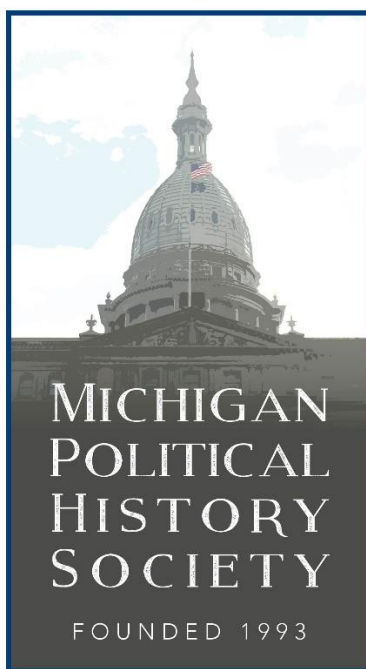


# ROMAN GRIBBS

Interviewed by  
Bill Ballenger  
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Bill Ballenger: This interview is part of the James J. Blanchard Living Library of Michigan Political History.

Bill Ballenger: Mayor Gribbs, Judge Gribbs. It is a great pleasure to have you here today for this interview for the Michigan Political History Society. You are identified very strongly with the city of Detroit, and yet I'm not sure that's where you were born and brought up. Or is it?

Roman Gribbs: I was born in Detroit, but when I was about three-years-old my parents bought a farm in the Thumb Area, about 60 miles north of Detroit and about a mile from a little burg called Riley Center. That was in the early '30's, but then they lost that farm in the Depression, I remember I was about five or six-years-old. Went back to Detroit for a couple years, and then dad was rehired, Ford took him back, re-hired him, and then they bought a second farm. So I really grew up on the farm.

Bill Ballenger: So the second farm was up near Capac?

Roman Gribbs: It was between Capac and Emmett, yes. Three miles from Emmett and seven miles from Capac, and so I went to Capac High School, graduated from Capac High School.

Bill Ballenger: Were you a good student?

Roman Gribbs: I was a good student, yeah.

Bill Ballenger: You were a good student?

Roman Gribbs: I was number two of the class, yeah.

Bill Ballenger: You were a salutatorian?

Roman Gribbs: Yes, correct. Yeah. The young lady that was number one, she had all A's. I didn't quite make that.

Bill Ballenger: That's a tough standard to match.

Roman Gribbs: Yeah.

Bill Ballenger: Okay, so you're through Capac High School, what do you remember about life on the farm? Did it have any impact on your later life, after you got back into law school and went to Detroit? Did your memories of the farm have any bearing on what you thought about things or what you did later, or not?

Roman Gribbs: Well, what you learned on a farm, particularly if you're a poor farmer, and my dad worked in the foundry in Detroit all the time that we lived on the farm. During the summers we'd get a hired man to help us in the crops, but my

brother and I, who was two years older, when we got into our early teens, we were able to do most of the work. Milk the cows ... We started with horses.

Roman Gribbs: There's ... you learn to make do and you learn to organize, and you learn to repair machinery because you have to-

Bill Ballenger: And you have to be resourceful.

Roman Gribbs: That's the word. And so, you learn that.

Bill Ballenger: Were there just the two children?

Roman Gribbs: Just the two. I had to earlier brothers but they died at a young age, and so my brother Joe and I were the two that remained, and he was two years older.

Bill Ballenger: One thing that's interesting, your name Gribbs. Now, a lot of people wonder what kind of a name is that? And actually, I think you have a fascinating story, and that is, I think Gribbs is an Anglicization, or an Americanization of a Polish name that is actually shorter. Right? Five letter versus six? What is it?

Roman Gribbs: Yes. Yeah. G-R-Z-Y-B.

Bill Ballenger: Now how do you pronounce that in Polish?

Roman Gribbs: We used to pronounce it "Grib", the "Z" being silent. Like G-R-Y-B. And my brother went into the seminary and he Anglicized it to Gribbs. We said Gribbs, and we took that spelling, and later on I did the same thing.

Bill Ballenger: When you were growing up, was your name Gribbs then, or was it the Polish version?

Roman Gribbs: No, it was the Polish version. G-R-Z-Y-B.

Bill Ballenger: It was the Polish version when you were at Capac.

Roman Gribbs: Right, right.

Bill Ballenger: Wow. Did your parents come over from Poland, or grandparents, or what?

Roman Gribbs: Both of my parents immigrated from Poland, but separately. They didn't know each other. My dad came here to Detroit and joined his brother who was here in Detroit. My mother was brought over by my dad, he took a ship across, it took her a week to get to the United States, and she was about 13, 14-years-old. Dad was 16. Well in Poland, Poland was under the auspices of the Hungarian ... Austrian/Hungarian Empire, Franz Joseph was the Emperor. He learned to become a blacksmith, and it was in that service for about a year, he must have

been 14 or 15, and they said, "Oh, go home for awhile. We'll call you when we need you."

Roman Gribbs: Well his buddies ... people said, "Go someplace because there's gonna be another war." This is about the 1914, '15. So he came to the United States, he came to Detroit, and my mother came to Detroit separately. They met here and married, and I'm the fortunate one to be the beneficiary of their venture.

Bill Ballenger: Was there a substantial Polish American community in the Detroit area at that time?

Roman Gribbs: Oh, very much so. Yes, yeah. As a matter of fact, we were at St. Hedwig Parish, it was all Polish, Polish Americans, the Holy Redeemer, all of that area, Michigan Junction area, there's huge Polish community. Polish food, sausages, groceries and all that. Yeah.

Bill Ballenger: Wow. So you're out of Capac High School, then what happens? World War II, what?

Roman Gribbs: Well, the war was winding down. My brother by that time had gone to the seminary, and I was the one that was left to work the farm with my dad, and my dad and mom said, "Stick with us, this is your farm." I decided I did not wanna be a farmer. I had really enrolled to go to the service, but because I was one keeping the farm going. So we had a tractor by then, a small one, but instead of farming, we had a hundred acres, but we always sharecropped with the neighbors so we were farming about 200 acres, which allowed us to make some money and allowed my parents to finally pay off the mortgage and own the farm. But I decided to go into service, and I enlisted and had to wait until the crops were in, and by that time the war had ended. I went there for 18 months, and had all the veterans benefit.

Bill Ballenger: Where did you go?

Roman Gribbs: I went to Fort Dix for basic training.

Bill Ballenger: New Jersey.

Roman Gribbs: Then I went to the military academy. I thought then I'd want to be a policeman. The military police commander came to Fort Dix and interviewed and select a half a dozen, I was one of those, to go to West Point, to the military academy.

