

Alsobrook: Was the reception as dramatic as your previous experience or was it a different sort of thing altogether?

Starr: Yes, it was very different, because these were intellectuals. And his speech was not memorable. I don't even remember what he said that day. I don't even have a copy of it in my files. It couldn't have been very memorable, or I would have kept a copy of it in my files.

Alsobrook: Think Stu wrote that one?

Starr: I doubt it.

Alsobrook: Or was this one the President probably just delivered off the cuff.

Starr: Yeah, because before we got to the headquarters in Atlanta, much of the campaign took place on the plane and Stuart then was with Carter. But once we came to Atlanta, Stuart more was based in Atlanta, you know, with us, and then he occasionally went with the President places, but I don't think he was with him as frequently. And I don't know that he wrote the speech. Maybe he did, but by then it was more of a bureaucracy, there were speechwriters and various people to do different things.

Alsobrook: And by that point, Patrick Anderson had already become speechwriter to the president, too.

Starr: Probably. I didn't know him, either. And so, the speech wasn't memorable. But he said things the right way, and in addition you had all of these other people like Bob Lipshutz and Stu to say he's okay. "We're Jewish and he's okay." That's basically what they were saying to us, to the people there. "He's Jewish, I mean, we're Jewish and we are willing to stand behind him." I remember that afterward I went with Paul Berger back to the headquarters, I guess only to learn that Carter had made a sweep of headquarters shortly after the speech. I think I had missed the sweep. I don't remember whether I had seen him or not. But Paul said, "Well, he's okay, and I can see giving him support. The alternative didn't look too good to any of those people in the room, they weren't very enamored with Ford." I would say that all that that day convinced them was that, "well, why not." That was basically, there was very little, I mean, the response was certainly not, "My God, this guy is tremendous," or "Boy, are we glad we came here to see this. But the things that we worried about, maybe they're not so bad. There are a couple of Jewish people here that say he's okay. After all, they won't lie to us, we hope." And they liked Stuart. Everybody likes Stuart. I must say, from beginning to end, I believe as for myself, others, what people were backing wasn't Jimmy Carter, but Stuart Eizenstat! And once they heard Stuart speak, after that event, as a matter of fact, all that went on in the crowd was how fantastic Stuart was. That's who they were talking about, not the candidate. They were so impressed with this fellow, you know. And the others? At least they realized that Tim Kraft had some humor and warmth, so he can't be so bad. Pat Caddell sells things to the Saudis, but he parried it alright and Bob Lipshutz seemed like a nice man and even to this day people say he's a nice man, you know he's husky

and big and paternal appearing and that was generally the response to him, he's nice. But Stuart was different. Stuart was outstanding even for these honchos. So I guess they decided to back Stuart. And why not the candidate.

Alsobrook: And so they went back to their cities...

Starr: They went back to their cities. Now I had prepared for them extensive directions and I got to speak at the event. And oh, I was so nervous, it was a big moment in my life. I got up I got to stand up there in front of all of these people who were significant lawyers and corporate heads and whatever and tell them what to do when they went back to their community. I gave them instructions on how to deal with the press and how to write letters to the editors and how to contact their local- or *to* contact their local radio stations and try and get on the air, and, you know, I gave them a list. It was such a task. I prepared a list for each person, depending on his state, of the major press outlets in his state, Jewish and non-Jewish. And I took the target cities that Carter that Jerry Rafshoon had targeted for the campaign and in those cities, highlighted the critical press. So there was target city press, and radio and TV outlets and then there was general state wide, and I had it broken down. It was a very complicated system I created without any help. I remember going over and over it, and kept updating and perfecting it. So we gave them a master plan that was very detailed and practical. And Mark Sussman gave them directions on political activities on the grass-roots, and then he later made it his business. He was out there connecting with all of these people, and he did a very good job.

Alsobrook: What you said earlier, I think the grass-roots approach was really Harriet Zimmerman's influence there?

Starr: Yes, yes. And it prevailed into the White House, because where she stopped, where she left off I took up. And by then, we both shared the same philosophy, and basically, the contact that I maintained in the White House was grass-roots. I was not in touch with the presidents of the conference of presidents, but with grass-roots people. And by grass-roots, you tend to think of people who are not very powerful, but when we talk about grass-roots Jewish, we're talking about grass-roots powerful, but not presidential. Not presidents of organizations, but influential. The local level.

Alsobrook: But some of those people you mentioned, the people who came to the meeting in Atlanta, would you classify them as grass-roots powerful?

Starr: Grass-roots powerful. And influential. And by the way, those people I named, Paul Berger became, was at the center of our dealings on the boycott. He was drafting outside the administration and we were working with him. Stuart was working with him. And a few others, but Paul was doing most of the work. Mike Eisenberg has been involved with the administration as an outside resource. Not as directly as Paul, but sort of filtering it through other people. Max Kampelman is one of perhaps five people that the Carter administration does not ignore and calls upon regularly. He's one of the five people, Jewish, I can't speak about others, he doesn't call them, they call him. So we identified some pretty powerful people, but they wouldn't have come to Carter's attention

otherwise. Now, I'd say that the Washington people were the most important, because they're here in Washington and because they're more interested in Washington politics. Those who're from the further hinterlands certainly believed that they were going to have a great deal of influence. As time went on in the Carter presidency, when they had worked so hard, for those who had worked hard, many didn't, but they didn't. Influence was not proportionate to involvement in the campaign. It was, to some extent, for those who were based in Washington. A few. Like Max and Paul. Cause they had had closer access once we got here, I'd say, or maybe there are more complicated reasons, but we sought them out maybe because of their expertise after all Max was Humphrey's assistant and Paul is a very highly regarded lawyer and the boycott was his issue, so we had good reason to seek these people out here, but we got to know them, or Stuart came to know them, through the campaign.

Alsobrook: You know, while we're talking about these things, I want to ask you a few questions about this whole thing about Jewish issues. I think this might be a good time to maybe get into that. And maybe a little bit about the importance of the Jewish vote to Carter. He got what, maybe over 68%, over 70%.

Starr: Over 75%. It was over 75%, and in New York, Harriet says that it tipped the balance. Had one out of every, I believe she said nine Jews voted otherwise, Carter would have lost New York and therefore the election. In Miami Beach it may have been over 80% and I believe one of the counties in, major county in Florida, I know it was a major county in Florida, went Democratic for the first time. And we focused on Florida and New York.

Alsobrook: Were there other states that became crucial to—

Starr: Chicago. We worked very hard in Chicago. California. But I don't, I think we were critical, that's a good question, I think we were critical, I *know* we were critical in New York, I know we were critical in Florida. Whether we were critical in those other states, I can't answer you.

Alsobrook: I was wondering about Ohio, that's the one that stands out in my mind. And I think Cleveland has a very influential—

Starr: We worked very hard in Cleveland. We stressed a lot of activity. But I don't, we didn't have many leadership... we didn't have a lot of people from Cleveland. No, maybe we didn't, I'm thinking that we worked hard, but I remember thinking a lot about Cleveland when I was still in Washington. I'm not so sure that we did much with Cleveland later on. We sent Isaac Goodfriend to Cleveland. Isaac was the cantor who was involved with the campaign. We sent him to Cleveland as a cantor to talk up Jimmy Carter. We did probably peripheral things in Cleveland. Most of our activity was in the, I guess in the Washington/Maryland area, New York, Chicago, and California and Florida.

Alsobrook: Los Angeles?

Starr: Los Angeles.

Alsobrook: First, you know, when we use the term Jewish issues, what kind of issues are we talking about?

Starr: Israel. And Soviet Jewry. Human rights. Soviet Jewry/human rights. But really it's Soviet Jewry. And then a whole range, a wide range of domestic issues that are the same issues that concern every other American. The elderly, housing... bacchi (?). So, the whole range of civil rights issues. Jewish Americans tend to be interested in Democratic issues, what are traditionally identified as Democratic issues. You know, the good society but the social concerns. And there, you're not going at them as a Jewish bloc, but as Democrats. Traditional Democratic concerns. But the specific issues that then veer off, then you have your Jewish bloc, so to speak, are Israel and Soviet Jewry.

Alsobrook: You're really talking about some of the same types of issues that helped form a Democratic coalition during the New Deal, then?

Starr: Absolutely. And, of course, Stuart was the one that was writing the statements and there was nobody who better understood Jewish concerns and the Democratic platform concerns than Stuart Eizenstat, who happened all to combine in one person. So it worked out very nicely. There was very little problem. Never was there a problem in convincing the Jewish voter that Carter took the right stand on social issues. I don't remember having to work very hard on that. The issue was Israel. Even Soviet Jewry wasn't a major issue during the campaign, but because of the letter, the telegram to Slepak, that brought significant points. And, at any rate, you couldn't say much about Soviet Jewry. He said that he wouldn't, that he would fight for greater rights under the Helsinki final act, and he wouldn't trade these lives. He used those words. But basically that he wouldn't sacrifice for trade gains, for example, to the Soviet Union. He said all the right things but there wasn't a whole lot you could say. But there was a lot you could say about Israel. And there was a lot you could say about domestic issues, but those were not different issues. We didn't, for example, send a great deal of material to the Jewish community on domestic concerns. We just made the decision that it would come to them through the national press. When Carter took a stand on housing, they would hear about it in the national press.

