

**THE ROLE OF SENATOR THOMAS F. EAGLETON IN
THE 1972 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

—

DALE BYRON CHERRY

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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Dale Byron Cherry
January, 1976

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ABSTRACT

On August 1, 1972 Missouri's Junior Senator, Thomas Francis Eagleton, formerly tendered his resignation as the Vice Presidential nominee to Mrs. Jean Westwood, the chairperson of the Democratic National Committee, becoming the first person in United States history to do so.

The Democratic Convention was held in Miami in late July amidst a violent uproar caused by the clashing of "old line" Democratic forces with the "New Left" movement led by Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. Eagleton was one of over thirty persons mentioned for the second slot by the McGovern forces after McGovern had secured the Presidential nomination on July 12. Eagleton was the last in a group of twenty-three "semi-finalists" to be contacted by McGovern, and was the first to accept the offer to become the Vice Presidential nominee.

Though a check had been run by McGovern staffers on rumors about Eagleton's health and drinking habits before McGovern called him, the check produced nothing to substantiate the rumors. A subsequent check, made after Eagleton had accepted the offer and under closer scrutiny, revealed that Eagleton had been hospitalized in psychiatric wards on three different occasions in the past. After public disclosure of this fact, public and private opinion

and political maneuvers by both McGovern and Eagleton and their respective staffs led to the Missouri Senator's resignation. The resignation, termed "dismissal" in a number of circles, led, in turn, to a great controversy between McGovern and Eagleton factions which lasted through McGovern's disastrous defeat by Richard Nixon and which still persists today.

The purpose of this paper is to present the events of the "Eagleton Affair," as it has been dubbed in many circles, as seen from both sides of the controversy. By piecing the events together the role of Eagleton in the 1972 Presidential Election and the effect the episode had upon the political career of the Missouri Senator may be determined.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

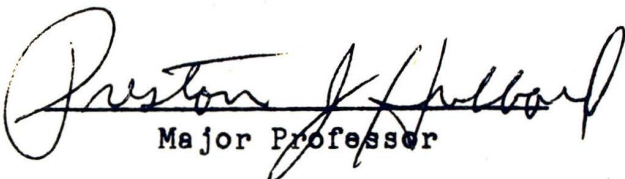
The author wishes to express his deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to Dr. Preston J. Hubbard, Professor of History, Austin Peay State University, who has patiently and untiringly given his time and effort in making the manuscript coherent and readable. He would also like to thank Dr. J. Milton Henry for his suggestions and constructive criticisms of the manuscript, and Mr. Hugh Akerman, Jr. for his time and patience in reading it.

Loving thanks are given to the author's wife, Marta, for her understanding and moral support during times of tension and frustration. He also hopes his daughter, Jennifer, will, when she gets old enough to understand, forgive him for the neglect she suffered during certain periods of this endeavor.

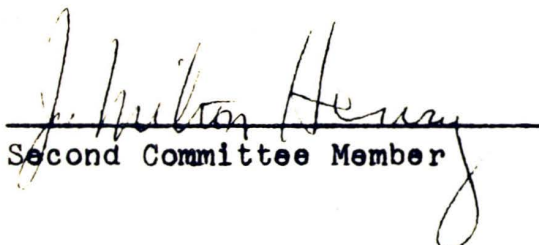
Last, but not least, the author wishes to thank his father, mother and Uncle Sam for the financial support necessary to allow him to devote his full time to the research and writing of this thesis.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Dale Byron Cherry entitled "The Role of Senator Thomas F. Eagleton in the 1972 Presidential Election." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.


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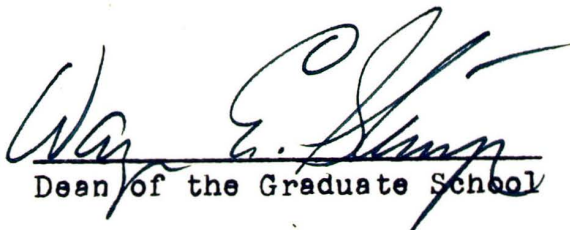

Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

THE PERSONAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF SENATOR THOMAS F. EAGLETON

In 1972 Thomas Francis Eagleton became the first Vice-Presidential nominee in American history to withdraw from candidacy. During this candidacy, which lasted only eighteen days, the Democratic Senator from Missouri "went 'from anonymity to notoriety in a shockingly brilliant way,' as he later remarked to the press."¹ Eagleton was forced to resign because of mental instability, but quickly recovered from the debacle to become, in the words of Shana Alexander, "The Man Who--turned defeat into victory, humiliation into triumph, liability into asset, mental instability into immense political clout."² How Eagleton made this rise to fame, subsequent downfall and the second rise to greater fame begins with the story of his personal and political background.

His father, Mark D. Eagleton, was a prominent St. Louis lawyer who had once been active in Republican politics,

¹Charles Moritz, ed., Evelyn Lohr et al., associate eds., Current Biography Yearbook: 1973 (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1974), p. 110.

²Shana Alexander, "Eagleton's Saintly Revenge," Newsweek, LXXX (November 13, 1972), p. 41.

winning the presidency of the police board and the board of education, but losing in his bid for the mayor of St. Louis. The elder Eagleton early exposed and introduced his son to politics. "He's been handtailored for . . . [high elective office] by his father," Dr. Hugh Johnson, Eagleton's history teacher at the Country Day School, told Washington bureau correspondent Clark Hoyt of the Knight Newspapers for an article published in the New York Daily News on July 30, 1972.³ In 1940 Tom accompanied his father to the Republican Convention in Philadelphia. At ten years of age he early displayed an individualistic trait by differing with his father who supported Wendell Wilkie. Young Tom backed Thomas Dewey because "he had better buttons."⁴ He was also taken to hear Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri in 1946. Such trips added to Eagleton's political prowess as did discussions of politics at the Eagleton dinner table and trips to school board meetings at which he was to view and learn the political process in action. "I became fascinated," he recalls. "The way other kids wanted to be farmers or firemen or cowboys, I wanted to be a politician."⁵

³Moritz, op. cit., p. 111.

⁴"Eagleton: McGovern's Man From Missouri," Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 20.

⁵Ibid.

Eagleton attended the fashionable St. Louis Country Day School. While in high school there, his father hired one tutor to increase his son's knowledge of national and international affairs, and another tutor to teach him public speaking. After graduation from the Country Day School, Eagleton traveled to the East to attend Amherst College. At Amherst Eagleton put to practical use his knowledge of and interest in politics by managing campus campaigns. He was known as "the Jim Farley" of his class, "the campus politician."⁶

Eagleton interrupted his studies at Amherst during the 1948-49 academic year to spend a year in the United States Naval Reserve, ". . . entering and leaving an apprentice seaman."⁷ He returned to Amherst and graduated cum laude in 1950, having taken one summer out to study speech at Northwestern University. Eagleton said in 1968:

By the time I went back and graduated from Amherst, I knew that politics was for me. Somehow, somewhere I had to get into it and the law seemed the best answer.⁸

Following his graduation from Amherst, Eagleton studied history for one summer at Oxford, then entered the Harvard

⁶Ibid.

