

2:Paul Schrade

TAPE 44, CR 41, SR 19, TC 2:30

2:41:40 Why were you sent out to Stockton in 62-63?

2:41:47 Reuther and me had different ideas about organizing. Reuther really wanted major organizing effort in the country, and one of the organizing efforts was in the San Joaquin Valley, and he asked me to go to Stockton because he was concerned that Meany was going to end the drive among farm workers and Reuther passionate about organizing farm workers his whole life, and felt we could be helpful. So I went to Stockton to meet with Al Green who was heading the drive at that point, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee along with Norm Smith I believe he came out of the CIO. And and so I went there and and went into the office and sat down and and Al Green was immediately called out of the office to for a phone call he came back in and he said he sounded chuckling, well to Norm he said well you won't believe this but that was a call from Bill Spretzer who was number two from George Meany, the secretary treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and he said this is the first phone call we've ever had from Washington about the drive. They've got some sort of peculiar interest in it. The fact that you're here Paul. So, that in a way I think was helpful because the drive wasn't ended and Reuther kept the pressure on to keep the drive going.

2:43:10 What was going on between the UAW and the AFLCIO? Was there competition?

2:43:17 Well there there was on certain issues. The merger took place of the AFL and CIO led by Reuther for the CIO in 1955. And, uh, during this period Reuther did everything possible to get along, and, but there were disagreements on how to put unions together behind major organizing efforts. Meany just didn't seem to be that interested in organizing at all, and particularly farm workers. He didn't think farm workers could ever be organized, but Reuther wanted to make the try and and felt organizing was important, so that was one thing. In the civil rights movement in 1963, the UAW was a major supporter of the march on Washington with where Martin Luther King made his "I have a dream" speech. And Meany condemn that saying there'll be blood in the street, this is a communist tactic, and so forth and refused to to support it. But a lot of unions got involved in it and Reuther played a major role in in that effort but also in introducing Martin Luther King to President Kennedy.

2:44:26 What was Meany's attitude?

2:44:35 that's generally it although...

2:44:40 ...that he thought that they couldn't be organized, and didn't want to spend the money. We pointed out that he was spending millions of AFL-CIO dues money in third world countries organizing against workers, setting up a a fascist dictatorships, that he was working with the federal government and big corporations in this country doing that. We argued you ought to be doing something about farm workers here, and we have our peasants too who are mistreated and under paid and overworked we ought to

be doing that. So it really got in to a very strange situation between Reuther and Meany over that kind of thing.

2:45:19 Apparently you and Cesar were able to capitalize on that?

2:45:26 Well in 65 during the AFL-CIO convention in San Francisco, we had a hell of a job trying to get a resolution on the floor in support of the grape strike in favor of farm worker organizing. But we finally did and, we were setting up a trip for Reuther to Delano, out of San Francisco, along with the National Labor media people, to to make the farm workers effort a national issue, and uh. I never gave up on things and I went to George Meany on the platform which, one day, which is not the usual thing for people to do, and said, Mr.Meany, Walter is going down to Delano tomorrow, and would like to know if you would like to join us, we're chartering a plane and and and to give some support based upon the resolution we just passed. He says, oh, no, I'm gonna be busy, I can't do that. And I said would you send a letter, and he said, yeah, work it out with Lane, Lane Kirkland, his administrative assistant. So I went to Lane and told him this, and he got angry, he says, well it's your idea you write the letter, so I wrote a UAW style letter in support of the farm workers and and got it signed by George Meany, which Reuther presented the next day or in Delano in the Filippino Hall. And my main reason for doing this was to show some solidarity even though I knew that Meany wasn't fully supporting what we were doing and that this kind of symbolized that we were all together.

2:47:02 Along the way does AFL and UAW competition?

2:47:16 Yeah well there're two organizations at this point, Chavez heading the National Farm Workers Association and Larry Itliong along with Al Green, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AWOC. And we knew that this division had to end at some point. So, going into Delano in December of 65 I think it was December 16th, um, with Reuther showing his support for the efforts, we'd decided to make a contribution and split, split it between the two organizations. We also found out later that Cesar in his own beautiful strategic way had assigned Wendy Goepel, and, and Jim Drake, I guess Manuel Chavez to us to sort of guide us into this position. Which was fine because we'd already decided that it was a good idea. And so when Reuther announced the 5000 dollar contribution would be to split between the two organizations and since it was Christmas season, another five thousand, for, for because of that. So the five thou, the first five thousand dollars for, was on a monthly basis for the, for the length of the strike and so, ah this is the kind of thing that began to attract attention from the AFL-CIO. Al Green was being confronted by Reuther and by Chavez about the efforts of the AFL-CIO, and this caught the attention of Bill Kircher who was then the national organizing director for George Meany and the AFL-CIO. And there were a lot of old competitive situations between Kircher and Reuther, Kircher and Jack Conway, who was part of our team, and myself. We all had very serious personal problems with Kircher. Well Kircher is the organizing director, saw Reuther taking the initiative there, and he felt that the AFL-CIO ought to be involved, and I believe he convinced George Meany to make a better effort. And as we made further contributions to the effort by bringing people in, by helping fund the organizing drive and promoting Chavez as a real leader of the organization, this helped the AFL-CIO come to better decisions about what

they ought to be doing. So we kept ante-ing up and they kept coming back in, and I think a lot of it had to do with very personal problems between Kircher and those of us on the Chavez team. It was that kind of thing that helped build the organization. And it was one of the things that Chavez understood. He, he would not play one group against the other, but he could see competing groups wanting to be involved and getting both of them, or all of them to come in behind the effort and it helped the farm worker struggle a lot.

2:50:11 What did you think about Cesar as an strategist?

