

Interview with Carl Golden

Michael Aron: Today is December 9, 2009 . It's the afternoon. I'm Michael Aron of NJN News here for the Rutgers Program on the Governor, specifically the Thomas Kean Archive. We are in Burlington Township at the home of Carl Golden. Carl is an iconic figure in New Jersey politics and journalism. He was press secretary to Governor Tom Kean and to Governor Christie Whitman and during the Florio interregnum he went over to the judiciary and was communications director for the Chief Justice Robert Wilentz. That title of press secretary became communications director probably during Carl's time there. We're going to hear about Carl's time in the Kean Administration. Carl, where were you born?

Carl Golden: Easton Pennsylvania .

Q: When did you come to New Jersey ?

Carl Golden: I moved to New Jersey in 1962.

Q: At age?

Carl Golden: Twenty-five.

Q: What were you doing at the time?

Carl Golden: I was a reporter. I left my reporting job at the Easton Express, which is the town I grew up in and I got a job with the Newark News and I worked in the Morristown bureau, lived around the Morristown area and I spent some time working in Newark at well. So I came to New Jersey in 1962.

Q: You came from a large family, or what kind of family?

Carl Golden: I had four brothers. One has since passed away, so I have three brothers obviously. My mother and father came from a very middle class blue collar background, raised in a very working class town and, you know, went all through grade school and high school there. I graduated from high school on a Wednesday night and the following Monday morning, I went to work at the local paper.

Q: What did your parents do?

Carl Golden: My father at the time he retired, he was a truck driver for the Easton Express. I wrote the stories and he delivered them.

Q: And your mother?

Carl Golden: She worked for a while on - I'm trying to remember the company. They made some sort of hand tools like soldering guns or something. It was on an assembly line. As my brothers and I grew older, she stopped working because we could care for ourselves obviously and we were out either having jobs or part-time jobs. At least we were old enough that we weren't getting in any serious trouble, so she didn't have to worry about leaving us alone.

Q: What do you think drew you to newspaper work?

Carl Golden: Actually, I was offered the job by the news editor of the local paper and at that time I graduated from high school, that would be in 1955, your choices were join the military or pump gas or whatever. When that job offer was made to me at the local paper, I thought, "This is a pretty good deal. It's all indoor work and it doesn't look like a lot of heavy lifting, so I'll take that."

Q: No college?

Carl Golden: No.

Q: So how long did you work for Easton Express?

Carl Golden: I worked there a little over seven years.

Q: Covering?

Carl Golden: Well, the first six months of my time there I was a copy boy, which is about as long on the rung as you can get. They don't call them copy boys anymore. They're now called desk assistants I think. My job was to do what all the hung over reporters didn't feel like doing that day. So I did that for six months and then they came to me and said, you know, "Gee, how'd you like to be a reporter?" I said, "Oh, that sort of sounds good to me, so let me try that." And so I stayed there until '62 when I left and got a job at Newark News, which at that time was the largest and most influential newspaper in New Jersey, light years ahead of the Star-Ledger at that time. In fact, the Star-Ledger at that time was known as the "racing paper." It came out in the morning. It had all the morning lines and all the tracks and the Newark News was the paper that was a look to for sort of in-depth, insightful, well written stories that people became accustomed to.

Q: A point of fact, the Newark News spawned the great newspaper men of the last third of the 20 th Century in New Jersey ; all of them just about, right?

Carl Golden: Yeah, a great many, myself included of course.

Q: Well, how long did you stay at the Newark News?

Carl Golden: I stayed there until 1966. Yeah, '66.

Q: In the Morristown bureau?

Carl Golden: Mostly in the Morristown bureau, but when you work there you sort of were open to being sent anywhere and I spent some time working in Newark, not a lot, but some time. It was largely Morristown and they decided the Morristown bureau sounded much too provincial, parochial so they changed it to the Northwest New Jersey bureau, which sounded it much more important than it was. But I worked primarily nights. I'd go to work at maybe 7:00 at night and worked until, you know, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 in the morning depending on what was going on and then I'd go home and try to sleep while my youngsters were running around, banging on drums and things like that, but it was good.

Q: Where did you live at the time?

Carl Golden: I lived right outside of Morristown. I lived in Morris Plains.

Q: You worked there until '66. What happened in '66?

Carl Golden: I was offered an opportunity to go to work in Washington, D.C. and I mulled that over for quite a long time and made my decision basically for two reasons. One, my family was growing and paycheck was not.

Q: How many kids?

Carl Golden: At that time, I had four and I wanted to write politics for the paper. That was probably an ambition that was beyond my grasp being the paper that it was. But the fellow who was writing it was young. He was older than I.

Q: Do you remember who it was?

Carl Golden: Yeah, it was Andy Baglivo and he wasn't about to go anywhere. So this other opportunity came along. So I went to work on Capitol Hill for Congressman Peter Frelinghuysen, Rodney Frelinghuysen's father.

Q: Who represented that part of New Jersey ? Is that how you knew him?

Carl Golden: Yeah, he represented Morris and Somerset Counties. That was the district and that's how I He lived right outside of Morristown and I had covered him, you know, and his campaigns periodically and some of his personal appearances, campaign appearances and so on. That's how I got to know him and a number of members of his staff.

Q: What was he liked compared to Rodney Frelinghuysen?

Carl Golden: The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. They're very much alike. Peter was probably a little bit more conservative than Rodney is, but I attribute that more to changing the times than anything - a change of philosophy. They're very, very much alike. Rodney was always sort of sort of destined to follow his dad into Congress. He had an older brother and whatever, but there wasn't much political interest I think on the older brother's part.

Q: So you took your family down to Washington and how long did you spend there?

Carl Golden: I stayed there until 1971, January of '71.

Q: What happened then?

Carl Golden: I got a call from a reporter I worked with at the Newark News. He was still there. The paper was still in business then and he called me up and he said, "Are you looking to leave Washington?" And I said, "Well, at some point. I don't want to make this my career - working on Capitol Hill." It's great, great city and kids are exposed to a lot of things they wouldn't normally be exposed to. My kids were going to elementary school with youngsters from all over the world. But I said, "Yeah, eventually I want to leave." He said, "This young member of the state legislature called me and offered me a job," and he said, "I don't want to leave the news business." He said, "I told him I knew a guy who might be interested in the political side of things and if you could talk to him." So I said, "Yeah, okay, fine." Well, it turned out to be Tom Kean and I came up to New Jersey, interviewed with him and he hired me to work in the legislature. That January of '71.

Q: How long had he been in the legislature?

Carl Golden: He was elected in '67. So he had been there four years and at that time, he was the Assembly Republican Leader or Majority Leader and the Speaker was Barry Parker from Burlington County and Kean was the majority leader.

Q: So Kean was the number two Republican in the chain.

Carl Golden: Right.

Q: What did he hire you to do?

Carl Golden: At that time, it was the very beginnings of what later became to be known as the legislature's partisan staff. There really wasn't any up to that point. I think both the Republicans and Democrats had one or two people and that was it. Kean saw a need to establish a communication side of things as well as the management, administrative, legislative side of things - policy and whatever. So he hired me to work with state house media and see to it that the Republican outlook, Republican insights on pending legislation got into the mix. There was a Republican governor at the time. It was Bill Cahill and who was a delight to be around.

Q: Are you being sarcastic?

Carl Golden: No, no. Obviously, you don't know Bill Cahill.

Q: No.

Carl Golden: I don't know if I have time to tell you a story about New Jersey.

Q: Go ahead. You've got plenty of time.

Carl Golden: Tom Kean introduced legislation to create New Jersey Network. He had a guy named Dick Zimmer and Cahill was very much against it and Kean had done this big research thing showing that, you know, people knew the mayor of New York and didn't know who their governor was. The amount of time devoted to New Jersey news both in New York and Philadelphia from a television perspective was miniscule as to be invisible and this was the way to go or whatever. I recall going to a meeting in Cahill's office about this and Cahill looked at Kean and he said, "Why do you want to do this? Why do you want to do this?" So Kean we knew was rabid about coverage and all this kind of stuff. He looked at Cahill and he said, "Why are you against it?" And Cahill said, "First off, it'll become a bottomless pit and secondly, they'll stick it to ya."

Q: He was right on both

Carl Golden: Yes, indeed he was. History proved him to be very prescient to that we thought.

Q: Although Tom Kean was to not too much longer afterwards use NJN to get himself well known <inaudible>.

Carl Golden: I should say, by the way, that I cleaned up Cahill's remarks some.

Q: Going back a second, the reporter who got the phone call who then referred it on to you, that wasn't somebody we know of today?

Carl Golden: That was Jim Staples. Do you remember Jim Staples?

Q: Yeah, he went to the DEP.

Carl Golden: Yes. I had worked with Jim both in Easton and in Newark.

Q: Okay. Was it farsighted of Kean to want a communications person, or was it kind of obvious by 1971 that he needed to worry about the press?

Carl Golden: Well, I came to find out that at that time in the Assembly, and the Senate to a large extent, it was very, very local. There was no statewide flavor to the legislature. You had the Assembly people from Gloucester County that were worried about one newspaper and as long as they kept that one newspaper happy, or at least reasonably happy, everything was fine. It was very regional. I mean the newspapers in New Jersey are very regional aside from the Ledger now, which is a little more statewide, but they were very regional papers. They were only concerned with the legislators or the state officials from their area. There was no need for this sort of overarching sort of press coverage that Kean was looking for. So there was not a universal agreement that this was a wise thing to do. You have to remember this was 38, almost 40 years ago. The media in the minds of many in the legislature at that point were not really friends. They were always looking for something, something that's going to be embarrassing or something like that. So not a great deal has changed. So there was some question about whether it was a wise move to try to sort of promote a Republican statewide agenda. Kean was of a mind that this was what had to be done. If the party was ever going to become not so much more powerful, but much more relevant than it was, it needed a more cohesive one voice to the extent one voice could be heard party. The way to do it was to kind of cross all the regional considerations, not eliminate them, but just sort of kind of cross them and tell the people of New Jersey

that this is what our party stands for in a much broader context than what you're used to seeing.

Q: That sort of foreshadows what would happen in the '80s when part of Kean's legacy was to create this statewide identity for the state and see its image ramped up, correct?

Carl Golden: Yeah, much of that was in that direction, but it wasn't so much with a political end in mind, although that wasn't very far from the equation. It was much more of a policy oriented thing. His idea was that, you know, policy could translate into political advantage and in order to gain the political advantage, you had to convince people of the validity of the policy. One inevitably would follow the other.

Q: Good government is good policy.

Carl Golden: Yeah, I don't know if he ever said that, but I think you were the first one who coined that. But basically, that was it. I think a lot of people saw it then as overshadowing their local identity and there were some things in a statewide agenda that didn't play well in some areas of the state and some of these folks didn't want to get into a discussion or a debate about things that they either didn't agree with or whatever. There were some very outspoken people back then who were not at all reluctant to talk about how this was a lousy program even though the Republicans might have been for it. Thus and such wasn't a good idea because again, they were playing to a very local audience. The first thing that struck me about it, or one of the first things that struck me about it was the enormous difference in philosophy and politics and approach to government between North and South Jersey. You know, South Jersey was this kind of backwater, sort of like New Jersey's West Virginia, you know, and the folks in the north were obviously much more cosmopolitan. You know, the folks in the north went to the opera. You know, the folks in the south went to Cowtown Rodeo. You could see that in the

Q: ...in the legislature?

