

OH-107
ZAGHI

Oral History Interview with
Frederick A. Zaghi

by
Dr. John E. Wickman
on
November 5, 1968

Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
Abilene, Kansas 67410

SIGURD S. LARMON
THE CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17

October 23, 1969

Dr. John E. Wickman, Director
Eisenhower Library
Abilene, Kansas 67110

Dear Doctor Wickman:

Enclosed herewith is a copy
of the text of our interview of November
5th, 1968 pertaining to the 1952
Eisenhower election campaign. You will
observe certain changes have been made.

I regret exceedingly the
delay in sending this to you. The fact
is I thought it had gone out to you
some time ago but just recently it was
discovered among Mr. Larmon's papers.

Regards.

Sincerely,



Frederick A. Zaghi

enc.

SIGURD S. LARMON
THE CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17

November 25, 1969

Mr. John E. Wickman, Director
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
Abilene, Kansas 67410

Dear Mr. Wickman:

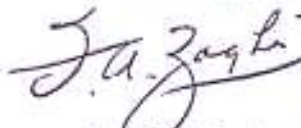
I have your letter of
November nineteenth for which many
thanks.

This is to advise you
that you may use the transcript of our
interview in any manner, shape or form,
that will be to the advantage of the
Library and perhaps make your life just
a little easier. For your information,
Mr. Larmon agrees with this opinion.

I shall look forward
to seeing you when you next visit
New York and Mr. Larmon.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,



Frederick A. Zaghi

FAZ/hnr

This is an interview on November 5th, 1968 with Mr. Frederick A. Zaghi of Young & Rubicam on his part in the 1952 election campaign.

DR. WICKMAN: All I want to do on this tape is simply ask you about your associations, your earliest associations with the Citizens for Eisenhower group and get some of your memories about that, so let me start with some questions and one question, you can respond to these and then if you feel particularly talkative just go ahead and talk and we'll forget about the questions. But the first question is: when did you get associated with the Citizens for Eisenhower movement?

MR. ZAGHI: January 6, 1952, that was my first start and that was supposed to be for a three week period while Mr. Dyke, who at that time was Mr. Larmon's assistant, was on vacation.

DR. WICKMAN: At Young & Rubicam?

MR. ZAGHI: --at Young & Rubicam. I was a member of Young & Rubicam and at that time I was business manager of the TV-Radio Department. Mr. Larmon asked the head of that department if he could borrow me for three weeks while Dyke was on vacation. My immediate superior said, "Sure." So I moved into Dyke's office, right next to Mr. Larmon's office on the executive floor.

DR. WICKMAN: What was Mr. Larmon doing at this time?

MR. ZAGHI: He was holding many meetings with key members of the Citizens for Eisenhower group-planning strategy, making recommendations, etc. etc. At the time I got involved the New Hampshire campaign was going on and we were in the process of preparing a special folder which was to be distributed to all the people in the state of New Hampshire to try to woo the delegates over to Eisenhower rather than Taft. Of course Taft had his own campaign going on up

there at the time we had ours going. Well, that was my start. At the end of three weeks after conversations with Senators and Congressmen and trips to New Hampshire, three very, very hectic weeks, I wrote a status report figuring that Ken Dyke would then take over when I left. But I was asked by Mr. Larmon if I would like to continue and I said, "Yes," and I did. And that went on and my part of the Citizens for Eisenhower campaign lasted until after the election or a matter of eleven months. During that time I had charge of all printed material to see that expedited, get it out, brochures, commercials, buying time on radio, buying time on television, always with the help of the staff that I had at my disposal at Young and Rubicam directors, producers, writers, media people, artists for layout purposes.

DR. WICKMAN: Was this the first major campaign of this kind that the agency had become involved in?

MR. ZAGHI: Yes. We were real neophytes when we started, there's no question about it. Of course as we got deeper and deeper into this matter of politics we learned a lot, if I can quote Tom Stevens, he said, 'he never say anybody learn as fast as we did'

DR. WICKMAN: Whose, let me ask you this if you can remember or if you know but, whose idea was it to bring Young and Rubicam into?