2:50:14 Excellent. I learned a lot from him. I thought I was pretty good, and I thought Reuther was pretty good...

continued

2:50:27 I think Cesar was an excellent strategist, and that's proven over the years and his history with organizing the farm workers. And I thought we were pretty good, Reuther and Conway and myself in organizing strategies, in our big industries. But we saw him as a primary strategist in doing some things that had never been done before.

TAPE 45, CR 42, 43, SR 19, TC 3:30

03:30:10 What were your initial thoughts about what Cesar was trying to do organizing farm workers? Did you think he could pull it off?

3:30:17 didn't know didn't know much about him or what he was trying to do and but we learned that and

learned what?

3:30:26 We learned an awful lot about Chavez very early just in meeting with him and talking to people about him, seeing what forces were reigned around him and against him. And and beginning to understanding was very we quickly came to the decision that his goals, were our goals and that he he was a good strategist

3:30:57 What were the circumstances around your first visit to Delano - 1965?

3:31:02 Well it was probably in October we were holding our union was holding a meeting the UAW was holding a meeting in Fresno and Roy Reuther came out from Detroit to speak to our meeting and Ann Draper was the first person that actually tried to recruit me into the farm workers movement, as she did in the anti-war movement, and she was an organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and knew Chavez and she told Roy and me, you've got to meet this guy, and find out what he's doing and see if you can give him some support. So I remember that very rainy stormy night in Ann's old car driving from Fresno to Delano we made some contacts there and I don't know who we talked, but Chavez was not around. He said later that he wasn't in town, but I suspect that he was in town and didn't want to meet with us, because he always wanted to be prepared. And he might have had some anxiety about meeting with Roy and and first national labor leader

to come to Delano and and wanted to be prepared to meet with them. So we didn't see him that night we did see some people but we went back to Fresno and later on I, I met with him I'm not quite sure when, but our major exposure to Cesar was when we brought Walter Reuther into Delano in December 16, of 65 after the AFL-CIO convention.

3:32:39 What happened then?

3:32:40 Well we had a major media turn out which is really what we wanted. We were using Walter for that and that's the way he wanted it because farm worker struggle was not a national issue at that time, but it became one, practically overnight. And so we went to Filipino Hall, and there's a major rally that AWOC and NFWA had organized, a joint effort. And Walter was greeted with great excitement, and he said, look this is not your strike this is our strike and set that theme. And then announced that the UAW would contribute 5 thousand dollars monthly til the end of the strike and another 5 thousand dollars as a Christmas gift from all the workers families around the country, and that was greeted with a lot of excitement as well, because they're working on a very small budget and very poor people, and poor poor organizations. As a result of that meeting Cesar and Larry asked us to go out and visit one of the warehouses in the city of Delano not far from Filipino Hall to see the picketing operation. We went, and and a large group of people from the union and our delegation, and as we got there the police began buzzing around us, motorcycles, cars and so forth, and Chavez, sort of chuckled. He said, well they they passed a rule yesterday that we can't march or do anything, or make any demonstration in the city of Delano. And so Walter said well what do you want to do? And he said, well

there's another warehouse, let's go down to the other warehouse, we get into our cars and go. And, and Walter said to Chavez, how far is it. Well it's several blocks, he said, let's march. He said, no, we can't do that, it's against the law and so they'll arrest us. So they'll arrest us, Walter said. Chavez says fine. So we marched and of course they're not gonna arrest Walther Reuther in the middle of San Joaquin Valley with the national media there. So we did that we marched to another place. And, so we got a message from Mayor Lowder. I think he was a dentist. And he wanted to meet, so we meet in the courthouse in Delano he wanted to meet Reuther and Chavez and Itliong, and we went and met with him and he'd said what a proud city they were, there was no racism or discrimination. Of course he lied in the courtroom, but he wasn't under oath at that point. But we had this very cordial meeting with him, and he told Walther, that maybe the growers would wanna meet . Well the growers had never met with any representative of the AFL-CIO or the farm workers organization so we went back to the hall for dinner to the Filipino Hall, and and we got a call saying growers would like to meet at a private home. Walther said that to Cesar, well what about this? He said, well the growers specifically said I couldn't be there. Well Walther says well I won't go, I'm not going to meet them without you, and Chavez says you've got to go, this is the first kind of chance we've had to find out what's on their minds. And so Walter says, well on that basis, if you approve of it, I will go. So a group of us went out to this big house. They had an adjoining livingroom if you can believe it, of immense size, and a party was going on, a cocktail party was going on, in one room, we sat in this other living room, and so Walter sort of talked to them about organizing. It is gonna be inevitable. All workers in this country are seeking organization the farm workers need it most, and tried to persuade

them but they were really rigid about that, they didn't trust Chavez and didn't want to deal with them, and, and, and hoped that Walter would leave soon. So we had that that was the first time we ever ever did anything like that but Chavez was pleased at at least we made those kind of contacts and and sort of opened the door a little bit with the growers.

3:37:12 Why did the UAW want to get behind Cesar and the UFW?

3:37:23 Well friends of mine in California who were part of the effort, they're church groups, and students, supporting the effort, and a few unions, like the Packing House Workers Union. Burt Simons and the director was doing a really good job for packing house workers, but the farm workers were providing the crop for the packing house workers, were unorganized and he felt that that was an effort that ought to be made and I trusted him, and I trusted Ann Draper, and and I just felt that this was something we had to do. And nobody else was really around to give the kind of major help that we could. And Reuther was passionately involved with the idea of organizing farmworkers, he believed in it from the 30's on, because there were efforts over over the years to organize. And Chavez seemed to be the kind of leader that understood and was close to farm workers, not some business agent of another unions trying to organize among farm workers but somebody of the farm workers, who'd been a farm worker, and you could feel the sincerity and commitment. Chavez was the person who'd really strategic ideas and good tactics and we saw him as a really good person and and why not.

3:38:46 Was Chavez a tough guy?