Bill Ballenger: Wow.

Roman Gribbs: Now they have a regular post there, and a police detachment that controls the gates and the traffic, football or otherwise. We had really nothing, literally, to do with the cadets, they had their own squared-in area. But there were teachers living there and there was a cook car, and MP car, and ordinance car, and so for

running the post, and I became a Buck Sargent during that year and a half. Came out, went to the University of Detroit.

Bill Ballenger: This is around 1948 at this point?

Roman Gribbs: Correct. I started in '48.

Bill Ballenger: And so, you started at the University of Detroit as an undergraduate.

Roman Gribbs: Correct.

Bill Ballenger: Did you have in mind then you were gonna continue on and go into law enforcement, or did you wanna be a lawyer at that point, or what did you think?

Roman Gribbs: God bless my brother Joe, I didn't even want to go to college. It was after the war, lots of money. You could get jobs and make good money, but Joe insisted. "Look, you got the G.I. Bill, you don't have to worry about it, it'll pay for three years. Try it." Well I decided to try it, and I did well academically. It gave me the confidence so I initially I thought merchandising or marketing, 'cause I was a salesman for People's Outfitting Company, a retail outfit in downtown Detroit, on a part time basis. Then I found out, no, I think I'll do something more substantial. Went into accounting but that was too quiet. I wanted to go to the people area, and medicine didn't appeal to me so I considered law. And at that time, we were able to, if I did well academically,. The first three years I got all my basic courses in and my first year in law school would be my fourth year for the undergrad. So I got two degrees in six years instead of seven.

Bill Ballenger: I gotcha.

Roman Gribbs: They gave me that fourth year. First year in law school's the fourth year, so I have a BS, Bachelor of Science, in Accounting and Economics and in law school.

Bill Ballenger: Wow. It's like 1954 at this point?

Roman Gribbs: Exactly.

Bill Ballenger: You're outta law school and you've got these degrees, so then what happens?

Roman Gribbs: Then I wanted trial work. One of the teachers was, at the U.D., was Joe Rashid, who was Chief Trial Attorney for the Prosecutor's Office, he taught Criminal Law. He said, "Why don't you come join the Prosecutor's Office and get some experience?" And I did that. I liked it so much and I was given so many challenges that I ultimately stayed almost eight years. I wanted to stay two or three years, but then they'd promote me and give me big conspiracy cases, and the challenges, It really was a good life, I learned a lot. That's the way to learn law, every day in court.

Bill Ballenger: Then what happened next?

Roman Gribbs: Well, I decided to go in private practice, and I always, by appearing in front of judges, I felt, "Well, I could do a job as a judge." So I left the Prosecutor's Office, and I decided to run for then Recorder's Court. There were three of us: DeMascio and Vince Brennan, and myself ran for one slot. Of course DeMascio and Brennan were one and two, I was three, and I was glad I wasn't Vince, because he just walked away with the election and became a very astute and famous judge.

Bill Ballenger: Okay. Now ... But you're practicing privately. This wasn't the time that maybe you were mixed up with that group of political lawyers, people like Tom Brennan and Brickley, and people like that? Was there a time when you shared some space with them?

Roman Gribbs: Right. I had five kids and in order to practice on the side a little bit, I couldn't go to court but I could draft wills and do estate matters and consult people on Saturday's and nights. It was Waldron, Brennan and Maher was the firm, they had space in the First National Building. So Jim Brickley and I were classmates, and he had been in the F.B.I. He came back to practice, he had an office on 6 Mile in his father's, Brickley Dairy, but he wanted an office downtown. So he and I, and Joe Shaheen, the three of us shared one room, and we all used that office and conference room as we needed to handle our private clientele on a private basis.

Bill Ballenger: In the same facility with Brennan and Waldron?

Roman Gribbs: Oh, no. They had four or five offices, and we had one of the four.

Bill Ballenger: I've never heard of such a bunch of political lawyers together in one space in my life. Did you guys ever actually practice any law, or were you plotting your next campaign? Huh?

Roman Gribbs: Well everybody had a finger in the elections, and of course Tom Brennan, as you know, he ran for various jobs. He became a Circuit Judge, and he became Supreme Court Justice, and then he started a law school.

Bill Ballenger: And Brickley became Lieutenant Governor

Roman Gribbs: President of Eastern for awhile.

Bill Ballenger: Right. And Maher was what, Court of Appeals?

Roman Gribbs: He was Court of Appeals. He was a Traffic Judge and then became a Court of Appeals Judge and finished out his career there. Good career.

Bill Ballenger: Okay. You lost your first race, then what happened?

Roman Gribbs: I was practicing law, I was making good money, very frankly. I made a salary five times the amount I was paid in the Prosecutor's Office. I was ... 'Cause I was a good attorney, had a nice reputation. So I decided, well, I'd like to get into the judicial arena and try it again.

Roman Gribbs: So John Kerwin, who was then a Traffic Court Judge said, "We gotta opening as a Referee, and if you'd like the appointment I'll appoint you. It's my turn." The three judges took turns as to appointing Referee's, so I took the appointment, and it was sitting as a small municipal judge doing traffic matters.

Bill Ballenger: So this is the mid '60's at this point?

Roman Gribbs: Correct.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah. So this is the mid '60's.

Roman Gribbs: And I was about to resign.

Bill Ballenger: Why were you about to resign?

Roman Gribbs: Well, I wanted to go back into private practice. I was also thinking of doing some work in Washington.

Bill Ballenger: But you were about to resign, and then what?

Roman Gribbs: Well, that's when the Sheriff of Wayne County resigned.

Bill Ballenger: Was that Bommarito?

Roman Gribbs: No, he was Undersheriff. The Sheriff was Bubeck.

Bill Ballenger: Oh, Bubeck. Peter Bubeck.

Roman Gribbs: Peter Bubeck, yeah. He replaced Andy Baird, who'd been Sheriff for the eternity before that.

Bill Ballenger: Right, right.

Roman Gribbs: Bubeck had Bommarito, and they got into some ticket fixing problems. In fact, he was charged criminally, and he resigned to save his pension. Then it was dismissed, he never was convicted of ticket fixing.

Bill Ballenger: Bubeck was not.

Roman Gribbs: No, he was not.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah.

Roman Gribbs: But he did resign. See, the statute allows for three people to appoint one until the next election, and when they got together, The Prosecutor was Cahalan, and the clerk was Brannigan, and Frank Szymanski was the Probate Judge, and those three came together, as Brickley tells it. Brickley at that time was Chief Assistant for Bill Cahalan.

