

May 9, 1990 - Bob Tyrer

--Lunch with Bob Tyrer who is now Bill's AA. Tom is VP of Baltimore Orioles - Bob was reporter in Shelbyville, KY, after he left Bill. He and Tom came back in 1989 (Tom was in Maine doing something else, I think) to help Bill get ready for the campaign. So the old team was back - then Tom went to Baltimore and Bob became AA. But he's filled with the campaign now.

--Most interesting thing he said was that the campaign team was nowhere in between '84 and '90.

--"When I got back I thought I'd reassemble the old Cohen campaign team and we'd get going. When I got to Main I found that our campaign team was dog shit. The software for our computer operation wouldn't work anymore. The diskettes we had just fell apart. We had even sold our computer. The guy who knew how to run it was selling Buicks in Missouri. Honest to God! I called him; he didn't have any idea where our records were. Somebody said, it's all in the file cabinet. I looked in the file cabinet and there was nothing there except some reports that had gone unfiled from 1984. I know that journalists have this image that all incumbents have this well oiled juggernaut ready to go at election time, that we are in an age of permanent campaigning. Our campaign shut down, bang, the day after Bill got reelected and nothing happened between 1984 and 1989."

--He spoke of the challenge of the campaign. "I'm not worrying about him winning. He's got 95-5 favorability, 90% reelect number. Every campaign has to have a challenge. When Bill won by 74% in 1984, it was a state record. ~~Bob~~ Mitchell won by 81% in 1988. It would be unrealistic to expect to do better than that. We'll have to create a challenge.

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--I think this comment involved the challenge. "Bill's situation is very different now from wht it was a few years ago. The party lost control of the Senate. That's a big change. More than more people realize. You lose your subcommittee chairmanship. You lose most of your chances to get attention. There was Iran-Contra, but that is fading now. Then George Mitchell came into prominence nationally. He gets more attention than Bill. He's more popular in Main than Bill. Then the Republicans captured the governorship for the first time in a long long time. So the governor has become the focus of attention. So there's been a lot of eclipsing going on. and let's face it, he is not the young Turk anymore. Watergate was another era.

So it may seem like Bill hasn't been doing much lately. It has been a bit of a down period for him. So my aim for the campaign is to demonstrate that Bill Cohen is still in there active and fighting. With people over 40 who remember Watergate, Bill is rock solid--he gets 56% of the Democrats too. Our job is to reach the younger people--some of them were just being born at the time of Watergate. One way is to have him campaign pretty hard, and we want him to do that."

--"We've been talking to consultants, and deciding which one to hire. The one we always had (Sy Haroff?) died. So we've been talking about whether we ought to emphasize Washington or Maine. I think people know he can do the job in Washington; we need to make sure that they see him as concerned about Maine."

--opponent Rolde (?) has lots of money - state rep, ass't to Hildreth - has had experience, but hasn't done anything so far. "He's got gobs of money. He's spent a lot of money. But we can't see what he's done with it. So the campaign is very soft right now."

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--They'll have 2 debates.