3:39:03 He was tough about his commitment to farm workers and their struggle. And he was tough about dealing with growers. But he was also a very soft and, and decent person on a personal level, maybe shy, I don't know. He felt he was coming from really the bottom of society, and and challenging major growers, banks, insurance companies, that ran agribusiness in California, politicians who he'd not dealt with, and so I, I think he had some concerns about that. But I never had any concern about that, because of the way he handled himself with farm workers and with major institutions that were began to support him. He could deal with anybody, and he had great back up from Dolores Huerta, from Larry Itliong, from the lawyers in the group. It seemed to me that he was heading the near perfect team to, to really do the job.

SR 20

3:40:33 They UAW and the UFW had ... what was that all about?

3:40:51 Well as I have said many times Walter Reuther was passionately interested in farm worker organizing and came from a strong socialist family and personal tradition and I believed that matched where Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta were politically, and philosophically. And so it became and an easy, to do kind of relationship, it just a natural flow of things. We had major organization built from the thirties and had an interest in farm worker organizing and had the resources to help out so that commitment was easy to make.

3:41:37 And on a more basic level between the workers?

3:41:41 I've I was criticized a lot in my union as the western director for being in the antiwar movement a lot of work in the civil rights movement and my work in the farm workers movement. People complained about that. That I wasn't paying attention to my own work in the UAW. Which I was doing, and proved it by getting elected each time. But, ah, well one of the wonderful things that we found out was that not only the hispanic members of our union supporting what we were doing and helping the farm workers, because many of their families had been involved or were still involved in in farm work, but a lot of the anglos in our union had been involved in farm work. A lot of the membership in the industrial plants of california, auto, ah and our union, and aerospace and union, steel and rubber, came from families who moved out of Oklahoma, and Arkansas, and Texas, during the Dustbowl days, and and after, during the depression, and and had known farm work, had known the the cruelty of growers and and the terrible conditions, and the terrible pay. So they were very supportive because they they had knowledge and feelings about this.

3:43:07 You were able to get Bobby Kennedy involved - could you tell us about that?

3:43:16 Well the the relationship between Reuther and our union and and Jack Conway who worked with Reuther very closely, started I think during the McCullen committee days, when our union was being pushed around by their extreme right wing, their religious right, and people like Goldwater and Nixon and so forth. And during the McCaulen committee

hearings, ah, the Kennedys were targeting corrupt unions like the teamsters, and and others, but saw us as a model union in term of our financial structure and how we dealt with the membership and our dues, and so forth. And so that relationship built during that period in the late fifties. In 1960 Reuther was a very strong supporter of Jack Kennedy for the presidential nomination. I came into, I was living in Detroit at the time but came back to California to help Robert Kennedy put the California delegation behind Jack Kennedy. So I built a personal relationship on a political basis with Robert Kennedy, and knew him as a kind of tough guy great organizer that he was. And so we worked with the Kennedy administration I didn't see much of Jack Kennedy or Bob Kennedy during the sixties, early sixties but after his brother got killed it became much closer cause he was searching for his own life. Terrible agony over his brother's death, and that loss. And part of what Robert Kennedy was doing was going to third world countries, and because of his experience with his brother as attorney general working in Mississippi and Alabama in the civil rights struggle he became a less the attorney for the United States, but had more important feeling about the civil rights movement and actually joined the struggle, late, as attorney general, and after his brother was killed. And I think that that made him a prime mover with the farm workers movement, because when he was approached by us to hold an investigation by the Senate Migratory Subcommittee, Migratory Labor Subcommittee, in late 65, nearly early 66. He was quite open to that, and we helped put that together, Reuther, Conway and, Peter Edelman who worked for Bob Kennedy, were instrumental in putting this this group toge, this senate committee to come out and investigate working conditions and living conditions of farm workers, and that sort of got him directly involved. But Bob had the sense that he had a mission now, based upon his experience

with his brother, based upon the civil rights experience, his relationship with Dr. King that he ought to be and could be a better representative of poor people in this country. And in the third world, and I think that changed him to a great extent and made him really a better political leader than his own brother.

3:46:39 What was going on at the 68 fast?

3:46:50 Well before the 68 fast ,at the end of that, he'd been in Delano for the hearings, and during the hearings in the Delano Highschool in march of 66, he challenged the sheriff, and challenged the growers for their treatment of farm workers. And told the sheriff who didn't understand that mass arrests of strikers wasn't the American way of doing things, that he ought to go out and read the Constitution, Bill of Rights during the lunch break. Well after that he went to the Filipino Hall, and I heard him say "I support your strike against the grape growers, I support your boycott," and went out and marched on the DiGiorgio picket line. And I'd never seen any Democrat much less a Republican, politician do that. You didn't see Lyndon Johnson doing that, you didn't see Hubert Humphrey doing that, you didn't see Eugene McCarthy or Dukakis doing anything like that. He went out there and joined the struggle, and that's why why I see him as something special that was, happened in our country and particularly on behalf of the farm workers. And so he went back and got his family into the boycott struggle. He began moving legislation in the Senate on behalf of the farm workers where it never had moved before, and was that kind of effort that he was making that showed his commitment to the struggle.

3:48:20 Was Ethel Kennedy involved?

3:48:22 Ethel too and other members of the family

3:48:28 You were there the night Bobby was killed what were your recollections, feelings?