Carl Golden: Yeah. Yeah, you really could. I remember when Bill Cahill decided that he was going to turn the Meadowlands into this, you know, sports complex with the stadium and the race track and whatever. We were talking about that one day and somebody from - I don't remember where they were from - Salem County, or it was somewhere in the south, in the southern part of the state, said, "What do you want to put all that money into New York for?" And it was like, no, no. You see the turnpike.

Q: What were your first impressions of Kean if you could separate them from your many years of growing with Kean?

Carl Golden: It's funny. When I came up in January to start the job, in January of '71, I had interviewed with him in like October or something. I said, "I can't leave until January 1st" or whatever. I happened to have walked into the legislative chamber and there he was with his leg in a cast. He had fallen and broken his leg like two weeks before that or something. That's, you know, here's a little trivia for you. That was when they first installed telephones from the Speaker's podium to the Leaders' desks because he couldn't get up and walk back and forth to the Speaker's podium. So they installed a closed circuit, not a closed circuit, but a closed line telephone system. It struck me that he's obviously a very bright guy, very genuine, no phoniness about him at all. He at that time was very, very much immersed in environmental issues. That was his major area of concern and very, very easy guy to work with. If he asked for my opinion, my advice or whatever and I gave it to him, he would nod and he would say, "Okay." He would never say, "No, we're not going to do that." He would mull it over and let you know. Even when he wasn't going to agree with you or suggest a different direction, you never got that feeling, sort of rejected feeling. He always made you feel as if you were also part of the solution that he devised. That, I think, was an enormous, enormous benefit to him when he became governor.

Q: It helped him create a sense of team morale?

Carl Golden: Yeah, team morale was one thing. Morale was always very good because, you know, he had a tremendous knack of slotting people in the governor's office right where they belonged. I mean it was just amazing.

He wrestled with who should be chief counsel, Cary Edwards or Gary Stein. Both were long-time friends. He had a great deal of confidence in both of them and it was a real tough decision for him, but he slotted Edwards in as chief counsel and Stein as policy and planning. It worked out great because Cary was the guy who had come out of the legislature. He had all those relationships that were in the legislature. He spoke their language so to speak. He could go there and deal with these guys. Stein was of a much more analytical mind and he became policy and planning director, which is exactly where he belonged. So Stein got to talk to the captains of industry and Edwards got to talk to all the leading legislators and I got stuck with you and Jim Goodman.

Q: Did Kean become Speaker in 1972?

Carl Golden: Yeah, after the 1971 election deadlock.

Q: Tell us that story. It's a famous story.

Carl Golden: The election broke down 40-39-1 - 40 Democrats, 39 Republicans and one independent. That was Tony Imperiale from Newark . And as a result, no one had the 41 votes necessary to organize the House and elect a Speaker and whatever. It was obvious that someone had to cross the line. Someone had to give some accommodation, an arrangement was going to have to be made.

Q: Imperiale of Newark could have easily gone with the Democrats.

Carl Golden: He could have, but he overplayed his hand. He was going to be the kingmaker and by the time he got around to realizing that he really could have been the kingmaker, the deal had been done and he became irrelevant at that point. He never thought himself as irrelevant, obviously and no one had the audacity to suggest to him that he was irrelevant, but there was someone from Bergen County named Richard De Korte who was absolutely a brilliant guy politically and every other way. And he dealt with some dissident Democrats from Hudson County to have four Democrat votes, three from Hudson and one from Union , come over and support Kean for Speaker and that's what happened.

Q: It's remembered as a deal with David Friedland. You're saying it was really more a deal with Dick De Korte.

Carl Golden: Well, Dick De Korte and David Friedland brokered the deal and David for all of his faults, and he had many. He spent time in prison and all the rest. For all of his faults, he was an absolutely brilliant man and had he channeled that brilliance into legitimate undertakings, you know, who knows, but he was extraordinarily smart.

Q: What did he get out of the deal?

Carl Golden: He got the ability to appoint several committee chairmen. I don't remember how many at the time, but he got the ability to appoint several committee chairmen and he got the authority, the ability and the money to have two or three, I believe it was, staff people assigned to him and his office. And there was created something called the conference committee, which was designed to bring Republicans and Democrats together to talk about arriving at a consensus on certain pieces of legislation. It never really took hold frankly, but that was essentially what David got.

Q: Were you involved in any of this?

Carl Golden: I was not involved in a face-to-face negotiations. I was involved in picking up all the shattered pieces of glass when it was over.

Q: Was he criticized in the press?

Carl Golden: We just took a fearful beating.

Q: Did you?

Carl Golden: Yeah, we took a fearful beating.

Q: Was it portrayed as a deal with the devil, or what was it?

Carl Golden: Well, you know, I always said that if David and his folks were from Mercer County it would have been okay, but they were from Hudson County and they carried that baggage with them. When you were a legislator or public official from Hudson County these are the kinds of things that you did. You know, when you were too busy stealing elections, you did things like this and we were just pounded.

Q: Did it hurt Kean?

Carl Golden: Briefly and in the short-term, yeah. But over the long-term, the way he conducted himself as Speaker I think overcame a lot of that. But, oh, we were just, editorials pounded unmercifully with criticism of, you know, as you say, making a deal with the devil and whatever. But he reveled in it. He loved it. You know you say in the medical profession, "First do no harm," well David was, "First get in front of a TV camera." He loved it. I mean he reveled in it. He liked walking down the hall being trailed by a bunch of notebook reporters and TV cameras. He just loved it.

Q: So Kean became Speaker. Did that change your duties much?

Carl Golden: Well, it put me in a position where, you know, not to put too fine a point on this, but what I said went. You know, if the media wanted something out of the Speaker's office, you know, they came to see me because at that time the Speaker controlled everything. He controlled the flow of legislation with the floor. So if anything came out of Kean or out of my office that said this is what we're going to do, this is what we're going to do. So it didn't change the duties so much as it changed the way I had to operate. It was one thing, you know, when you're working on behalf of, you know, 40 Republicans or 43 Republicans or whatever it was. It was another when you worked at the epicenter of what made the Assembly operate and what made the Assembly run. So it made life a little busier. Suddenly, I was getting 150 Christmas cards instead of 20, but that's you know....

Q: Where were you living?

Carl Golden: It was living in Willingboro , which is not too far from here as a matter of fact.

Q: And you had five kids by this point?

Carl Golden: Yes. My youngest daughter at that point had been born in Maryland when we lived down there and the family was growing.

Q: Did Kean carry his environmental interests into the Speakership?

Carl Golden: Very much so. As a matter of fact, Kean was the author of what today is either praised or reviled depending on where you are. The CAFRA, the Coastal Area Facilities Review Agency or whatever it's called was one of his major accomplishments. He was also one of the people who foresaw that continually opening up and filling up landfills was a disaster waiting to happen. He tried at that time to enact something to get them to close down and over a long period of time. It met tremendous resistance because there's a lot of money involved. Without getting into any kind of great detail, all those folks in the solid waste industry were not easy folks to deal with. There were, you know, huge sums of money involved in all of this. He never really succeeded in getting that done. It began when he become governor. He got some of it done, but he was still very much the environmentalist, but there were other things crowded in. There were, you know, budget matters and school funding matters and Cahill's efforts to get an income tax through back in '72 I guess that was.

Q: Did Kean support that?

Carl Golden: Yes, he did. Yes, he did. He was one of only a handful of Republicans who voted for that.

Q: Did that effort hurt Cahill? Cahill was a one-term governor.

Carl Golden: Yes, he was.

Q: He was defeated in a primary in '73. Was the income tax a large part of that?

Carl Golden: Not really. There were some scandals. Remember, that was the height of Watergate. There was the scandal in Cahill's Administration involving his secretary of state and the awarding of a road construction contract, I think it was at the time. There was great restiveness in the party with Cahill, great unhappiness with him. The rap on Bill was that he never paid attention to the party. He wouldn't do the kinds of things that, as distasteful as he may have found it to be, had to be done to keep party folks happy, whether they were county leaders or local officials or just what we know

Q: Did Kean do those things?

Carl Golden: Kean did a lot of those things. Kean did a lot of those things. He was very accessible. Cahill was not the most accessible in that. He was pretty irascible. I liked him because he had the kind of personality that I liked, but, you know, he was a very, very tough Irish pol and you know, he would never sugar coat his opinions or his answers. When you asked him something, you had better be prepared to get an answer you weren't going to like and it may be delivered in a way you weren't going to like either. But very honest, he was not. When he was trying to get the sports complex done in the Meadowlands, he ran afoul of Nelson Rockefeller because they obviously didn't want the Giants to move to New Jersey and Nelson Rockefeller got a hold of his bother David Rockefeller who controlled Chase Manhattan Bank I guess and told him to shut down every financing house in New York when they were approached by New Jersey to sell bonds for the stadium, and he did. And I remember Cahill holding forth in a very high volume and monumentally profane tirade about Nelson Rockefeller, but he was that kind of guy. Somebody once said, you know, never pick a fight with someone who likes to fight and Bill fit that description. He relished it. He loved it.

Michael Aron: What did Watergate mean for Tom Kean and the Republicans and in the Assembly?

Carl Golden: It didn't touch us so much, obviously, in the Assembly. I mean as a party it was just a horrible, horrible time with new and more serious and worse revelations. I mean back then, no one had come up with the phrase, "What were they thinking," but that was going through everybody's minds. What the hell were these people thinking when they did this? It was also unnecessary. Nixon was going to win the '72 election by some phenomenal amount of number of votes anyway. There were people who were very unhappy about it and there were some who were saying, "You know, politics. It rolls off his back. This is what happened. It's not going to hurt him." You know, you'd be amazed at the number of people who really sort of misread that impact at the time. Now later on, obviously, when the tapes came out and it showed him having discussions about shutting down investigations then I think it became a little different. But initially, it was no different than, you know, voting dead people in Hudson County. It was about the same level of concern.

Q: Kean for most of his career was a reformer and big on ethics. Did this cause any consternation for him, that the titular head of the Republican Party was unethical?

Carl Golden: I don't know if he told you this or not, but he was never a big fan of Richard Nixon and I think he was very, very disturbed about the long-term impact of what he saw and what obviously later came to be true as just outrageous criminal behavior at the highest level of government. I remember him saying to me at one time that this will have very, very far-reaching implications. I think he was convinced at one time that Nixon would wind up in a jail cell. And he sort of looked down the road and thought that this is gonna take years to recover from this, that we

will forever be known as the party of Watergate. And the-- to some extent we still are. That-- so he was right about that and-- but it was also something that he felt obviously powerless to control. There was nothing he could do about it. As as revelations came out there was nothing he could do about it except, you know, express his disappointment and his chagrin that this had all happened. But it bothered him, you know, because I mean his father, as you know, was in Congress for many years. His father was sort of the model of rectitude, and I think it bothered him at that level too, that this is not how people are supposed to behave, you know. In politics or not you don't behave this way. You don't do things like this. And so he was very much bothered with that. Both on a personal level and a political level he was very much bothered by that.

Q: In '73 did the Republicans lose badly in the assembly?