⁷"Candidates '72," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (July 22, 1972), p. 1810.

⁸Ibid.

Law School graduating, again cum laude, in 1953. Here he also put his political prowess to practical use by editing the prestigious Harvard Law Review.

Eagleton joined his father's St. Louis law firm after his Harvard graduation and served as assistant general counsel to Anheuser-Busch, Inc., the large St. Louis-based brewery, for three years. In 1956, Eagleton decided to go into politics.

Winning election as St. Louis circuit attorney at age twenty-six made Eagleton the youngest man to be elected to this office in the state of Missouri; and, this victory started him on a political career in which he never stood for reelection but moved on to higher offices every four years.

As circuit attorney, Eagleton "denounced wiretapping as a 'dirty business', supported legalized parimutuel betting, and urged penal reforms."⁹ He urged these penal reforms during a period in which he trimmed a backlog of cases by about two-thirds. As he told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in a 1968 interview:

We dealt with 2,000 felons a year there. Merely meting out 25-year and 50-year sentences wasn't going to accomplish a lot unless we set up dozens of penitentiaries in Missouri and in other states.¹⁰

⁹Moritz, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁰"Candidates '72," op. cit., p. 1810.

Eagleton became the "youngest man to" again in 1960 when he was elected state attorney general at age thirty by a margin of 283,832 votes;¹¹ and, according to historians at Jefferson City, he became "the first Roman Catholic to win a statewide office in Missouri in this century."¹² In this office Eagleton attacked capital punishment, supported consumer protection and ordered court-appointed lawyers for impoverished defendants accused of serious misdemeanors.

In another four years Eagleton was ready to move up the political ladder again. He was elected the "youngest" Lieutenant Governor in 1964, attaining a greater marginal-victory than in his previous statewide election. This time the margin was by 521,642 votes.¹³ While serving in this capacity, Eagleton did not merely preside over the state senate. He became cochairman of the Governor's Conference on Education and headed a task force on vocational-technical education. He also supervised the Departments of Correction and of Probation and Parole. Even so, Eagleton was not satisfied with this office. He characterized the post of Lieutenant Governor he held "with great anonymity for four years" as having "absolutely no responsibilities or duties . . . and there in the resplendent dining room

¹¹Ibid.

¹²"Rise and Fall of Tom Eagleton," New York Times, (August 1, 1972), p. 24.

¹³"Candidates '72," op. cit., p. 1810.

of the governor's mansion, I had a peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich."¹⁴

In 1968 Eagleton became the Democratic candidate for the Senate polling 36 percent of the vote in a primary race which included incumbent Senator Edward V. Long (1961-69) who polled 32 percent of the vote, and W. True Davis, a St. Joseph businessman, former ambassador and former assistant Secretary of the Treasury, who split the remainder of the votes with three minor candidates. Then, in a close general election, Eagleton defeated the veteran Republican candidate, Representative Thomas B. Curtis, by a 36,870-vote margin. Curtis had been in the House since 1951.¹⁵

Eagleton, prior to this Senate race, was considered by many a product of big-city politics because he had won his three statewide elections in a state dominated by the industrial centers of St. Louis and Kansas City. His rise came, however, at a time of disintegration of "old-style St. Louis and Kansas City Democratic machines" which had long controlled state office nominations. Eagleton steered clear of the intra-party feuding which accompanied this disintegration and strengthened his position through this moderate, individualistic stance. This individualism was

¹⁴Moritz, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁵"Democratic Convention: 'Eagleton's Background,'" Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXIX (July 15, 1972), p. 1716.

more pronounced in the general election against Curtis. As was stated in an article in the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report,

[Eagleton] campaigned in favor of a draft lottery, federal aid for housing and education, East-West trade, ratification of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the Peace Corps and an unconditional halt to the bombing of North Vietnam as 'an indispensable prelude' to an honorable peace.¹⁶

With this platform in a "moderately-conservative" state, Eagleton, a Roman Catholic, Eastern educated and moderate on racial issues as well, defeated Curtis by combining about 60 percent of the urban vote with nearly 100 percent of the black vote and a substantial number of votes from Missouri's rural areas including the "conservative, fundamentalist, southern-oriented populations of the Boot-heel region and the central Missouri River valley area."¹⁷

As a freshman legislator in the Senate, Eagleton quickly showed himself to be a "thoughtful and hard-working legislator in the tradition of such Missouri senators as Harry S. Truman, Thomas Hennings, Stuart Symington and Thomas Hart Benton."¹⁸ In the Senate he concentrated on cutting military spending, election reform and urban affairs. He was co-sponsor of a Senate resolution, introduced October

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Moritz, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁸"Biography," Britannica Book of the Year (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1973), p. 126.

8, 1969, which called for political reform of the Thieu regime in Saigon as a prerequisite to continued economic and military assistance from the United States. In 1970, he introduced an amendment to the fiscal 1970 military appropriations bill which would delete \$10 million requested for the MBT-70, a new main battle tank on which about \$2 billion had been spent over a period of eight years without even one tank being produced.¹⁹ This amendment was accepted. However, his amendment to delete \$27.5 million from the 1971 appropriations bill for another main battle tank, the XM-803, was defeated.

Eagleton supported the Cooper-Hart amendment which barred the deployment of the Safeguard antiballistic missile system at the same time calling for other domestic concerns to receive priority over military spending. He contrasted his ABM vote with President Nixon's veto of "inflationary" education and housing bills. The Hatfield-McGovern amendment calling for a "firm, final and public" withdrawal date from Vietnam was supported by Eagleton, leading him, as a member of Members of Congress for Peace through Law, to propose legislation to restrict a President's war-making powers by guaranteeing Congressional access to all privileged information and decisions that could result in war.

¹⁹Ibid.

This was later accomplished by the War Powers Act passed in the Senate April 13, 1972.²⁰

In the realm of election reform, Eagleton introduced a bill to shorten the primary election season. This bill would "require all states holding Presidential primaries to hold them on a Tuesday in July and would permit no campaign advertising in any state until three weeks before its primary." An electoral reform proposal, called the Federal System Plan, was introduced by Eagleton in 1970. By this plan, a President would be elected by pluralities in votes and states. The Presidential candidate with the most popular votes would win if he carried more than half the states or if he carried states containing more than half the total number of voters in the nation. In case there was no popular majority, then there would be a switch back to the electoral system. If there was no electoral majority, then the two leaders in the electoral votes would split the votes of all the states proportionately.²¹

In 1971, Eagleton became the chairman of the District of Columbia Committee's Fiscal Affairs Subcommittee. Through his leadership, the city received the largest federal payment in its history in 1971; and, his bill to

²⁰"Candidates '72," op. cit., p. 1812.