3:48:46 Well I hadn't, had been involved in the campaign, and involved in getting Chavez in the delegation based on his going on, I went on the delegation. We both had very difficult problems over that with our leader George Meany and Walter Reuther. But anyway, that night I hadn't planned to go to the hotel cause I disliked victory parties, but I heard coming back from San Francisco coming in from the airport that we were behind, so I said well I got to be there this is gonna be a disaster. And so I went and when I got there to the hotel things had changed Bob Kennedy was beginning to lead Eugene Mc Carthy in the California primary. And so I went upstairs to the Kennedy suite and talked to people and we sat watching the results. And in my discussion with Bob I got him to put a call to Walter Reuther who I'd just left in San Francisco to see if we could recruit him because he wasn't for Robert Kennedy at that point. And we talked about the efforts of the farm workers, cause I told him I said look, what we did in getting Chavez in the delegation and getting him involved in organizing and recruiting new voters is your margin of difference over Eugene McCarthy. Chavez and the farm workers union organized over 200 thousand new voters in California that year and that gave Kennedy the victory, and it proved not only the political skills of Chavez but also of Robert Kennedy. That a commitment to farm workers struggle could give you great political power and Chavez

understood that, and so did Robert Kennedy. And so we tried to find Chavez that night because as the victory began developing he wanted Chavez with him on the platform, to thank him and the rest of us for what we did in the campaign. And Chavez had left the hotel proudly with a band of farm workers many of whom had been out organizing in the precinct. And one of the things that was said about the campaign was that in both African American and Hispanic precincts around Los Angeles and the rest of the state, people were lined up at the poll, and these were generally poor people were lined up at the polls waiting to vote for Robert Kennedy.

TAPE 46, CR 44, SR 20, TC 4:30

4:30:11 Cesar had background in doing voter registration from CSO days could you tell us about that?

4:30:23 Yeah, it was part of the CSO, he was part of the viva Kennedy campaign for Jack Kennedy in 1960, and so he had this experience but he also knew the value of it, That you had to get new voters out there, in order to create a margin and that was exactly what happened in the Robert Kennedy campaign in 1968 for the Democratic primary. That the Farm Workers Union under Chavez gave Kennedy the margin over Eugene Mc Carthy in organizing new voters. And one of the experiences here in Los Angeles and also San Francisco was that in Hispanic precincts and African-American precincts people, the, only poor people were lined up at the polls to vote and that had never happened before. And as some members of the Farm Worker Union said people voted one hundred percent, of the registered

voters in my precinct, and they all voted for Robert Kennedy you know, they were saying that with a real pride and they deserved that.

4:31:34 was the death of Robert Kennedy a blow for Cesar and the UFW?

4:31:40 Oh yes, a blow for the whole country, the fact that Robert Kennedy was such the partner of the farm worker struggle, so involved was a real blow for the farm workers union when Robert Kennedy was assassinated.

4:31:57 Why?

4:31:59 It was a blow for the whole country, Robert Kennedy was probably the only candidate who could have stopped the war in Vietnam. He was committed to that and he felt very strongly about that because he and his brother helped us get involved there. And he was the kind of organizer that could do that. After all he he helped save this coutry and maybe the world in the Cuban missile crisis because as a strategist he knew that he had to make some sort of an agreement with Krushov and that happened. In the case of the farm workers Robert Kennedy was important in supporting the struggle when he was a United States senator but as president I think farm workers throughtout the country would have had an opportunity for the first time to vote democratically for unions, unions that where workers could help themselves to a better life and he was the hope and the promise.

4:33:00 Was the 1968 fast a turning point for Bobby Kennedy?

4:33:07 It was in this sense, first that it showed his real commitment. Cause he came to California just for that occasion. He didn't combine it with other political events or other senatorial work. He came out specifically to to support Chavez and the struggle against violence and that was what the fast was all about, and Chavez you know, wanted that. Although that day he was pretty much out of it because he was suffering so much from the fast that he was weak and not too coherent, because when we first went in when he's lying on this litter in the gas station the first building on at the 40 acres the farm workers built, he introduced me to Robert Kennedy and and later he said he apologized to me, says "Paul why was I introducing you to Robert Kennedy, you brought him to us," you know and and in his own soft personal way he was embarrassed by this, which was absolutely foolish because he was suffering pretty badly, and this was a major event for the farm workers to have Robert Kennedy there for the end of the fast.

4:34:20 Did Bobby then decide to run for the presidency?

4:34:26 Yeah Bob, this is probably the largest farm worker rally in the history of this country, over ten thousand people there at Delano Park. Bob made a speech where he showed his support for Chavez and was cheered immensely, particularly when he started reading some of the speech in Spanish and butchering it with his Harvard, Massachusetts accent and getting lots of laughs and he laughed a lot. And it was a rather joyous occasion, and as we left we had a hell of a time getting him out of there, crowds just want to be with him. And we had to drag him do the crowds and

stuff him in the car. And I had felt that the moment was so important that I came back to Delano. I'd been out o the road with a friend of mine Bud Simons of the Packing House Workers and his wife, going back to LA and I said we've got to talk to him and about running for president. So I went back to the Delano Airport where we'd left him, and Bob was just standing there. Peter Edelman who worked for him was on the phone. So I went out to him and I said "Bob with this kind of support, this kind of feeling for you, you've got to run for president. You're the only person who can really help the farm workers. You've just got to be their candidate, you you are their candidate and you can't deny these people the presidency. And so he showed some interest at that point by asking questions about politics of California at that point, and I took that as some sort of interest that he might wanna do this. I found out later that he'd mentioned to Dolores during the day that he was thinking about running for president. And I found out later too that he called Ethel Kennedy back home and said, call Dick Goodwin, a friend of his who is working for Eugene McCarthy, to tell Dick to call, to tell Gene McCarthy that he was re-thinking about running for president. So was a turning point and I believe that the kind of support that he was getting from the farm workers was the kind of support that he wanted. He could see this as a margin of difference again, of organizing poor people black and hispanic around the country, people who had some feeling and trust for him, could be the margin for difference to win the presidency back for us.

4:37:11 What are your recollections of the DiGiorgio strike?