Alsobrook: This was really the question I was getting at, you usually answer my questions before I ask you, so you don't leave me much to say, but were there a series of domestic issues that your staff pinpointed as pivotal to win the Jewish vote?

Starr: No.

Alsobrook: So you just let these issues take care of themselves, you just-

Starr: Well, you have to realize that Harriet and I had tremendous confidence in Stuart. And Stuart was taking care of that part of the business. And we both made the assessment that, you see, the Jewish readership is weighted towards national press.

Jewish, probably a very high readership. Probably the highest readership, as a community, of the New York Times, and the Washington Post, and the L. A. Times, and the major Chicago newspapers. They're oriented in that direction. The Wall Street Journal. So that if issues were prominent in the national press, then they were going to be read and evaluated by the Jewish community. And Carter was taking, you know, a relatively good stand on these broad-based issues, so it wasn't our concern. Our concern was to respond to the fear of his religious background, to put him on the record on Israel, because he'd never been on the record prior to campaign. He'd done some good things as governor. He had declared an Israeli independence day in Georgia, which was very nice. He'd gone to Israel and met with Golda [Golda Meir]. So he could claim a trip as a governor.

Alsobrook: Now he met her in New York at one point actually, during the campaign. Do you recall anything about that?

Starr: No.

Alsobrook: Okay.

Starr: I don't recall that. But I know that he had gone to Israel years prior, and, in fact, I'm aware he was presented with an Israeli humanities award by Sam Koddenitz (?), so I guess he must have been presented with that on the basis of some of his work as governor. But, substantively, he hadn't said very much, so we tasked ourselves with getting him to say things, and getting them repeated and repeated and repeated and getting him- We were much more involved with getting him before groups, getting him to make the appearances, convincing the schedulers, and then getting the people there, and, thirdly, with getting our grass-roots- relying on our grass-roots people to convince their friends when Carter came into their community, whether it was for a Jewish occasion or something else, that this was a good man. So we were relying very heavily on this network of seventy people to do a lot of the convincing. We, as two people, and remember by then Sheldon had disappeared and David was on the issues staff, buried on the issues staff, and he wasn't buried, but we were glad he was there at any rate. That left Harriet and I and roving Mark. So there wasn't much we could do about convincing people from that vantage point. Harriet didn't travel. I didn't travel. But what we could do was respond to demand and requests, and those demands and requests were basically, "When is Carter coming to our community, and if not Carter, who can you get as an alternative speaker." I mean, we were at war constantly with the Speaker's bureau, which was Richie Reiman and another fellow. Richie had nothing but antagonism for Harriet and possibly I, although he never said it, because we were constantly making demands. The Jewish desk was constantly making demands. Everybody else was making them too, but I think our demand level was very high, because our people wanted good speakers. The best speakers. And you couldn't send the speaker who had already spoken a lot, because then he was known as a speaker. So you had to get somebody new from the whole bigglety-wick and Jackson wasn't good enough because everybody knew Jackson in Florida, so you had to get Moynihan, but Moynihan didn't want to go to Florida, because Moynihan wanted to go on a vacation with his wife, or something of that

nature, and that did happen. And then I remember calling Justice Goldberg, and it was my first phone call to him, he doesn't remember this, but I located him in California. We had a major event, and he said "Oh, I'm not going to speak to a Jewish audience per say, I'll speak to a general audience, but not a Jewish audience," so... And I can understand his vantage point- in other words, he wasn't going to be used so, any candidate because of his own Jewishness. And at the time I heard it differently, but that's basically what he was saying. And he was right. So you had all the requests, then you had all the reasons why people couldn't go. And somehow you'd be begging in between. I remember once, begging Marty Paritts (?) to go someplace. I mean, begging him, and ultimately, he didn't do it. And you would call up people that you would never think to telephone. I would never think, even now, to call up Marty Paritts. He's not the most influential person in American, but he was influential. I called him at his home. You would break through any barrier to get to anybody. Now as I said I'd tracked Goldberg down to California, found him in cubicles. So we were focused on process and on participation and on events and scheduling and checking in on a very regular basis. Harriet was constantly on the phone with the people in the, these prominent grass-roots influential to see how things were going in their place, in their city. So she had a very good feel for what was going on with the leadership. But our activities were centered on getting Carter exposure and meeting requests. I mean, I was even dealing with Ruth Stapleton, getting Ruth Stapleton to make appearances. It didn't matter who, the whole, I mean it was a wide open, the whole family was subject to it and the Jews wanted to meet them.

Alsobrook: Did Ruth Carter Stapleton seem to have a positive effect on them?

Starr: Yeah, I remember, she went to a synagogue in Washington and was received beautifully and handled herself beautifully. Very warmly. So when she went, she was well received. Mrs. Carter went to Pittsburg, our one event was we scheduled Mrs. Carter for a Pittsburg group. National Council of Jewish Women had, I believe, maybe their national, maybe not their national meeting. Oh! We worked so hard. You had to send in memo after memo and you had to go down, and by then you had Fran Voorde or her sister, who's name now escapes me. But the two Voorde sisters. Charlotte.

Alsobrook: This is in scheduling now?

Starr: Scheduling. Now it was Fran and Charlotte. They had replaced this other person who was deemed inept. And you were, you know, you would go down so apologetically. "I'm so sorry to bother you, but could you tell me, do you think there's any chance..." And, you know, I always felt, I walked away angry. Because you're always a supplicant trying to get this man elected. You're always a supplicant trying to get this man elected. And you would put on your best behavior and your best smile and your best unemotional trappings and you'd do anything just to get this man to go to the place you know, or at least you believed could have some positive benefit to him. You had fight for it, every day. So your energy was taken up on a...

Alsobrook: So it was hard to devote a great deal of time to issues or anything sometimes, because you were too busy scheduling or making arrangements.

Starr: I wrote his statement, his New Year's statement, Jewish New Year's statement. I wrote it myself. And I had it distributed. I don't think he ever, I think Stuart signed off on it. But I'm not sure anybody signed off on it. I think I wrote it and delivered it to the JTA, which is the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and it hit all the press, and was received beautifully. What's interesting is that so much political activity has now taken place vis a vis Carter and the Jewish community that it seems that it must have always been that way, and it wasn't. What we were doing was breaking ground. I mean, to, Ford drafted a New Year's statement, but ours was much better. It didn't just incorporate my own wisdom, but different wisdoms and today, Ford would have a phenomenal New Years. He would know that it's very important to have a very warm and, you know, very strong New Year's statement, but then it just sort of came out and without a lot of work and I don't know who did it, but I remember at the end of the campaign, toward the end, Ford convened a meeting of Jewish leaders at the White House and we were outraged that that was so low, such low tactics, to call the Jews into the White House and use the prestige of the White House to attract the Jewish vote. Well, we've had so many meetings and Jewish leaders and it would never occur to us now if it was campaign time that Carter should not have Jewish leaders at the White House. It would be next to impossible that he wouldn't. And at the time, it was a new thing. And Carter met with Aaron Sharon at our request, who had lead the troops across the Sinai in the taking of Cairo or what came close to being the taking of Cairo. We fought so hard for that, it was a major success for me, I felt as if I had just gone through my PhD all over again. When Fran Voorde or Charlotte Voorde told me that Carter would meet with General Sharon, I remember that Sharon refused to meet with Ford, because he was convinced that Ford had not been good for Israel, despite requests from Ford to meet with him. But he was anxious to meet with Carter, because he believed that Carter would win and Carter carried some of his own sentiments about the future. And, interestingly enough, and I went back over my notes and saw this, Sharon was in the United States under an assumed name because at the time, Israelis didn't come to the United States so frequently. It was very occasional and rare and Sharon was a hero so he was here under an assumed name. Well, under the Carter administration, and connected to the Carter administration, the Israelis have been in Washington like a revolving door. And if anybody took an assumed name, people would simply laugh. [Alsobrook laughs] They would laugh! Even Rabin [Yitzhak Rabin] was here several months ago, close to the signing ceremony on an Israel bonds function. I mean they really had great contact, I mean frequent contact with the Carter administration, if not the American public. And, but at the time, Sharon in town in Washington ready to meet with Carter was a very big event. So. And also, although Nixon had had a Jewish desk, well after all, I spent hours with Larry Goldberg who was the head of the Jewish desk for Nixon talking about what he had done. And while Larry shared with me a great deal of perspective on how to get things done, we put in, there was no digest of how to get the system into effect. And there weren't, other than Larry, there weren't a whole lot of people around the country to say, "Oh yeah, I already did it, this is what you do." You know, going out to the grass-roots, the radio stations. Press releases, the Jewish press. All this was basically new. Maybe Larry knew it and maybe a fellow named Ken Wallick who had headed the campaign for what's his

name from Wisconsin. No Wisconsin. The other liberal who ran for president. McGovern! Where's McGovern from?