²¹"Democratic Convention: 'Eagleton's Background'," op. cit., p. 1716.

give the District of Columbia home rule was passed in the Senate by a vote of 64 to 8.²² As vice-chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee's Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, Eagleton conducted hearings on the implementation of the Clean Air Act amendments which he had helped to draft.

The Current Biography Yearbook describes Eagleton's stand on domestic affairs as follows:

. . . Eagleton supported tough drug control legislation, increased federal funding for demographic research and population control, and federal grants to the states to provide nutritious meals for the elderly poor. He approved no-fault insurance, the use of highway trust funds to improve rail and mass transit facilities, and a more equitable tax structure.²³

These and other domestic and foreign affairs were particularly strong issues during the 1972 election year. The most outstanding of these concerned busing, war powers, Vietnam, law enforcement, the economy, agriculture and election reform. Eagleton expressed his stand on busing in an interview published in The Washington Post on July 14, 1972. "I take the position that busing may well be a useful tool in breaking down the barriers of de jure segregation," he said, adding that there was no constitutional remedy for de facto segregation. He voted for anti-busing amendments which limited federal financial aid

²²Ibid.

²³Moritz, op. cit., p. 112.

for busing and postponed the use of court-ordered busing till January 1, 1974. In the same interview he stated:

The courts do not have the authority to order busing across non-gerrymandered county lines. I underscore the word 'non-gerrymandered', because if they are gerrymandered, obviously that would be de jure segregation and busing would apply.²⁴

Eagleton's view of war powers were expressed in the War Powers Act that he cosponsored. The Vietnam dilemma, which spawned the War Powers Act, was a matter about which Eagleton had strong feelings. In an April 19, 1972 speech to the Senate he said:

We must leave Vietnam to the Vietnamese. Our Vietnam Policy should be one of disengagement. Our only goal should be the release of our prisoners of war. And we can only pursue this policy at the conference table.²⁵

Eagleton and three other former state attorneys general serving in the Senate--William B. Saxbe (R Ohio), Edward W. Brooke (R Massachusetts) and Walter F. Mondale (D Minnesota)--introduced the Model Criminal Justice Reform Act in 1971. It would pay up to 90 percent of all costs incurred by a state and its subdivisions which undertook reforms in their police, court and corrections programs. Some of the reforms it advocated were creating uniform standards for police training and compensation, ensuring

²⁴"Candidates '72," op. cit., p. 1811.

²⁵Ibid., p. 1812.

speedy trials and revamping the prison system to ensure individualized treatment. This bill never got anywhere.

The economic situation in 1972 seemed to confuse Eagleton as it did many others. In a speech at the University of Texas on February 10, 1972, he stated, "Credibility in government's economic management capacity will be further eroded as the present exercise in wage-price controls continues." Then, in a speech at Cameron, Missouri two days later, he said, "I think the present wage and price controls are necessary and I only wish the President had acted much earlier so the medicine would have been less severe."²⁶

His position on electoral reform and tax reform has been mentioned. In a statement about agriculture he said he supports "the independent family farm pattern of agriculture."²⁷ In particular, he supported a Senate Appropriation Committee amendment eliminating the House-passed \$20,000 ceiling on subsidy payments to individual farmers.

As a result of his stand on these issues and affairs, Eagleton, as of mid-1972 and on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, was rated at 90 percent by the liberal Americans for Democratic Action, while the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action measured his

²⁶Ibid., p. 1813.

²⁷Ibid.

record at near zero. He could also claim strong labor ratings as a result of the COPE (AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education) ratings of 100 for 1969 and 1970. In 1971, however, Eagleton voted against a loan guarantee for the Lockheed Tristar L-1011 airbus and a subsidy to Boeing for development of the giant SST airliner. Eagleton also voted for the nomination of William H. Rehnquist to the Supreme Court. Labor supported the former measures but opposed the latter; thus, Eagleton's COPE rating dropped in 1971 to 67.²⁸

Eagleton may or may not have seriously considered himself as prime material for the Vice Presidency just prior to the Democratic Convention. In the beginning he supported the presidential candidacy of Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine; and later, after the Missouri Senator had definitely decided himself to be Vice Presidential material, he supported Senator George McGovern of South Dakota for the Presidential nomination. At any rate, Eagleton's personal background and political history, especially his Senate record, certainly were under investigation and consideration by McGovern when he chose Eagleton as his Vice-Presidential running mate.

²⁸Ibid., p. 1811. "Cope ratings reflect the percentage of the time a senator voted in accordance with or was paired in favor of the COPE position."

CHAPTER II

SELECTION AS THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE IN 1972

When George McGovern chose Senator Thomas F. Eagleton as his Vice Presidential running mate in 1972, he opted for a man with a record very similar to, but not an exact match of, his own: a man "cast in the same 'liberal' mold from which he himself emerged."¹ A glance down the list of pertinent issues shows Eagleton voted for withdrawal from Vietnam, cutting military spending, tax reform, more generous expenditures for social welfare, election reform and penal reform. He voted against Clement F. Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell as appointees to the Supreme Court. Eagleton supported busing to remedy de jure segregation, opposed it in the case of de facto segregation. If in these cases the two men's records were similar, in others they were quite different. McGovern voted against seating William H. Rehnquist on the Supreme Court; Eagleton voted for it. McGovern favored an all volunteer army; Eagleton objected to it stating, "an all volunteer army will be a poor boy's army."² Eagleton was more adamant

¹"Tom Eagleton," The New Republic, CLXVII (August 5 and 12, 1972), p. 9.

²Ibid.

than McGovern about Senate reform, and more involved with environment matters.

An article in the New York Times, dated July 14, 1972, states:

The variety of subtle balances in his [Eagleton's] political profile suggests a casting director's ideal for a running mate. An urban antiwar liberal from a moderately-conservative state, he is also a Border State Roman Catholic chosen to run with a Prairie State Methodist. . . .

A progressive on race, he is popular in the Little Dixie boot-heel of his state. A Midwesterner, he has Eastern credentials as a graduate of Amherst College and Harvard Law School.