4:37:17 It was, particularly when the teamsters got involved on behalf of DiGiorgio, signing off contract. And it was crucial that some major effort

be made, and, so we were able, with a lot of help from a lot of groups, to get Governor Pat Brown to intercede with DiGiorgio to hold a new election with the farm workers union on the ballot. And so he called on the state mediation service to set up a neutral observers kind of election to do that. So that became a rallying point for all the groups supporting the farm workers, and and we played a major role in that. We had a meeting, Reuther was on his way to Japan to meet with japanese trade union leaders and we met in a motel in San Francisco airport. Chavez and I went up because Chavez wanted to make a pitch to get some support. So Reuther said “fine I’m gonna put 50 thousand dollars in the Los Angeles bank and Paul will give it to you as you need it for the campaign and he’ll be quite liberal about it, won’t you, Paul?” he said. And I said, of course. So we left the room, and Chavez says oh sort of, soft and warm way, he says “Reuther is giving me confidence.” And so we got most of our organizing staff involved. Other unions did, church groups, students, and it became a major effort we were able to get a group of... (ring,) anyway a part of our effort was, we went out and got used Ford cars from the Ford motor company, get them cheaply for traveling around, doing house calls, and field visits for the organizers, and that was a good way to do it because with all those miles and those big ranch areas, it was it was helpful that way. But we won that vote and it was a lot of problems. Teamsters were very aggressive and brutal to some of the organizers. But we won and were able to turn that one around.

4:39:52 Was Cesar's life endangered on some occasions?

4:40:03 There's always threats, because he was he was endangering the profit making capacity of major financial institutions, growers, banks and

insurance companies in the state. And, there was also right wing, Birch Society was against him, extreme right. And there was one incident where an informant for the United States, the Treasury Department, the Alcohol Tobacco Firearms section, their informant told us that a grower had a contract for 25 thousand dollars on Cesar Chavez's life, and the word had been put out. And he knew about it because he was directly involved with the growers at that point as an informant for the Treasury Department. And that (PIC ROLL OFF) concerned a lot of us in fact we tried to get...

SR 21

4:41:17 Can we come back to the story of the informant?

4:41:24 Yes, I don't know how we got the information, check that out, but an ATF informant who was working in California, we found out about him, and asked him to come to a press conference where he talked about a contract by a grower or a group of growers on the life of Cesar Chavez for 25 thousand dollars. And we wanted this public so that it might deter that kind of behavior on the part of the growers. And we also decided that this was a time where Chavez ought to be helped, in a way of protecting himself, because he was out and around and so many cities and around the rural areas, that his life could have been in serious jeopardy. But he resisted that, he said the farm workers will protect me. And he did agree to accept a gift of two german shepards trained in attack methods, before long they were named Boycott and Huelga. Before long they were just as gentle as he was, just as friendly and were no longer attack dogs. He changed their lives too.

4:42:47 Was there a time where he really took the threat seriously?

4:42:54 I believe so yeah, and we we tried to get some people in I remember we offered I don't know if he accepted, the work of a former FBI agent who'd we knew to get in and go over some security work that everybody could be involved in, in the union, not just Cesar since he was resisting most of that.

4:43:22 there was some cooperation with the teamsters in this ... situation, could you tell us about that?

4:43:31 Yeah they, at one time, it goes back to a proposal I made a in a farm worker rally in Bakersfield, that there be mutual assistance no-raid agreement worked out among the unions that were involved in agriculture and those major supporters of the farm worker struggle. And that came in the time after we beat the Teamsters at Di Giorgio in that election, I believe it was 1967. And I get a call soon after it was reported that I'd made this proposal from Einer Mohn the vice president of the teamsters said "come out let's talk about this I'm interested," and as a result of it we put together the Teamsters because of Mohn and the Longshore union, and the Packing House Workers, the facility workers, the glass bottle blowers union, our union ,and the farm workers union . And, in fact we in a way became supporters of Chavez at this point because Mohn and the Teamsters really didn't trust him, and had problems with him and that sort of nonsense, and it gave Chavez some legitimacy in groups that he, that didn't particularly favor him. So that worked for a long time and I think that it particularly worked in, in winning the Schenley. Now I'm not sure here whether Schenley came

before or after the agreement, it could have been before so. Anyway let's treat it as a separate thing. When Chavez, the farm workers union threatened to boycott Schenley products we hit a really important vulnerable situation for Schenleys because that was their major product. And so the Teamsters sort of interceded on behalf of Schenleys as did their attorney and Rosensteil's attorney. Rosensteil owning Schenleys. And I know Blackie Levitt of the Hotel Restaurant Workers Union, vice president was also involved in meetings at the attorneys house, at Korshack's house, and also meeting where I was in the coffee shop with Chavez and Jim Drake waiting to find out what was happening with this group, and I think Bill Kercher was involved for the AFL-CIO at this point. So in a way some certain mutual interests were coming together and I remember it Korshack called Rosensteil back east or wherever, and said "look Mr. Rosensteil, there's a threat of a boycott against Schenleys and if we don't do something about it its gonna happen." And Rosensteil obviously asked why, and he says well because the farm workers union are interested in organizing the workers, on you, in your grape vineyards. And obviously Rosensteil didn't know he had 5 thousand acres of grapes in California. So as a result of all this Rosensteil said, "sure recognize the farm workers union" and it happened as a result of all these forces coming together, and along with the farm workers wanting a union on that, in those vineyards ,so that's, the Schenley contract was the earliest contract I believe.

4:46:49 What's your opinion on the effectiveness of boycotts?

4:46:56 Absolutely it's a very important tool. And other unions have adopted it as a strategy. Particularly where strike strategy doesn't work. And

strikes don't always work, they often make the point and you may lose a strike but what it does is help organize you better through that kind of struggle. But strikes during the past 20 30 years have become much more difficult, because the employers along with a lot of help from government agencies are, are at war against unions, and those wars are hard to win. So boycotts, boycott becomes a weapon, an economic weapon, and it doesn't mean that you have to go out and destroy a business. Doesn't mean you have to cut their product fifty percent or their profits 50 percent. Just a small percentage, that margin is often the difference between winning the boycott and not winning the boycott.

