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- Todd Richman (Campaign Manager), Ben Wolf (Intern), Jed Merkowitz, Jordan Goldes (Hillary, Seth, John--from DC office).
- After USAir cancelled their early flight, we scrambled to get out of the house for earlier flight on Delta. Nancy called ahead and finally I get picked up--Ben Wolf to the office, and then to campaign office.
- It was a funny day. Most of it was spent sitting in the campaign office while Gary sat at a desk holding court and dialing for money and talking money and handing out assignments to staffers to make calls for money.
- Afternoon, John Berger (his LD), Seth (his deputy AA) and I went with Gary to the UPS accounting facility (covering all of NYC except Staten Island) where he went around to shake hands with the employees in their work cubicles, then we and the employees went to a room where snacks were laid out--and the carnation caper took place. Gary and the dozen or so managers stood around talking and the employees would come in--some shake hands with Gary--take some snacks and leave.
- They were concerned with competition from Postal Service in overseas packages--PS subsidizes package rates with revenue from 1st class mail. Illegal says Gary, should be a "firewall," so they assure Gary they will come to DC to push their bill for change. He tells them that if Dems take power, he could become Chairman of a revived POCS Comm.
- They have a PAC and support him.
- Outside, he says "what a difference between the post office, where every employee works within a strict routine and where people shoot each other and this company where they work hard, are happy and make tons of money." A paean to private enterprise!
- They had reminded Gary that in a recent study, UPS was named "the most admired company in the world in the communication business." And that may have triggered his paean.
- One guy said to us that they lost 200 drivers in the strike

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last year and lost business, too. But they are getting it back. They said they gained 200 new customers as a result of the Hong Kong strike when "we were the only company that kept its packages going throughout the strike, because we had our own system to rely on."

- Don't want
to tell that one*
- The carnation caper came in the context of Gary's story to the men around him that in his first campaign, he had posters all over the place and shopping bags all with carnations, and a woman came up to him, sees his carnation, and says "you look just like your poster." At that point he turned to a young black woman employee standing nearby, listening to the story, shakes hands with her and she, looking at his carnation, said, "I like that carnation." He said, "I'll send you one." She said, "I'd like twelve." Everyone laughs. "What's your name," says Gary. She tells him. He says, "I'd hate to be on the other side of the bargaining table with you." Whereupon Gary says to John (who has the cell phone), call Arthur and tell him to send twelve carnations to Ms. _____. Then to her, "when do you get off work." Then to John, "tell Arthur to use the flower shop we use and tell him to rush them." Amid laughs, she thanks him, he kisses her and she leaves. Says Gary to the men, "when she gets them, she'll count them... one, two, three. She's management material." The whole story is light-hearted and very humorous.
 - Afterward Gary says, "That was a fun stop. You've got to make it fun, otherwise its boring." It's typical of his spirit.
 - From there, we went to the Bayside Senior Center to hand out shopping bags. All the women took them and men much less so--especially the card players. "You watch the big gamblers in there," says Gary. "They won't even say hello." Some did and one guy at the pool table argued at great length over medicare. He wants to pay his own doctor when he wishes, but the doctor can't do it that way and he tells Gary its wrong and Gary is wrong to support medicare as it is. A conservative view--Gary ends the lengthy back and forth by saying, "We're looking into it and we make some changes. Come to the office some time when I'm there and I'll lay it all out for you." "I will. I always write to you when I think I've got something to say."
 - Then back to the campaign office for a long, long afternoon of watching and listening to Gary. Jerry Scharfman is there. In

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*But Dr
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humor*

the evening, Gary, Jerry and I have dinner (Italian).