Carl Golden : Oh, the great disaster of '73, yes. Well we had nominated Charlie Sandman, who was another delightful guy. And I say that in all seriousness. I liked Charlie. I knew him and I got along with him and he was a very nice man, but much too conservative for this state, even back then, and lost by what, at that time, was a record 720,000 vote plurality for Brendan Byrne. Byrne, who really no one had ever heard of. He was just a prosecutor in Essex County and a judge but nobody really sort of heard of him until there was a front page story in the New York Times that captured some organized crime guy, whose name escapes me, as saying that Brendan Byrne was-- you couldn't buy Brendan Byrne. And once that hit the front page of the New York Times it became the man who can't be bought. And at that point you just knew that-- I mean Charlie had an uphill climb anyway but at that point he was sort of-- then it became sort of this Darwinian survival of the fittest at that point, 'cause you just knew this was gonna be a disaster. And it was.

Q: Do you recall how that election ended so far as the assembly makeup?

Carl Golden: Yeah, we wound up with 14 people. And-- 66 to 14.

Q: So Kean no longer was the Speaker, did he serve for the next two years?

Carl Golden: Yeah, he-- in fact there was one point in the course of the night where he was actually behind in his election. It was unbelievable. The only people who won were people who came from very, very strong Republican strongholds that, you know, Morris County , Somerset County , suburban Essex , which is where Kean was from. And bear in mind, too, Kean, by that time he had been in the legislature six years. He had been in leadership and all the rest and he had much more exposure in his district. Had he just been sort of a backbencher he'd have lost. But no, so we had this...

Q: He was also the son of a Congressman.

Carl Golden: Yeah, and the Kean family name in suburban Essex and that area was very, very strong, you know, politically, socially, business and all the rest. So we, you know, we caucused in this little room with 14 folding chairs and we couldn't control anything, obviously, and, you know, and...

Q: How did that change your life?

Carl Golden: Well it was-- for awhile on election night I wasn't sure I was gonna be employed the following week, but the best we could do at that point, and this is how it changed my life, was to just try to convince reporters, convince the media that we really had things to offer and alternatives to suggest, the things that the Democrats were proposing, including the governor and whatever. But it was a tough sell, Michael, because the sort of reporters that look back at you and say, "You guys got 14 votes, you know. You guys can't get a parking space. You got 14 votes." And so it was tough, but Kean worked with-- I'm trying to remember who the-- with the Democratic leadership. And there were times when we'd get little things to go our way but it was not a happy time. I mean it was happy in a sense that we were all still working, you had this sort of sense of camaraderie that being that far in the minority gave you, but it was difficult. We came back two years later and, you know, it took a number of election cycles to get back competitive again.

Q: Kean started eyeing a congressional seat around '75 for the '76 election. Am I right?

Carl Golden: Yeah, that was when Peter Frelinghuysen announced his retirement. And that was '76, I guess, Peter retired.

Q: '74.

Carl Golden: Or '74, I'm sorry. You're right, '74. And, you know, there was some interest in Tom Kean and on his part there was interest as well 'cause he lived in the district and whatever. And Millicent Fenwick lived in the same district and she wanted to run as well. And there was-- suddenly this became of great interest because this was just gonna be a great primary with Tom Kean versus Millicent Fenwick. And it was the one time that, and I'm sure Tom Kean will argue with me to this day about this, but it was the one time that I think he let his good nature and ethical sort of approach to politics get in the way. He agreed that no one should get the organization line in the primary. He said, "Okay, we shouldn't do that. We'll put both our names up there and let people pick between the two of us," which was a wonderful idea but remarkably naïve because the county chairman in Somerset County gave Millicent Fenwick a state line-- the county line, and that was the ball game. Still, he only lost by a very slim margin, a few hundred votes if that.

Q: Are we talking '74 or '76?

Carl Golden: Talking '74 because he left the legislature in '77. He ran for governor in '77 in the primary. So yeah, that was '76. And Millicent went on to serve for...

Q: It was '76, this congressional primary took place, not '74, right?

<crew talk>

Q: We'll clarify.

Carl Golden : Yeah, I-- to be honest with you, I mean I-- yeah, okay.

Q: Were you involved in his congressional primary?

Carl Golden: No.

Q: You were still working in the minority office.

Carl Golden: Right. Right.

Q: In Trenton .

Carl Golden: Yes.

Q: Were you involved in his '77 run for the Republican gubernatorial nomination?

Carl Golden: Not greatly, a little bit. I was still working in the legislature, for obviously different leadership now, because he had stepped down to run in '77.

Q: Who was the leader?

Carl Golden: Jim Hurley from Cumberland County . And Kean decided that this was the time to do it. He had been in the legislature ten years and it was-- he knew going in that it was gonna be extremely difficult. I mean Ray Bateman, president of the senate and all the rest. And-- but he decided this was the time to do it. And obviously he

lost, and Bateman went on to lose as well. But it was a very, by today's standards, a very gentlemanly primary. I mean these two did not have at each other like you see people do now. It was very, very gentlemanly. It was sort of like Mother Theresa running against Albert Schweitzer. There's no, you know, you don't see the bombast and the allegations and the accusations.

Q: They are considered two statesmen today, too.

Carl Golden: Very much so, very much so. Although you know Michael, my definition of a statesman is someone who has the ability to inflict pain and the audacity to get away with it.

Q: So what did Kean do between '77 and '81 and what did you do?

Carl Golden: Kean just went back to his private business. It was the family business, Elizabethtown Utility, water and gas. And he was-- he ran something called-- it had real estate in the title, realty transfer or something of that sort. And-- which also happened to indulge his passion to promote the environment, figured he'd have the company run around and buy up land so nobody else could. And I stayed in the legislature. I worked in the assembly office from '77, when he left. I stayed there till January of 1980 and I left, and in January of 1980-- and went off. And I decided, foolishly one might say, to see if I could do all this by myself. And so I did.

Q: Do what by yourself?

Carl Golden: Just be my own boss and work for who I wanted to work for and...

Q: As a public affairs consultant?

Carl Golden: As-- yeah, as a freelance, you know. I soon found out that freelancing was, you know, sort of welcome to the world of cash flow. And...

Q: You were gonna be a media advisor?

Carl Golden: Yeah, and I did. I worked for about half a dozen legislators, some senators, one or two senators and a number of assembly people, and I wrote, you know, some op eds and got a few bucks here and there for that and kept things together through 1980, 1981. And in '81 I was approached by Barry Parker who decided he wanted to run for governor and would like me to come to work for his campaign in the primary.

Q: Parker was from Burlington County ?

Carl Golden : Yes, Burlington County.

Q: And you lived in Burlington County .

Carl Golden: Yes. And so I thought well, this sounds kind of interesting so I joined the Barry Parker for governor campaign. And I think he finished 5 th in a field of 10 or 11.

Q: So you worked against Tom Kean for a while.

Carl Golden: Yes, yes.

Q: What was that like?

Carl Golden: Well, you know, I called him up and-- after Parker offered me the job I called Tom Kean and I said, you know, "I know there's--" of course he hadn't-- Tom Kean had not yet announced his intentions. And I called him up and I said, you know, "Barry Parker's asked me to come to work for him. I know you haven't announced

your intentions. I don't want you to tell me what you're gonna do but I want you to know that I am probably going to go do this unless you decide to get in it, then I would like to come to work for you." And he said, "I'm not ready to make that decision. I'm not ready to make that commitment yet. I'm still--" I said, "I understand that." And he said, "You go to work for Barry. Barry's a friend of mine, you know. You do a good job for him," and the usual sorts of things that are exchanged. And so I worked for Barry through the primary.

Q: Do you think that he knew that if he got in that he could win the primary and get you to come work for him anyway? Was that why he let you go so readily?

Carl Golden: I don't know what was-- yeah, I don't know what was going through his mind. I mean the odds-on favorite in '81 was Pat Kramer, who was the Mayor of Paterson. And Beau Sullivan, who was a-- the first sort of self financier. Beau was a man of circumstance, a man of means, and I think Kean, when he told me he hadn't made up his mind, I think that was true. I think he was looking at who else was going to get in it, where were they from, what kind of support they had, you know. And the field was extremely crowded. You could win this thing with 25 percent of the vote. And I think he mulled over all of that and sat down with his pencil and paper and tried to decide what he should do. So when he said to me that he hadn't made up his mind, I believed him. I don't think he had made up his mind. But I-- but Barry did and, you know, I thought that this was a) an interesting thing for me to do. It obviously provided income. And so that's what I did. It was...

Q: Was it interesting?

Carl Golden: Yeah, yeah it really was. Barry was-- I don't know if you know him or not, is a big teddy bear, big teddy bear of a man, and very friendly, very outgoing, really very, very nice guy who simply wasn't going to win. He came from a party-- he came from Burlington County, which, again, you know, if looked at people from Burlington County you were sort of like from Delaware, you know. And although there was one emissary from Mr. Kramer who came to see Barry and I and wanted to know if Barry would get out of the race and throw his support to Kramer because Kramer, too, had figured out that this was going to be very, very tight. And if Barry had 15, 20,000 votes, it could be very valuable if he had done that. And Barry didn't do it but, you know, so-- but it was interesting. I got to do a lot of traveling around and meet a lot of people, some of whom I liked, many of whom I did not. And-- but Barry and I forged a pretty close relationship, you know, as a result of that. It's very hard to work in someone's campaign for four or five months and not forge that kind of relationship when you're together eight, nine, ten, sometimes more than that hours a day.

Q: One assumes that when an emissary from one candidate goes to visit the other candidate with a request to get out of the race that you're offered something. Is that a fair assumption? And if you get out we will consider you for such and such.

Carl Golden: Oh, it wasn't quite that crass Michael.

Q: No, it's more subtle than that?

Carl Golden: Yeah. I mean there's no-- I mean contrary to sort of popular belief or Hollywood or whatever, no one says, "If you get out of the race you're our next attorney general." Nobody says that. But there's always this understanding that if you support me and I win...

Q: I owe you one.

Carl Golden: Yeah, yeah. I mean the world revolves on chits. And that was-- that could've been a substantial one.

Q: So Tom Kean won the primary. Why?

Carl Golden: A) the field was very crowded, b) he came from an area of the state that was more Republican voter rich than many of the others. He had much more name recognition than virtually everybody else. And he had some

folks working for him who understood very, very well how you win Republican primaries.

Q: Folks like who?

Carl Golden: Well one who I don't particularly care for, but it's neither here nor there, was Roger Stone, who-- Roger Stone could be very valuable in a primary. But as soon as you win the primary your first act is declare victory and fire Roger Stone.

Q: Explain that.

Carl Golden: Because Roger, you know, at least in New Jersey, couldn't appeal across the wide spectrum of belief and philosophy and ideology that was necessary to win statewide.

Q: He's such a rabid Republican?

Carl Golden: Well he had some baggage. I mean he was, you know, hung around with people during Watergate and he was involved in some of the so called dirty tricks. Whether he actually did it or not I don't know. Roger used to brag that he did but with Roger you never really knew. And, you know, but he understood how you appealed to primary voters in a Republican primary. He really understood that very well, that the Republican primary voters were more conservative than Tom Kean, which is true. The Republican primary voter was interested in certain social issues. Again, remember, we're talking here about the, you know, early 80s, and the interest was in things like being anti abortion, anti school bussing to achieve integration, this was still very much on the minds of people, pro death penalty, things of that sort. And Roger understood that and he understood that this was how you won, that you appealed to those folks, that your candidacy had to address what they felt were the important issues.

Q: Tom Kean was an anti abortion Republican?

Carl Golden: His view at that time was, "I'm against it but I understand the need for-- or I understand the necessity of having that available but I personally am opposed to it," which was...

Q: Did that change much?