A Senate "insider" stated in this same article:

He's more liberal than McGovern. . . . I would think he would be prepared to go beyond McGovern on most social problems.³

Many others viewed Eagleton's selection as a mere compromise to help heal wounds left over from McGovern's own pre-Convention campaign. The echoes of staffers and non-staff supporters could be heard in the words of Hunter S. Thompson:

Tom Eagleton was exactly the kind of VP candidate that Muskie or Humphrey would have chosen: a harmless, Catholic, neo-Liberal Rotarian nebbish from one of the border states, who presumably wouldn't make waves.⁴

Many asserted that McGovern needed a running mate acceptable

³"Missouri's Contribution to the Ticket," New York Times, (July 14, 1972), p. 10.

⁴Hunter S. Thompson, Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), p. 368.

to the "Old Guard: The Meany/Daley/Muskie/Humphrey/Truman/LBJ axis . . ."⁵ in order to beat Nixon in 1972. Although personal and political appeal and acceptability to disenchanted factions of the Democratic Party were certainly considered in the choice, it cannot be said that these were the reasons, specifically, that Eagleton was selected, for he was the last of a list of eight "finalists" to whom the offer was made. Then, just why and how was Thomas F. Eagleton selected?

George McGovern wanted Edward Kennedy to be his running mate, and was convinced that he could persuade Kennedy to accept the nomination. Despite the Massachusetts Senator's repeated denials, both public and private, since 1970, that he would accept either the Presidential or Vice Presidential nomination in 1972, "McGovern was so firm in his belief that he could convince Kennedy when the time came that he paid relatively little attention to the question of the Vice Presidency."⁶

Although mainly considering Kennedy for the second slot, McGovern did make a couple other soundings before the convention. According to Gordon L. weil, McGovern's first press secretary and, later, executive assistant, "He was

⁵Ibid., p. 371.

⁶Gordon L. weil, The Long Shot: George McGovern Runs for President (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 156.

intrigued with the possibility of Connecticut Senator Abe Ribicoff, who was one of his closest friends in the Senate."⁷ The Senator was identified with the Kennedy faction; was an Easterner; was experienced as Governor, Cabinet member, and Senator; was well known in the business community; and, was a Jew. This latter fact, had he been nominated, would have been a "first" but McGovern felt "The country was ready" for it.⁸ On Sunday, June 18, Ribicoff and McGovern were campaigning together in the New York Primary. Asked to consider the nomination in the event that Kennedy refused to accept, the 62-year-old Ribicoff "pleaded that he was too old to play second fiddle to any other person including the President."⁹

A couple of weeks later, McGovern discussed the Vice Presidency with United Auto Workers President Leonard Woodcock in Washington. McGovern asked his view of the office and hinted he might consider Woodcock as his running mate. Woodcock indicated interest in the job, but no more about it was discussed between the two till the convention. Within a few days, McGovern prepared a list of possible running mates headed by Kennedy, Ribicoff, and Woodcock. Also, according to Weil, "Eagleton's name had first [for the

⁷Ibid., p. 158.

⁸Ibid., p. 159.

⁹Ibid.

first time] come up speculatively . . ."¹⁰ But, still counting on Kennedy, McGovern was not ready to discuss alternatives with his staff.

On Wednesday, July 12, 1972, George McGovern became the Presidential nominee of the Democratic Party. It was on this day that McGovern took the first formal step in selecting his running mate by having Weil canvass the key members of the staff "in order to get their first four choices." McGovern had hinted during the primaries that he might throw the Convention open to the selection, but left no doubt in Weil's mind at the time the canvass was made that he would choose his own running mate. He told Weil that "he was too concerned about being saddled by a Vice Presidential Candidate overly identified with the left to take that course."¹¹

Weil collected "bits and pieces of paper" but had no discussion with anyone about the selection. That evening, he tabulated the results and showed the list to McGovern. As might be expected, the majority canvassed favored Kennedy. The others most frequently mentioned were Minnesota Senator Fritz Mondale, Florida Governor Reubin Askew, Woodcock, Eagleton, Muskie, Idaho Senator Frank

¹⁰"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), p. 11.

¹¹Weil, op. cit., p. 159.

Church, Wisconsin Governor Pat Lucey, Ribicoff and Democratic National Committee Chairman Larry O'Brien. McGovern showed interest in a few but then "laid the paper aside and said no more about the Vice Presidency."¹²

After the nomination that evening, McGovern received a call from Ted Kennedy and made a long-winded twenty-minute speech in trying to convince Kennedy to take the second slot. Kennedy succinctly refused but agreed to fly down from Hyannis to introduce McGovern to the Convention. After he hung up the phone, he told the members of his staff there with him, "You had better get everybody together first thing in the morning to come up with some suggestions."¹³ with only fifteen hours left till filing time, McGovern had finally decided seriously to consider a substitute for Kennedy.

The next morning, July 13, about nine o'clock, approximately twenty staffers met in the Board Room at the Doral Hotel, McGovern's headquarters.¹⁴ The staffers put together a list of possible running mates "taking into consideration such vote-getting factors as labor connections, ethnic background, religious affiliation, and geographical balance"¹⁵ They also considered personal

¹²Ibid., pp. 159-60.

¹³Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁴Gary W. Hart, Right From the Start (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1974), p. 112.

¹⁵Charles Moritz, ed., Evelyn Lohr et al., associate eds., Current Biography Yearbook: 1973 (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), p. 238.

characteristics such as family, reputation, business dealings, background and peer evaluation. The most important thing taken into consideration, however, was the potential candidate's ability to govern as President.

McGovern had made no preferences, and a poll conducted by staffer Pat Caddell, dated July 4, 1972, indicated that "with the exception of Kennedy's obvious strength, no other possibility had a significant effect on McGovern's chances."¹⁶ Thus, the group started working on a list of thirty-six or thirty-seven names, trimming it down to twenty-three "semi-finalists." Weil, who kept the list, wrote the following:

Muskie	
Mills	(Wilbur, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee)
Lucey	
Eagleton	
Stevenson	(Adlai III, Senator from Illinois)
Woodcock	
Ribicoff	
Hart	(Philip, Senator from Michigan)
Bayh	(Birch, Senator from Indiana)
Shriver	(Sargent, former Peace Corps head and Kennedy's brother-in-law)
Gilligan	(John, Governor of Ohio)
Church	
Cronkite	(Walter, CBS Evening News Anchorman and reputedly the most respected public figure)
Nelson	(Gaylord, Senator from Wisconsin)
White	(Kevin, Mayor of Boston)
Hesburgh	(Father Theodore, head of the US Civil Rights Commission)
Bumpers	(Dale, Governor of Arkansas)
Harris	(Fred, Senator from Oklahoma)

¹⁶ Weil, op. cit., p. 161.