4:47:53 In December 1970 you invited Ethel Kennedy she got quite a reception, could you tell us that story?

we didn't know she was in the neighborhood and was a major
What happened...?

4:48:17 Well the farmworkers union was organizing a major demonstration in front of the jail where Cesar Chavez was in Salinas. And when I was there helping organize that demonstration we got a call from a reporter, saying Ethel Kennedy is in San Francisco, is she coming to Salinas, if so we'll be down. And I said I didn't even know that, so I made some calls into Washington, finally located Ethel, and she was looking at a project the Kennedy Foundation was involved in in San Francisco. And and she was also going to a football game with Rayford Johnson. And so as a result of all this Ethel Kennedy agreed to come from San Francisco, fly down to make the demonstration in the evening. So we picked her up at the airport,

we marched through Salinas, went to a mass before the jail. She marched with us ,and Rayford Johnson did too, and went through the mass, and then before we went to visit Chavez in the jail, that had been arranged earlier, that we go see him, a large counter demonstration of young people mostly relatives of the growers were there, with all kinds of nasty signs about Chappaquiddick, and go home Ethel Kennedy, support the growers. You know everything against farm workers. And so as a precaution I went over to the front of the jail and met the sheriff and the chief of police and I said “look, if I understand what's happening here we're gonna have difficulty because we're gonna have to go right by these grower pickets and demonstrators. They've got every right to do what they're doing, but we could be in serious trouble if they attack us.” And they just sort of sneered at me saying, “we know what we're doing and you can, don't tell us what, how to do our jobs” and I said “well it doesn't sound very objective to me, I've been in situations like this before, I know what can occur.” And so we went back. And what we did when we got ready to go to the jail, we organized as many big people around eEhel Kennedy as we could, like Rayford and Estaban Torres who's now in the congress and Jerry, the attorney, for the farm workers, and and other big farm workers. And that wasn't enough because people were reaching in and throwing picket signs at her, and trying to hit her with picket signs, grabbing for her hair, spitting at us, and all this sort of thing. We finally got her into the jail, and it was very quiet and in the jail. And so we had a chance to talk to Chavez. He was through glass and through the telephone system, and it was a very nice occassion because they had a chance to exchange information. And so there was a deputy sheriff standing there with us and I said to him “look I'm not going to take eEhel Kennedy out through that crowd again,” we could still hear them in the

background, and he said “what are you gonna do?” I said we're gonna stay here until that crowd disperses. He says “that may be a real long time” I said “we're gonna stay all night if that's the problem.” And so he said “let me see how we can deal with this,” well a few minutes later he came back he said “look there's a back door to the jail, can you get a car around to the back door.” So we sent a person out to do that, and as we left Chavez in the front of the jail we walked through the cell block and cries began coming out from the prisoners saying Viva Ethel! Viva Kennedy! Viva Cesar Chavez! Viva Huelga! (PIC ROLL OFF) And it was just another part of our demonstration. So we got to the door and to the car and Ethel said, turned to me and said Paul you really throw some wild parties here in California.

4:52:11 CR ends

TAPE 46, CR 46, SR 20, TC 5:30

5:30:23 As we went towards the back door of the jail we had to go through the cell block and immediately greeted with Viva Ethel Kennedy! Viva Chavez! Viva Huelga! You know, all the great slogans and and cheers went up from the prisoners and it was like part of our demonstration was still going on. So we got to the back door and the car was waiting for us and, so as Ethel was leaving she says “Paul you really throw some weird parties in here in California.” But she really was pleased with it and showed great deal of courage in doing that because she was under attack and that doesn't often happen.

5:31:69 She dealt with it with a great deal of ...?

5:31:12 Yeah, really gutsy person.

5:31:17 How did Chavez become a Kennedy delegate?

5:31:26 Well since Robert Kennedy made his decision based a lot on what he was finding out and feeling about the farm workers support in California, which led to his decision to run, we all felt obligated at that point to support him. And I know I was going to have difficulty doing that in my union because we're still sticking with Johnson and Humphrey. And would also be a problem for Chavez because George Meany's support for the farm workers union, even though it wasn't all that it could have been, was still important and George Meany was not only supporting Johnson and Humphrey, but he was harder line on the war in Vietnam than anybody in the country. So it created a difficult problem. I had to go, I decided myself, as an officer of the union, that as a responsible person that I had announced, I had to announce my intention in advance. So I put out a blistering statement of Johnson, the war in Vietnam, and about his destroying the war on poverty, which both wars couldn't happen at the same time and we were feeling that the effects of that in Los Angeles. And endorsed Robert Kennedy, but I did not go on the delegation even though I was helping organize the delegation. And we were having problems organizing the delegation because two other delegations already been organized: one on behalf of the Johnson-Humphrey ticket and one on behalf of Eugene McCarthy. And so I went to Detroit for a board meeting and planning to talk to Reuther about this and met him in the parking lot at our solidarity house or headquarters in Detroit and I said "Walter there's some political questions in California that I'd like to talk to you about before I leave to go back to Los Angeles." He says "it's the first