Bill Ballenger: Right, right.

Roman Gribbs: And Brickley told me about it, he said those guys got together and each one was committed to some other person, but they couldn't get a second vote, so they adjourned for a week. And he said that Cahalan threw your name out, and they said "Yeah, he might be a candidate, but you think he wants the job?" So Jim Brickley said to me, "Do you want the job? Talk to Bill, and he'll submit your name and say you'll take the job as Sheriff of Wayne County."

Bill Ballenger: Right, right.

Roman Gribbs: Well, I figured, I'm a lawyer not a cop.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, but you an interest in being in law enforcement and a cop at one point. You went to the military academy.

Roman Gribbs: Exactly. And I had worked with the Prosecutor's Office, you work with police officers all the time developing the case. So I said, "Sure, why not?" So when they got together he said, "Well stick around the telephone." They got together again a week later, once again they each had a number one choice and it couldn't get a second vote, and they considered my name and they said, "It's his." They called me, I went over there, and bingo, I was appointed Sheriff.

Bill Ballenger: Wow, that is amazing.

Roman Gribbs: That really was amazing.

Bill Ballenger: So you were a compromise candidate that everybody could accept.

Roman Gribbs: Everybody's number two.

Bill Ballenger: Everybody's number two. That's sometimes better than being anybody's number one.

Roman Gribbs: You got it.

Bill Ballenger: That's good.

Roman Gribbs: I lucked out.

Bill Ballenger: So all of a sudden you're Sheriff, and how long does the term run?



Roman Gribbs: Well, I had to run. I was appointed in June of '68, and I had to run that fall. It was the election that September, so I had very little time to campaign. But I did campaign and I was elected.

Bill Ballenger: Did you get a primary challenge in the Democratic Primary?

Roman Gribbs: Oh, I had a lot.

Bill Ballenger: But you won it.

Roman Gribbs: But I won it.

Bill Ballenger: Okay.

Roman Gribbs: And then I was Sheriff for four years and the job of Sheriff is really administrative, if you've got good law enforcement people. I had a jail to run, and the jail had 1200 inmates, built for 800, so you had custodial personnel working for you. But the administration was so chopped up over the last three or four years that everything we did had good ink, the press was very kind to us. So I got good publicity, and I did a nice job.

Roman Gribbs: When I was appointed Sheriff, I said to Jim Brickley, I said, "Hey, this is right after the riots, this is '68, the riots in '67. I said "I need a law man and I would like to get to be appointed Deputy Sheriff, and I need somebody that's politically astute, and it would help if he's a black man." And he said, "I've got just the guy for you." And I said, "Who's that?" "Bill Lucas." I didn't know Bill, and Brickley knew that Jerry Tanyon and Bill Lucas were partners in the F.B.I. picking up fugitives, "body snatchers" they called them.

Roman Gribbs: So Tanyon had by that time left the F.B.I. and he was an assistant to Brickley. And so he put it, Jim's information, to me, and I interviewed Bill and we talked together for about an hour and a half or two, and I said, "You want the job?" And he said, "I'll take it." So I appointed him Deputy Sheriff.

Bill Ballenger: Wow. Did he have a law degree at that point? Bill Lucas?

Roman Gribbs: Oh, yes.

Bill Ballenger: He did.

Roman Gribbs: Yeah, he graduated from Harvard. He was a policeman in the city of Detroit, and while he was a policeman he was in law school, and while he was on security duty, Jack Kennedy came to town, to New York, and Bobby came with him. He saw Lucas in security, and he says, "What are you doing, kid?" And he said, "I'm in law school." He said, "When you get out, call me. I'll help you out." And that's what happened.

Roman Gribbs: When he got his degree, he called Bobby Kennedy and Kennedy appointed him an Assistant Attorney General in Washington.

Bill Ballenger: In Washington, okay.

Roman Gribbs: Yeah, and he worked there for a while. Then he went to the F.B.I.

Bill Ballenger: Right.

Roman Gribbs: So he had a policeman responsibility, he had a law degree. He was very articulate, as I'm sure you know, because he became Sheriff after I did, then County Executive for the Wayne County, so he has a very successful career.

Bill Ballenger: Now, you were appointed to the job of Sheriff, as you said, in '68, and then you immediately have to run for election. You win, you got a four year term in front of you, but you didn't serve all four years, by a long shot. What happened next?

Roman Gribbs: Well, in '69 Jerry Cavanaugh had been mayor for eight years, he decided not to run again, so it was an open spot. And I wanted Jim Brickley to run for it, and Jim considered because he had been City Councilman for awhile, and he was happy with working with Bill Cahalan so he decided not to. And others that I've thought ... And finally somebody said, "Why don't you try it? You've got good ink." And we flew out some teasers and the results were positive, and so we had a slam bang primary in '69.

Bill Ballenger: Well, let me back up just a little bit, though. Before you had to run for Sheriff as an incumbent, after you were appointed and so you were the incumbent, the only other time you'd run for office before was that 1964 race for Judgeship, which you lost. So this is the first, or I should say the second, time you've really run for public office. It's an incredibly tumultuous time, the riots had just occurred a year and a half before. What was in your mind running for office at this point, having run one losing race? This must have been daunting. The riot had just been a year and a half before, the city was in really

Roman Gribbs: Turmoil.

Bill Ballenger: Turmoil, a lot of tension. It was a huge, huge challenge. Who else ran against you? How many people ran?

Roman Gribbs: Well, there were two nominated in the primary, myself and Dick Austin.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, and Austin's position at that time was what?

Roman Gribbs: Auditor General.

Bill Ballenger: He was the Auditor.

Roman Gribbs: Auditor for the Wayne County Auditor, one of three.

Bill Ballenger: Wayne County Auditor.

Roman Gribbs: He was a CPA, he's a very qualified accountant.

Bill Ballenger: Right. Had he been elected? Was that an elected position, Wayne County Auditor, or was it appointed?

Roman Gribbs: It's elected, I think. I'm not sure.

Bill Ballenger: You think? But he had an electoral base then, in other words, countywide?

Roman Gribbs: Oh, yes. Oh, sure.

Bill Ballenger: So he and you. Did anybody else of consequence run in that race?

Roman Gribbs: Yes, Mary Beck did.

Bill Ballenger: Oh, Mary Beck. City Councilwoman. Yes.

Roman Gribbs: She was on the City Council. And the President of the City Council ... Not Nessel, I forget.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, I'm trying to think who that would have been at that time.

Roman Gribbs: And there were several others, but the two nominees were myself and Dick Austin.

Bill Ballenger: You finished one, two.