- Riding to the campaign headquarters with Jed, I had asked if anyone mentioned Ben or was he pretty much history. "All politicians are pretty much forgotten when they leave office. They live on in buildings. The main Flushing Post Office was named after him."
- When, in the afternoon, someone asked me what I was doing and I mentioned Ben, Gary said, "Different constituencies, different styles, different guys. The heart of the district is still Queens. For Ben, the heart of it was Jackson Heights. That's where he grew up. The flavor of the heart is the same. But it's Queens several constituent generations later. It's less Jewish and much, much more Asian. It has a few blacks since it has been moved eastward into Long Island. Long Island would have been just as foreign to Ben as it was to me."
- At one point, Gary mentioned "the three districts I have." And that is always the sense you get. I asked Arthur if the people in Great Neck were mostly people who migrated out to the east are from Queens. He didn't quite answer the question. "It's the strongest Jewish area in the district. It's very liberal. There's a nuclear freeze movement there. (How about Gulf War vote?) We didn't have Great Neck in our district then. But if we had, we'd have had a very strong reaction to it."

Arthur:

- "Great Neck is a very special place. The people who live there do not want to be confused with anyone else. It's as if they wear a badge, 'I'm from Great Neck.' It's more a state of mind than a place. One morning after we had spent a couple of hours shaking hands with early morning commuters to the City, we saw a woman walking along the street. I said to her, 'it looks like you missed your train to work.' She said, 'I'm from Great Neck. I'm not going to work, I'm going shopping.' That's Great Neck." (Laughter)
- On Thursday, I started out doing clips in Gary's office. But he decided to do a couple of senior centers. So Ben, Hillary and I went with him. He taught me (us) about Queens much of the way--especially ethnic feature--as we went from Flushing to Bayside. 100,000 Koreans in the area. Not quite as many Chinese. Both groups are very supportive of GA, he says. He

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has a Korean fund-raiser tonight. "Both groups support me."

- When we get to the Flushing Center, it is called The Self Help Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center. Ben is now more icon than person. It is attached to a large residence apartment building. We go in with our shopping bags and start handing them out in the lobby and then moved to dining room. Director comes to say we can't do this in the Center, against regulation. There's a long discussion, telephone calls and we are asked to leave. Gary protests, but we go. In car, he calls Arthur who calls the Department on Aging and we get Deputy Commissioner on line, apologizing profusely. Gary treats her with kid gloves.
- At one point he says to the Ageing Department lady, "I've just been thrown out of a very nice place--The Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center in Flushing. I've been doing this every year for 24 years and no one has ever thrown me out before. In fact, I've been doing it ever since I broke ground for the building with Ben Rosenthal. We were both hard hats, and I have the picture to prove it." If he does, I'd love to have a copy of it for the study!
- When we get to the Bay Meadows Center, ("the best in the city," says Arthur), the Deputy Director for Communications of the Ageing Department has said that she'll stay on the line in case trouble repeats itself. Well, it does. No sooner do we get inside the door and start distributing shopping bags than a couple of "directors" come out to tell us "you can't come in here. Get out of here." One pushes Gary. Then she ask the three shopping bag carriers (me) to step outside. Gary holds his ground, gets the Agency person (Kelleher) on the line. She tells the official senior center director it's OK. She retreats to her office, never to be seen again.
- We distribute bags in the dining room, the pool room, the Alzheimer's group and everyone who comes and goes till they're all gone (100+) (they have ordered 50,000 shopping bags and will get rid of them). Gary plays pool with a group of five men who play "every day." Then he leads another group in singing "for he's a jolly good fellow," after they serenade him with "you are my sunshine." Half the people know him, the rest recognize him. We leave on a bubble of happiness. "A great stop," he says.