thing on the agenda Paul.” And so oh okay. So I got into the board meeting and they really confronted me, that I was you know going beyond policy, and should not be endorsing Robert Kennedy and should not be attacking Lyndon Johnson, and I said “well that's the way I feel and those feelings are not gonna change. We're in trouble in California, in this country because of the Johnson-Humphrey ticket and I have no other choice to make.” And so it was agreed there would be what's called a good and welfare session because another, other members of the board were really opposed to what I was doing, and the good and welfare session meant a wood shed session where I would be under attack for what I was doing. Well I left that meeting feeling pretty bad and went with a group of my friends some of whom were Kennedy supporters from the board, and talked about this and got a call from Jess Unruh, and he said to me he said “I'm in New Jersey tonight.” Jess was head of the delegation and strongest democrat in California. And said we haven't heard from Cesar Chavez and whether he's going on the delegation and I said “Well Bob was supposed to talk to him, and ask him to do this, what's he say?” He says “well I can't reach him.” And I said “well I'll try to reach him.” And I called Bob and got him at home and and said “what happened with your conversation with with Cesar about going on the delegation?” He says w”ell I talked to him today and he sounded so sick and so weak from the effects of the fast I didn't have the heart to ask him to have this confrontation with George Meany. So he agreed to do a registration get out the vote drive.” I said, “that doesn't sound like the cold blooded SOB you're supposed to be.” And he says, he sort of, there was this pause, and I thought I'd gone a little bit too far with, that but he sort of giggled a little bit, he says well don't tell anybody. And I said “well what do you think about this.” He says “well I think it'd be good if we were on the delegation.” I said

“I’ll call him.” Got Chavez at home and and said what's going on and he said well Bob only asked me to register voters and help on getting out the vote. I said “well he'd really like you on the delegation.” And he said “well what are you gonna do?” I said “I am having this problem with Reuther, and I know you're gonna have a problem with Meany, can we make a joint decision?” And he says “well I’ll call a membership meeting.” I said “well you’ve only got two days to do this.” He says “tonight.” And I got a call I believe from Jim Drake about four in the morning in Detroit, and Jim said, had 800 people for the meeting, they unanimously instructed Chavez to go on the delegation. I said “George Meany is gonna understand that kind of democracy.” And so so he agreed to go on. And and I understand too that Meanys representatives spoke against this, but didn't get one vote against Chavez going on the delegation. The next day Reuther said we're going back on that California problem, looking at me, and said that he had a call from Hubert Humphrey at home, and the vice president had called demanding that he do something about my endorsement of Robert Kennedy. And so he said the president is very upset about this and would like to talk to you about it. So Reuther said I’ll be home for another half hour. Three minutes later Johnson was on the line ,and Reuther, explaining, saying that Bobby has no answers in Vietnam and and now it's the time for our friends to stand behind me. And so Reuther said “what about that?” And I said “well I’ll tell you what happened to me last night but I don't want to, what happened to me here yesterday now convinces me that I should be a member of that delegation.” And so I said “I’m going on the delegation.” And they were you know outcry against this and Reuther was really angry. But happened in that board meeting was the vice president of the union who was the chief hawk on the board and a Johnson-Humphrey supporter, said, and the heir

apparent to Walter Reuther, who became a president after Reuther was killed in 1970, said if I were Paul in California, faced with this decision at this time, I would do the same thing, I'll never vote for that SOB Johnson either. So that sort of rebalanced the whole board situation, and and so I felt that I had a little easier time with it and so we just came out and organized for Bob and and Chavez did so much to help Bob win in California.

5:38:15 Tell us about your recollections on that march to Sacramento?

5:38:20 Well I was in the beginning, sometimes detail escapes me in a lot of these things because I had a job to do, and I was being criticized for that, but, I was at the begining of the march and the first day of the march and then I went a couple of times during the march and I was there at the end of the march in Sacramento. And I remember at the beginning of the march was wonderful because the Delano police were lined up across the street blocking our exit from Delano. The first thing they should have wanted was to get rid of us, and get us out of Delano but they they wouldn't let us march. And and so we made speeches at that point and one of them was remember what Robert Kennedy said to the sheriff yesterday, that you'll learn the Constitution and the Bill of Rights of the United States you can't stop us from marching. And they finally disappeared and we went on with the march. I think the end to the march was significant because march really picked up great support from farm workers, as the the encampments took place up through the San Joaquin Valley over 300 hundred miles, because that's when the organizing meetings took place in each community, and there were bush beaters or advance people going ahead of the of the march to organize meetings every night, and there was singing and food and speeches

and conversation, so the march was really good that way. When we got to Sacramento, I was there for that that final rally and the night before, and as we were getting set to go to the state capital there were about 10 or 15 thousand people there. We were trying to still get Governor Pat Brown to come to Sacramento he was in Palm Springs at Frank Sinatra's house and taking the weekend off. And we suggested that in his best political interest to be there and he had done us a favor in setting up the vote at DiGiorgio where we beat the Teamsters and on that contract. But his complaint was that this was the first time he'd seen his new grand daughter and his first grand child and Bill Kircher told us about his conversation with Pat at this point, and Kircher reminded him, "you just took the Sinatra plane and flew up to northern California to dedicate the new nuclear accelerator (CR 46 ENDS) and it seems to me that this is just as important. And and so Pat still complained about wanting to spend this time with his grand daughter well Kercher said to Pat he said, look Pat, he said, your grand daughter will never remember that you were with her but when she reads in the history books that you lost the governor's race in California because you wouldn't attend the farm workers rally, she'll really be displeased with you. That caught Pat pretty hard i'm sure.. Pat was very sensitive Fearful person, I'm sure it made him miserable, but he didn't show up. But the rally was wonderful and we did make a big impact on the state and on Sacramento that time.

CR 47, SR 22, TC 5:41

5:41:19 What was Ted's involvement in the movement?