Roman Gribbs: Right.

Bill Ballenger: Did you finish first in the primary?

Roman Gribbs: I was slightly ahead.

Bill Ballenger: Slightly ahead of Austin.

Roman Gribbs: Right. No, Let me correct that. No, he was slightly ahead of me.

Bill Ballenger: He was ahead of you?

Roman Gribbs: Yes

Bill Ballenger: In the primary?

Roman Gribbs: In the primary.

Bill Ballenger: And you came in second, so the top two go on to November.

Roman Gribbs: Right.

Bill Ballenger: And you've got a city that's precariously balanced racially, right?

Roman Gribbs: It was about 45%/55%, 45% black and 55% white in 1969, and '70 when I really took off, if the election is in the fall of '69.

Bill Ballenger: Right. So what was that campaign like? Did you and Dick Austin debate? What kind of a campaign was it?

Roman Gribbs: Eight times.

Bill Ballenger: Eight times?

Roman Gribbs: On TV.

Bill Ballenger: Wow. Really?

Roman Gribbs: In fact, 2-4-7 had us for a half hour each, and then Channel 50 had us for three or four different debates, for an hour each. And I must say that Dick was an honorable guy.

Bill Ballenger: And the pressure was obvious to everybody, and because in addition to him being Black, aside from that, the racial matters are in everybody's memory. Because we had what \$50 million of damage in the city of Detroit in the riot in 1967. And people killed, or about 40 people that were killed during the riot and the tension was very evident.

Bill Ballenger: So I said to my staff, we're not going to talk about race per se, we're going to talk about the merits. And Dick Austin said the same thing. We both agreed that we're going to talk about our backgrounds, our plans, and let's not talk about racial tensions other than something that will help to community to grow. And he kept his word, and I did. They were trying to label me in law and order, and I said, "No, no, I'm a law and justice man."

Roman Gribbs: Yeah, that's good. Yep, that's right.

Bill Ballenger: But I had that time, I had been sheriff. Now, aside from the racial matters, which were the number one issue, number two was crime. And because of my background of sheriff, and with the prosecutor's office for almost eight years in trying criminal matters, I had an up on him on the criminal, anti-crime sentiment of the people. And so I won the race, but very close.

Roman Gribbs: Very close, right.

Bill Ballenger: ... about 460,000 votes, and I won by 7,242 votes.

Roman Gribbs: Right, I think it was a Detroit News article talking about the close race afterwards; the picture of you on the cover with your team of people around you. Jerry Tanyan, Bill Lucas, all these other people talking about how it looked like you were maybe comfortably ahead, maybe six or eight points, with time beginning to run out. And all of a sudden, it looked like it was closing. What was going on there? Why did it close and what did you do to get over the top?

Bill Ballenger: We had to be very careful of what we were espousing and planning and bringing of people together. And so you have to be very careful in the words that's used and to make sure. I know one of the things that happened that some of Dick Austin's people had an ad in the paper the week before the Tuesday election, the weekend before that. And it was rather espousing his election but rather racial in tone and we had a negative reaction in the community about that. So that impacted it a little bit.

Roman Gribbs: You think that maybe backfired against all of that?

Bill Ballenger: I think it did. And it was touch and go when you win by 7,000 out of 450,000 votes.

Roman Gribbs: I'll say. Absolutely. Let me ask you this: Do you remember how much you raised and spent in that campaign, just by contrast?

Bill Ballenger: Between the two, we spent about \$250,000.

Roman Gribbs: Wow.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, we raised about \$100,000 for the primary and then about another \$150,000 for the general election.

Roman Gribbs: Were there any real major issues? I mean, other than the racial issue which, as you said, you didn't really want to talk about and didn't talk about and it was off to the side. It may have been under the radar. Crime was obviously something. But did Dick Austin, for instance, have a different approach to what he thought the crime problem was or the solutions to it?

Bill Ballenger: Not really. No, both of us were for economic growth and before I forget, I want to remind you that Dick Austin, a couple of years later, became Secretary of State for the state of Michigan and served in that capacity for about 15 years till he passed away on the job; maybe more than that.

Roman Gribbs: Well, he served 24 years.

Bill Ballenger: 24, oh.

Roman Gribbs: But he didn't pass away on the job. He finally got defeated.

Bill Ballenger: Oh, that's right.

Roman Gribbs: by Candace Miller. All right, you've won this cliffhanger of a race for Mayor of Detroit in November of 1969. You find yourself presented with an enormous challenge. Did you meet, pretty much, all the goals you set for yourself or not?

Bill Ballenger: Met a lot. We had most of them. We talked about little city halls, a new concept of bringing downtown to the neighborhood and I patterned that after Boston. Mayor White did that in Boston and I went there to visit him during the campaign to see how to organize it. It was successful there. I said we're going to do it in Detroit and we did implement it. We had about 12 or so when I left office. Crime was number one; safety on the streets was important. This is all after the rise so you can see then. We had then about 4,200 policemen and I said we had to get a lot more. Then I had to find a police commissioner that would serve the city well under those very tense circumstances. So I did a national search and Pat Murphy had been head of the Police Foundation in Washington, D.C. But he came from a high ranking, as a police officer in New York, went to the city of Rochester in New York as Police Chief. Then he was Police Chief in Washington, D.C. for awhile. Then he became President of the Police Foundation, which was a national organization with a lot of distributing grant money. I found out from my headhunters that he would rather get back into police work so I interviewed him, offered him a job and he came to Detroit. He did such a good job. He was such a principled guy, based on that background. He was so good that after a year and a half here, John Lindsay, the Mayor of New York, called me, says, "I got to have a new commissioner. Do you mind if I talk to Pat Murphy?"

Roman Gribbs: What can you say?

Bill Ballenger: So he talked to Pat. Now, he went back home. But you have to understand, let me just finish. When he came over here and became Police Chief, he said all command officers have to have a degree. If you want a command position, maybe the top eight or ten, or I don't know where he drew the line, but if you really want a promotion, you got to get a degree in law enforcement or societal problems of some sort. And he inspired the men to do that and he upgraded the police department and always dealing with the community relations with the Black community. So he came and that was a promise kept, with some skilled people in dealing with law enforcement and the community and the black community particularly. My first appointment was as Deputy Mayor. There was no Deputy Mayor position, but I created it because I said so. I appointed Walter Green, the Black man. Walter had been head of the Civil Rights Commission for the state of Michigan and he had lived in Detroit. I said I need someone like you, would you like the job?

Bill Ballenger: And he said, I'll do it. So he came and moved to Detroit and took the job as Deputy Mayor. He did a magnificent job. He was very articulate and very wise counsel on tense matters.