MR. ZAGHI: The person whose idea it was to bring Young and Rubicam in, my guess would be and I think it's a good guess would be Bill Robinson. It was Bill Robinson who sold Larmon on the idea of coming on, it was Bill Robinson now that I recall it. And Cabot Lodge also talked with Sig Larmon about coming into this thing and putting the power of Young and Rubicam behind the campaign. I became his assistant, so to speak, on this particular operation and eventually I did become one of his assistants. After the campaign I was taken out of my duties as business manager and given an office up on the executive floor, reporting directly to Sig Larmon who at that time was president, chairman of

the board, and chief executive officer. Now so far as other things that I did, I visited many states where we had a delegate problem to find out from the head of the Citizens for Eisenhower in that state what they thought their chances were to win the delegates over to Eisenhower and what kind of help they needed, both in material matter, like mats for newspapers, brochures, folders and money if they wanted to buy local time. We also provided them with radio commercials that we had prepared or television film if they felt they would be helpful. There was only one case, that was in West Virginia, where I had to come back with a negative recommendation in connection with the chances of Eisenhower getting the delegates from that state because they were really strong in that state for Taft and, as a matter of fact, I was warned that if I went to West Virginia to be sure to take my Ike pin off because they were so rabid down there they would probably tar and feather me and ride me out of town on the rails, so I did that. I took it off and I went to visit the head of the Citizens for Eisenhower and then came back and said, "We can forget West Virginia." And we did. Of course we never got West Virginia, we didn't have a chance. We also lost one other state as I recall and that was South Dakota. South Dakota, unfortunately, the recommendation which I made was not accepted by the Finance Committee, I wanted to spend a few more dollars there because I wanted to use Kate Smith, this isn't historical but anyway it's a fact, to use Kate Smith more heavily than we were using her on stations, large stations, in the state and in that way to counteract the effect of the big name politicians that Mr. Taft was bringing in on his behalf. And I think if they'd have voted 'yes' we'd have won with a slight plurality rather than lose by a total of six hundred some odd voters.

DR. WICKMAN: Would you go over, from your point of view, because I think I indicated the other day we're getting from several points of view, from your point of view the Texas delegate struggle in the convention?

MR. ZAGHI: There were two groups of delegates from Texas one group was appointed by the committee of the previous convention and another by the committee representing the present convention. The old committee elected delegates who favored Taft and the new committee elected delegates who favored Eisenhower. In a situation such as this both groups must appear before the credential committee--state their case and then the credential committee decides which group is to be the accredited group representing the state of Texas.

DR. WICKMAN: This is again the, was this the Citizens for Eisenhower---

MR. ZAGHI: Oh, yes.

DR. WICKMAN: ---organization doing this?

MR. ZAGHI: Oh, yes. So without their knowledge, at that moment, we arranged for television coverage of that meeting. However when the old group learned about the TV coverage, they wanted the TV coverage cancelled. But it wasn't. As it turned out the old delegates who claimed they were the accredited delegates were thrown out and the rightful delegates appointed by the current committee were given the authority to represent the state of Texas for the Republican Party. Now this was a tremendous victory for Eisenhower because if they had gotten away with it, there were three other states as I recall that had duplicate delegates, the accredited delegates and another group that came in and said, "They're not the accredited delegates, we are." Well when they learned what happened to this Texas group they didn't have any better argument than the Texas group so they quit. I don't believe any of them went before the credentials committee. As I recall and a matter of fact I spoke to a secondary group of delegates from the state of Florida and I told them the story of what they would have to do, to wit, they would have to go before the credentials committee and prove that they were the rightful delegates from the state of Florida and if they could do that, well, all right, but if they couldn't do that then they might just as well forget it. So they forgot it and they went home. Now, in my opinion if