Alsobrook: He's from South Dakota.

Starr: I'm sorry, South Dakota. Ken Wallick had done it, and he was with APAC, and he didn't have a lot to offer us in the way of suggestions, it was hit or miss. People, there wasn't a science of campaign activity. For any group. But there certainly wasn't a science when it came to the Jewish community even though Nixon and McGovern and others had had their Jewish organizers. So we were, well maybe we weren't forging new ground, but there wasn't a reservoir of experience to call upon and we had to think it all, each step through for ourselves.

Alsobrook: During the campaign, Mark Siegel was still working back at DNC, right?

Starr: I hadn't heard of him.

Alsobrook: He had no contact with the--

Starr: No, nothing.

Alsobrook: So he wouldn't begin to assume his role as an advisor in Jewish affairs until after the administration?

Starr: Well after. He assumed it on October 6th or 7th, the day after the statement of the Soviet-US agreement. Or statement, whatever it was called. He assumed that role. But that's another story.

Alsobrook: Yeah, and you told me a little bit about that on the last tape, maybe we can get into that some other time. But I think you answered that particular question in great depth. One little follow-up on that, and you touched on this at the beginning of the question. How important was the Jewish vote to Jimmy Carter in 1976?

Starr: Oh, as I said, according to Harriet, and even according apparently to Pat Caddell, had the Jews voted differently in New York, we would have lost the election. So after all the concentration of Jewish votes are in New York. And in New York the Jewish community voted... a higher proportion of blacks voted for Carter, but a higher proportion of Jews vote. It was that kind of arithmetic. And they, others say that they carried the state, but Harriet says that we carried New York. And when you carry New York, you carry the election. And Florida. So I mean, you could say that, Harriet would say, I think according to what I read, Pat Caddell came close to saying or said that the Jewish vote carried the election for Carter. Had it been different, he would have lost. Let's put it that way. When Harriet and I entered the campaign, we had just- when I entered and Harriet was approximately the same time, we had just finished the Maryland primary, and at that time, Carter was nine to one against in the Jewish community. So when the campaign was finished, while he lost, you could say, the campaign, he won the

Jewish vote. If you say that by losing percentage points to the final day, he lost in the general population at large, but in the Jewish community he went from nine to one against in April to 75% to 80% for.

Alsobrook: That's amazing.

Starr: So we did a good job.

Alsobrook: I want- One question I wanted to ask you that I think you might find of interest since you're a sociologist is, okay, the candidate won. Now what happens to a Presidential campaign's staff after your candidate wins? And I guess what I'm getting at is, is there a degree of letdown, of physiological letdown after that initial exhilaration that you feel?

Starr: Oh boy. That's another whole story. The days leading up the election are a blur, because there wasn't much activity. Once you came within a week or two of the election, all the activity moved toward, or to the cities and communities. Get out the vote. It then became get out the vote. You weren't scheduling, and there weren't appearances, et cetera, of any great consequence. So those of us in headquarters then had very little to do. You had to rely on your people out in the states. And a lot of people in headquarters left to go to the states to work. So, in part it became a ghost town. And those who were there sat. We weren't writing statements, or issues papers, we sat and we waited. And then the night of the election, it was predicted that Carter would win, it was, at that point things had evened out and we were pretty confident. But not overly confident.

Alsobrook: Well even before Carter got the nomination, weren't you even confident then? Weren't you feeling confident that he would probably get the nomination?

Starr: I think they were more confident of that than they were of the election. But they were mildly confident in the election for although people would talk about, "But what if he loses after all we've done? For all we've put in, what if he loses?" So there wasn't, we weren't sure.

Alsobrook: It became close at the end.

Starr: That's right, we weren't sure. And then they did the election in some monster building in Atlanta. Monster hotel. And it wasn't, I mean, again, because it was a monster hotel, you couldn't even get in. You had to be, you had to both be with somebody who was clearly credentialed and somebody who was aggressive. There had to be, there was two requirements to get into that building. Somebody had to push you in.

Alsobrook: But you worked on the campaign.

Starr: Didn't matter.

Alsobrook: So you weren't able to get in.

Starr: I got in because I was hanging onto Harriet! [Alsobrook laughs] That's the only way I could have gotten in. I couldn't have gotten through that crowd. People couldn't get in. I don't know how, maybe if they came hours early, campaign people were in there. You had your button, you had to show your button, but it was an effort. And you got in and you walked around. And there were TVs in every room. Which didn't make a lot of sense. Because then you had to choose your room. And again, I ended up watching the election late into the night with Vickie and Terry, and Gina Beroni who had come to town. And I didn't know the other people in that room. Nobody, I mean the campaign staff was sort of lost in the thick of people so there was no camaraderie. And eventually, late into the night, he won. By sort of late into the night, we were sure he was going to win, but it just wasn't taking place. We were waiting and waiting, but as I recall it was predicted that he would win, but it took forever for some of the states to cast their vote the right way. You may know better than I. I just don't remember it being a very exciting moment. Or a very scary moment. Sort of a tedious period of waiting and waiting. Three o'clock, four o'clock, but eventually he was elected.

And we all ran because he was going to be saying something, making an announcement in some other building, I think. Maybe it was the same building but some other place in the building. And then all I recall is hanging onto Tom Tatum, because he was very big and he could make it through the crowd. This was the main, the major objective, was making it through the crowds that night to be close when Carter came in and accepted or made his acceptance speech, whatever he did. And it was non-memorable. And then the biggest question was who would get to stand on the stage with him, and was Tom going to be up there and was Hamilton going to be up there. It was in a very grey, cold room that was like a basement. I don't remember where it was but it was like or maybe it was a basement, like a garage almost basement. And all these teenagers were pushing and shoving. And it sort of had nothing to do with the campaign. A melee. So, after that there was a party on the tenth floor, but you had to be somebody special to go, meaning Carter's suite. Carter had a party. And number one, as I said, you had to be somebody to go, but I suspect that, but I remember somebody saying, "Come on, we'll take you up there," and I decided I didn't want to go, because it was a drunken party. Not Carter, but the staff aides were drinking a lot, as people do after all this and I didn't want to be subject to it. Not subjected, but subject to it. I felt uncomfortable again. So even at the very final moments, I went home to my apartment. It was then five in the morning, to my awful, awful apartment, energized beyond belief, as we all were, but what now? And not really feeling a part of it at the final moment. And again, I don't think I was unlike many other people who went home to their respective places because there was not a large party for Carter's campaign workers, only a select group. Maybe at most 100 participated, if that many in that event. People from all over didn't, even people from the campaign.

Alsobrook: Do you think a campaign is a good way for one to learn about his values, goals, strengths, weaknesses? Or would you recommend some other method of learning about these things?

Starr: I don't think that there's, well, its cutthroat as they say, but I'm not sure in what way it was cutthroat because we weren't cutting each other's throats. A few were. But largely there wasn't, even as there isn't in the White House today, a great deal of intra-rivalry. That may be a standard that Carter and Hamilton have set. Hamilton's not competitive with others and he sets the tone for non-brutality towards your fellow worker to his credit. So you didn't learn, particularly in this campaign how not to be a rotten person. Because you weren't really called upon to be a rotten person. Maybe out in the hinterlands there was some of that going on, but not terribly much at headquarters. I don't think the campaign gave you any time to think about yourself as a person, I think just the opposite. It was beneficial in that it didn't. And if you did a survey of those who went into the campaign and why, it may be largely because it was a time in their lives where they didn't want to be thinking about themselves as a person, but to have some outward manifestation of themselves as a person. Activity, involvement, and the hours were prohibitive in terms of thinking about personal problems, et cetera. You couldn't have personal relationships because they would break down very quickly, and they did break down very quickly for those who had them. Most people were by themselves. So if you can't have personal relationships and you don't have time to think, than it isn't much of a growth experience. Only what it did for me was to show me that I could enter an arena I had never entered before without any of the skills. Jump, leap, you could say, and manage it. Politics was for me, and campaigning, a total unknown and I had none of the skills to be the press person that I was later identified as in the Carter campaign under Jewish affairs. I had never done a press release and yet, these are not terribly difficult things but they're imposing if you, for most people who'd think, "Oh, how would I work in a campaign. What would I do?" And, you can do it, and I learned I can do it. And for academics, or those academically oriented towards more ephemeral tasks like thinking, it's a marvelous experience because you're based in the practical. And in the immediate. Now, for me, the best compliment I received was when somebody called me and said, "You know, we've heard about you and we've heard that you come through." And the biggest compliment you could receive is that you delivered. Regardless of what it was, it didn't matter what it was. And that had nothing to do with your person. But maybe your, it does, I don't know, responsibility, discipline, and good memory. Because you were juggling so many things simultaneously.