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- When I comment at lunch (he takes us to Scobee's Diner across the street from campaign headquarters) that everyone in Flushing and Bayside knows him from somewhere, he says "I've always felt I was lucky to have grown up in the projects. I had friends to play with on every floor. My kids never had that. That had a nice house, on a nice street, but not with the numbers of families and friends I had. There were 25 families in our building. My mother was the kind who kept the door open, and as kids, we congregated in our apartment. We went to school with each other and we stayed in touch with each other as people moved out of the projects into other parts of Queens. There were 2,000 people in these projects. And I had an index card file of 500 names when I ran my first race. That's how I started." His base!
- At lunch, when he was talking about work in Suffolk (I think I said, "and it's changed your thought processes too." "My thought processes have changed completely. I used to think of Republicans as people who lived on another planet. It wasn't that I didn't like them. I just had nothing to do with them. As soon as I got ^{elected} rescheduled, and before I even was sworn in as their congressman, I started going out there to help them recover from hurricane damage. They saw me more in the first couple of months than they had seen a congressman in ten years. I've spent a lot of time getting to know them, proportionally much more than in the rest of the district. I've gotten to know them, I've worked hard with them and for them. And they have come to appreciate me. Neither the Suffolk Republican leader nor the Nassau Republican leader (each of whom only has 20% of Gary's district) has any interest in defeating me. Last time, when I had a real opponent, the Republican leader called me and said 'I wish you luck. And I mean it.' (This time, he did too.) If, as logic suggests, I lose some or all of Suffolk in the next redistricting, I'll be very sad about that."
- At lunch again, "this campaign is very different from the last one. Everything is under control. Even when it looks out of control, it's really under control."
- Gary's opponent, Greg Pinzon, comes from Queens--a last minute fill-in, after the first nominee (a guy name D'Amato!) dropped out. This new guy had one debate with Gary, during which Gary pushed him to declare who he would vote for "as the first vote of the Congress." Finally, when Gary explained to him the

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significance of the vote for Speaker, he admitted he'd vote for the Republican Gingrich, though he didn't want to! He dropped out of the second debate, because he had to stay home with his kids. Then he asked Gary if he could get two passes to the White House for his mother! Says Gary, "He's really a nice guy, with a nice family. I'd like to keep him in storage for the next campaign." His one attack on Gary was for his flag vote. "We're going to get that flag burner." (He has a military background.)

- At headquarters the first day, someone from the office called to say that a group called "Censure and Move On" wanted to come to his office the next day and that they had 1,000 people in the district that had signed petitions. Gary started to play with it whimsically, "1,000 people from my district? Tell them all to come and line up outside my office. I want to see all of them lined up in alphabetical order or by size. Anyone else who comes can be 1,001." And he left it at that, assuming it would be taken care of.
- As we rode to the senior centers the next day, Ann (from the office) called, very upset at Ben for not telling her about the group. The leader, apparently had come to the office with the petitions and with someone from the press to get publicity. Ann didn't know who they were, but called Gary to see what to do. Gary said that the rule was that no one from the press ever got inside the office, to tell her to leave the petitions, but no press. I guess that's what happened. Ann was upset at Ben for not telling her. Ben thought the woman had gotten the message and would not bring the press. Interestingly, that's Gary's position: censure and move on! But he will not be pressured.
- Jordan says that Gary has been in the middle of the House membership in terms of the amount of his involvement in the impeachment ~~st~~aff. The one comment he made that was widely used was his motion on the floor during the debate over procedure that "I motion that we adjourn to Salem, Mass, a northeastern town noted for.... (check in CR).
- He called Rabbi Waxman in hospital to ask how he was after quadruple bypass. "I feel terrible, but the doctors are happy," Gary reports his comments. They chat about Israel and Schumer and the House elections and impeachment. Constituency work! He did this because one of the workers at the

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headquarters told him about it and said to Gary, "I would think you would want to call and inquire into his condition."