the old Texas group had won and the new and rightful delegates had been kicked out, I think there would have been a great many more groups of delegates coming in to claim that they were the rightful delegates and therefore Eisenhower never would have gotten the nomination. The Texas thing was a turning point and a very important one in connection with the Eisenhower campaign as far as we were concerned. It was very important. There was so much literature written on what we call 'the Texas Steal', there were pamphlets after pamphlets more literature written and distributed to delegates in Chicago in connection with the Texas Steal than any other campaign we had. And we had a bevy of pretty girls who delivered this material to all the delegates. We had the names of all the delegates, the hotel they were staying at, and their room number. We soon learned that you couldn't go into these hotels to distribute this material to the delegates during regular hours so we got these good-looking girls to go and distribute this stuff at 2:00 o'clock in the morning, 3:00 o'clock in the morning, and slide it under the delegates door. Of course they were always confronted by the doorman who would ask, "Where you going?" And they'd say, "We want to go upstairs and give this stuff out to the delegates, they're expecting it." And he'd say, "Oh, fine, go ahead." These gals did a tremendous job and we got the stuff to the delegates. At our convention headquarters stacks of all of our promotional material was placed on a counter behind which were these very pretty girls who would answer questions and distribute all this literature, buttons and everything else. It was quite a display -- the whole lobby was beautifully decorated. It must be remembered that there was a great staff of people working for Citizens for Eisenhower, this was not entirely a Young and Rubicam operation, there were many, many people, important people who made great contributions to the Eisenhower victory. If you are interested I can tell you who they were.

DR. WICKMAN: Yes, why don't you go over some of them.

MR. ZAGHI: This is a list and I'm not going to try to place them in --

DR. WICKMAN: No, no, don't, just take them as they come, no, fine, that's right.

MR. ZAGHI: --category of importance, I'm just going to read them, except for the first one on the list I have to say something about him, that was Authur Vandenberg. He was chairman of the Citizens for Eisenhower for a short term time. And he was succeeded by another man, later on I'll tell you his name. Now these are the names of the people that had a lot to do in this campaign and quite a number of them eventually became members of the Eisenhower family in Washington as Assistants to the President, Economic Advisors and in various capacities which is a matter of history. Well, here go the names: Paul Hoffman, Sigurd S. Larmon, Walter Williams, Gabriel Hauge, Abbott Washburn, Charley Willis, Stanley Rumbaugh, Howard Chase, Henry Sears, Tom Stevens, Ann Whitman, Mary Jane MacCaffree, Ed Russell, Howard Peterson, Mary Lord, Sherman Adams, Lucius Clay, Herb Brownell, Tom Dewey, Cabot Lodge, Bill Robinson, Slat Slater, Cliff Roberts, Phil Reed, Len Hall, Dorothy Houghton, Tony Zaghi, and also a large staff of writers, directors, producers, advertisements, radio commercials, TV commercials from Young and Rubicam.

DR. WICKMAN: When the convention was over and the Citizens for Eisenhower group was succeeded by the Republican National Committee what happened to most of these people -- was there a merger of the two organizations?

MR. ZAGHI: That's very interesting because he was nominated on the first ballot. And of course after it was all over we all went back to the Conrad Hilton Hotel and it wasn't long before we were told by Jim Haggerty, in a very complimentary way about the job that we'd done but from that point on the National Republican Party would take over the campaign to elect Eisenhower President of the United States but would we keep on working, that is the Young and Rubicam group and all the other people, on behalf of the Eisenhower campaign. And we said, "Yes."

DR. WICKMAN: Well then what did this mean --

MR. ZAGHI: That meant that we had to report to them --

DR. WICKMAN: In Washington?

MR. ZAGHI: No, here in New York or in Washington, yes, but not in Washington so much as I think we spoke to them here in New York. Herb Brownell I think was our closest contact after the nomination, then anyone else. He was really the man who made the decisions. And we cleared everything with him. Sometimes we cleared stuff with Lucius Clay because we felt it should be cleared with him. But most of the material I ever took out to be cleared after the nomination was with Herb Brownell.