Now, I don't think that this was the case for others. I think if you went, maybe for some, I think if you did a survey with most of the people that were involved in the Carter campaign, they would answer that question by saying, "Yeah, it showed me that politics is unscrupulous. Look how hard I worked and what little I got for it." Because what we haven't gotten to is the finale. What then? And for most people there was no reward. For me, ultimately there was, but it was not an inevitable fact of my participation in the campaign, but my endurance and my doggedness and my determination. And, in addition, I had the background. I had the government experience, I had the PhD. These were kids. So for them having later found disappointment and most of them did, they would probably look back and say, "It taught me how tough the world can be." It may have taught me how tough the world can be, but I've learned that lesson so many times in the past few years that the campaign seems moderate by comparison. This is really true.

I don't remember thinking this is reality, look how awful we can be treated. Although I did feel that we were not being treated well. But I didn't feel that I had just come across a precipice of understanding because of it. Now, to tell you that, what happened was we won. And then nobody knew what to do. And nobody was telling them. But finally, the word was out that Hamilton was going to have a meeting. And we would all come and be told what was going to happen to us next. And we all went, and Hamilton—

Alsobrook: This was down in Atlanta?

Starr: In Atlanta. We were now sitting around headquarters after the election, not knowing what to do with ourselves. Although we did have an immediate task. And the immediate task was to prepare a paper for the President or Hamilton, we weren't sure who it was going to in answer to a number of questions, and I do have a copy of what Harriet did, saying who we had looked to for support and what we had gained from the campaign and who we thought the ought to be reaching out to in the presidency, et cetera. So it was a great groundwork paper, summary of the experience and then a projection of the future. And then we had to prepare lists of all the people we had worked with and who we had done the most work with and who the President should thank and who we should call. So there was a great deal of immediate activity following, which I must say Harriet did most of it, because by that time I was half-dead. And anyway, it was mostly in her head. And everybody else had to do it, but they were all half-dead as well. Still, it gave, there was an activity. That being done, there wasn't much of anything to do except to wait. You didn't know where you were going or what. So Hamilton called the meeting, and I remember distinctly that he arrived very late and people were so nervous. They were so worried because they were renting these shanties and shacks and they had no income then coming in and they didn't know how long Carter would pay them or what next. So Hamilton arrived very late. Charming and apologetic, but by then the anxiety level had gone up very high. And he said, "You fill out these papers and you tell us where you're going to be and what you'd like to do, and we'll contact you." That was the essence of it. Well, that was a terrible letdown. And I remember one girl saying that she was prepared to commit suicide. And she was half serious, because she didn't have any place to go. And most of these people had been working much longer than I had, so maybe they'd been living on peanuts, so to speak, for a year or more. They had no savings and they had no real home base or job to go back to because they were all kids. So it was a time of terrible worry. And I remember that then the scenario became to go and sit over a drink or sit on top of the desks that were about to be removed and languish over our fate and what would happen. "Well no, you see, you'll be okay because you have this and that skill and know this and that person." "No, this one won't come through for me and why did they take me." "Yes they'll take you, but do you think they'll take me?" And the agonizing took up a gre- I mean, it took up all of everybody's time. Anybody that was still left around was agonizing.

Alsobrook: This lasted for what, about month and a half, I guess a month?

Starr: Yeah. Until the transition team was formed and even then you knew that the team had been formed but you weren't on it. And where would you be on it and how would

you get on it? Well, I was broke. I had an apartment in Washington, but I had sublet it and it was I guess still occupied, and it was coming open, but I had no more, I had, I remember, the second week in November I had \$100 to my name. And that was, you see because little by little if you walked away from your professional job and hadn't a great deal of savings behind you, you just used up everything. You had to pay bills. On \$500 a month, you couldn't do very well. So I had \$100. And I was, and I said to Harriet, "I'm in—" "Harriet let me stay in her house, and I said, "I'm not leaving. I'm simply, I can't leave. There's no place I can go until I know what's going to happen to me." And she was on a vacation so it was perfectly fine with her. So I sat there in that empty house for several weeks while she was gone, very depressed. And eventually she returned, and eventually Bob Lipshutz came back for some kind of activity in Atlanta and said, "Joyce is coming to Washington with me to work with me as a secretary" or whatever. Still not very consequential for somebody with a PhD, but at least I was going someplace. I guess I could have returned to my job at the Humanities, but like everybody else, after you'd done so much you didn't want to go back to your old employer, you didn't want to pick up the phone and say, "Look, can you hire me back," because it was a terrible humiliation for anybody who'd been involved not to be called upon. And so, everybody was simply, wherever they were, waiting to be called upon. And then your biggest source of conversation was, "What happened to so-and-so? And did they make it? And are they here?" when we arrived at transition headquarters. I don't know if you want to go into the transition, but that was then the next step and another waiting game.

Alsobrook: I don't really have any questions for you about the transition, I felt like we covered that last time and really you've exhausted all my questions.

Starr: And you?

Alsobrook: Yeah, you've exhausted me and you have a great deal of endurance. You've covered all my questions and you forced me to ask you a lot of questions I didn't even have written down because you're such a demanding interviewee. [Alsobrook laughs]

Starr: Well... Let me think if there's...

Alsobrook: Yeah, I want to make sure that if there's anything else that you feel like needs to be said about your recollections of the campaign of 1976, be sure to point those out to me. I think we've covered it in pretty good depth, you know, but if there's anything else, we can get at it. Or we can always wait and discuss it next time.

Starr: Yeah, I guess we can do that, I'm just trying to—

Alsobrook: Yeah, there's no reason why we have to—

Starr: Another item that's useful to remember is that the campaign had a lot of volunteers working for it. In fact, Bob Lipshutz's wife headed up the volunteers. And this later became a great source of chagrin because all of these volunteers who worked so hard, in Atlanta and elsewhere and every major campaign headquarters, expected

something. Rightly so, rightly so. And, again, there was no connection in later times, transition or White House. Some made it, but most didn't. Most were just simply forgotten. They received a nice letter thanking them. Now, when I say all this I don't mean that anyone went out of their way to forget, went out of their way to injure or insult. It was simply, it happened. Nobody went out of their way that it should be otherwise, but it did happen, it was unfortunate, I think if you talked to Hamilton now about it, he would say that he greatly regretted that it happened. He would be very sensitive about it, but at the time...

[End of tape]

Joyce Starr interview #2 (continued) and #3 side 1 tape 3

Starr: But at the time, it was happening so quickly and you didn't have people with the experience to protect against that kind of personal insult or injury. It was really more a lack of experienced people than it was anybody's intent to do harm but you had throughout the country hundreds of people, hundreds, maybe thousands, who had contributed in some way, who felt absolutely no linkage to the president elect, or to the President, once he took office. So this was another aspect of it. And then, maybe a final point is you had in every state a campaign office. And these people worked very hard at the state level. We talk about Ohio, I know they had a tremendous staff out there. And they expected to be remembered, of course. I mean to carry Ohio or carry New York, I can tell you that the man who worked so hard for us in New York never had any later relationship, Stanley Lowe, I think his name was, I've forgotten, and he did the Jewish events for us in New York, had a lot of responsibility for everything in there and that was it. So.

Alsobrook: That was just standard procedure? It just happened?

Starr: It wasn't procedure; it just happened. So. OK.

Joyce Starr, Interview # 3. May 3, 1979, 10:30 AM, at her office.

Alsobrook: Testing 123, testing 123, testing 123. Interview number 3, Joyce Starr, May 3rd, 1979, 10:30 am, in her office.

Starr: Ok we're going.

Alsobrook: Ok I think we're going, you want to just say test into yours and make sure I've got you. In the mic. Into my microphone and you too. If you want to say test into my microphone too-

Starr: Test. Testing.

Alsobrook: There, ok. This is interview number three, Joyce, and I want to ask you a few obvious questions today about the Office of Public Liaison and some of the work you did there. First of all, what was the origin of the Office of Public Liaison? How did it come about? How did it come into being?

Starr: There was a previous Office of Public Liaison directed by Bill Baroody, so there was a precedent. And when they were contemplating during the campaign outreach to ethnics and others, it was a natural thought that they would recreate or continue the concept of Office of Public Liaison but simply to orient it in a different direction, although I don't think anybody considered exactly what that direction would be. But they kept the essential structure.

Alsobrook: Baroody was in the Ford administration?