- I picked up a copy of the Queens' Tribune "The Trib," the paper Gary owned and ran. He said that's the Bayside edition. There's a Flushing edition. (Why?) The philosophy behind the paper was that neighborhoods count. When I was given Suffolk, I was asked by people and by the newspapers, "What is your goal now that you have Suffolk? I said, "My goal is that when the Suffolk County papers print my name, they will say Gary Ackerman (Democrat, Huntington). They do that now (smile). When people begin to think of you as the hometown boy, you've got it made. And when you live 70 miles away, that's the best."
- Talked a lot about Scheuer, "He was not Ben Rosenthal's favorite congressman." I said "He wasn't anybody's favorite congressman." That comment released Gary to contribute his opinion. Very negative! "Idiot."
- "They called him the Marco Polo congressman he was redistricted into so many districts... four."
- About the time they were thrown together. New York Times calls and says they have a copy of a loan of \$1 million that Scheuer just made to himself and asked Gary to comment. "If that son-of-a-bitch thinks he can come in and win this district on the cheap, he's got another thing coming! I had thrown down the gauntlet and I couldn't back down." Commitment politics, dominance, etc.
- *Jerry calls Gary "endearing," which makes you want to help him even when he's maddening. He is a little old fashioned in calling women "sweetheart" (mostly) and "dear." And when people call with pledges of money, "I love you." He's very warm and very witty. His wit doesn't really wound, but it stings sometimes.
- He loves to talk, tells stories and teach. When he goes off on a tangent, he always comes back to his original point. I think he enjoys teaching me, now. I got longer explanations than I can keep in my head--especially when one follows the other in cascading fashion. Gary began as a social studies teacher. His senior staff are all teachers, except Jed.

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Arthur worked in NYC school administration--programs for improving grades by teaching to objectives till he retired at 50 and went to work for Gary. Jerry is a school teacher, all those people in the Huntington office were or are teachers. Todd has an MA; John--the computer guy--has an MPP (Kennedy School). There are no practicing lawyers on the staff at home or in DC. Jerry is only one with a law degree, but he doesn't practice. Jerry called me "one of the family" when we parted. There is a respect for teaching that permeates this group; and it gives everything a distinctive feel. They are visceral liberals, too, but practical in politics.

- The guy doing Schumer's TV, Hank Morris, was the guy who directed the primary campaign against Gary in 1992--his toughest campaign. Morris' mother was running! This may account for what I thought was a less than ringing endorsement of Schumer--solid, but not ringing. At the Bayside Jewish Center, he spoke well of Al D'Amato, too. And Mrs. Schumer spoke strongly in support of "my son, Chuck." That temple is their temple; both parents were there.
- In 1992, he spent \$700,000 for the primary and \$600,000 vs. Binder in the general. Binder, his strongest challenger. Lally beat Binder in 1994 primary. (Said, "I'll bet I'm the only member of Congress who has had to spend over a million dollars in three consecutive elections.")
- In 1996, he knew he was going to beat Lally; and he had \$300,000 left. Q: Should we husband it for next time or spend it even though we don't need to? Decision: spend it! "If we do it now, we will make the point that we can raise and spend more than anyone, that they won't catch us sleeping and we will do whatever we need to get 64%. We put out the whole wad and got 63.5%. Without that effort, we would have had a tougher time this year."
- They were thrilled that Lally got fined \$280,000 for campaign irregularities. Gary said that Lally accepted that fine quickly so as to prevent any further investigation into where money came from. He says Swiss banks were mentioned. He believes that the Republicans appreciated the fact that Gary did not gloat publicly or capitalize on it, "that I was a gentleman." "I could have mashed the Republicans." Mondello calls Gary and says the Republicans will swallow it and asked that Gary "keep my Judge out of it." Gary agreed. His judge

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was Lally's mother! Gary says again, in the context, that Mondello "wished him luck in the 1998 election." D'Amato withdrew because northern Suffolk and Nassau Republicans offered him money.