O'Brien	
Mondale	
Landrieu	(Moon, Mayor of New Orleans)
O'Hara	(James, Congressman from Michigan)
Farenthold	(Cissy, defeated candidate for the Democratic Senate nomination in Texas) ¹⁷

One by one, names were eliminated because they lacked support from staff members, did not fit enough of the criteria, or were undesirable because rumors about them, which were checked out, turned out to be either true or politically unwise. The final list, which was taken to McGovern about eleven o'clock that morning, contained the names of Mondale, White, Ribicoff, Lucey, Shriver, O'Brien, and Eagleton.¹⁸

In discussing Eagleton, the group recognized he had a good record in the Senate and was personable. They realized that neither the staff nor McGovern knew him well, and someone "questioned whether he was up to the job of

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 161-62. Mrs. Farenthold was actually the defeated candidate for the Democratic Gubernatorial nomination in Texas. See "McGovern Names Eagleton Running Mate," New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 11. Also, one spelling of New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu is given as Landreau. See Hart, op. cit., p. 239. Further checking indicates the correct spelling is Landrieu. See Who's Who In America, 1974-75, 38th ed., vol. 2 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1974), p. 1795.

¹⁸Hart, op. cit., p. 239. There is some dispute between Hart and Weil over this final list: for Weil's list did not include Mondale. Another source, however, does back up Hart's list. See "Introducing . . . The McGovern Machine," Time (July 24, 1972), p. 22. Also the fact that Mondale was the first called by McGovern backs up Hart.

President."¹⁹ Eagleton had told a national television audience the night before that he wanted the nomination, and the group was impressed with this interview, and impressed with the fact that Eagleton had supported McGovern in a seating quarrel over the California delegation which had, ultimately, led to McGovern's nomination. Rick Stearns, a staff member who had come to Miami early to line up delegates, recalled an earlier conversation with whom he thought was St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter Tom Ottenad, in which Ottenad mentioned the possibility of drinking and mental illness in Eagleton's background. Weil agreed to check out these rumors when the meeting broke up at 11:15, and reported with his findings two hours and five minutes later.

Weil's report noted there were stories about Eagleton's alleged excessive drinking while he was Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor of Missouri. It was also known in Missouri that Eagleton "had been hospitalized, ostensibly for a stomach problem, although it was in fact in connection with drinking." The hospital had diagnosed Eagleton's problem as "a physiological problem which gave him a low tolerance for alcohol."²⁰ Weil erred in interpreting the reference to mental health problems "in his

¹⁹Weil, op. cit., p. 162.

²⁰Ibid., p. 164.

background" as related to other members of Eagleton's family. He found no evidence that a family member had mental problems; but, he did not check on Eagleton himself. When Weil was ready to make his report, he found there was no interest in the information on Eagleton because "he had been eliminated from consideration."²¹

McGovern made his first phone call about 1:30 P. M. after Ribicoff already had been marked off the list on the basis of his earlier refusals. This first call went to Senator Mondale who refused to accept because it would probably cost him his own seat in the Senate. McGovern then called Kevin White, the mayor of Boston, who agreed to take the post if he was asked formally. McGovern told White he needed to make some more calls first, and would call him back in about half an hour. It appeared, at this time, that White would be the choice, and Rick Stearns was asked to prepare the filing papers with White's name on them in order to make the 4:00 o'clock deadline.

Sargent Shriver was ruled out when a call to his Washington office disclosed that he was in Moscow on business. McGovern then called Kennedy to make sure White was not objectionable to him, for it seemed strange to some of the staff that Kennedy might be willing to "let another Massachusetts politician place himself in line for the

²¹Ibid., p. 165.

Democratic Presidential nomination. . . ." Kennedy did not object but urged consideration of Ribicoff and Mills.

McGovern made a last minute pitch to get Kennedy, and, to everyone's surprise, he "agreed to think it over and said he would call back in 30 minutes."²²

While waiting for Kennedy's return call, a courtesy call was made to John Kenneth Galbraith to learn how the Massachusetts delegation felt about White. Galbraith was not available but would call back. Kennedy's return call came and he decided not to reconsider, leaving the impression that he would not support McGovern if White was his running mate. Almost immediately after this, Galbraith phoned and said that he and the rest of the Massachusetts delegation would "rise up en masse to oppose White," threatening to walk out of the convention.²³ McGovern then placed a call to Gaylord Nelson, but Nelson, after consulting with his wife, refused the offer. Relates Weil: "With that, McGovern said simply: 'well, I guess it's Eagleton,' and asked that a call be placed to the Missouri Senator."²⁴

²²Ibid., pp. 165-66.

²³Hart, op. cit., p. 242. As it turned out, it was Galbraith's opposition to white being voiced, for the Massachusetts delegation had "merely urged that the delegation be consulted before any nomination [of white] was made." Weil, op. cit., p. 168.

²⁴Weil, op. cit., p. 168. According to one article, at this point McGovern talked to Hubert Humphrey. "George put it to me straight," Humphrey later told Time's Hays

While awaiting this call, which he half-way expected and half-way did not expect, Eagleton fidgeted nervously.

An article in Time states:

He had stayed up half the previous night sipping gins and tonic and wisecracking with his aides to ease the tension. His lame jokes were not half so funny as the fact that he was wearing unmatched shoes. The next morning he paced his hotel room like a caged cat, twitching each time the telephone rang. . . . Then, at 3:30 P. M., the call came. . . .²⁵

McGovern offered the job and Eagleton eagerly accepted.

Frank Mankiewicz, one of McGovern's top advisors, took the phone and conversed first with Eagleton, then with Eagleton's assistant, Doug Bennet, then with Eagleton again. This last conversation, which concerned "skeletons in the closet," is still a matter of controversy; but, regardless of the exact wording, Eagleton said he had no skeletons, and, finally, George McGovern had made his choice for the Vice-Presidential nominee.

That evening on the convention floor it became obvious that Eagleton would be denied the "automatic nomination" that had come at past conventions. The mood on the convention floor is related by Hunter S. Thompson as

Gorey. "He didn't beg me or implore me, but he asked me. I told him just as plainly that I could not and should not." "Introducing . . . The McGovern Machine," op. cit., p. 22. Both Weil and Hart insist that Humphrey was never even suggested by any staffer as a possible running mate, and neither of the two mention any call to Humphrey.

²⁵"Eagleton: McGovern's Man From Missouri," Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 20.

follows:

There was a lot of talk in the press about "the spontaneous outburst of fun and games" on Thursday night--when the delegates, who had been so deadly serious for the first three sessions, suddenly ran wild on the floor and delayed McGovern's long-awaited acceptance speech until 3:30 A. M. by tying the convention in knots with a long outburst of frivolous squabbling over the vice-presidential nomination. Newsweek described it as 'a comic interlude, a burst of silliness on the part of the delegates whose taut bonds of decorum and discipline seemed suddenly to snap, now that it didn't make any difference.'