Starr: Yes, even to the extent of, I think, that there had been some contact with Baroody's staff. At least, once we came in office, I think that Midge was in touch with him, through her first deputy Ronnie Feit, to see the basic groups they had covered.

Alsobrook: Did citizens and staff urge the President to establish such an office in the White House?

Starr: Not such an office, but this was an administration that came in on the plank of open government and access, so I don't think anybody considered *not* establishing some outreach to the people. The greatest controversy which we would spend staff meeting after staff meeting, I can't even account for the number of hours which we spent discussing whether our task was outreach or to convince them of the President's positions or access, to receive from them their points of view. Most of us were of the school of thought that we should be on the receiving line or side of it. Richie Reiman took the strong position, and perhaps not incorrectly so. He may have been more correct than any of us that our task was to convince these groups of the rightness of the President's positions, that we were not advocates. But since Midge hired what were essentially a staff of advocates, people of that nature and bent, there was a real confusion. And since she herself was of the advocate school, advocacy school, you could say, there was a tremendous confusion in our role.

Alsobrook: How do you spell Reiman's last name?

Starr: R-i-e-m-a-n [editor's note: She misspelled; he is Richard A. Reiman.]

Alsobrook: It's really interesting that you should bring this up about the role of Office of Public Liaison because I was going to give you one definition that I've seen of the office's role and see what you think about this. "The office's function has been described as designed to reach out to various interest groups in order to bring them into the White House, to give them access to relevant policy people who would hopefully help them with their problems and concerns." That's a rather vague definition of what the office was set up to do. Do you think this is an accurate description?

Starr: Yes, I think that what we tried to do was to give them access to policy people. Most of us thought that in terms of any advocacy role, our main, first our credibility and two, what we had to offer was not only to listen to them, but somehow to get them to somebody who would listen. The problem was that since Midge had no credibility, or at least as time went on, less and less credibility, perhaps we should assume that she started out on an equal level to the others, but as time went on, it, this was greatly decreased and therefore it was very difficult, unless you had personal relationships with people in policy roles to lend weight to a complaint because it came from the Office of Public Liaison. That became irrelevant. It was only relevant if the particular advisor or the agency believed in your credibility, as an individual, somehow linked to others and not to Midge. For example, Richie and Steve linked to Hamilton and I was linked to Bob [Lipshutz] and Stuart [Eizenstat] and nobody took seriously my relationship after a while and I say that there was a great evolution here so it is hard to remember the earlier stages when you come to the later stages. But there was a time when that wasn't so, but eventually you were negotiating on behalf of people but not in a relationship to Midge, even though you may still, even though up until almost the very end we were writing Midge memos and going through all these procedures of keeping her informed. It was a farce. Maybe farce is a harsh word. It was... a façade. We all knew we had to do it to keep her ameliorated, but it wasn't because we believed we were doing anything purposeful. And I don't say this, really underscore, I so not say this as a criticism of Midge, because we should address her strengths and her weaknesses, and why the relationship with the office ended as it did. It is simply a *fact* that by the end, she did not have credibility.

Alsobrook. Okay, this is a later question but maybe we can go into it now. How would you describe Midge Costanza's role as head of OPL?

Starr: Let's take the beginning days when I first met Midge. And I was told by Bob Lipshutz that this very dynamic and warm woman was going to be the Assistant to the President for Ethnic Affairs essentially. But they weren't sure. They thought it had something to do with Ethnic Affairs. Nobody structured it. And Stuart had said to me in the transition "There'll be an Ethnic Office and you should be in it because you'd be good with ethnic groups." In hiring people, nobody told Midge that she had to hire anybody. But it was suggested to her that she should interview us. I was one of the people that she interviewed coming out of the campaign, in transition. She offered me initially to be a secretary, something paid maybe \$10,000 less than I made when I even first came to Washington, something incredible and I rejected her offer three or four times before I finally accepted it on the basis that she upgraded it at least to the point that I was at when I left to go into the campaign, financially and in terms of my rating, GS rating, with the government. But even so, and this was the same situation with others, Caroline Wellons also, though Caroline hadn't been highly paid before she came into the campaign. She had certainly served her time with Hamilton and expected to be offered something rather substantial. She too, she and I both were offered to be secretaries. And Steve Selig had expected to be something rather important in the White House. He was offered to be a vague assistant and Richie something even less. Richie was never clear at that, actually Richie wasn't interviewed then. That took some time, even when, which

was... maybe two months after we were in office that Richie was interviewed and offered a position, so I guess the core was Steve, Caroline, myself, Richie, Jane Wales and Marilyn came later.

Alsobrook: Marilyn Haft?

Starr: Haft. They all came later and Steve was the only one offered anything of consequence and even he was upset with that. But we didn't blame it on Midge. Midge was given nothing to start with. I recall vividly going to see her at the New Executive Office Building where she had temporary office space before we came into the Old EOB [Executive Office Building] and, before the first date of the administration. And Richard Harden was there with all sorts of maps. And he was giving maps of offices and where everybody would sit, and diagrams of structure, etc. And Midge was saying that it wasn't her fault that this was all they would give her, and she was fighting for an upgrading of these positions. And really we had no reason to doubt it, so while I was turning her down time and time again, I didn't actually blame her for not being able to offer me something better. It also demonstrated that she wasn't having her arm twisted. I never called Bob and complained bitterly, or. I may, I did call him in fact and said that this was occurring and really wasn't fair, because I told him what I expected but I didn't push him and, I mean, he never did anything about it. It was simply a human complaint. Nobody was twisting Midge's arm to take anybody. At the same time, they were offering her very little in the way of support slots and credibility by virtue of the status of those slots. When I met her, she was very warm, vivacious, excited, and, you know, a power and energy and so I would suggest that we liked her very much actually, at the beginning. Caroline and I were taken by her. She was *extremely* funny, perhaps the best stand-up comic that I have come across in a long time. I remember occasions of being absolutely delighted sitting in a room with her with other people, watching her put them at ease and making them laugh and making them feel comfortable. I also remember that she would take human interest in some very peripheral cases that I would bring to her.

I was immediately identified by Ronnie Feit as the bleeding heart of the Office of Public Liaison, in a warm way. It was a positive- wasn't a negative, it was said warmly. In that capacity, as bleeding heart, I did bring to Midge a number of things which, in retrospect, going through the book, we shouldn't have touched with a ten foot pole. They really weren't related to the White House's responsibility, but she took them seriously, I guess, because she too was as unsophisticated as I was. So, she was, she didn't start off on a negative, and she wasn't received on a negative, but she was as inexperienced and unsophisticated as the rest of us were in what it was that she was supposed to be doing, so that it was very easy to absorb her in non-essential activities. Secondly and most importantly, Midge had no more than a high school education, I believe, if that much. I guess she had a high school degree. She had spent her life in upstate New York, had never really ventured very far from it and had the foresight to stand behind Jimmy Carter's nomination for which she was rewarded, as a woman and because she was from New York, in making the speech at the nominating convention. And she's quite forceful in speaking, very good. All of that catapulted her into a role as Assistant to the President of the United States for which she was absolutely unprepared, intellectually,

psychologically, and otherwise. She had also just been through, in December of that year, a traumatic loss of a person that had been very close to her, a man, a very, very, for twenty years a personal relationship and he died in December. And she had apparently gone to recover from the shock of this off to a secluded spot where she received the call from the President. So if you can put it on a human level for a moment, here was a person that had been traumatized by the loss of someone very close to her, lacking in essential skills, and skills give you confidence, coming into this power position. Not having the friend any longer, we all need a friend or a close relationship to lean on, she no longer has this person and she was really out of her league. So she was out of her league, alone, with an unchartered responsibility and surrounded by people of good will, very sensitive. I think all of us were good people, but equally unskilled, more skilled than she by comparison. But, and, as time went on this became a problem because we learned quickly and we were brighter, we were more educated. I had a PhD, all of them had college degrees. She was very threatened by that. That became disconcerting for her. In all of that morass, Midge had to try to determine what it was she was supposed to do. And nobody was telling her and she didn't know whether she was supposed to outreach or in reach, you see, so I am giving you an overview of the beginning months of confusion. We can go further with this.

Alsobrook: I have a couple of questions related to these. Did, you mentioned her speaking ability. Did she write her own speeches or did you and the others contribute to those speeches?

Starr: We contributed. But most of her talks were stand-up, spontaneous. They weren't speeches. Where there was a speech, we all, I wrote, I don't think I wrote but maybe one or two things for her. I- Jane Wales. Now I remember. Jane Wales wrote a great deal for Midge, so perhaps more speeches were written than I know. She was the writer, she was hired to be the writer. Also, at another point, a fellow named Ed, whose last name I forget, was hired to be a writer for her and Jane was doing other things. Who was asked first to do it I don't remember, whether Jane took it over from him or he took it over from Jane, I don't recall. But I guess you are correct, she did have speeches written for her. But most of the times I saw her speak, she didn't speak from a speech.