Carl Golden: You know, it never really was much of an issue during his tenure as governor. There were no efforts made in the legislature, at least not that I can recall, to either restrict or liberalize the rules governing the procedure. So it just never really became an issue. It-- yeah, there were other things that were much more pressing.

Q: At what point did you join the campaign, the general election campaign?

Carl Golden: Yeah, in 1980, right after the primary, about a week after the primary, Tony Ciciatello called me and said, "Would you consider coming to work for Tom Kean in the primary-- or in the general election?"

Q: As?

Carl Golden : To run the press operation, yeah. And I said, "Tony, I just don't know. I don't know. I'm not sure that I want to go and do a general election campaign. I've never done one before. I've done, you know, legislative campaigns but never a statewide campaign. I'm not sure that I'm really the guy that you want. There may be somebody else more experienced," all of which was my way of saying I just don't really think I want to go do this. I wanted to go back and start doing my-- I really sort of got to like being my own boss, you know. If you didn't feel like going to work on Tuesday you didn't go to work on Tuesday. Course you didn't get paid for Tuesday either but, you know, and I sort of wanted to go back to that. And my family at that time, my older children were-- two were in junior high school and the others were sort of in the later stages of elementary school, the beginning of elementary school. And I wanted to spend a little more time there with them. And so he said, "Well, can you just come up and talk to me?" So I said, "Okay, fine." So I went to-- God, it was a hotel right off exit 9 on the Turnpike,

whatever it was, a Sheraton or one of them, went up there, had lunch with them, and he said, "Oh, what would it take to get you to come to work for us, to work for Tom Kean? What would it take to get you to do that?" And I hadn't even thought in terms of dollars or whatever so I just named some outrageous figure and he said, "Okay."

Q: That's a good day.

Carl Golden: Well, and then I thought, "Well, how do you get yourself out of this one, you know." And that-- I mean it really happened just like that. And the next thing that I knew I wound up in...

Q: It was Tony who made you...

Carl Golden : Yeah, yeah, and the next thing I knew I wound up in Union , New Jersey , the campaign headquarters, yeah, and a great experience.

Q: Was it?

Carl Golden: Yeah. Unless you're ex-- it's sort of like being in the center ring at Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey. I mean it's just-- the days never end but you never get tired, you know. I met people who-- you're exposed to people and ideas and things that are just incredible. And all of a sudden you've become the sort of center of media attention. And contrary to what you may think or what you may have been told or what may even be the prevailing view, I love being around reporters. And I mean they were in and out of the headquarters by the dozens, you know. And I loved it. I just loved every minute of it. And there were little things that-- and looking back now, you know, some very funny times, some very tense times, but...

Q: Give us an example of one of each.

Carl Golden: The first debate in '81 was over at-- it was over at Monmouth-- it was at Monmouth College I think, sponsored by the Asbury Park Press and, at that time, the Red Bank Register, which is no longer in existence. And Ciciatello was-- he-- Tony was sort of like the first body man. Nobody called him that then but that was-- and he was in charge of sort of debate prep and things like that. And he said to me, "We have to get him-- get Tom get a new tie, you know, red-- nice red tie for television." I said, "All right, fine." So he goes somewhere, I don't know where. He comes back with this beautiful red silk tie. And Kean's looking at it. He said, "How much did that cost?" And Ciciatello says, "\$40." And Kean was dumbstruck, like \$40 for a necktie, you know. And it's-- yeah...

Q: Came from a million dollar background.

Carl Golden: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but he, you know, he was also the first Nobel Prize winner for thrift. I mean he was not, you know, and to him \$40 for a necktie, I mean for Tom Kean that was like eight haircuts, you know. So it was just, you know, so it's campaign money. It was 40 bucks for a tie. You can wear it for the next ten years. It only comes out to four bucks a year, you know. And, you know, but he just couldn't get over the fact that someone would pay \$40 for a necktie, you know. And yeah, and there were other things like that. I mean we'd be out, you know, with-- running around every day and we'd, you know, campaigns are not conducive to good nutrition and-- well, you probably know this from running around in your business but-- there was a-- one of the first drive through fast food places, and I can't remember which one it was so I won't mention it, but in Elizabeth, right about three or four blocks down the street from the campaign headquarters. And so we stopped in, we drove through the thing, and you drove up and there was this big plastic clown's head, and you gave your order there. And Tom Kean could not get over that you could talk to this clown head and tell them what you wanted to eat, and he thought that-- and I said, "Tom, you just-- you gotta get out more. I mean you really gotta get out more, you know." And there were just little things like that, you know. And-- but as I said, there were some tense times. I mean campaigns are not all the well planned, well thought out experiences that a lot of people like to think they are.

Q: There's a lot of flying by the seat of your pants.

Carl Golden : Yeah, there really is. And when you're doing that flying there's some collisions sometimes. And there were indeed a few and, you know, but when you take a group of strong personalities, strong minded individuals, people willing to get involved in campaigns, you have to be strong minded, you have to be strong willed. When you take them and you put them in a situation where they've been working 14 or 15 hours a day, you have some sparks fly. And, you know...

Q: We've heard an anecdote about Kean's wallet.

Carl Golden: Kean's wallet?

Q: Yes. You don't know it? All right.

Carl Golden: During the campaign you mean? 'Cause I don't recall.

Q: We'll pass on that. This was not over on election night.

Carl Golden: No, it was not.

Q: Going into election day, did you think you were with the winner, the loser? Did you think it was close?

Carl Golden: We knew it was gonna be close, obviously. The polling, while it wasn't as widespread as it is today, I mean everything indicated that this was going to be very, very close.

Q: Didn't one of the major polls call it for Florio that weekend?

Carl Golden: Yeah, but even with that it was obvious that it was not going to be-- yeah, we weren't going to be, we weren't going home at 9:30 on election night. That just wasn't gonna happen. And, you know, so we all went out to Holiday Inn in Livingston, which was-- Kean always had his campaign headquarters. It was his lucky place. And so we all went out there and well, you know, the night just went on and on and on. And New York TV called it for Florio and like two hours later retracted it. And it got to be three or four o'clock in the morning and, you know, it was clear that we weren't gonna get a decision that night. So we had all had rooms there, thank God, and I went to bed at like four o'clock in the morning. And there was a reporter who was there who had obviously counted on going home that night and he said, "I have no place to go--" the guy, you know, "I don't want to drive home. It's four o'clock in the morning." "Come on in, you can go sleep in my room." So, you know, he didn't get much sleep because the reporters found out where I was and every 20 minutes the phone rang. So it was-- and the next morning we all sort of met in the coffee shop. And we had had like, you know, an hour or two hour's sleep. We're just totally exhausted and decided that we're just gonna have to let this play out and counting absentees and all this kind of stuff. And we had sent attorneys to a lot of the polling places where recounting was taking place and just to sort of look at things and make sure no one was doing something they shouldn't have been doing.

Q: Who were the key players at this point in time?

Carl Golden: Well Roger Bodman, obviously, as the campaign manager. Roger Stone was still there, obviously. I was there, Bob Franks.

Q: Ciciatello?

Carl Golden: Ciciatello, certainly. And we were, as I say, sitting around the coffee shop up there trying to figure out what to do and-- till it reached a point where we were just so beat it just was pointless to continue, because we were sort of making no sense, you know, and so at some point you cross over that threshold where you just don't make any sense in some of the things you're saying. And made me-- made a career out of that but-- so I went home. I was living in Burlington County. I drove back home, just about made it. I think I, you know, every time I passed a rest stop on the turnpike the word rest got to me. I figured I'm gonna pull in here and fall asleep. This might not be a

wise thing to do. I get rousted by some state trooper and, you know, after one hour's worth of sleep, no shave, no shower, say, "Yeah, I work for the governor." "Yeah, right. We believe that." So I went home and I went to bed on Wednesday afternoon. I think I woke up on Friday but-- and then it became clear that it was going to go to a recount. And that began about a month's worth of back and forth. It never wavered by much. It would go up 50 votes or down 20 and, you know, the discrepancy never really amounted to much.

Q: It ended up being 1797 votes.

Carl Golden: 1,797, yeah. And what happened was, it was right after Thanksgiving and we were all still at the headquarters in Clark-- in Union. In fact, both the Kean people and the Florio people had transition offices funded by the state 'cause no one knew who the governor was, so we both had transition offices. Anyway, we were sitting around the headquarters and I think it was in Bodman's office up in Union and I said, you know, "We can't just let this go on. I mean there has to be an end to the, you know, everything has a beginning, a middle and an end, you know. We have to have an end to it." And I don't remember who it was, I don't know whether I said it or somebody else said it, I just don't remember, they said, "Well, let's go to Trenton and say we won." And so on December first we all piled into cars, called a press conference, went to the state house, and Tom Kean got up and said, you know, "I've been elected. I won." And the next day Jim Florio dropped the recount effort and that was it. We just sort of declared our own victory.

Q: Then what did you do?

Carl Golden: I went back to bed. I just-- I went to work in the transition office. I mean we were very far behind because for that month we couldn't offer cabinet posts to people 'cause we didn't know if we could deliver, and these were folks who already had positions and they didn't sort of want to leave a position they have for this iffy thing, you know. If Kean wins and if the recount doesn't change things, they don't have a job in the cabinet. So we sort of got behind a little bit. But we caught up in a hurry and, you know, we made the transition. I think we had the cabinet, I think, full by inauguration day. I may be off by one or two people but I think we pretty much had it full by inauguration day. And...

Q: Was it assumed that you would be press secretary or did Kean make some kind of formal invitation to you?

Carl Golden : Nobody ever asks me formally to do anything, you know. It's just-- he said, "I'd like you to join the administration, you know." And so I said, "Fine," and that was kind of like the extent of the conversation. And on inauguration day, I probably shouldn't tell you this story but since it's gonna be archived I'll tell you, Clinton Pagano, who was the Superintendent of State Police, came in and said you know, "We've received a death threat on the governor and we don't want you to march in the parade down State Street," you know, the traditional inaugural day parade. And Kean said, "No, I'm going to do that." And Pagano said, "But there's this death threat, we don't know if there's somebody on the roof of a building. I mean we just don't know." So Kean looked at me and he said, "Well, I'm gonna go march, are you?" and I said, "Not next to you I'm not, you know. I'm staying-- see the guys with the uniforms and the guns? That's where you're gonna find me, you know." And of course it was a hoax. Obviously it went off without a hitch but, you know, it's not exactly an auspicious start. But-- and I did the inaugural ball and the usual kinds of things that night and it was just down to business after that.

Michael Aron: Carl, during the break you recalled a tense moment during the campaign. Do you want to tell us about it?

Carl Golden : Well, we all knew it was a very tight race and that that any kind of slip-up or anything that was going to prove to be embarrassing or potentially embarrassing could turn this thing one way or the other. At least, that's the way we were thinking. And there was a person who was sent up from Washington, DC to do something in the campaign. I don't know what. And he was always underfoot. I mean, he was a nice enough young man but he was always underfoot, had very little experience or whatever. And someone had written an editorial that I was endorsing Florio or criticizing Kean for something.

Q: Who was? Oh, the editorial...