- "We're running a perfunctory campaign. We're doing street fairs and senior centers and shopping bags."
- The shopping bags were redesigned this year--smaller, red and white reversed. But key is, still, that they be big enough so they can't be stuffed in a woman's handbag. He could have plastic bags for one-third the price. But wants bulkier, more visible ones. They bought 50,000 at \$.40 cents a bag! That what? \$20,000 worth.
- On Wednesday, he got the endorsement of the Suffolk Life paper, which he described as "right wing nuts" and Jerry described as "Nazis," or just plain "far right." They endorsed him faintly last year, but this time "strongly endorsed" him. Gary was pleased (I have it). "I couldn't have written it better myself. The first time, I was interviewed by the editor. He asked me to compare different kinds of guns--this gun, that gun. What does a Jewish boy know about guns? My mother told me never to touch those things. Now they are "strongly endorsing the Jewish liberal missionary. I can't understand it." He called the editor to thank him. A measure of his acceptance and his cultivation of Suffolk.
- As sign of approaching 2002, says Jerry, "This is the first time Gary has given money to State Representatives for their campaigns."
- Off the record: "One night my wife said to me, how can you take money from the banks, you're on the Banking Committee? Isn't that a conflict of interest? I said to her, 'Rita, that's why I am on the Banking Committee.'"
- *It might be interesting to check Gary's progress up the committee ladder against others in his class. I think it's been slow. At lunch today, he mentioned again, how he would have been POCS Chairman if the Dems had stayed in power. He likes the fact that he's ranking on IR subcommittees and gets to travel--funny stories about getting to see Dalai Lama and in Cartagena, the first in old cars with substitute cars in

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case of breakdown--one congressman per car and the second in donkey carts with guys running along side--one member to a cart.

- "I'm going to win. I only worry about the money."
- Guy who was Lally's finance chairman last time is raising money for Gary this time with his family. Gary: "When your opponent's finance chairman is raising money for you, it doesn't get any better than that."
- The day before I got there, he went to Minnesota for a fundraiser for a long shot friend of his. "They asked me how I could be a social liberal and a fiscal conservative. I said I used to teach sex education and driver's education at the same time." They said, "we couldn't say that in Minnesota." (I don't believe that.)
- Co-chairman of Indian Caucus is Jim Greenwood. At the fundraiser, Gary made sure I sat at the table with the leaders. "Stay close. I want you to hear this." He made Clem Sofir talk to me when he talked about saving desecrated Jewish grave yards world-wide.
- Lady at senior center, as Gary goes around the table. He introduces himself. "I'm Gary Ackerman." Other lady asks this one, what is his name? The first woman says "Geriatrics." Gary gets huge laugh out of that.
- Re pic that shows Gary breaking ground for underground lines in Asharoken: "I negotiated with Lilco." That stemmed from the hurricane after he was elected and his help then, in evacuating people from home, wading around in hip boots, etc. He got a whole lot of people to agree to put all the lines underground in that area as a flood precaution--cable, telephone, electricity, etc.
- Mayor Kelley of Asharoken, "Gary Ackerman disagrees with everything I believe in, but he's the best congressman we ever had."

Driving through Flushing, Gary says that there are 100,000 Chinese and a little fewer Koreans. I had looked out my hotel window at a street that had 15 stores in one block--all Chinese. Jerry says, "Chinatown is not in San Francisco, it's

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in Flushing." Arthur says of my very nice hotel, "it shouldn't be there. In the 1960's, that whole area fell apart and real estate plummeted. Now its come back and it has some of the highest priced real estate in Queens." This is the kind of thing, i.e., changing neighborhoods that Ben always talked about. A constant theme and thread of the district.

- Gary agrees that he has put his stamp on the district.
- When he first ran for office, he took a leave from his paper and turned it over to someone else. They wondered whether they should endorse him or not. They did, with appropriate disclaimer. In his first debate, "someone asked me if I was surprised that my paper had endorsed me. I said, 'I'd have been surprised if they hadn't.' And that ended it."

At Bayside Temple candidate's night (after the Indian Restaurant in Manhattan), Gary got questioned by three "plants" on abortion. I have his answers. Then the MC got up and said, "I want to ask a question that is much more important than abortion. Do you support the privatization of social security? I have Gary's reply. "I do not support the privatization of social security." He also said that he'd support a pilot program that allows people if they wish to put 10% or 15% in investments.

- Earlier in the day, he had said to me that he was in favor of some privatization on a voluntary basis. "That's a good middle of the road position. If my Republican friends think they can do better on the stock market, let them try. For others, keep the program as it is." I took it as more evidence of Gary's slow reconsideration of an old position.
- *A nice, important connection with Ben. When I said that Ben had been in a small minority on flag desecration, he said, "That's why I loved him." Ben came out of the machine; Gary came as maverick. Different origins, ~~some~~ liberation.