DR. WICKMAN: And then throughout the campaign you continued to provide what, your group provided literature, was this --

MR. ZAGHI: Literature, radio, television commercials, Eisenhower on the air and various programs, you have them on film, his person to person interview in Washington, D. C., where people get up and asked him a questions and he'd give the answer. I know he appeared on several Young and Rubicam TV programs. He appeared on quite a number of other programs after nomination. He had said before he was nominated that he would not campaign but he did campaign to an extent anyway even prior to the nomination. He made a speech in Abilene. You may recall it, it rained and there was mud up to your ankles. And then he did a "We, the People" thing and he did quite a few other things prior to the nomination.

DR. WICKMAN: When the, what shhpened after the election was over -- what are some of your reminiscences about this -- did you, did that group close down then completely?

MR. ZAGHI: Well, yes, the group closed down completely. A lot of them went back to their own personal endeavors like I went back to Young and Rubicam and Mr. Larson went back to Young and Rubicam. But as I said before quite a number of the people whose names I mentioned before became members of Eisenhower's staff and stayed with him practically for his entire two terms. Just one example was

his appointment secretary.

DR. WICKMAN: Did you visit the President when he was President?

MR. ZAGHI: I was fortunate enough to be invited to the White House to one of the stag dinners and to me this was a great honor. But there is a little story I want to tell you about this great man, as you go into the White House of course you are stopped at the gate by a guard and you show him your invitation and go ahead right up. And when I got in the door I was met by President Eisenhower's secretary and I showed him my invitation and he said, "Oh, yes, Mr. Zaghi, I want to tell you a couple of things" He said, "First of all, I want to show you the seating arrangement, where you will sit at the table. And," he said, "you come in the door you turn left and go around to right here and Mr. so-and-so will be here," and I think Chuck Percy was on my right and some big restaurant man was on my left. And he said, "But before that," he said, "You will go into a room where you will all meet, you will eventually meet the President. Now," he said, "when you are in that room and the President comes in stay where you are, don't move. He will come to you, don't go to him." So when he finally came in I was talking to Chuck Percy and Arthur Vandenberg and he eventually came over to me. Well, prior to that again going back to the secretary, the secretary said, "Here is a list of the people who are going to be here tonight for dinner." And I looked at this list and it started out, it was alphabetically arranged. So-and-so, retired Admiral, so-and-so, President of such-and-such company, all fantastic titles, and it came down to me, Frederick A. Zaghi, Young and Rubicam, but no title. So when the President came in he was introduced to all the guests and he had some little remark to make to each one as, 'how are you, Jim?' if he knew him by his first name of 'Glad to see you' and finally he came to me and the secretary introduced me, he said, "This is Mr. Zaghi from Young and Rubicam." And he said, "Holy gee I know you, you're Sig Larmon's deputy."

DR. WICKMAN: You had a title.

MR. ZAGHI: I had a title. And you know they, the guests heard it and of course I guess the majority of them know Sig Larmon but I think they were all wondering 'well, who in the heck is that?' That's another facet of this great man.

DR. WICKMAN: Have you seen Mr. Eisenhower since that time?

MR. ZAGHI: Not -- that was kind of--let's call it a social visit. But I have seen him, yes, several times since then because you know he likes to play bridge every time he gets into New York he plays bridge with close personal friends and on a couple of those occasions I had a chance to see him and say 'hello.'

DR. WICKMAN: What about the '56 election, was Young and Rubicam involved in that?

MR. ZAGHI: Well, the '56 election, Summerfield, who was then the Postmaster General -- picked J. Walter Thompson to be the agency of record. Actually we didn't want the job, Young and Rubicam did not want, you see, in an agency such as ours we have to be careful not to favor one political party --

DR. WICKMAN: Once would be enough.

MR. ZAGHI: Well it was a calculated risk to be the official agency whereas during the 1952 campaign we were working for a man affiliated with no party, we weren't affiliated with any party. We were Citizens for Eisenhower, no party affiliation. But in 1956 Summerfield gave the account to J. Walter Thompson and it's a matter of record that we were asked to come back into it because the President's advisors felt we had more know-how than J. Walter Thompson and we did move in and we wrote quite a few scripts. We made many, many television proposals, recommendations. We made many minute commercials that evidently did a find job because the critics said some very nice things about them. So that was the extent of what we did.