Carl Golden : The editorial was, yeah. So this young man decided it would be a good idea to call the editorial writer at the newspaper and threaten that he would see to it that his papers, White House credentials, were revoked. And so the editorial writer, who I happen to know, called me. Yeah, and basically, "Who the hell is this guy?" And I don't know if it was a particularly bad day. I don't really know what the context was. But I came out of the chair and when I asked him, and I was going to hit him. I was actually going to hit him. I was yelling at him. I was just- I was going to sock the guy. And David Murray, who was the political and field director of the campaign, got his 200 pounds of Irishman between the two of us, and I was no match for David, obviously. But that was the closest I ever come to belting somebody in a campaign. And later on, out back, I said, "Look, I'm sorry I did it." Whatever, whatever, you know. But at the time I was just-- I mean, I don't know what I'd done. I really would have belted him. And very out of character for me. I don't do things like that.

Q: As I recall the first year of the Kean administration, you were left with a budget problem and you had to hike some taxes. Is that...

Carl Golden : Yes, that's correct.

Q: How do you recall that?

Carl Golden : The budget deficit-- of course, compared to what we're looking at in later years and obviously today, is pretty miniscule, but it was like \$100 million or \$150 million. I don't remember. And we went for increase in the- with alcohol tax and-- and we didn't go for an increase in the sales tax...

Q: Gas tax?

Carl Golden : Gas tax. And it was tough. I mean, the Legislature was controlled by Democratic Party. The leader in the assembly was Alan Karcher, who was a very political guy, very bright guy, extremely bright guy, but very, very political and used this as a way to make Kean look weak or not up to the job or sort of this candy-pants rich governor from Livingston, whatever and all that. But we really didn't have much choice but to do that. As it turned out, it was very minor, but there was a lot of debate and a lot discussion in the administration about whether we should just take a knife to the budget and whack out 100 million bucks from various places, as they do now. But Kean said no, that was not the way to go; this was a bitter pill to swallow but we could get over it. And I remember when we did it, there were- one newspaper reporter, a great, good guy and a very terrific, terrific writer, wrote that this was the end of Tom Kean. He'd serve one term and that was it.

Q: Who was that?

Carl Golden : John McLaughlin.

Q: One of the legends of New Jersey .

Carl Golden : Yeah. He wrote a piece and the headline was, "The reign of Kean is mainly on the wane." And I never let John forget that in later years. You know, John, this is- just kind of thinking the new Ledger wants. But as you know, the economy turned around and by '83, '84, things were just vastly different.

Q: Didn't the Legislature force Kean to sign small hikes to the sales and income taxes?

Carl Golden : Yeah, it raised the rates, the income tax rates at the upper-- I think it went up to 4 percent. I'm not sure. I think it was about 4 percent.

Q: So he proposed certain taxes and they said no.

Carl Golden : Right.

Q: “We’re going to make you sign other taxation.”

Carl Golden : Yes.

Q: Was that when he held his nose or...?

Carl Golden : Well, he said he was holding his nose and signing it, but he also- “It’s all that I can get from the Legislature.” He sort of suggested that this wasn’t his idea. Not sort of suggested, he did suggest this wasn’t his idea; this was the Legislature’s idea to raise these taxes. And he was in a position where he had no option. This was all the Legislature would give him. This was all the Legislature would approve, and so who was he, as governor, to stand in the way of the Legislature? If the Legislature wanted to raise taxes, go raise taxes.

Q: Did that work?

Carl Golden : Well, it got washed away. I mean, the memory banks just disappeared once the economy turned around and unemployment went down below 5 percent. There were more people working, making more money than they’d ever made in their lives. And those things just became this memory. Nobody really cared about it at that point.

Q: So Kean was lucky.

Carl Golden : To the extent that he was in office when the economic cycle turned, yeah. I mean, he could take a little bit of credit for it, but you know, it-- when the economy goes bad, the president’s to blame. When it gets better, the president gets the credit. And governors-- I don’t care what state you’re from; governor’s benefit from that. And well, you have to keep it going. You have to continue to do things at the state level that- to encourage business and job growth and all of the rest. But the fact of the matter is when economic recovery sweeps across the country like it did in the mid-’80s, it carries everybody along with it.

Q: As I recall, Kean’s report card after the first year was not that great.

Carl Golden : No, it was pretty dismal.

Q: Why was that?

Carl Golden : Well, there were some missteps. There was the appointment of an education commissioner who had to be withdrawn.

Q: Who was that?

Carl Golden : He was the Commissioner of Education in Pennsylvania , and he was an African American and very, very bright, very capable, very competent guy. And we announced that this was going to be the new education commissioner. And then a story broke that he had plagiarized a part of his thesis, and that got people upset and so he had to withdraw. And that was one problem that-- obviously, tax and spending problem was another. We were still dealing with what the Dems called the Reagan recession of ’81, and that obviously carried over into ’82. So there were- a combination of things and people were unhappy. Bear in mind, he was a governor who got elected by the tiniest margin in the history of the state, that as many people didn’t want him as did, in a sense. And so all of that worked to make the first year tough, plus the fact that people- a lot of folks had never done this before, never been either in the governor’s office or served in a cabinet position and, to a large extent, they were feeling their way around too.

Q: Were you?

Carl Golden : To some extent, yeah. I at least had the benefit of some experience dealing with the media.

Q: Had a decade...

Carl Golden : Yeah, exactly. But some of the other folks did not, and there were some clashes within the governor's office, personality clashes, nothing that resulted in physical violence, obviously. But yeah, there were some clashes. Cary Edwards, for example, as you know, is a very forceful personality and butted heads a few times with some other people, but nothing that I saw as sort of out of the ordinary. I remember one time having a discussion-- call it an argument-- with Cary in this more like a high volume exchange of contrary points of view with him. And it ended up by my saying to him, "I won't tell you how to write legislation; don't tell me how to talk to reporters." And he sort of chuckled and says, "That's a fair point." You know, things like that, and there was still some folks who thought the closer they got to the governor, that was sort of the thing to do. I remember George Stephanopoulos once described the president-- he was working in the Clinton White House-- as, "Did you ever watch a kids' soccer game? Wherever the ball goes, all the kids run there?" It's sort of- that's very true. And that never bothered me. I mean, if I was in the office with Tom Kean, that was fine. If I wasn't, I was somewhere else. I was the only guy, really, in the place who called him Tom. Everybody else called him Governor.

Q: Really?

Carl Golden : Yeah.

Q: You called him Tom?

Carl Golden : Yeah.

Q: The whole eight years...

Carl Golden : Yeah.

Q: ...called him Tom?

Carl Golden : I don't think I ever called him Governor. I may have called him Governor if we were out somewhere at a function or whatever, but other than that, just called him Tom. Why not?

Q: Lew Thurston was the first chief of staff, and after that first year he was replaced.

Carl Golden : Yes.

Q: Which is often an admission that things aren't right and need to be righted somehow. Fair observation?

Carl Golden : I wouldn't say things weren't right. We were dealing with some very tough situations. And as you know, the chief of staff is the first among equals in the hierarchy in the Governor's Office. And I think Lew took some criticism that maybe he didn't deserve totally. But some of it perhaps was valid, that he was just simply not a strong enough personality to be chief of staff in difficult times. And I think that that's really what happened, that Lew was not fired in that sense. He...

Q: Where did he go?

Carl Golden : He went to the Sports Authority and he-- I mean, there was...

Q: What had he been, the executive director of the Assembly of Republicans?

Carl Golden : No, he had been executive director of the Senate Republicans. Then he left there and went- he ran

ELEC for a while, and he came into the Kean administration after that.

Q: Was he personally close with Kean?

Carl Golden : I don't think so, not as close as some others were. He was close, obviously, because of the working relationship, but not as close as some others were. I mean, there was a story that gained some credence that he was appointed to the job with the understanding that he would leave after a year. I don't know what transpired between he and Tom Kean. None of us ever talked. I never talked to Lew or to Tom about that, but that Kean really wanted Greg Stevens as the chief of staff. Stevens was working at that time in Washington for Congresswoman Olympia Snowe, and he...

Q: What was Stevens' background in New Jersey ? He had been a newspaperman.

Carl Golden : Yeah. He had been a newspaperman and he went to work for the New Jersey campaign for Gerald Ford in '76. Tom Kean was the statewide chairman for Ford. And oddly enough, Kean called me up and said, "We need someone for the Ford campaign in New Jersey . Do you know anybody who might be willing?" I said, "Yeah." I went downstairs. I said to Greg Stevens, "You want to quit the paper and go to work for the Ford campaign?" And...

Q: What was he working for, the "News Tribune"?

Carl Golden : Yes, the Woodbridge "News Tribune." And that's-- I don't want to say I gave Greg Stevens his start. He was going to get his start no matter what, you know. And so that's where he went. But, yeah.

Q: So he was in Washington working for Olympia Snowe...

Carl Golden : Yeah.

Q: ...when what happened? Tom Kean called him up and said, "Hey"...

Carl Golden : Kean got elected in '81, and I think there was some discussions with Stevens about joining the administration in some capacity. And Stevens, according to the story, and I think this is true-- there may be some difference in detail, but I think this is- the core of it is essentially true, that Stevens said, "I made a commitment to the congresswoman to stay through '82. That's her election year. And I made a commitment to stay through the election year, and I can't now walk away from that commitment," which meant that Kean needed someone for 1982 as the chief of staff. As a side issue to that, there were a lot of folks who thought that Roger Bodman would have been the chief of staff because he was a campaign manager. But Kean knew that Bodman wouldn't take this job for one year. So at the end of that year, I guess Olympia Snowe we reelected and Stevens then became available.

Q: Bodman's first job was commissioner...

Carl Golden : Commissioner of Labor.

Q: Labor.

Carl Golden : Yeah, and which was a great appointment, but it was opposed by some people in the Legislature, including one senator who said, "Nobody 38 years old should make \$65,000 a year." I never quite figured out what the rationale was for that. But then so Stevens came on in '82; I'm sorry, in '83.

Q: He's generally credited with helping, in some respect, to advance the Kean cause.

Carl Golden : Yes.

Q: Tell us what you think he did or what he falsely gets credit for.

Carl Golden : Oh, well, we all understood-- I mean, everybody who's been around years in politics for any length of time understands that, in New Jersey , it's extremely difficult to gain significant recognition. The lack of a commercial television station, the- New York and Philadelphia largely ignoring this state, except in times of great disaster or great scandal or whatever. And there had to be a way developed and devised to bring the governor into an atmosphere where people would recognize, understand and talk about New Jersey and the governor of New Jersey . And Stevens is credited with getting- putting together a program whereby Kean went on television with what were then called public service announcements, promoting travel and tourism in the state. The first person that was recruited to help was Bill Cosby. Bill Cosby did the voiceover for the very first travel and tourism commercials, the " New Jersey and You, Perfect Together" commercials. Bill Cosby did the voiceover for that, and we had this PSA showing the shore and all the usual, the mountains and the lakes and whatever. And from that evolved others. We did one on where the lottery money, goes with Kean visiting colleges. The money goes there, and Kean visiting; some- I believe a veteran's hospital somewhere in South Jersey . We did a series of these public service announcements, and the " New Jersey and You, Perfect Together" thing just- it really did catch on, almost like the GEICO commercials. Yeah. And so it had the effect of promoting Tom Kean as a cheerleader, in a sense, for New Jersey . We'd been the butt of these jokes for all these many years. Well, we're not going to do that anymore. We're not going to be the butt of these jokes anymore. We have all this stuff. We have this to offer for your vacation. We do this and we do that, and we're very progressive. And of course, the guy whose face was all of this was Tom Kean. And it even led to a cartoon in the "New Yorker" magazine that showed a man and his wife sitting there in an apartment in New York , and the wife is saying, "We must pop over to New Jersey soon. This fellow, Kean, seems interesting." And, yeah, so it reached that point and it really-- that's how Tom Kean became as widely known through the power of your medium. I mean, you could do- and I could do as many editorial boards and interviews as we wanted. But nothing could compete with the screen. And it still can't, obviously, because it showed Kean in these great situations, sort of walking on the beach at Island Beach State Park in his short-sleeved t-shirt and his pants rolled up or whatever it was.