Alsobrook: Was that Ed Smith?

Starr: Ed Smith, yeah....

Alsobrook: Did she have direct access to the President? Could she just walk in? Her office was next door at one point, right?

Starr: She said she did but I don't believe she ever did. First, I don't believe that anybody does. I don't believe that Bob Lipshutz himself would walk in to see the President without a scheduled appointment to do so. There is an understanding in the White House that people don't do that. I am not even sure that Hamilton does it, unscheduled.

Alsobrook: Just pop in the office?

Starr: Yeah. With Gerald Ford, I think people did. With Jimmy Carter, they didn't, they don't. And Midge would say that she had direct access but that meant something different than being able to walk into his office.

Alsobrook: Okay, you described some of the things going on in the early days. Now didn't she have a staff in the West Wing and then people in the EOB too?

Starr: Yes, it was very bad, because she surrounded herself first with a woman from upstate New York who was even less able than Midge, or significantly less able than Midge, again, I've forgotten her name. And obviously she was a patronage position paid at a very high rate. She also never showed up for work.

Alsobrook: Where were we? Okay, we were talking about the two separate staffs she had.

Starr: So this woman who was hired by Midge created tremendous morale problems for the rest of us because- Sandy. Sandy Adams. Sandy did, simply failed to come to work half of the time. There was talk of a very close relationship between she and Midge. That's rather irrelevant. I am sure they were very good friends because they had known each other a long time from upstate New York, but it seemed she that was taking advantage of that friendship and that Midge was allowing her to, while all the rest of us were working ourselves to the bone. She also had at different times different secretaries over there who eventually all ended up coming to us after they had what were typically breakdowns of sorts. Every one of them, to a person, simply caved in under the pressure of working for Midge in her office. Now, you might ask why? Perhaps.

Alsobrook: Okay.

Starr: Why? What did they, what was the pressure? What was it that Midge did? Because she was so insecure and uncomfortable, she was frenetic and explosive. It would be impossible to say whether she had that nature before coming to the White House. I am sure she did have a very emotional nature, no question that she did, but that perhaps was severely exacerbated by the pressure of the White House. Therefore, she was given to screaming, shouting, papers strewn all over her office, immense disorganization. Name-calling. She would call somebody to her office when she was aggravated with them and chew them out, bitterly. On one occasion where she was quite upset with me for a phone call I had made. She was more intimidated by me, so therefore less verbal, but she did pull me into her office at 2:00 in the afternoon and not allow me to leave her office till 10:00 at night. I was simply locked in her office. I had one cup of coffee. It was, as a result, and it's a good example of her erratic behavior.

I had made a, read a Colman McCarthy article on Sunday of that week about the flood disaster in West Virginia and I was very moved by it and feeling very strongly that perhaps in the position of the White House we could do good things. Colman said

nobody from this administration had called these flood disaster people and therefore I took it upon myself on Monday morning, first to call him and find out what the problem was, and then to call down there. I said specifically when I reached the people that I was not authorized to make the call, but I was touched by their situation and would like more information. It was my misfortune that they used the telephone call, it came shortly before a rally that they were holding, and they claimed that the White House had acceded to their demands, had agreed to their demands. So I was right in the middle of the frying pan. Well, as the phone calls began to come in from NBC and CBS to Midge's office around noon and I was, of course, totally unaware. I thought I had just made a nice call in the morning. Told Bob Nastanovich about it, you know. Midge became very upset and called me over. She did not yell at me, I don't recall that even though she was very upset, but she insisted that we must meet with all the appropriate people in the administration to clear this up. And she went back and forth with the fellow on the telephone and she did defend me to him. And defend what I had done as an act that was accompanied by a disclaimer that I was not authorized to do it. She, but she told the press that I had made an unauthorized call and she simply identified me to the press and it was announced on NBC, and it was very, can you imagine for a person who was several months with the administration how unsettling it was to find yourself on the news that night at the center of this great controversy and she had delivered that information essentially to the press. But worse than that, because that didn't, I took that with good stride, was the fact that she called in every single person in the administration having to do with flood disasters to consult on this situation rather than saying, "All right, it's done, it was a mistake, it was unfortunate, but you won't do that again, clearly." And which, of course, I wouldn't. She made it into a major issue, and then somehow in her mind she went not only from the fact of my phone call, but she was trying to solve the problem. She then took it on as her cause to get the flood disaster relief to the people. It became very convoluted. Nothing was ever really accomplished except that we sat there meeting after meeting after meeting. I can hardly even remember what it was that was discussed, and I wasn't allowed to leave until 10:00 at night. So there were times when people would come back, and you know that this staff, some of them waited for me because they were terrified of what she was doing to me. And the very fact of their terror is example of the fear she had put into people by her extreme, you know, verbal activity.

Alsobrook: Let me go back and touch on something you mentioned in interview #1. I know which I know seems like many months ago. You mentioned in interview # 1 that your major areas of OPL responsibilities included Jewish organizations, religious groups, Hispanics, the handicapped and then you said "anybody else who seemed to have a problem." I want to ask you several questions about all of this. Number one, who would fall into the final category of "anybody who would have a problem?"

Starr: Initially, for months we received, we were the White House case workers, Anybody, you could, I would get a call from somebody who said that their water had been turned off, you know, in New Jersey, and what would they do and they hadn't money from their Social Security and nobody would help them. Or we had several cases of people that were severely ill or had died, and needed to be immediately transported and we negotiated with the airlines. They came to the White House, they didn't know

where else to turn. One I remember a death and the other, I remember somebody being severely injured or sick and had to be moved and there was no way to move them unless there was special assistance by the airlines. Any number of individuals with severe problems, learning disability, or they couldn't get money to go to school and I took most of them. They all came to me. Eventually it became clear that we couldn't be the White House case workers and a decision was made to refer these calls to agencies. Now it was a terrible mistake that I was ever taking these in the first place. Can you imagine when I went back and looked at the way I spent my time, it cert- although I was probably one of the busiest people in the Office of Public Liaison and received up to fifty phone calls a day, any number of different activities and projects. I had an intern at one time, finally, who said that if she received as many phone calls per day as I did she would kill herself, because the stress was just enormous, you know, always on the phone, always wanting, people were wanting from you, but it wasn't productive. As of now, as a person with some managerial or administrative skills, or experience at least, I don't know about skills-, I could see how unproductive that approach was, even though it was humanitarian.

Alsobrook: There was a later question I wanted to ask you too...but I would rather move to the questions as they develop. Even though OPL was disbanded in the spring of 1978, did the work within the White House with interest groups continue even after that date, I mean even though the office itself was disbanded?

Starr: Oh sure, sure. Let's give me, I'll give you an example. As far as Jewish groups, of course, I was still working with them, Bob Lipshutz, Stu. By the fall, Ed Sanders had come in. Don't forget Mark Siegel, I don't, he was still around, so that was quite taken care of. Now ethnics... Jan was gone, so ethnics fell through the cracks.

Alsobrook: Jane?

Starr: Jan Peterson. Environmentalists, Jane was still there, they didn't need so much assistance. Richie Reiman and Steve were there full force with business. The handicapped issue had advanced to such a significant stage of accomplishment that contacts were then made directly with the Domestic Policy Staff and with Califano's people, they didn't- Frank Bowe, my friends in that community, no longer needed us. They had gone an immeasurable distance by that point, so that, it wasn't a great loss of access for substantial groups. It was, for peripheral groups, I guess. But even for peripheral groups, the demands on the White House had increased to such an extent that structurally and administratively, you couldn't accommodate peripheral groups. It comes to a point that you have to begin to select and put your time where it can be politically most effective, I suspect, I believe, substantively and politically. Now, if you want to get re-elected, *politically* becomes very important. So you, there might be all sorts of good peripheral causes, but where does it begin and where does it end?

Alsobrook: What is a "peripheral cause"? Or group?

Starr: For example, many of the individual Hispanic groups. It would be impossible to accommodate them directly. Joe [Joseph Aragon] was there initially. I was help doing it.

Then J- no, Joe took a little bit more of it at the final phase, of his last few months there. Finally, Rick Hernandez came back in to handle it, but let's say that I had stopped and Rick and Joe weren't doing it and it came to the attention of Jane Wales that La Raza needed help. As a human being, she might want to help, but to get the request, whatever it might be, through the entire system, any individual request takes an awful lot of time, so you have to make, you have to have priorities on groups, and are you then helping groups or, I mean organizations, or should your focus be on a larger community of interest? Yes, it should be on the larger community of interest. Initially, we were helping groups and really not acknowledging the larger community of interest. Eventually, we began or perhaps implicitly to understand, I don't think anybody ever stated it that way that the orientation ought to be to the community and not to the individual groups.