. . . From where I stood that famous 'comic interlude' . . . looked more like the first scattered signs of mass Fatigue Hysteria, . . . what the press mistook for relaxed levity was actually a mood of ugly restlessness that by 3:00 A. M. on Friday was bordering on rebellion.²⁶

A fifteen-minute nominating speech and two five-minute seconding speeches were entitled to each candidate. Eagleton's name was formally placed in nomination by Kenneth A. Gibson, the black Mayor of Newark. Others formally nominated, according to the New York Times, were:

Endicott Peabody, former Governor of Massachusetts; Senator Gravel [Mike, D Alaska]; Mrs. Farenthold, a defeated candidate for the Democratic nomination for Governor of Texas; Hodding Carter 3d, editor of the Greenville (Miss.) Delta-Times; Stanley Arnold, an advertising executive from New York City; Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. of Newark and Clay Sothers [sic] of Dallas, a black supporter of Governor Wallace.²⁷

²⁶Thompson, op. cit., p. 319.

²⁷"McGovern Names Eagleton Running Mate," New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 11. According to another article, "Hodding Carter III . . . withdrew before he was nominated." See "Democratic Convention," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXIX (July 15, 1972), p. 1715. In the same article, "Clay Sothers" is "Clay Smothers." A check of other sources indicates that this article is correct about Smothers; but, nothing else has been revealed concerning Carter's alleged withdrawal.

In the balloting, some eighty candidates received votes including Martha Mitchell, Archie Bunker, Jerry Rubin and others like them. It was not until 1:51 A. M., near the end of the ballot, that Eagleton was declared the winner. "His final delegate count was 1,741.81."²⁸ According to the New York Times,

He [Eagleton] was accepted by the convention, but only grudgingly in many delegations. He was unknown even to some of the most trusting McGovern backers in the hall. Spurred on by a self-proclaimed candidate for Vice President--Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska--many delegates resented the summons to blind acceptance of the Presidential solitary choice.²⁹

In the acceptance speech dedicated to "M.D.E.," his late father, Eagleton said:

When George McGovern asked me to be the nominee of the Democratic Party for Vice President, he told me what he perceived the office of the Vice Presidency to be:

The second highest office in the land . . .
To be filled by a person whose objectives are compatible with the President himself, but who will not hesitate to make his views known to the President . . .

After praising McGovern and blasting Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew, Eagleton concluded:

And let us conduct ourselves and our campaign and our lives that in later years men may say---

1972 was the year, not when America lost its way,

²⁸
Ibid.

²⁹"Democratic Convention," op. cit., p. 1715.

but the year when America found its conscience.³⁰

It seems a little ironic that, only a few days later, Eagleton "lost his way" to the Vice Presidency and "found his conscience" bothering him as a result of the public disclosure of his past hospitalization in psychiatric wards.

³⁰Thomas F. Eagleton, "Acceptance Speech," Vital Speeches (August 15, 1972), pp. 641-42.

CHAPTER III

EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND CAUSES OF EAGLETON'S RESIGNATION

Thomas F. Eagleton became the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate early in the morning of July 14, 1972. Eighteen days later, August 1, Eagleton handed in his resignation after a chain of events had occurred during this period which led him to that decision. The events and related causes of this decision actually began even before Eagleton had been chosen as a running mate by George McGovern.

On the morning that the McGovern staffers had convened to draw up a list of prospective running mates, Gordon L. Weil voluntarily ran a check on Kevin White, Mayor of Boston, and Eagleton. His report, given later in the afternoon, revealed nothing to substantiate rumors of drinking or mental problems in Eagleton's background. This report left Weil open to later charges of doing a "perfunctory" job.¹ It appears that time was the cause of his

¹Gordon L. Weil, The Long Shot: George McGovern Runs for President (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 178. According to Weil, Dick Dougherty, McGovern's press secretary, made these implications to the press. Dougherty, of course, denied it. Richard Dougherty, Goodbye, Mr. Christian (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1973). As far as his checking is concerned, Weil said it revealed a "cover story

negative report for later that evening, and after Eagleton already had been called, Weil received calls from his sources who indicated that there was something to these rumors.

Between 4:00 and 4:30 the next morning, Friday, July 14, Weil called Doug Bennet, Eagleton's administrative assistant, and Bennet informed him that Eagleton had been hospitalized for "mental exhaustion and depression" in 1960. Weil immediately went upstairs to the victory celebration in the Doral Hotel and told both Frank Mankiewicz and Gary Hart all that he had just learned. Mankiewicz's first reaction was that Eagleton should use a Sunday discussion program, since he was to be on the "Face the Nation" program two days hence, and say that his hard campaigning

under a cover story" and Eagleton "had taken great pains to cover his past." In a number of other places, too numerous to list, this idea is upheld. A reprint of a December 17, 1960 article, attributed to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, related the story of Eagleton's first hospitalization including a statement saying that he had "checked into the hospital's [Barnes] psychiatric wing for the first of two electric shock treatments that he was to receive in the next six years, and many observers here traced the rumors of a 'drinking problem' to that hospitalization." "The Rise and Fall of Tom Eagleton," New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 24. This part of the article probably refers to the date of the Times's article, that is July, 1972, and does not indicate that the story of the shock treatments was known before Eagleton's public disclosure.

had put him in the hospital for rest. "None of us," said Weil, "informed McGovern at this time,"2

That afternoon Eagleton flew to Kansas City to fulfill a speaking engagement. He was to return to Washington the next night, the 15th, to be briefed by Ted Van Dyk, another McGovern aide, on the key campaign issues before his Sunday "Face the Nation" appearance. Eagleton later stated that his staff and the Mankiewicz staff had met on this same Friday to discuss the problem. "My people informed them that I had been hospitalized; my aides didn't know all the precise dates, but they knew about the shock treatments."3 Gary Hart, on the other hand, said that he met with Bennet and two other Eagleton staffers on Saturday morning before he flew to the Virgin Islands to join Mankiewicz on a short vacation. Hart maintains:

The meeting was to 'brief them as thoroughly as possible on the general election race. The subject of Eagleton's medical record was never raised because, at this point, I knew nothing about it.'4

Mankiewicz called Eagleton that afternoon from the Virgin Islands but was unable to speak to him. Eagleton

²Weil, op. cit., pp. 171-72. Hart said that Weil informed Mankiewicz only and used the words "fatigue and exhaustion" rather than those stated by Weil. Gary W. Hart, Right From the Start (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1974), p. 251.