Q: Plus the accent on " New Jersey and You, Perfect Together," it could have been a turnoff to a state of working class people. And instead, everybody loved it.

Carl Golden : It became sort of goofily attractive. Well, it did. And people, to this day, here we are, what, almost 30 years later...

Q: Yeah, people still use it.

Carl Golden : And people still use it. And there has yet to be a new state slogan that has embedded itself in the psyche the way that one has.

Q: I once suggested " New Jersey , you got a problem with that?" But it didn't catch on.

Carl Golden : It would catch on with a certain element. That was the beginning of "The Sopranos," Michael? Is that...

Michael Aron: In the first term, I wonder what stands out in terms of legacy items. I can think of one, but before I offer it, let me throw it open to you. The first term, what did Kean run on at the end of the first term?

Carl Golden : You mean when he ran for reelection in '85?

Q: When he ran for reelection in '85, what could he point back to and say, "I did this"?

Carl Golden : Are you better off now than you were four years ago? You're damn right you are. I mean, you look back and you saw, you know, minimum wage for teachers. You saw much more support for higher ed.

Q: It was \$18,000...

Carl Golden : You may be right, Michael. I don't remember. More money into higher ed. Kean had a tremendous interest in higher education and wanted to put more money into it, to open it more so more kids could go. A number of environmental initiatives, and quite frankly, a sense of, "Jeez, times are really good."

Q: You jogged a memory of mine that first term. Dioxin was discovered in Newark , and you all reacted like a third world war had been declared. And you had Kean up there in a spacesuit...

Carl Golden : Ah, no. You see, you're mixing two stories.

Q: Am I? Go ahead.

Carl Golden : Yeah. Well, they discovered dioxin, and it was in the Ironbound section of Newark . And it was a tremendous concern, because this was the stuff that they used to make Agent Orange and all the health issues that arose from that. And it was all sort of lying around in the ground or in barrels at this big industrial complex in the Ironbound section.

Q: Diamond Shamrock.

Carl Golden : Diamond Shamrock, indeed. Good for you. So we all went up there. It was in the evening, went up there. We picked up Ken Gibson, who was then the mayor of Newark , who had not much interest in this issue. And we went down to the Ironbound and Kean and a couple of troopers, me-- I don't know who else was along. And we went into this bar called Lisbon by Night. I'm not sure I'd have gone into that bar alone, but with a couple of guys wearing guns, then it's a little easier. So we go in there and Kean says, "You know, I'm the governor." "Wow, awesome!" So he walks around. It's this big, u-shaped bar and he's in the middle of it. And he's telling people, "This is what we found and we're on top of this situation. There's no need to panic." You know, this kind of stuff. And it was all going along extremely well, and people were nodding their heads and saying, this is nice of the governor to come up there. And all of a sudden, Kean, without any prompting, said, "I'll buy a round." Well, he had, like, five bucks in his pocket or whatever. He said, "I'll buy a round." Someone threw open the front door and yelled out the door, "The governor's buying!" And about 3,000 people storming into this bar. And I was standing in-- but I think Chris Daggett might have been with me. We're standing in the back. I said, "Who's going to pay for all of this?" You know, Tom Kean's not going to pay for this. He was going to pull his broken arm routine. He wasn't going to pay. So I went to the bartender and I said, "Are you the owner?" He said, "Well, I own a piece of it." Well, I knew what that meant. So I said, "All right. Look. Here's my name. Here's my address. Send us a bill for whatever this is." And I don't know if he ever padded the bill or not. He probably did but I didn't care. But it was just- it was unbelievable. But it was great. At the end of it, they were cheering him. You know, "Hip, hip, hooray for Tom Kean!" It was great. And it was about two weeks after that, or maybe it was shortly after that, the incident you're talking about was in Nutley , I think, where he went in actually the moon suit or whatever they call those things. And that picture made, that you can imagine, every newspaper, newsmagazine, television show, whatever. And that showed that here was a guy, you know, he wasn't sitting in Trenton saying, "Gee, that's a real problem. Somebody go take care of it." You know, that this guy got in the car and came up there, talked to people and showed the kind of concern that you see coming through when he does his television commercials. "Come to New Jersey to"-- this guy really cares about what goes on here. He cares about the people who live here. And you can't package that. You can't buy that. Either you have it or you don't have it.

Q: Another thing that I think happened in the first term was he signed the South Africa divestiture.

Carl Golden : Yes, yeah.

Q: You know, and that that was big. Was that big?

Carl Golden : Yes, it was. There was tremendous opposition to that from the business community, largely. It

required the state to divest its holdings in any company that did business in South Africa , which was a lot of New Jersey companies. I didn't realize there were that many but I mean, some had greater involvement than others. But there were a lot of companies. And there was a meeting in the governor's office with 20, 25 either CEOs or executives of very large New Jersey businesses to come in and make their case to Kean, how this was going to be-- they were going to be at a disadvantage and all of that kind of stuff. And as he usually listened very calmly and very quietly and listened very intently to everything they had to say, and they made their case and they made some good points. You know, whatever. And at the end of it he said, "Well, I'm going to do it anyway." And you could just sort of see the jaws start to drop. It was like dominoes around the room. But it wasn't confrontational. No voices were raised. And he said, "It's just the right thing to do." And he was a person who was, as you know, in '85, endorsed by Coretta Scott King for reelection.

Q: Because of this?

Carl Golden : I don't think it was because of it. I think it obviously helped. But it was just- in Tom Kean's mind, this was just the right thing to do, that if New Jersey could strike a blow, so to speak, against the apartheid policies of South Africa by doing this, by moving it front and center, by saying, "We're just simply not going to support, directly or indirectly, the policies of this government." Yeah, I mean, the South African government isn't going to be quaking in their boots because New Jersey did this, but it's a start. It's something that had to be done.

Q: That was a pretty liberal thing to do, wasn't it?

Carl Golden : At that time, yes. Yeah, very much so. Very much so. But it didn't raise the kind of ruckus, I think, that a lot of people thought it was going to, because I don't think it directly affected a lot of people. I mean, a lot of ordinary, everyday New Jerseyans.

Q: It was a symbolic gesture.

Carl Golden : Yeah, in many ways, it was. It did have a business impact; there's no question about that. But all of those people who were there, saying, "Don't do this," are probably all still in business today, getting million-dollar bonuses, Michael. Didn't hurt them any. Yeah.

Q: They may well have voted for Tom Kean in '85, too.

Carl Golden : Yeah, they very well may have. Yeah. But it was a reasonably courageous thing to do in the light of the circumstances.

Q: In '85, the Democrats nominated for governor the Essex County executive, Peter Shapiro, Harvard educated, bright, articulate, touted by his admirers as the first Jewish president in the United States .

Carl Golden : I hadn't heard that before, but that's interesting.

Q: You never heard that before?

Carl Golden : No, no.

Q: Oh, yeah. And Kean trounced him. Biggest, most lopsided victory in...

Carl Golden : In history, yeah.

Q: ...modern state history.

Carl Golden : And his was 780,000 votes or something.

Q: I think, percentage wise, it was something like 70 to 30.

Carl Golden : Seventy, thirty. Yeah.

Q: Why did that happen?

Carl Golden : People were happy. They were happy with Kean. They were happy with their lot in life. As I said, the economy was very good. They had a better opportunity to get their kids into college, because there was more money for college loans, and college tuition wasn't out of sight and all of the rest of it. There was that. Times were really very good. Peter was a wonderful, wonderful guy. I mean, he really, really was. But he looked like a high school sophomore, you know, which I hope he still looks like the same way today. God bless him if he does. But people looked at him and they didn't see a governor.

Q: He was about 32 or 34.

Carl Golden : Yeah. I don't remember. Yeah. And he really- he had no issue to run on you know to get rid of a sitting governor. You have to give people a reason to do that. You have to give people a reason to vote against the guy that they, four years prior to that, had voted for. And there just simply was no reason. Peter was in the position where he almost had to say, "Yeah. Jeez, things are really good. But vote for me anyway." And...

Q: "We can do a better job pertaining to superfunds."

Carl Golden : Yeah, exactly. And it just-- he ran in the wrong year. I don't think Peter expected to win. I think everybody expected John Russo to win that primary.

Q: That's right. It was a five-way primary that year.

Carl Golden : Yeah, and Peter wanted to run a strong second so he could run in '89.

Q: Ken Gibson, Bob Del Tufo, I believe.

Carl Golden : Yeah, I think Del Tufo did too. And I think Peter was looking to '89. He'd make a strong showing...

Q: Wiley ran that year.

Carl Golden : Yeah. He'd get around. He'd meet all the county leaders and all of this, and he'd show that he could raise the money and all that. He was really looking to '89. And he woke up Wednesday morning and said, "My God! I won."

Q: Alan Karcher played such a role at that point in time. He was assembly speaker. He was Kean's foil.

Carl Golden : Yes, he was.

Q: He really ran harder against Kean than Shapiro did, although his name wasn't on the ballot. But he was out there criticizing Kean all the time. Tell us a little about that rivalry and...

Carl Golden : Alan was an extraordinarily bright guy, died much too young, an extraordinarily bright man. But like a lot of people in politics who are as bright as he was, they sometimes over think things and overstate their case. And then they begin to look, not that they're reasonable, but a little bit unreasonable. And that's where Alan went. One of the things that hurt him was there was a bill passed that would have reinstated prayer in the public schools. And Kean vetoed the bill on the advice of his attorney general, that it was unconstitutional. Alan Karcher took Tom Kean to court and spent I don't know how much money, fighting this thing all the way up and lost every step of the way.

Q: Karcher wanted prayer in the schools?

Carl Golden : He challenged Kean's veto, that this bill did not provide for prayer in the public schools. It was one of those "a minute of silent meditation" or- I can't remember exactly what the phrase, but I think that was it. And he challenged it, that it was not unconstitutional, that it really was having kids stay quiet for a minute and meditate on whatever it is they wanted to meditate on, whether it was, you know, "I'll get pizza after school," or, "I wonder if Suzie will go out with me." They meditate on whatever they want to meditate on. And what hurt the case was the- Carmen Orechio, who was the Senate president during the debate on the bill in the Senate said, "This is how we're going to get prayer in the public schools." And so that signaled legislative intent. But Karcher fought this to the newspapers, to the courts. I don't even remember. He spent public money because he got the Legislature to finance the suit. And that hurt Alan. I think that was a case of his over thinking and overplaying his hand, because he was convinced that this was going to be an embarrassment to Kean and that this would cost Kean politically, because people really did want prayer in the public schools. I don't know what he based that on, but that was a fairly widespread belief. Whether that was true or not, I don't know. So he would do things. It was sort of like a step too far sometimes. For example, when they wanted to create the Transportation Trust Fund, Alan decided this was not a good idea. So we put together a press conference with Tom Kean and about 50 union guys, including those burly guys who run the cranes and the heavy construction guys, the guys you stay away from, you know, or when the fight breaks out in a bar and you want to be on their side. And they all came to Trenton and stood with Tom Kean about how wonderful this was and all of that, because the subtext was, "This is our money you're talking about here." And I never saw anything like it in my life. They pinned Alan Karcher in the hallway, sort of formed a semicircle around Karcher, I mean big burly guys, you know, in flannel shirts and whatever. And they-- I think they scared him a little bit to be honest. I know I would've been. And they didn't exactly threaten him but it was pretty clear that he had damn well better get on board with this thing or labor, all of labor, was gonna take a walk on him.