Alsobrook: But, Joyce, during this early time especially, did you find you were spending most of your time with Jewish groups?

Starr: No.

Alsobrook: Percentage-wise?

Starr: No, ironically, no. I was spending most of my first five months, six months perhaps on handicapped, Hispanic and human rights Jewish issues, Soviet Jewry, Shcharansky. A great deal of time with the Hispanic groups, individual groups' meetings. When you look back over the files, you will see that. I had many meetings with Jewish groups but I don't think it took up more than 25 per cent of my time, if that.

Alsobrook: In regard to the handicapped, did the fact that they were handicapped present a logistical problem in getting them to the White House for some of these briefings?

Starr: Yes.

Alsobrook: Can you recall any preparation problems that you ran into?

Starr: Well, just elevator problems, but, you know the fact is, that the irony of it all was the final awareness on our part that we didn't have the ramps, we have ver- I think we have one ramp, very hard to get into and out of the OEOB. None of that has been corrected. And we certainly didn't have facilities, toilet facilities, et cetera. And there was only one person in a wheel chair, and she was shortly- she was briefly in the OEOB, and I don't think she's still there. There are no handicapped people working for this administration.

Alsobrook: So a lot of problems with getting people into the building then?

Starr: Yes, I remember one time they came for a meeting with Stuart and it took 45 minutes simply to get all of them through the elevator system because of the various

difficulties that each of them had because they came as a coalition of groups and in the groups, different people had different problems. During the 504 controversy, I was very, very involved, many, many, many hours in all of that.

Alsobrook: Say, you brought those handicapped people in and they obviously had concerns about barrier-free buildings and things like that. Who would be some of the people in addition to Stu that you would bring in to consult with?

Starr: Oh, he had very good staff people, but it wasn't initially to Stu, although we involved Stu in every meeting. Frank Raines and, I know I forget his name, he's black and was marvelous. He was the best. Can you remember? He was on domestic policy dealing with the handicapped. He was an assistant to Frank Raines.

Alsobrook: Not off the top of my head I sure can't. What was the 504 controversy?

Starr: Regulations that would call for structure and architectural changes in government buildings across the United States.

Alsobrook: Did you do a survey? Nationwide?

Starr: No, we didn't, the regulations had been drafted in the Ford administration and were not signed under the Ford administration. The complaint was that they had not been signed and Carter's positions would demand that he call Califano to sign these regulations. Initially there was great resistance in HEW to doing so. You may recall that there was a massive sit-in by the handicapped led by my friend Frank Bowe and eventually there was a signing of these regulations. The handicapped in their- and you ought to do an interview with Frank Bowe who is the President of the American Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities because he was the architect of this entire fight. As an example of an effort to put pressure on the government and a success, this is a perfect example of, from beginning to end. It began as a group with no credibility and no reputation, grass roots, coalition of organizations, nobody of stature, no name people. And from that point, they came, I was the first person they contacted in the administration, yelling at me, screaming at me. I remember my first call with Frank. I thought, "Who is this man? How dare he speak to me this way?" But they were angry. Eventually I realized that part of his conversation and the tone of his voice had to do with the fact he was he was deaf and could not speak to me in a voice that was appropriate. And, I led him to these people in domestic policy [tape becomes indecipherable for approximately 10 seconds] Because he was the sympathetic one. Anyway, and I put together for Stuart's office from Jack Watson's people and others [audio unclear] meet with the President that day in Califano's office. It's in the notes somewhere. It should be in Central Files or in one of my memorandums to Bob Nastonovich. Because then I did a memorandum summarizing the meeting and Stuart gave his support to a directive to [indecipherable for about 20 seconds]but now this year, [audio indecipherable] Frank Bowe

Alsobrook: How do you spell his last name?

Starr: B O W E. He started as an outsider [audio unclear] and is a representative for the United States government to the United Nations for the Year of the Handicapped, so if this isn't a success story, I don't know what is. It's a marvelous example of grass roots action.

Alsobrook: I wish you would clarify one thing for me in regard to Hispanics. I was laboring under the impression that Joe Aragon was considered like, especially in the early days of the administration, as the spokesman-

Starr: Joe was laboring under it too. He didn't want it, he never wanted it. He is Hispanic but he is, I believe, a lawyer and also a professional and he wanted to do other work. He didn't come to the White House to be the Hispanic Liaison. This caused him a great deal of grief. One, because it wasn't being done and people more or less expected him to do it and, two, because the community held him in, well, they had nothing but the greatest anger because he wouldn't and he didn't. I think that this was unfair. That is the traditional assumption that if you are born "something" then you are there to help those people. It wasn't Joe's understanding, I believe, when he took the job, I don't think he, because you know, when we first came into the White House I think he was responsible for restructuring the, what do you call it, Community Services Administration. He had all the maps on his wall and he was responsible for something quite substantive, not soothing the Hispanic community. And when I told him that I felt very dearly about these people and had some experience with them in Washington, oh he was very excited to let me do it. There was certainly no resistance on his part and he gave me all sorts of direction and help, and Vivian Lichtman, his assistant, who is also Jewish... You know, here you had Vivian sort of being the link between Joe and I and also assisting me, telling me which group was which and how to handle them if I had problems. And here I am being liaison. And it was a disjunctive for the community, the Hispanics, but they didn't treat it poorly. They were not incensed that there was somebody not Hispanic coming to see them and deal with them. If anything, I suspect they were intrigued by the fact that I showed enthusiasm for it. They didn't care as long as somebody took their complaints to the top. The problem was, of course, that we had no real ability to get their complaints very far.

Alsobrook: What were some of their issues that....?

Starr: Representation in the administration was their most important issue. We did appoint a number of Hispanics, but not enough by their terms and expectations. They had voted for Carter whole-heartedly and felt that they didn't see visibly, although there were some, a few high level appointments, they didn't see visibly throughout the bureaucracy substantial changes, political appointments, resources, attention, symbolic attention. Very upset that the President didn't make an effort to attend some of their functions and he had spoken in Spanish during the campaign and gone to Texas, et cetera, and they expected that this was going to be their man or at least that he would give some impression of that and they didn't feel that it was happening.

Alsobrook: Did you do any work in regard to issues like unregistered workers or discrimination against Hispanics in the cities?

Starr: No. Fortunately, Annie Gutierrez was handling justice issues under Stuart and had all that on her little back, then went on to be the person in the US embassy in Mexico. She is now stationed down there handling that very issue of the illegal, undocumented aliens, a terrible issue, really terrible. I did sit in on some of the meetings. I did assist in organizing a few of them but was never deeply involved on a substantive level.

Alsobrook: Let me ask you a little bit more about the Jewish groups that you were involved in. Were these some of the same people you had worked with during the campaign?

Starr: Sure, absolutely.

Alsobrook: As you think back about it, I know you had a lot of meetings with these people in the White House and you brought in a lot of groups. Are there any memorable days that really stand out in your mind? You know, events that happened when you brought some of these people in that are prominent in your mind?

Starr: Well, yes. The memorable are, this event that I told you about on August 1st where I arranged what was then, as I said, a radical departure, the first forum, and I called it a forum, and I did a major memo to Hamilton asking for his permission to do it, bringing in a grass roots leadership, people that held, hold substantial positions in organizations but not the president or the chairman of the conference of Presidents organization. So it was a different breed of people, some younger, younger leadership, and a good combination, not all of one organization or another. I put them together with State Department representatives, I believe it was Nick Veliotos, [Nicholas A. Veliotos] who now has gone on to become ambassador to Jordan and then was deputy assistant to Secretary of State. That was a suc- I was so excited because it *worked*. And they were so pleased and they thought, my goodness, this is a marvelous administration, look at the access they've given us. This had never happened before. I suppose there may have been some unhappiness at the higher levels, the people that are traditionally invited in, you know, presidents, and et cetera, but I doubt it because they did have their access through Bob Lipshutz or others. They were having their meetings, but this was the first time that... well, I go back to the word "grass roots." I don't mean the average, ok we can continue, the average citizen, I mean somebody that is very active, maybe for example, Irene Anacosky, the president, or was then president, of the Councils for Soviet Jewry, was in attendance and others of that stature, although Irene, of course, is not a part of the traditional establishment structure. That was one event.

Alsobrook: This was August 1st, 1977?

Starr: August 1st, yeah, I do remember, really, when the President made the statement on S Shcharansky at a press conference that I felt that was one of the happiest days of my life, because I had fed the material, fed it and fed it and fed it. And it had gone from

Midge to the President and here she really did deliver. She did go to the President. Even what he had said, some of the things I had framed, et cetera and so forth, and so I felt very dramatically involved that day and thrilled that he did it. It was, I believed, a very courageous act because he had the courage to set a precedent since it was clear that once you said that one man, you declare that one man was not a spy, you might be called upon to do it again. And he was, the recommendations coming from, I believe from the State Department, were that he should not do such a thing, but he did. So I was very excited. Then there was the May 1st Independence Day celebration for Israel for 1000 rabbis.