³"Eagleton's Own Odyssey," Interview, Time, C (August 7, 1972), p. 14.

⁴Hart, op. cit., p. 251. (See footnote #2 above).

returned the call about midnight and, "at Frank's request," Hart listened in. The two discussed Eagleton's health and Mankiewicz asked how it should be handled if a question comes up on the television program the following day. Hart's recollection of the conversation indicates that Eagleton was holding back as much as possible. He related part of it as follows:

EAGLETON: "Well, it wasn't a big thing. I was just exhausted after campaigning and that's all that needs to be said."

MANKIEWICZ: "You might say, if the question comes up, that you are such an energetic campaigner that you once campaigned yourself right into the hospital, and that's the kind of campaign you intend to run this fall. . . . In case he [McGovern] gets asked any questions, is there anything else he needs to know?"

EAGLETON: "No, that's about it. Nothing very serious."⁵

A question about it didn't arise on the television program, but Mankiewicz called Eagleton on Sunday to talk about it again anyway and learned that Eagleton had been hospitalized on more than one occasion. The next day Mankiewicz phoned McGovern in Washington and brought him up to date, "in general terms," on the information he had received. Meanwhile, Hart talked to Marcia Johnston, an assistant in charge of receiving messages in Washington, D. C., who informed him that one caller said that Eagleton had suffered from nervous disorders and that he had called in the same information to John Knight III, an editorial

⁵Ibid.

writer on the Detroit Free Press and grandson of the newspaper group's editorial chairman. Johnston took it to be a crank call, but Hart knew better.

The next day the "anonymous tipster" made the second of three calls to Knight giving him "the name of the Renard Psychiatric Clinic and the name and address of a member of a therapy team."⁶ This same information was then called in to Hart and Mankiewicz. Knight relayed the information to the chain's Washington bureau reporter, Clark Hoyt, who was in the process of running a routine check on Eagleton's personal and political background. Hoyt located the therapy member who did not confirm the story but refused to deny it. Hoyt held counsel with his chief, Bob Boyd, and the two decided to hold the story until they talked with Mankiewicz.

The McGovern staff, like Knight, received a third call on July 18 concerning further hospitalizations of

⁶"The Best and the Worst," Newsweek LXXX (August 7, 1972), p. 58. Weil stated that former Attorney General Ramsey Clark informed McGovern that an FBI file containing Eagleton's medical history was available to John Mitchell before he became the head of the Committee to Re-Elect the President. Although it was denied, it was common knowledge in one Detroit community that a resident doctor had informed a member of Agnew's staff about Eagleton's hospitalizations. Thus, Weil believes that this "anonymous tipster" possibly had come out of Agnew's office. The Knight newspapers believed it was a relative of this same doctor, and a former trainee at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, who was a "genuine McGovern supporter" and was worried about the damage a "Republican leak" would cause later on. Weil, op. cit., pp. 186-87.

Eagleton. Mankiewicz called Eagleton again and a meeting was arranged for Thursday morning, July 20. Having flown in from the Virgin Islands the night before, Hart and Mankiewicz met with Eagleton and Bennet in the Senate dining room from about 8:30 to 10:00 A. M. Eagleton revealed everything about his hospitalizations and agreed to "send a staff member" to get the medical records to see if any "technical terms could be twisted by the Committee to Re-Elect the President or anyone else." Eagleton then saw McGovern that same day, but McGovern postponed a talk till later in the Black Hills. The next day on the plane trip to the Black Hills, Mankiewicz and Hart broke the full story to Senator and Mrs. McGovern. "Eleanor was appalled by the information, the Senator thoughtful." Once in the Black Hills, Mankiewicz spent considerable time negotiating with Boyd and Hoyt to hold off publication of their story until McGovern and Eagleton could meet and decide what to do.⁷

The following Tuesday, July 25, Eagleton, McGovern and their wives met in McGovern's cabin for breakfast. The four talked till about 9:15 and Eagleton "spelled out to him and his wife, as I spelled out to Mankiewicz, the health thing." Eagleton added that if the problem "comes to be an embarrassment or an impediment or hindrance to you,

⁷Hart, op. cit., pp. 253-57.

you just ask--you say the word--and I'll withdraw."

McGovern replied: "Oh, no, no, no. Nothing like that. I understand."⁸ Mankiewicz, Dick Dougherty, Doug Bennet and Mike Kelly, Eagleton's press secretary, then joined the group and the decision was made to release the story in a press conference that afternoon. Boyd and Hoyt, righteously irate, were promised an "exclusive interview" with Eagleton on the bus to the airport following the press conference.

In the press conference, which perked up an otherwise routine afternoon, Eagleton described himself as "an intense and hard-fighting person," adding that "I sometimes push myself too far." After his successful attorney general election in 1960, in which he did his own driving to campaign for John Kennedy as well as himself and criss-crossed the state to give speeches at the same time maintaining his job as District Attorney in St. Louis, Eagleton was hospitalized in Barnes Hospital in St. Louis "on my own volition" for about four weeks for "exhaustion and fatigue." During the Christmas season of 1964, he was hospitalized in the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for four days for a "physical examination." His third hospitalization was in 1966, following another campaign, and was also in the Mayo Clinic, this time for about three weeks. On two of these occasions, in 1960 and 1966,

⁸"Eagleton's Own Odyssey," op. cit., pp. 14-15.

Eagleton underwent shock therapy for depression. Eagleton stated: "I have every confidence that I've learned how to pace myself and know the limits of my own endurance."

McGovern, at Eagleton's side, said he thought Eagleton was "fully qualified in mind, body and spirit to be the Vice President . . . and, if necessary, to take on the presidency at a moment's notice," McGovern concluded that if he "had known every detail that he discussed this morning, he would still have been my choice for Vice President."⁹

The initial reaction of some of McGovern's staff was reserved, yet friendly. "A gutsy performance," said Fred Dutton, a senior advisor. "It could turn into a plus," remarked Bill Dougherty, South Dakota's Lieutenant Governor and another aide.¹⁰ Their attitudes changed as the first reactions of Democratic leaders around the country were voiced over the phone and in the Western Union Telex messages received in the pressroom of the HiHo Motel in Custer, South Dakota. Most of the calls and messages were comparable to the first one that newsmen read on the Telex: "DO YOU WANT NUT FOR VICE PRESIDENT. DROP EAGLETON."¹¹

⁹"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), p. 11; "Eagleton's Own Story of His Health Problems," excerpts from the news conference of July 25, 1972, U. S. News & World Report, LXXIII (August 7, 1972), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰Hunter S. Thompson, Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), p. 328.

¹¹Timothy Crouse, The Boys on the Bus (New York: Random House, 1972-1973), p. 326.