Q: Would you say that the '85 victory was Kean also whooping Karcher a little bit?

Carl Golden: To some extent, yeah, but the odd thing about the '85 campaign was, because it was not competitive, I don't say that as a insult to Peter, you know, to Peter, but because it was not really competitive from day one, I mean once the primary ended basically the general election ended as well. That-- you didn't have that enthusiasm that a competitive race creates. And without the enthusiasm, you don't have the conflict. Without the conflict, you have no hum in the media. The media loves unresolved conflict. I mean that's what they live for. And you-- it wasn't there. It just wasn't there. So Alan understood that. Alan said in disgust, this thing is over.

Q: And his speakership ended in that election too because the Republicans won...

Carl Golden: And Chuck Hardwick became speaker.

Q: Did the press like Tom Kean?

Carl Golden: Press loved Tom Kean. And he loved them back. He, you know, about a month ago I was talking to a former reporter for the AP who now works for The Ledger. And we were just sort of comparing notes about Tom Kean's style and Jon Corzine's style and as well some other people. And he said, you know, "I will never forget Christmas Eve, 1982, when you and Tom Kean showed on press row and went door to door wishing everybody happy holidays and whatever." He said, "Nobody's ever done that before." Kean genuinely enjoyed the company of reporters. He really did. He liked them, he enjoyed their company, he enjoyed their style, some more flamboyant than others but-- and all the rest. And I think that you could see that in almost everything he did, publicly. Well, you know Michael, he'd walk out of the office at five o'clock in the afternoon and if you were standing in the hallway and said, "I have a question," he'd stand there and answer your question for the next half hour. And at the end of that half hour he'd say, "Well do you have any more, you know." And to-- I'm not saying that it was not genuine. It was. It wasn't like, have to stop and talk to this guy. I can't wait to get out of here. He just didn't do that. He, you know, and he was that way whether you worked for The New York Times or the Salem Sunbeam. It didn't matter. He, you know, you were a reporter, you were here for a reason, he understood the-- some of the

pressures that a lot of reporters were under, you know, and you'd better get this and nobody else had better get this kind of thing with the largest paper in the state at that time. The guys who worked there were under a lot of pressure. And it was something that he understood, you know...

Q: So you fed The Ledger?

Carl Golden: No, I didn't feed The Ledger. I didn't feed The Ledger. I used to get this rap and oh yeah, The Ledger gets this, The Ledger gets that. The Ledger had 15 reporters running around with their nose to the ground and they wondered why a one person bureau didn't get all the stories the 15 guys got. I mean you were just out-- they just outnumbered you. And they would find stories that either you-- not because you were a bad reporter but you didn't have enough manpower or time to go and do all this stuff. The one thing I never did, and I'm sort of proud of this, was what-- if a reporter came up to me and said, "I have a story about, you know, pick a subject. I'm the only one who has it. And I'm gonna beat The Ledger." I would say, "That's fine. The Ledger will never find out from me that you got their story." And they never did. And I used to get these anguished calls from Star Ledger Plaza, anguished and angry calls from Star Ledger Plaza blaming...

Q: Mort Pye, or from others?

Carl Golden: And others, blaming me for giving a story. I said, "You guys don't understand. That was the--" one of the problems with The Ledger was when they didn't have a story and somebody else did, it was always I gave somebody else the story, you know. I didn't. They got it on their own. I, you know, I leaked stories, of course I did, everybody does, you know. But I never handed up one reporter to curry favor with another. Just-- I never did that.

Q: Did you float trial balloons?

Carl Golden: Oh sure. Sure. What do you think about so and so you mean? Yeah, sure.

Q: We're thinking about doing this. You write it and we'll see what kind of reaction it gets.

Carl Golden : It wasn't quite that blunt but, you know-- you know, I often said that reporters can talk to me but, you know, it's not my job to lead you to questions. It's your job to lead me to answers.

Q: That's a good line.

Carl Golden : You know, and once everybody got that that's the way I operated then everything was fine. And somebody would come in and say, you know, "I have a story about thus and such and thus and such but I can't confirm it, you know." Which left me in a bit of a dilemma because, you know, either I confirmed it or I didn't or, you know, whatever. And I didn't want to shoot the guys down because they probably had 90 percent of it but had to figure out which ten percent he couldn't use because it was either embarrassing to him because it wasn't accurate or whatever. And so we'd just sort of discuss it back and forth and during the course of the conversation, if he was smart enough, and most of them were, understood, you know, where their-- where the boundaries were on this story. And I did that many times. The only time I would actually leak something to avoid embarrassment was this, and this is just so silly, but travel and tourism made a whole bunch of coffee mugs that said New Jersey and You, Perfect Together on these big blue or white or whatever they were coffee mugs. So they came over and they very proudly gave me one. I'm looking at it, I turned it upside down, on the bottom it said "made in China". I gotta somehow control this before some wise ass gets a hold of it. So I went down the hall to a reporter. I said, you know, "You ought to call travel and tourism and find out why this thing says "made in China"." So she did and she ran the story the next day. Well everybody has to-- had to follow it. And the story died after like two days, you know. But those sorts of things.

Q: You're reminding me of your style, which as I recall, well it had several components, but one of the components was that you talked to a reporter like we're talking right now. When we'd call you on the phone and talk about an issue or a situation and you'd just talk it based on what you knew and what you felt you could say. Nowadays when

you call a governor's office you get the one-line answer, the party line, you get the what we've decided to say about this, and that's all you get. Would you advise guys today to be more forthcoming or is it a different environment today than it was 25 years ago?

Carl Golden: I think there's too many people in the business that I was in, too many people in the business today who are convinced that everything is gotcha journalism, and as a result they're constantly on their guard. And when you're constantly on your guard your first reaction is to say I know nothing, or as little as possible. And that's the mistake I think. Look, if someone's out there playing gotcha journalism, they'll get you anyway. At some point or other during the course of this whole thing they'll get you. So what? So you got me. I might've gotten you ten times, you know. No, I think you have to establish, not a personal relationship, look, you know, the relationship between a government official and the press is always going to be adversarial. It's just the nature of the two businesses. It's always going to be adversarial. It doesn't have to be hostile, just adversarial. You have a job, I have a job, you know what you have to do, I know what I have to do. I will help you to the extent that I can. I'll be as forthcoming as I can without betraying confidences or telling you things that I can't tell you. I was fortunate in the sense that I had—that Tom Kean had a great deal of confidence in me, and I am not trying to be immodest here but he did. And I was fortunate that I had that because it freed me to do the kinds of things that I was able to do, to sit down with you or any reporter and say, "Here's this, here's that, here's what I can tell you, here's what I can't. But what I can't tell you, keep it in the back of your mind because maybe a week from now or two weeks from now I can tell you, you know." And I always thought that was sort of appreciated by the reporter and I always felt that, you know, yeah, I used to be one. I never covered a governor but, you know, if I did what would I be into, what question would I ask, or questions would I ask. I was sort of always prepared a little bit because I knew what I'd ask if I was on the other side of the desk, and when it came for interviews that we scheduled, things like that, I'd go back and read maybe a week's worth, two week's worth of stories that a reporter had written to see a) what he was writing about, he or she was writing about, what he or she was interested in, the style used in writing the story. So before the interview even took place I could say to Kean with some fair level of accuracy, "Here's what he's going to ask you," yeah. And I don't think anybody does that anymore. Now it might just be a function of, you know, news cycles, you know. There used to be two news cycles a day, now there's a cycle every 15 minutes, but maybe that's a function of the times. I don't know. But I think a lot of it-- I think, unfortunately, much of government, national, state, and local, much of it has gone back to being as closed mouth as possible because if you don't say anything you're not gonna get in trouble. And that's unfortunate because there's so much more benefit to be gained by doing the opposite, so much more.

Q: The other thing I remember about your style was that you would bark at a reporter if you thought he took a cheap shot or got something wrong, or you would rag a reporter about an interview on television. You rode these guys a little bit. Am I right or wrong?

Carl Golden: When the occasion demanded it. You know, I never-- if I did that to a reporter, once it was over it was over. You were as welcome in my office the next day or the same afternoon as you always were. But I only did that in, really, cases where I thought there really was a genuine cheap shot. And I would make my feelings known that, "Look, this was just one hell of a cheap shot you took here, you know." And Michael, you and I have gone around and danced for more than once on some of these things. But it was never personal. It was never the I'm right and you're wrong and don't ever forget it kind of thing. I had a great deal of respect for people in that business. I think that they don't get the respect they deserve. They get attacked by people who are not in any position to attack a reporter. They're blamed for things that reflect, in many ways, the prejudices of the person doing the blaming. And I have a great deal of respect for people in that business. Still do, always did and still do. It's a tough job and it's not getting easier. The economics of the business are not making it any easier, that's for sure. So when I dealt with reporters I tried to deal with them on a level that was professional, recognize that the reporter's a professional. I hope he recognizes that I'm a professional and that we can deal with it this way. And if I have a problem I'm not going to sit here and let this problem fester in my mind. I'm going to tell him I have a problem. And if he has a problem, hopefully he'll tell me he's got a problem.

Q: For what it's worth, you created the mold for the Trenton press secretary and some have done better than others at living up to the standard you set.

Carl Golden: I went--oh, I can't remember where it was, someone took a poll on press people in state government and I won, you know, which I thought was more a reflection of currying favor than-- I mean who wants to curry the favor of the spokesperson for the department of labor? I mean, you know, better to curry a favor with the guy in the front office, you know. But during the course of that somebody said, you know, "Oh, you know, once you get past his prickly personality he's okay, you know." Yeah, I guess so. I don't know.

Q: I used the word intimidating before we went on camera here. There was an intimidating element to your style that it took me about a dozen years to get over and realize that it was all bark and no bite.

Carl Golden: I could bite when I wanted to, when I had to. I never set out to intimidate people. I mean I really didn't. I mean Michael, you know, if you can find one reporter in Trenton who can come to you and say to you in all seriousness, "Carl Golden screamed at me," you know, you're not gonna do that. I don't scream at people. I can disagree forcefully. I can use language that you don't normally find in a governor's office but I don't scream at people in a sort of out of control, outraged kind of thing.

Q: You wore cowboy boots in the governor's office but did you have a tie? I don't remember.

Carl Golden: Occasionally.

Q: You had your own sartorial style.

Carl Golden: Those of us in the sartorial vanguard have to uphold this line.

Q: You would've maybe fit better in the Texas governor's office than...

Carl Golden: This was, you know, if you read any portion of Tom Kean's book there's two pages in there where he talks about he and I and how he likes Pavarotti and I like Willie Nelson and, you know, whatever and...

Q: The Politics of Inclusion.