This was, you know, kind of embarrassing to J. Walter Thompson I would imagine. Well, we did do it. And we did a wonderful job in '56 of course our key Y&R people went to the convention in '56 in San Francisco but we went there more as observers however to be there in the event we might be needed to move in on any area where we might be helpful. And there were several such instances.

DR. WICKMAN: Can, how did the, one of the questions I've had about Citizens for Eisenhower groups that I always wanted to ask somebody who was involved with it was, how did the group in New York relate to the other Citizens for Eisenhower?

MR. ZAGHI: They were the headquarters.

DR. WICKMAN: It was the headquarters.

MR. ZAGHI: They were the headquarters and --

DR. WICKMAN: Did you say it started in New York?

MR. ZAGHI: It started in New York, it started in New York and then Citizens for Eisenhower groups were formed in other states throughout the United States. And we supplied those people with whatever material we had such as mats for newspapers ads or literature that we prepared on behalf of Eisenhower. And in some cases we even financed some of their operations on radio and television.

DR. WICKMAN: One of the things that I wondered about in the '52 campaign after the convention, the headquarters shifted to Denver, the campaign headquarters, did you go to Denver?

MR. ZAGHI: No, I didn't.

DR. WICKMAN: You worked strictly out of New York?

MR. ZAGHI: I worked out of New York because at that time we were still up at the Marguery Hotel and we were still getting out stuff. But isn't it strange I have no recollection of anything coming to me from Denver. It came to me from either Mr. Larmon or Tom Stevens or to them from either Herb Brownell or somebody else but it eventually got to me because if it had to be executed and

and it was my job to execute it, to get it done and get it out so there would be no hitch in it. But as far as Denver, no, I never was in Denver. I was to so many other places. And all of the people whose names I mentioned earlier had certain obligations and certain duties in connection with their efforts on behalf of Eisenhower and they all did an outstanding job. There was nobody stepping on somebody else's toes because they had their own responsibilities and they stuck right to that line and followed those responsibilities. And that's why this operation was so successful, they had something to do, and they did it and they did it well.

DR. WICKMAN: Do you have any idea of how early the efforts to get General Eisenhower to run started? You came into, you said, in --



MR. ZAGHI: Yes, it started in 1951, now there are a lot of people who say that they were responsible for starting this thing and I guess in time to come there will be many more people who will claim that they were responsible and influential in getting Eisenhower to run for the Presidency. From where I sit the two men that were most responsible for getting Eisenhower to agree to run for the Presidency of the United States was Cabot Lodge and Bill Robinson. At that time Bill Robinson was the head of the Herald Tribune and Cabot Lodge, was a Senator. These are the two men who talked to him and many times and he finally agreed to run. Sig Larmon talked to him but if you ask Sig Larmon how much responsibility he had in that, he'd say, "Well, they're the two men in my opinion" and he agrees with this opinion of mine "that they did the most to get him to run." That was the crux of the whole thing, 'would he do it?' You know you can propose anybody for the Presidency of the United States unless he does it, what have you got, a vacuum, nothing. They had many conversations with him. Now it's also possible that Lucius Clay may have had something to do with it. But I never felt or sensed that he had anything to do with the decision made by, at that time, General Eisenhower.

DR. WICKMAN: Were you at the rally that they put on in Madison Square Garden?

MR. ZAGHI: Oh, yes, oh, yes, that was, one of those rallies was put on by

DR. WICKMAN: That's the one I was thinking of, yes.

MR. ZAGHI: That was quite a rally. That was a hundred dollar a plate affair as you recall. And there was a humorous incident in connection with that, it was humorous to me, I don't imagine it was humorous to Tex McCrary or to other people that were involved in it, it so happened that they ran out of box luncheons and had to scrounge around looking for a place where we could buy a hot dog because we were hungry. We hadn't had any dinner.