Roman Gribbs: I remember him.

Bill Ballenger: And many times there was societal problems in the community and I would go there. If he needed some input, the two of us would go and then he'd speak to the Black community. They would look at him in a little more light and I said you know, when I'm out of town, you're running the city and that's what his job was.

Roman Gribbs: What was the percentage of African Americans in the police force when you came in as Mayor? Was that a sore point or not?

Bill Ballenger: They had about 11% and I hired a recruitment man from the professional field to come and recruit and everybody and I insisted that whenever we had a class of say, 100 new policemen for that two month period or whatever, half of them have to be Black. And I said they have to be confident Black, not just people that want to do the job. So they had to dig and sell and I remember a billboard, "Being a cop is a good gig," or some such thing that attracted people of responsibility in the Black community. So we had at least 50% of every policeman that was on the force were Black. When I left office, we'd gone from about 11% to about 21% over a four year period, as the turnover. But in addition, we needed more policemen. So I worked hard for revenue sharing with other mayors throughout the country, with Lindsay Alioto and Moon Landrieu and those others and we prevailed. Nixon was then the President and he was opting for revenue sharing, which would give us more money for three fields. One of the fields was the police. So we supported him nationally and we finally got some revenue sharing, which is not to block grant program, it's actual cash. I remember the first check that I picked up about 2 1/2 years into my office, was for \$56 million for a year and a half.

Roman Gribbs: That you could use for anything you wanted or some?

Bill Ballenger: Well, we designated. We did it for the police. When I left office, we had 6,000 policemen, instead of 4,500. So we were always growing. And we brought crime down for the first time in about 10-12 years. We had not only a reduction in the increase, but an absolute reduction in crime. In my third year in office, crime went down in Detroit by 16%; visibility of the police, training of the police, respect through the community that would cooperate with the police. That was all building toward a better city and a safer city.

Roman Gribbs: Now what about fiscal issues or problems? Did you have any while you were Mayor?

Bill Ballenger: I'll tell you, we did. When I took office in the city of Detroit, Jerry Cavanagh had been Mayor. Of course, he went through the riots and personally, he was a good guy. He really was disappointed with that happening because he had great rapport with the Black community. But that's another story of '67. Anyway, they had fiscal problems, people running away from the city of Detroit if they could afford to, so he gave me a \$40 million deficit for the first year I'm in office. We've got a deficit of \$40 million and at that time, that was very substantial. So within three months, I'm studying layoffs. Within four months, we're giving notice of layoffs. Within five or six months, we're laying off. And I can remember the headlines, "Layoff by the city of Detroit, first time since the Depression." So it really was a staggering responsibility but it had to be done. And we did it effectively and I had some good fiscal people. Bob Roselle comes to mind. He was my Fiscal Officer. He went on to become an Executive Vice President of Canbelego for

20 years; highly talented guy. Anyway, we were able to balance the budget. I was able to bring in revenue sharing to plug the holes and we balanced the budget the second year, third year and the fourth year. We left office in January. Halfway through the fiscal year, I left Coleman Young with a surplus of about \$12 million, so by that time the economy had turned up so we had some better revenue and things were picking up.

Roman Gribbs: Before we go any farther, let's just go back briefly to 1967, the Detroit riot. Why did that happen and what were the ramifications for Jerry Cavanagh? It must have been devastating to him. He'd been a very popular Mayor. The riot almost seemed to destroy his political career. He never really recovered from that. Is that the way you view it?

Bill Ballenger: Jerry Cavanagh and I graduated at the same time from the University of Detroit. But he went to night school, so he finished in January going to night school. But we're both in the same picture of graduates of '54. And he was an excellent mayor and they say that when he defeated the incumbent, Miriani, it was because the Black community liked him and they supported him. He had a lot of Black organizations, so he was their choice and he was their favorite. Because he was an enlightened guy and articulate, and he dealt with national organizations very well, he ran for a second term. He had no problem being re-elected. He was going to go for a third term, but he changed his mind.

Roman Gribbs: Before that and before the riot in '66 though, he decided, I want to be a U.S. Senator.

Bill Ballenger: Oh, that's right.

Roman Gribbs: And he challenged G. Mennen Williams in a Democratic primary.

Bill Ballenger: That's right.

Roman Gribbs: And he lost to G. Mennen Williams. Did that hurt him, in a way, do you think, maybe?

Bill Ballenger: Oh, sure.

Roman Gribbs: Not just personally, but in Detroit where they thought, well this guy is ready to bail out on us. He's just a grasping politician who wants to climb the next step on the ladder and then they had the riot.

Bill Ballenger: Well, the riots had nothing to do with his election.

Roman Gribbs: His election, okay.

Bill Ballenger: It was the turmoil. It was the temper of the times. There were riots going on in all the major cities, Los Angeles, Watts, Newark and Los Angeles and even New York had some. They weren't city wide.

Roman Gribbs: Was it the Vietnam War, do you think?

Bill Ballenger: Pardon me?



Roman Gribbs: Was it the Vietnam War?

Bill Ballenger: That was part of the matter, yeah. When I was elected, they tried to bring in, what do you think about that? I said, "Wait a minute, I'm not going to talk about that."

Roman Gribbs: You're not going to talk about it. Was that a factor, though, looming in the background all the time that you were Mayor, the Vietnam War?

Bill Ballenger: Oh yes. Yeah, it was very unpopular in terms of the masses of the people. But I was always able to say that's a matter for Congress and the President and the Senators. Let's talk about the home problems we have here. Let's solve those in the neighborhood. So I avoided the other.

Roman Gribbs: You couldn't see, necessarily, a negative impact of the Vietnam War on the running of the city?

Bill Ballenger: No, I don't think so. It just brought turmoil and dissension and a great deal of agitation by those that chose to agitate. But going back to Jerry Cavanagh, he was a good guy and those riots surprised everybody and surprised him. It turned out that Detroit suffered one of the major riots over the mid '60s that were across the United States. He had been such a good administrator and because he had dealt so well with the Black community, which were about 40-45% of that city were Black at that time, everybody thought that he had an outstanding promise, looking at years down the road, maybe the White House because he had that much promise. And when they had the riot, that just tore down, himself for one. He was just heartbroken and I knew Jerry because we were classmates with him, but I wasn't a close friend, but I was an acquaintance. He even appointed me to one of the city commissions. Well, it was the City Youth Commission to help out. At any rate, he decided not to run again and that left an opening for the Mayor. And I had gotten good press as Sheriff; did a good job as Sheriff.