Carl Golden: Yes, and I think that was part of why we got along as well as we did. But he said to me, you know, "You come in here and we ask you something or there's a discussion going on, a policy discussion, whatever, and whatever you say, it represents sort of what people out there outside the state house are thinking," you know, whether it's sort of like the blue collar response to something or whatever. And I think I brought that sort of dose of real life realism, you know. The governor's office can be a very isolating place, you know, and you wind up getting tunnel vision. You think the whole world is as interested in this one single thing that you are. Then you go outside and you find out they don't care, you know. And I think I was able, because of my background and history and whatever, to bring a little bit of a sense of reality and a broader context to some of this stuff that-- and I think Kean appreciated that. I mean Kean came from very different background from mine, extremely different background from mine. But it never got in the way. I mean it never seemed to get in the way. He asked me what, you know, where you get-- where in New Jersey you get cowboy boots. You can get them a lot of places, you know. You want a pair? Come on, I'll-- no, no, no, no, no. But he was, you know, very interested in other people and how they thought and how they felt and the kinds of things they did. He was extremely interested. And never personal, like how do you get along with your wife but I mean very interested in the thought processes of other people, what led them to certain conclusions, what they were proud of, what they were not proud of. He was very much interested in that.

<crew talk>

Q: Let's try to wrap this up in 10, 15 minutes.

Carl Golden : Sure.

Q: The second term of Kean was probably even more successful and productive than the first. Fair comment?

Carl Golden: Yeah, I would agree with that. I mean he came-- let's face it, after the '85 re-election he had unlimited political capital. I mean he had, you know, won with 70 percent of the vote. It doesn't get any better than that and probably never will get any better than that. So he had enormous political capital. And in fact there were some folks who criticized him for not taking a more active head-on approach with the property tax issue. Coming in with this level of political capital you could've done almost anything you wanted to do. You had a legislature that was-- many members of whom owed their election to you in '85, the coattails that you had. And you could've used some of that political capital to go after things that had proven to be so difficult.

Q: Home rule and solid waste?

Carl Golden: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And he felt that those were more issues that a government closer to people should be dealing with, the local governments, the local boards of education, the municipal governing bodies and things like that. And that he didn't-- he just never-- he understood the argument but he didn't accept the argument. He did some things, obviously, that required expenditure of capital, but it was successful in the sense that we were still riding that wave that begin to sort of peter out toward the end of the administration in '88, '89 and the economy started to...

Q: Just in time for Jim Florio.

Carl Golden: Hey, it's sometimes better to be lucky than good I guess. But-- and it started to peter out toward the end of it so-- but it was a little more productive in the sense that there were a lot of things that went on in-- one of the things was the whole public welfare program, the putting folks back to work in return for the family assistance checks and things like that. I mean there were all these early stage things but they were built upon, you know, later on as time went by, so there were things like that that it was productive, but I think, you know, second terms are funny because you don't have to worry about re-election and there's a tendency, particularly when it gets toward the end of it, you know, the last year, year and a half, people begin to say, "Well, what do I do now, you know. I've got to go back into the real world now and leave this great place we've been in." And so they begin to either leave or begin to think-- other things start to become a little more important. And we're on the downside, we're sliding toward the end of this, you know, and now I have to, you know, decide what's gonna be good for me. And where do I go after this. For the attorneys in the administration it was easy. You went to some law firm for some staggering sum of money because you worked in the governor's office, you know. For poor folks like me it was, you know, get back out and scuffle for a buck, you know.

Q: You ended up at the judiciary.

Carl Golden: Yes, working for-- I will treasure those three years I worked over there. The chief justice was one of the finest, most intellectual firepower, the compassion, the concern, a lot of which didn't come through publicly, just a real class, class individual.

Q: Robert Wilentz.

Carl Golden: Yeah, he was just a wonderful, wonderful guy.

Q: You had me come to his television interview so that people could see a little of that.

Carl Golden: Yeah, I tried. I tried. He was, you know, he-- when I left, when I called him up when I was gonna go join the Whitman administration, I called-- he was-- he had never-- the other thing that never came through with the public was he was intensely interested in politics. I mean he came from a family, you know, with a huge political background. And he never let it show because obviously as chief justice you can't do that. And when I called him up in 1993 and said, "I got an offer from the Whitman campaign. I think I'm going to go, you know." This was like June or whatever it was. And there was just silence on the end of the phone and he said, "Oh geez, who's gonna

talk to Bill Gormley for me now?” And when he was in the hospital in New York he called me up from the hospital and I said, you know, “How are you doing, you know.” I knew he was obviously ill. And all he said was, he said, “I’m very, very ill. And I wanted to call to say goodbye because I’m very ill.” And I just kind of sat there and I mean what do you say? And then he hung up the phone. That was the last conversation I ever had with him. But just a brilliant, brilliant guy.

Q: Agreed. Toward the end of the Kean years he was rumored to be a contender for the Vice Presidential nomination under George H.W. Bush. You recall that?

Carl Golden: Oh yeah.

Q: How real was it?

Carl Golden: There was an element of reality to it. I think once you stepped back, got a look, you knew it wasn’t going to happen.

Q: Why?

Carl Golden: Wrong-- he didn’t come from an area of the country that a lot of people felt was fertile ground for the election of a Republican president. In other words he didn’t bring anything to the ticket. The northeast wasn’t going to go for George H. W. Bush with Tom Kean on the ticket or not on the ticket. I mean we went to New Orleans . The convention was in New Orleans that year and when Bush announced Dan Quayle as his selection-- we had this sort of block of rooms in this hotel down in the French Quarter, and as soon as it came over television I went out, went down the hall. And other people were coming out. Michael Cole was there and Ed McGlynn and some others. I went down the hall and just as I got by Kean’s door he opened the door and he came out in the hallway. And I looked at him, I said, “How could you lose to Dan Quayle?”

Q: Had Kean been in the speculation game right up until that moment?

Carl Golden: No. He-- I think he dropped off that-- if there was a short list I think he dropped off that short list a couple of weeks before. When the story-- what the hint was, you’re going to be the keynote speaker, but you ain’t gonna be vice president.

Q: And he was the keynote speaker.

Carl Golden: Yes. And I think that was, you know, I knew at that point that-- I don’t want to call it the consolation prize ‘cause it’s a real honor, you know. It’s not that. But at that point I remember saying to Ed McGlynn, “Yeah, this just means that the stories are gonna be written that Kean’s out of the running for Vice President because anybody who sees his selection as keynote speaker is going to come to the conclusion that’s because he’s no longer under consideration.” And the press failed me again and nobody did. And I wasn’t about to go out and tell them but nobody did. But I knew at that point that that was not gonna happen.

Q: And Kean passed on a number of opportunities in the late 80s and early 90s to run for U.S. Senate. Lot of speculation each time there was an opportunity and each time he just didn’t want to go to Washington or his wife did not want him to go to Washington . Did you know all along that he would never take one of these or did you think...

Carl Golden: Yeah.

Q: Why?

Carl Golden: ‘Cause he loved to be speculated upon, you know. He liked that-- not the attention so much but it sort of validates your career in a way that here you are, you left office in 1989 and ten years later you have a 65 percent

approval rating and people want you to go to the U.S. Senate. You know, and it sort of validates everything that you've done. But he was not, particularly later on when the amount of money it takes to run for United States Senate-- he would have to raise \$100,000 a day every day for six months or whatever, and he wasn't going to do that. Just wasn't going to do that. I mean regardless of how well thought of he was, you still needed that sum of money to do it. And he was, you know, he did not like to raise money. He left that to other people who were very good at it. He didn't like to do that. He, you know, somebody once said raising political money is like-- it's like scrubbing toilets, distasteful but necessary. And he sort of saw it that way. And he really didn't like to do that.

Q: You may not be as closely in touch with him today. Do you sense that he's doing it now vicariously through his son?

Carl Golden: No, I don't think so. I think that his son gravitated toward public life. I mean one-- they're twins, as you know. One son gravitated toward public life, one did not. Now why does one do it and the other one don't-- does not? I don't know. No, I don't think Tom Kean senior is living vicariously through that. I think it's one of those where if this is what you want, you know, you have my support, obviously, and I'll do whatever I can to help you. I hope you succeed but you're your own person, you're on your own. And obviously it helps to have that name, in this state anyway. It helps politically to have that name. But-- and he, I'm sure, calls up his father and asks for advice every so often on things. I'm sure that's true. I've talked to Tom Kean junior a few times, nothing major certainly. No, I think he's very proud of his son's accomplishments and-- in public life, and whether he goes any further, obviously, remains to be seen. He's a young man, he's got his whole future in front of him, at least a considerable amount of his future in front him, so-- but, you know...

Q: It's the family business.

Carl Golden: To some extent, to some extent. I mean Kean never saw it as a business. He saw it as sort of-- I mean, you know, when-- who is the co-chair, the 9/11 commission? Oh, Lee Hamilton, the congressman from Ohio. If you remember when they announced the findings of the 9/11 commission Lee Hamilton got up and said, you know, "If there was ever a public service hall of fame, Tom Kean should be the first person in it." And that's the way he felt. This was not a business or a job, you know, it was doing things for the betterment and the overall good of people. I mean he often said that governor is great because when you go to work at nine o'clock in the morning you say, "Today I'm going to do this, this, and this. And when you leave at five o'clock in the afternoon you've done this, this, and this. When you go to U.S. Senate you're just one more guy giving a speech, you know. But as governor you can do things and you-- very tangible things. You can see what you've done, you know. You can pick it up and look at it, you know. And he liked that. He thought that was sort of the highest calling of public service. It was the highest calling, it wasn't perpetuation in office or power for the sake of power. It was doing things for people.

Q: How should we remember Tom Kean?

Carl Golden: Well first off, for a long time I hope. But I think as a person who knew what he wanted to do. He knew what he wanted to do on behalf of others. He knew he could do it. He knew he had the ability to do it. And he did it. And he did it. It may not have always been pretty and it may not have always won universal acclaim but he did it, you know. He had the conviction and the dedication and the commitment and he did it. And for people who are in public life, you know, I think there should be more of that, you know. What I did, you know, was wrap the coffee grounds up in the next morning, you know, when it appeared in the paper, you know, and then move on to the next thing, you know. But yeah, I think that's how he'd like to be remembered.

Q: And how would you like to be remembered?

Carl Golden: Oh God Michael. Intimidating. No. No, I don't know Michael. I guess as just somebody who understood the needs and problems of people he dealt with on a day to day basis in the media and did whatever-- did his best to meet those needs and resolve those issues to the extent that I was able to do that. And yeah, people will say, "Oh, you know, he used to yell," you know. It helps to have that reputation, it really does. Because, you

know, well, I intimidated you for 12 years.

Q: Well that's a modest legacy.

Carl Golden: I'm a modest guy, you know. Yeah, I got my family. I have three little kids running around the house and...

Q: This is your second family.

Carl Golden: Yeah, who love me, I hope, as much as I love them. You know, when I look back on the-- I honestly was thinking about this the other day 'cause I knew you were coming down here, but when Kean won by 1,797 votes, what came from that? If he had lost I probably would've gone my way. Linda would've gone her way, okay. I don't know what I'd have done. I don't know what she would've done. But we probably never would have established a relationship. These three little kids you see running around, who knows where they would be, you know. So it flowed from that victory where, in my judgment, all pretty good things.

Q: I wonder how many times that's multiplied over the lives of the people involved in the Kean administration.

Carl Golden: I don't know but I think about that every so often and it's kind of comforting sometimes.

Q: Thanks for inviting us into your home.

Carl Golden: Michael, it was my pleasure, believe me. It was my pleasure.

End of Carl Golden interview####