5:41:26 We didn't know what was gonna happen after Bob Kennedy was killed. We did know that Ethel Kennedy and and some of her children would be involved in, they became involved throughout the years. But Ted was unknown because he'd not really participated. Ah when I first asked him to do something, Cesar wanted him to come to the march through Coachella Valley. And I called his aid at that time and really got put down by him saying "there're security problems, he doesn't want to do the same thing Bobby did, and I don't know if he could be available." And so I said "well the security question is Ted's decision I can't decide that and besides the Kennedy name is involved in the farm workers movement. They supported Jack Kennedy, they supported Robert Kennedy, and I'm sure supported him in Mass-, supported Ted in Massachussettes, but nothing worked. I got a couple of call from Dolores and Cesar about Ted's availability and I said well look it doesn't look good. Well we got other people working on him as well and finally I decided that this was a time to go over the staff member's head. I didn't like his response and often did not go over staff members but occassionally did, and so I got Ted and he was in a meeting with some southern senator in his office, and I said "Ted I've talked to your aid and, and, he he's raised these questions about your coming to Delano." And and I said "I know that this is important to Cesar, he never asked Bob to do anything unless it was absolutely necessary and Bob did some very important things, I think that it'd be good if you'd help out at this point. And as far as security is concerned we'll do everything we can to protect you when you're in in the area, and but that's a decision you have to make." And so I left it there. I'd marched the last day got back to our motel in El Centro, where Gloria Steinem was laid out on this king size bed with all kinds of messages. She was handling media for Cesar and she said

“somebody who sounded like a Kennedy called in and the person who took the message said you'd be back.” And and so I said “oh it's probably that John Tunny, who never supported the farm workers union ever and despite being very close to Ted and the rest of the family. And so I went to bed. At about seven in the morning I got a call in my room and it was Ted Kennedy's aide, and he said “you won, you son of a bitch, we're in Los Angeles and we'd be down on United flight so and so, meet us at the El Centro airport.” So we alerted the sheriffs, we alerted the farm workers union, and we got people out to greet Ted. So Ted came in which was quite a surprise I didn't expect him. And so he was willing to make the effort, and so we spent most of the day together, Chavez and Ted Kennedy and John Tunny who came to the airport in a private plane. And one of the little anecdotes about that day was that I think Jim Drake was driving the car, and Ted was in the front seat and Tunny and his wife and I were sitting in the back, and and Ted turned to me and said “how are we going to solve this problem with the growers, Paul, it seems to be so difficult.” And I said w”ell why don't you talk to your friend John here, he's in bed with the growers these days, and he could tell you more than I can.” And Ted kind of gave me a dirty look, and and John was embarrassed and he became more embarrassed through the day. Because he tried to get on the speakers agenda at the square at and in Calexico and Chavez told him he said “look we don't want you to be embarrassed, you're not a supporter of ours, and we don't want to be embarrassed.” And so and Ted said “look John, you're the resident congressman here and shouldn't be involved in this thing.” And and because of all this and he went anyway. In fact he went down with me and Gloria Steinem, jumped in the back seat of our car with her, and he talked Jim Drake into going on the program. And he got up on this flatbed truck about,

5 thousand people in the square and and and started saying “look I admire Cesar Chavez” and so forth. And the chant started, “support the boycott! support the boycott!” because they knew he wasn't supporting the boycott. And then he got embarrassed. And so he walked by us, and Ted was shouting at him, “John ,support the boycott! Support the boycott!” which further humiliated poor John. But he never, he never was really part of our struggle here, and he was a senator from the state. And and it it and Ted couldn't turn him around, but Ted really tried to persuade him during that day to join in with us but he wouldn't do it.

5:47:01 ... the doctor?

5:47:03 Yeah ah, after the fast and the 68 election Chavez really had serious back problems, terrible pain he could hardly move and spent most of his time in bed for 9 months. He would struggle to get out of bed every Friday to go to farm worker union meeting. But hardly anything other than that. And when Jack Conway and I were there a few months after he was in bed, Jack said “look it looks like the whole movement is dead at this point, he, he's not gonna recover.” And Mary Moses told us that an effort was being made to get Dr. Janet Travell who was the John Kennedy back doctor who put the rocking chair in the White House, and also treated him quite comprehensively during that period. That they were trying to get her to come out. Well I was going into Washington with Jack after this visit to Delano and Jack called Ted Kennedy that night, and said “Ted you know it'd be important to get Dr. Travell out there to treat Cesar and see if she can do anything. And the next morning got a call back from Ted saying she'll be out in a couple of weeks. I picked her up took her out to Delano and she spent

two or three days exploring his back and his muscles and his health and waited for Cesar's own doctor to come in from San Jose, and when he came in she she assembled the whole board of the farm workers union around Cesar's bed at his house and she had a diagram set up showing a pain map where the intense pain of certain muscles in his back and so forth . That he had vitamin deficiencies and other health problems, so she said to him there's certain treatments that are going to get you out of bed, and so she said she took a medical journal out of her little kit looks like a carpenters kit and medical journal out of there and she said put this under your right butt and roll over on it so he placed it so he rolled over on this the pain was totally gone, not permanently but temporarily it was just that his frame had to be adjusted a certain amount which was the same as President Kennedy's. And most were all asymmetrical, some more asymmetrical than others, our sizes are so different and our structures are so different. And she solved the problem where you could just see feel the relief around the bed side, that there was a chance for him to recover so she worked on him for a couple of days and gave him instructions how to do physical therapy in the swimming pool put him on mega vitamins and did a number of other things, put him in a rocking chair put a pad in his shorts, lifts in his shoes and so forth, so he recovered very quickly after that. He was still in a lot of pain but at least he could become mobile again, take over the leadership which he hadn't been able to do very much about for several months.

5:50:27 What was going on in the courthouse just before .. La Paz?

5:50:36 Well Jack Conway and I were visiting Cesar in Delano and he took us over to La Paz to see a T.B. sanitarium which he wanted to convert

to a farm worker headquarters. And transfer, the property ownership was taking place, and he he told us first of all that how Helen had been a patient there and was opposed to it, really was spooked out about it, and the second thing he told us was that the word around the Bakersfield courthouse was that some Hollywood Jew had bought this property for that black Mexican communist Cesar Chavez and they were going to try to block it you know so it was you know and Cesar really laughed about all this sort of thing because he was well composed. But he also thought he could deal with Helen's problems by getting priests and bishops up there to sanctify the property and deal with her her problem about living there.