Roman Gribbs: I bet you did. Who were the people, by and large, people like Cahalan and Brickley, Who else, who were kind of your kitchen cabinet type influences or ... I'm not going to call them mentors but people whose opinion and respect you had and that you relied on for advice.

Bill Ballenger: I tell you, Vick Olson was an executive in the advertising firm. He was not only advisor, but he was instrumental in the campaigns as to what is the best way to spend your campaign money for literature, for TV, for radio or whatever. Vick Olson, Jim Campatelli, who was a teacher, was a friend of mine, Jerry Tanyan, Jim Brickley, those are the people that were friends and confidants. In fact, for awhile, the firm as we call Shaheen, Gribbs and Brickley, we had that one office in the First National building and Joe Shaheen worked for Burton Abstract in a full time business. He had eight kids. I had five kids. Jim Brickley had six kids. So everybody had a second job to help pay for that and those are the people that were the friends and confidants and helped me in the campaign. Now when I became Mayor, you need the lawyer, you need to cop, the Commissioner and you need a good fiscal man. I was able to get Pat Murphy in for the police job. Mike Glusac had at that time, had been a Mayor of Highland Park when it

was part time. He decided not to be Mayor because it became full time. So he was in private practice and I needed somebody and someone in the federal system said you'll need a good lawyer. He said you ought to check out Mike Glusac because he's in civic affairs. He knows the city problems. He had run Highland Park as a Mayor on a part time basis and he had a private practice. So I talked with him and he said great. So he took the job and he was my attorney, City Council, City Attorney and then I needed a good fiscal guy. Bob Roselle had worked for Jerry Cavanagh. He had been budget director under the Cavanagh administration and had worked there as a career man up the ladder, became budget director. Then Jerry appointed him as a department for a couple of years, maybe Parks and Rec or whatever it was. He ran that for a while. He was highly recommended. At that time, he was going to leave because he had been serving in that position. He came highly recommended as a man that knows the city budget and knows finance and has a fine reputation. Here again, I met him. I was impressed with what he said. I was impressed with the recommendations of people that knew him and his work. So I appointed him as Chief Fiscal Officer and he did a magnificent job. He was able to guide me to guide the city to balance the budget and do the hard judgments that had to be made to lay people off to balance the budget.

Roman Gribbs: So you start out and you've got these three big problem areas and you hire these three very strong men to come in and take responsibility for the four years you're going to be Mayor. Did they all last four years or Murphy went to New York because Lindsay stole him?

Bill Ballenger: Let me quickly say that, when I decided not to run for a second term, I had about a year to go. I thought in fairness to my appointees, they're a lot of good people. I wanted to tell them well in advance so they can go out and find another job and not be left in the lurch from the summer on. So I announced the December before the last full calendar year that I was not going to be a candidate to run again.

Bill Ballenger: By that time, Murphy went to New York-

Roman Gribbs: To join Lindsay.

Bill Ballenger: Well, by the way, he had a police department of 6,000 people in Detroit. He went to New York, 25,000 people; policemen. So that's the difference in the times.

Roman Gribbs: Sure.

Bill Ballenger: And it was his home, too.

Roman Gribbs: But the other two guys lasted, kind of right through the end.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, they did, except at the last few months.

Roman Gribbs: Last few months, yes.

Bill Ballenger: When Bob Roselle left because he did such a great job, he was my fiscal officer and he ran the budget bureau. Stetcher worked under him. He was a budget director and he worked up the ladder. He was very good. So I had good people that made a big difference. I could rely upon them. Oh, by the way, when Murphy left, then I was faced with a year and a half into the office with a new police chief. By that time, I got to know Nichols pretty well, so I gave him the job.

Roman Gribbs: John Nichols.

Bill Ballenger: John Nichols and he became the police chief.

Roman Gribbs: Okay.

Roman Gribbs: He ended up running for mayor when I decided not to run again. He was very popular with the community and with the police department. He decided to run for mayor. One of the others that decided to run for mayor was Coleman Young who had been state senator. Those two ended up being the two nominees at the end of the primary.

Bill Ballenger: In the late summer of 73, and you're still a mayor and Nichols your police chief has led the voting. Actually, he did lead the voting and Coleman came in second. Remember Ed Bell was running and John Molk the Wayne State University professor and Mel Ravitz. They were all in the race but Coleman got into second place so you again had a white and an African American. Then what happened?

Roman Gribbs: Well, one of the racial turmoil was that again picking up in the communities such as for example, there were complaints by the citizens that if they had a Coleman for Mayor sticker, the police stopped them and gave them a ticket. At least that was the accusation.

Bill Ballenger: Yes.

Roman Gribbs: I said to John Nickles after he was nominated I called him and I said, John you've never taken a vacation, you're working all the time, you've got to about three months of vacation time left that you could leave today and you get three months vacation. I said, look the election is about two months from now and if you're elected you'll be the mayor. If you're not elected you know you'll not be the police chief and you'll retire. So why don't you resign and walk gracefully and then you can campaign full time.

Bill Ballenger: Right. Makes sense.

Roman Gribbs: We can get rid of the accusation.

Bill Ballenger: You'd think he'd think of it himself.

Roman Gribbs: Well he said I don't want to resign Mr. Mayor. I said well, it's very important if you don't resign I may have to fire you. He said I don't think I want to resign. I said okay I'm gonna have to let you go. He didn't think I would. I gave him the letter the next day.

Bill Ballenger: Oh geez.

Roman Gribbs: He was a good guy. I just thought it was time for him to go.

Bill Ballenger: You probably did the right thing but on the other hand that probably didn't help his campaign too much either. Mayor fires police chief.

Roman Gribbs: Exactly.

Bill Ballenger: It would have been a lot better if he had just voluntarily said look I'm gonna voluntarily leave.

Roman Gribbs: He'd picked up points.

Bill Ballenger: He'd picked up points. Instead he lost points.

Roman Gribbs: Sure. Yeah, that's right. I felt a little bad about that but it was important. I was not gonna let the city have many riots or turmoil in the community after struggling for four years at the end of that. It was not necessary.

Bill Ballenger: Right.

Roman Gribbs: When he ran in the primary I didn't make him or suggest to him to resign. He went on to a distinguished career by the way. He became chief of police at Farmington Hills for a while and then Spreen who had been the police chief for Jerry Cavanagh when I took office. I appointed Murphy so he got a job and he went to Oakland County. He was elected Oakland County Sheriff for several terms.

Bill Ballenger: That's when Nichols

Roman Gribbs: Nichols was the police chief...he ran for sheriff. He died with his boots on.