Back to Flushing, he said that the redistricting split Flushing into three districts, thus preventing the Asian community from participating in our democracy as effectively as they might. Said he went to the Justice Dept. after the redistricting to protest that the district lines had split the four most important orthodox synagogues right down the middle--two on one side if a street, two on the other.

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"Crazy."

- He spoke of his old Senate district as Kew Gardens, Kew Gardens Hills, Flushing...
- Re Flushing, "Flushing is the birth place of religious tolerance in this country--the Flushing Remonstrance. In one block over there is an Orthodox Jewish School, a Protestant Church, a Korean Church and an Indian Temple. You can't get much more diversity than that!"
- Re his laid back campaign, Jerry says, "He blew off 30 different events, and now he wants to go where people are. But he wants to go to Connecticut over the weekend." He's upset at the lack of effort. Thinks I should wait till 2002 to see whole story. Charlie ~~S~~ still is supposed to be the redistricting guru.
- I reminded Gary of what he was doing when I had to leave last time--debating with union guys over fast track, and I asked how it came out. "I came back to my roots. I supported labor--the working people. So what did it get me politically, even though that is not why I did it? I got one-half of what I got from them in the last election. I said to them, I supported you when you told me it was life and death and you gave me half as much as before. 'Oh, you're all right. You didn't need it,' they said. So I lost a lot of business support and labor did not make up the difference. There are still some businessmen who think I have possibilities."
- "Great Neck is the most Jewish town in Nassau County. People there are Jews with a social conscience. As Jerry says, 'they vote left and live right.'"
- When he decided to run in the current district, he had only 40 out of 500 ED's. So he seemed very happy about his 52% victory in 1992.
- On election eve, he had a tradition of going to a street corner in front of Frederick's store in Great Neck. Binder is there when he gets there. He can't figure out why Binder should put his last minute push in this lest likely place to find votes. "We know it was our area of greatest strength. He didn't know it wasn't his territory." A tip off.

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- Gary re impeachment: "I think Ken Starr just spent \$40m of hard-earned taxpayer money on government-sponsored pornography. It has come down to a sordid tale about sex. This teaches us a lesson about special prosecutors." AP, 9/11/98: "From City Hall to the Hill: Wait and See," Annette McQueen.
- For local color, the constant preoccupation with driving routes--turn here, cross over the curb to get on the highway, do a U turn, we've gone too far, I thought it was a short-cut, but it wasn't, go here, stop here, etc..... *parking spots?*
- 9/11/98, Douglas Feider, New York Daily News, "Scandal's Not Enough to Ax Prez say Dems." Gary: "It's not a pretty picture. His sexual activity is an illicit affair with a woman not his wife was inelegant--but you just don't remove a President for hard-core pornography.
- "The whole exercise is aimed at hobbling the President just as it has been from the start."
- Calls Clinton speech "disappointing." Calls for "harsh punishment," but not "high crimes and misdemeanors."
- Jordan re New York Times. "Our relations with Times are ok, but they aren't interested unless its something very big." Gary noted with pleasure that they quoted his Salem "motion."
- Bayside Times, July 23, 1998, Ed Take the Money and Run" re condos. "Much to his credit, Ackerman championed the cause of the condo owners. What little is being offered appears to be the fruit of his labor."
- Vista Tower Condo in Flushing crumbling 15 story, 159 units. Built in 1987, City Dept. of Bldg in Sept. 98 discovered the structure had unstable foundation and shifting walls... tenants fled the condo, mostly Asians.
- GA, 7,500 contributors.
- Sponsored bill with Coburn requiring that HIV-infected persons be represented confidentially by name except by codes which are unreliable.
- Newsday 9/20/98, "Open Secrets." "I remember reading about

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sin for the first time in the Bible. It's been around for a long time. Most of us didn't get elected on the 10 Commandments." (Re Clinton)

- Looking at clips, GA does get stories about bizarre or newsworthy casework--he has nose for stuff like zip codes and blind man.

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