Alsobrook: What year was that?

Starr: 1978. That was the 30-year anniversary celebration, which I had the dubious delight of organizing and implementing and it was a tremendous headache. It was all out of bounds with rational thinking. I think I mentioned to you once that the supposition was that since we were so successful with the President's Middle East address in New Jersey because so many rabbis were in attendance, clearly what was needed here was a similar kind of event. We should invite rabbis, not community people. And I went through a lot of grief in negotiating for invitations for community people, conference of presidents, others, friends of the White House, friends of Israel, etcetera. But we did invite 1000 rabbis. Once again, by the way, and a slight irony, I told you about my experience with the telegrams in New Jersey. This is very funny, I hadn't thought about it before. On this occasion they allowed me only so many slots, 1000, because it was going to be held inside and even 1000 was enormous and that's because I fought for so many extras for other people. And we had a check-off list of all the rabbis in the country. And we, the Synagogue Council of America checked off for us all the substantial rabbis that should be invited that were representative and we gave the list to Western Union, but Western Union didn't take the checks, Western Union took the whole list and all of a sudden it came back that so many invitations had gone out. And I walked into Bob's office and I was as pale as a ghost, and I, it was a crazy thing to do, because, why- to go tell him that this had happened was crazier than that it had happened, but I didn't know who to say anything to. I had to say something to somebody and he was ready to, you know, to take me and strangle me, thinking, of course, that I had done it and I wasn't even convinced- certain at that moment that I hadn't done it. I thought, "Oh my goodness, I've overestimated, look what I have done. Again! I have done it again!"

After sort of confessing my soul to him and receiving his anger, I went back and I realized what had happened, that it was Western Union's fault, whereupon he was more willing, I think, to forgive me but oh, he was so upset because, and I was too, because we didn't know where these people would sit. As it turned out, we had it outside and there was room for even more people and it was a marvelous success. It was quite a moment when Begin came out and stood in front of all these rabbis with their little yarmulkes. Very few women present. Those who were present I had inserted into the list. And the people began spontaneously to sing: "Am Yisrael hai" which means "Israel Lives" and it was a thrill really, this emotional, spontaneous show of emotion and solidarity. And Bill Quandt was there and he had inserted into the President's speech a final phrase, which he himself forgets that he did, but I can tell you he did it, which is that "We shall support

Israel forever.” Something to that effect and it was his words. I drafted the first copy of the President’s speech that day, Carter’s speech. Stuart finalized it, but much of that was mine. And then Bill added final touches and it was Bill’s wording “that we shall support Israel forever.” So, all of this emotion was....

Alsobrook: Did you, you know, you obviously had some lists of people in the American Jewish community, like, when they signed the Mid-East Peace Treaty did you have any input in coming up with the list of people to invite to that?

Starr: No, but they apparently had used my master list because a number of people that I had inserted onto previous lists, just to be sure they were invited, found themselves invited to the signing ceremony and to the dinner when they shouldn’t have been. For example, one friend of mine, who I had put on my master list for the May 1st celebration, is a journalist, an Israeli journalist. I had put the whole Israeli embassy, all the people that should have been added and the journalists, on the master list to help them at getting cleared through. It was perfectly appropriate, but I simply combined them with my master list so that they would get through the gate. But obviously that master list was used in the signing ceremony because some of those people found themselves invited both to the dinner and to the ceremony when there was no reason in the world that they should be invited by the White House and not the Israelis. And they were invited by the wrong side, you see. And then all of the people that I had put on the master list in D.C. were invited, so I think, so it’s clear that my list was used.

Alsobrook: Let me ask you about some of these other religious groups that you mentioned in interview # 1. What were some of the types of groups that you worked with? What were the names of some of these? Do you recall any of those?

Starr: No, I, Christians, Protestants, Christians and Jews. I didn’t do very much with them. I remember a few meetings. What they really wanted was a meeting with the President. That is the only request that ever came of consequence from those meetings. And I don’t think it ever happened. I’m not sure. Maybe it did. It certainly didn’t happen while I was requesting it.

Alsobrook: Was it difficult to tell these people that, no, they couldn’t meet personally with the President?

Starr: We didn’t tell them they couldn’t meet. We kept trying to get the meeting. We didn’t believe they couldn’t meet. I didn’t believe that the President wouldn’t meet with them. After all, it was the President’s decision. These were very prestigious organizations, although I can’t remember the names. But I know them and you will know them as well and you would assume that the President would meet with them.

Alsobrook: OK, Joyce, this was a good overview of the office that I wanted to get. There are more detail questions that I think we can get into on our next interview and I think maybe we can also get into the thing about human rights, as it relates to Soviet Jewry. I know you can talk for many days on that. But, then, if you will let me, I will

take a look at these files, you know, that you showed me today in preparation for this next interview, which will probably be our final, our final interview.

Starr: OK, let me just say, you, do you want me to turn it off?

Alsobrook: No. No, no.

Starr: Ok. You might ask me, I'm not sure what the questions should be, but the course of demise of the Office of Public Liaison we've not really.....

Alsobrook: OK

Starr: You know, piece by piece, it fell apart. And all of us were eventually transferred, those who remained, but there were some very dramatic incidents toward the end, tremendous number of staff meetings, of non-substance, shouting matches, firings. People could be fired and they were fired. Tremendous disarray that was very sad. Perhaps we don't need to say too much about it but I'll say this because I think it is important. Had somebody and I think they would all say this is accurate, those in power now. They were trying to handle Midge as delicately as possible. It was recognized perhaps by the end of '77 that there was a problem, a serious problem. But because she had a good reputation with the public, they loved her because she was funny and warm and seemed to care, there was no desire to... there was a concern that if she was asked to leave, it could be very damaging, politically. This was a mistake. The real error with Midge was not to unders- not to take action when it was clear that the demise was no longer salvageable because it just got worse and they were using, I mean all of us were engaged, at least 30 to 40 percent of our time in maneuvering around Midge, and therefore much less effective, not to mention the wear and tear on our mental resources. My God, I would go home so depressed and enraged and upset!

And you haven't touched upon the personalities, for example, of Bob Nastanovich or even Seymour [Wishman] who was a much nicer fellow but also caught in the maze of being Midge's deputy. Bob Nastanovich sent most of us up the wall most of the time. He was, you know, a very, very defensive fellow, and fearful. So if action had been taken, perhaps a great deal of the people's money, people in the United States, their money would have been saved and we would have been able to do a lot more. When the President fired Bella [Abzug] without due, you know, without any due, I also think that was a terrible error because nobody understood that Bella had been, had tried to protect the President from that very memorandum. She had failed. I knew that, even before it happened. So there was a misjudgment there, but I suspect that part of the reason for taking such action against Bella was because of the lesson learned with Midge, and Midge and Bella were thought of as one person. I mean, there was a common identification there, even though perhaps the two of them don't get along very well doesn't matter. They were thought of in the same character. So, structurally I suspect that when somebody is being very ineffective, or ineffective in such a situation, you do have to take dramatic action, which wasn't taken.

On the other hand, you also have to have your facts together, because with Bella, that only, there was a backlash on that. With Midge... it could have done a lot of good and helped her. I mean she, why should she have had to suffer the humiliation of her own demise? She couldn't help her limitations, so there's a human element to this, that- We can all criticize Midge, and I've mentioned this to you once before, we can criticize her from now until the end of the week, but that doesn't give account to her own limitations, which she didn't, she accepted the position but she certainly hadn't been aiming for it for her whole life. She wasn't, she didn't reach much beyond herself, she was reached for. So I think it's... if we talk about Liaison, Public Liaison... then the question becomes did you ever need an Office of Public Liaison?

Now, I guess that Anne Wexler is doing that role, but she doesn't call herself the Office of Public Liaison. Then, I would say, a second really big mistake, aside from hiring Midge in the first place and not firing her, was to call it the Office of Public Liaison. Perhaps there was need for a radical departure from the previous administration or at least a separation so that the people didn't expect. They had had that access in the previous administration in a similar kind of way and they expected it to just keep going on, and they expected their Hispanic person to be traveling around the country and a Jewish person, a David Lissy, et cetera, and when we couldn't do that, and we couldn't do it because we didn't have the money to give the visibility to ourselves. In addition, nobody wanted us to have that kind of visibility. It wasn't encouraged. It still isn't. This is a fact of life, it's not a good nor bad. Personalities were not encouraged. Then you let down expectations. But Anne Wexler is very effective because she is outside the boundaries of expectations and she's effective. She not only relates in, but it is more her job to relate out. And therefore, she can't let people down because they're not confused about what she's there to do. Okay, that's enough.

[End of this tape]