Bill Ballenger: So you had all these refugees from Detroit fleeing to the northern suburbs in Oakland County and getting elected sheriff. Let me ask you with all your success in your four years as mayor, why did you decide not to run for reelection again?

Roman Gribbs: Good, tough question and it wasn't an easy one. First of all let me remind you I had five kids. When I was elected mayor I had two girls, a boy and two girls. My son was 10 years old when I was elected mayor. He was 14 after four years and you know getting in high school and the kids in college and being mayor is a monstrous time consuming job. That was one major reason. The other one was I figured that I had done as much as I could do for the city of Detroit. I was looking back for example at Jerry Cavanagh, his first four years were magical. He could look at the White House in his future, and then his second four years he had riot almost in the middle.

Bill Ballenger: You began to think.

Roman Gribbs: I'm thinking well maybe this is as good as I could get.

Bill Ballenger: The second term can't be as good as the first.

Roman Gribbs: Exactly. That was the problem. Also, I always had a desire to be a judge. I said I'll go in private practice and if it opens up I'll run for judge and that's what I wanted to do way back before these other career things interfered. That I decided to do that and to go into private practice and so I hooked up with a firm called Fenton, Nederlander, Dodge, Barris and Gribbs, that was the firm and then we did that for a year. There wasn't an opening that fall for the circuit court, they created five new positions.

Bill Ballenger: This would be 1974?

Roman Gribbs: Correct.

Bill Ballenger: Before we get to that, I just want to ask you a couple of other questions about the time when you were mayor and relationships you had with some other people. What about the state of Michigan? You became mayor and the governor was Bill Milliken and Brickley

Roman Gribbs: Lieutenant governor.

Bill Ballenger: Well, became lieutenant governor in 1970. He ran with Milliken of the first time. And of course you have this long standing relationship with Brickley. In fact, maybe you recommended Brickley to Milliken as a possible lieutenant governor.

Roman Gribbs: Well I don't know but Brickley had a lot of friends, a lot fans. He was an outstanding guy.

Bill Ballenger: What was your relationship with Milliken?

Roman Gribbs: It was very cordial. I want to remind you that I ran as sheriff as a partisan, it was a democratic. I was elected. When you win the primary that's it in Wayne County. The republican opposition is phenomenal. I was a nominal democrat but when you run for Mayor of Detroit you had to run as a nonpartisan and judicial elections later on that I participated in also nonpartisan. I had that nonpartisan coat on. When I would meet Milliken and he was always easy to deal with and gracious to deal with. Very helpful, as much as he could to the city of Detroit. There always is a big city bias by persons outside of Detroit. Just sort of a natural anxiety community. He was easy to work with and got some help that he put through the legislature from time to time. I became very active in national affairs. There's two national organizations for cities. The US Conference of Mayors and The National League of Cities. The Conference of Mayors just the mayors of course but The League of Cities comprised of department heads, and council people and mayors. Both of those were important to bring money to Detroit by legislator pressure. I was testifying in Lansing before the legislature here for a very aspects of city needs. I went to the White House a couple of times to meet with Agnew and President Nixon on city needs but I was on the board of The National League of Cities and I was quickly

nominated went up the ladder in my fourth year as mayor I was president of The National League of Cities which is, it's a big country.

Bill Ballenger: Not only that, in only four years you became the president. Some of these guys have to be around for 20 years before they get to be president.

Roman Gribbs: It was a successful effort on my part. That's important because the second year that I was mayor, the cities had a disproportion share of the poor and many times they were at disproportion share of the minorities. That what we were agitating when Nixon says he wanted the revenue sharing to help the cities out. I and a few others got together, we call it the Mayors Roadshow. Lindsey, Alioto from San Francisco, Moon Landrieu from New Orleans he was mayor and others would go from city to city and we started in Detroit. I brought the big mayors in her and everybody had four minutes to talk and they had all the TV, and the radio and the press was there. And they got a big splash and then next month we'd go to New Orleans, next month we'd go to New York City. I got a picture walking down 5th Avenue arm and arm with Lindsay and the others.

Bill Ballenger: Really? That's great.

Roman Gribbs: It was a great experience.

Bill Ballenger: Let me ask you.

Roman Gribbs: We were an effective tool.

Bill Ballenger: Yeah, sounds like you were. I'll tell you, I am staggered when I look at the list of organizations that you are affiliated with and belong to during your long career. It's staggering. Not just The League of Cities and the Municipal League and so forth but the world's society of Ekistics and what about the Colorado Institute. When did you have time for all of this?

Roman Gribbs: Well, they came in later. Ekistics came about when I was mayor.

Bill Ballenger: What are Ekistics?

Roman Gribbs: It's a study of cities led by Doxiadis who was a leading city analyst, Greek and International. The Ekistic society studied how to build houses in space for parks and recreation. They came out with the idea that if you're gonna have apartments you ought to have the green space in the middle. This goes way back.

Bill Ballenger: Kind of urban planning?

Roman Gribbs: Exactly. They made a study of the Detroit whole regional area. All the way from Port Huron down to Ann Arbor, all of this area centered on Detroit and he came to town, Doxiadis did and invited me to join the organization and in fact he invited my wife and I to go to a trip where they had a week conference in Greece and it was fun and also

educational. I participated, all these planners there from throughout the world were there at that conference so it's very important.

Bill Ballenger: So Ekistics wasn't just puffery, this is serious stuff.

Roman Gribbs: No, no.

Bill Ballenger: Okay. You mentioned going to the White House and talking with Agnew, that would be Vice President Spiro Agnew. My question is, what was your impression of him? He'd been a former governor of Maryland, what did you think of Agnew and did you get along with him well?

Roman Gribbs: Well Agnew was designated to be the chairman of the Domestic Affairs of some such label by Nixon. He's the one that we're to talk to if we want the administration to do something for the cities. He was the chairman. I would communicate with him regularly and he would, dear Roman I've got some correspondence over the years. We would tell him why we need revenue sharing, we would tell him why we need road money, we would tell him why we need housing money and from congress and so forth. He was to coordinate it all and so I had more frequent visits with him than I did with the President. We had a couple of meetings with the President and when I became an officer then the President of The National League of Cities I sat at the cabinet room with Nixon to my right and George Romney at the end of the table.

Bill Ballenger: Romney was with HUD. Housing in Urban Development secretary, yeah.

Roman Gribbs: Exactly. He did help us a lot.

Bill Ballenger: He did?

Roman Gribbs: But they also had some problems when they put in houses in Detroit and then economic times went down and their foreclosure process was too laborious, the whole department. By the times they stopped making payments they would tear down windows and all that, they wouldn't seal it, they wouldn't resell it. It went through the sweep. I finally went down to visit with him and I said, you got to put some more people down here to get this process going instead of taking six months you could do it in a month. And he did put in some people here in his office in Detroit. He brought them from Chicago and helped solve the problem to prevent the deterioration of houses that were under foreclosure that were being vacated and then ruined.

Bill Ballenger: So you're a nonpartisan mayor, you're dealing with a republican administration, your background was democratic party affiliated in the sense that you were elected as a sheriff as a democrat and you had to be a democrat to get elected in Wayne County. Did you feel you had a pretty good relationship though with let's say Nixon, Agnew, Romney, these republicans that you had to deal with?

Roman Gribbs: I tell you, one of the things that even though they may take a jab at each other here and there but as a matter of fact when running the country or running a city or running a

state you find them to be fairly level headed and if you approach them in a fair manner and with a hat in hand if needed to be they would accomplish and help you. State wide with Milliken I had a marvelous relationship. I consider him a friend now and I see him from time to time over the years. I was able to work with Spiro, he got into problems of course and then he had to resign. I remember I was there when Nixon signed the bill that called for revenue sharing. He had many of the big city mayors there to witness the signing and we went to Philadelphia. That's where he signed it and head of press conference there. We all met there and I sat next to him as I said when the last year he had one or two meetings with the mayors organizations so the president of the league, that was myself and the president of US conference of mayors on the other side and relevant cabinet members at the various meetings.

Bill Ballenger: Do you feel that people in positions are responsibility regardless of party affiliation or background got along pretty well when you were mayor and at that time. Do you think from what you have observed recently that, that's still the case? Or do you think maybe there's not quite as much cooperation between people in various positions today as there was before? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth.

Roman Gribbs: It's hard to read. I think it's there but when you get into the political temple of time there's disagreements as to what to do but once you're there, run the city for four years, run the governors office for four years, you got to work together and you do work together. Most of them, my experience is that they do their job and help if they can.

Bill Ballenger: Do you think for instance that Kwame Kilpatrick mayor of Detroit right now, gets along as well with George W. Bush and his administration?

Roman Gribbs: No, no now that's another problem.

Bill Ballenger: As you did with Nixon?

Roman Gribbs: In public affairs you've got to be honest. In public affairs you've got to be scrupulous in what you do so that people know that everything that they see is correct and above the lord. God bless him, Kwame young man, when he bought a car and had it shipped to the police department to use by his wife and kids, now that's improper. That happened in the second year or third year. Since then, we're talking about lying under oath, perjury charges, eight charges that's terrible. It's a sad time. We're taping this in 2008 and we're just waiting to see what happens.

Bill Ballenger: Let me ask you a question about relationship between the executive and legislative branches. There's always tension between let's say the President and Congress, between Governors and Legislatures, between Mayors and what used to be the Detroit Common Council or the Detroit City Council. What was your relationship with the City Council and it's members at that time?

Roman Gribbs: Very good relations. Remember we had Mel Ravitz who was council president. Another member was Carl Levin who has been our senator for like 20, 24 years. Wierzbicki and Billy Rogell. Billy is a sweet guy, very blunt, very direct.



Bill Ballenger: The old Detroit Tiger shortstop.

Roman Gribbs: Sure. He said to me, kid, and I'll never forget this, he was probably 20 or 30 years my senior. He says there's only one thing that I insist on as the horses and that department leave them alone.

Bill Ballenger: The horses?

Roman Gribbs: The mounted patrol.

Bill Ballenger: He wanted the mounted patrols to continue.

Roman Gribbs: He liked the mounted patrols. That was his favorite.

Bill Ballenger: He said don't touch the mounted patrols.

Roman Gribbs: Don't touch them. If you don't touch them you and I will get along. I'll never forget that. I said, okay. And I didn't. Somewhere in about the third year the budget department came in and they were gonna cut them by a couple of horses. I got a call from Billy. I said Billy, relax. I'll correct it.

Bill Ballenger: That's a classic.

Roman Gribbs: He was a great guy.

Bill Ballenger: That's good.

Roman Gribbs: We had some fine council people and as you have mentioned when I left office, Ravitz who had been president for a long time, decided to run for mayor. He gave up running for that position. Carl Levin ran, he became council president a couple years later he was US Senator and he's been there ever since. Magnificent.

Bill Ballenger: Was there any, I don't even know if there was an African American. One or two on the council?

Roman Gribbs: Yeah. Bill Patrick had been there ahead of me. I thought Bill Patrick might run for mayor when I ran but by that time he took a job in New York with the Bell Telephone Company.

Bill Ballenger: Now, today you've got a completely different situation racially. You've got an African American mayor and you've got an all basically an all black except I think for one African American city council. They don't seem to be getting along too well.

Roman Gribbs: I'm sorry to say that. It's amazing.

Bill Ballenger: Coleman Young actually had his problems with the city council and so did Dennis Archer. So what's happened in the last three decades?

Roman Gribbs: History will have to answer that. I do feel this however. One of the things that, when I was mayor, it was important to integrate the black community in the administration with qualified leadership. That I had the ability to do. When the majority of black became a black majority, now it's about 85% it's been 30 years. Then it was their job, it was Coleman's job to integrate the white community in the administration, well I think that was the mistake. Starting with Coleman because it's our turn friend. It's my way or the roadway and when I talk to mayors, when I became a judge I would talk to suburban mayors and they'd been dealing with Coleman 8, 10, 15 years after I left office. How you getting along? They say terrible, you got to do it Coleman's way or forget it. Now we're in charge. That was his attitude and that's not the right attitude.

Bill Ballenger: That's not the right attitude. Did you know Coleman Young fairly well? He was a state senator while you were mayor.

Roman Gribbs: Just peripherally.

Bill Ballenger: Did you know the Detroit delegation very well? People like Morris Hood, and in the legislature?

Roman Gribbs: Oh I did. Pretty much. I would lean on them and communicate with them.

Bill Ballenger: You had a pretty good relationship with his delegation?

Roman Gribbs: We even had a lobbyist on our payroll in Lansing that would brief me as to what's happening and who to contact and that kind of stuff. We relied on the Detroit legislator that was in the state of Michigan.

Bill Ballenger: Did you feel that they had a certain amount of influence up here and they really did help?

Roman Gribbs: Oh sure.

Bill Ballenger: Like key junctures and probably they worked pretty well with Milliken didn't they?

Roman Gribbs: What's the name of the guy that was on east-side, it was a state rep for 30 years.