The next day Henry Kimelman, McGovern's finance chief, notified McGovern that the major campaign contributors who had pledged three to four million dollars in loans were calling in to cancel them. Gary Hart relates that "within 72 hours up to 90 percent of the commitments were withdrawn, or seriously hedged pending the outcome of "the Eagleton thing"; and, that it was as early as Wednesday afternoon, July 26, that a "true national picture" emerged. From over two dozen states, the political leadership was speaking uniformly: "We can't win with Eagleton, we can't get a campaign off the ground; Eagleton will be the issue."¹²

Whether it was early as Hart stated or not, there was certainly a national picture within two or three days of the press conference. Editorialists in the washington Post, the Baltimore Sun, the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times called for Eagleton to quit. Supporters such as Frances Farenthold of Texas and Mathew Troy Jr. of New York said they couldn't support the ticket if Eagleton stayed on it. There were even messages sent to McGovern by psychiatrists who said "on the basis of what they had observed of Eagleton's behavior at the Convention and afterwards, they urged that he be asked to step down."¹³

Not all of the reactions were negative. Some took it lightly and others compassionately. Julian Bond quipped:

¹²Hart, op. cit., pp. 258-59.

¹³Weil, op. cit., p. 177.

"At least we know ours had treatment. What about theirs?" Chicago Mayor Richard Daley observed that "all of us are sick sometimes, . . . Many people come back and carry on their activities very successfully and capably." Eagleton's fellow Senators were sympathetic, and, although President Nixon instructed them "to say nothing political in public about the matter," many Republicans expressed delight.¹⁴

It appears that most of the negative responses came from the editorialists, huge financial supporters and national and state political bosses. They expressed "personal understanding, but political intolerance." Ironically, the men and women in the street, the "uneducated masses," the "blind public" turned out to be the most sophisticated about this affair. They not only displayed personal understanding but also political tolerance as indicated by Eagleton's later statements about their open support and encouragement.¹⁵

In the meantime, Eagleton had taken off for California on the 25th right after the press conference. He and McGovern had hoped that the press conference would be all that was required to take care of the problem, but newsmen kept asking questions about Eagleton's medical

¹⁴"McGovern's First Crisis," op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹⁵See "Self, It Won't Be Easy," Newsweek, LXXX (August 7, 1972), pp. 17-19.

history. This caused Eagleton, who held a press conference in Los Angeles on the morning of the 26th, to say that he had "made a mistake in not discussing his medical record with McGovern before the presidential nominee had chosen him"; and, a little later, Eagleton said that "if it appears his disclosures about past mental health treatment will destroy McGovern's chances for the Presidency, he will pull out of the race."¹⁶ The continuing questions caused McGovern to become more remote, halt all interviews and, finally, issue a public notice to his campaign staff telling them to "keep their mouths shut" on the subject.

Carl Leubsdorf, an Associated Press reporter, got an interview, however, on the evening of Eagleton's revelation, and, the next morning, quoted McGovern as saying, "We'll have to wait and see" about the public reaction to Eagleton's medical history.¹⁷ After some of his staff expressed concern, McGovern called Dick Dougherty and told him to issue a statement saying Leubsdorf's story was "absolutely false"; then, called back a few minutes later

¹⁶"Democratic Convention: Furor Over Eagleton's Illnesses," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (July 29, 1972), p. 1852; "Eagleton Hinted he may withdraw, conceded he erred in not telling sooner," Wall Street Journal, July 27, 1972, p. 1.

¹⁷Crouse, op. cit., p. 327.

and told him to add that he was "1,000 percent for Tom Eagleton."¹⁸

Eagleton's attitude about staying on the ticket toughened on July 27 after columnist Jack Anderson asserted on the Mutual Broadcasting System, the nation's largest radio network, that he had "located photostats of half a dozen arrests" of Eagleton "for drunk and reckless driving."¹⁹ Eagleton, campaigning in Hawaii, termed the charge "a damnable lie," and said he was now "doubly determined" to stay on the ticket. At the same time, Dick Dougherty "reiterated McGovern wouldn't tamper with the ticket."²⁰ Eagleton then demanded that Anderson produce the photostats. Anderson admitted he could not and was later forced to apologize when W. True Davis, one of Eagleton's opponents in the Democratic Senate nomination race in 1968, identified himself on CBS television as one of Anderson's sources, and admitted he had "passed information . . . based on unauthenticated papers he had received

¹⁸Dougherty, op. cit., pp. 191-92. Weil supports Leubsdorf's story saying that McGovern was "waiting to gauge public reaction." Weil, op. cit., p. 178.

¹⁹"McGovern's First Crisis," op. cit., p. 13.

²⁰"Eagleton Said He'll Stay on the ticket, denied charges of drunk driving," Wall Street Journal, July 28, 1972, p. 1.

in 1968 which were purported to be Eagleton's arrest records."²¹

By the next morning Eagleton and his staff became more adamant about remaining on the ticket, while McGovern and his followers started taking steps to rid themselves of Eagleton. Doug Bennet told Hart that the Anderson thing was what they had been waiting for. Now with the phony charges on the surface, they could "prove they are lies and knock the other stuff down at the same time."²² McGovern and Dick Dougherty met this same morning and decided to hint through the news media for Eagleton to withdraw. McGovern already had phoned Eagleton and read him part of a speech he was to deliver at the South Dakota State Democratic Convention the next night, Saturday, July 29, in which he asked for "prayers for Senator Eagleton and me while we deliberate on the proper course ahead."

²¹"Best and Worst," op. cit., p. 58. Anderson's original apology, made on "Face the Nation," was for releasing the story but not for the story itself. The day after Eagleton resigned, Anderson apologized again and retracted his story because of Davis' statements and the fact that the official Missouri files showed that Eagleton had received only three speeding violations and one minor accident on icy roads, none of which involved alcohol. Anderson was well chided for his irresponsible journalism which he employed "just to get a scoop." See "Anderson apologizes, then retracts unverified report about Eagleton," Editor & Publisher, CV (August 5, 1972), p. 10; "A Crisis Named Eagleton," Newsweek, LXXX (August 7, 1972), p. 15; and, "Best and Worst," op. cit., p. 58.

²²Hart, op. cit., pp. 260-61.

McGovern figured this had been hint enough, but realized it was not when Eagleton replied: "George, that's beautiful. I wish I'd written it myself."²³ McGovern immediately issued the text of this speech publicly to try the hint a second time.

McGovern called Jules Witcover, a Los Angeles Times reporter, and gave him an interview that afternoon. McGovern's message, conveyed by Witcover through the press, was simply that "public reaction to the disclosure of Eagleton's past health problems has been so negative that Eagleton must withdraw voluntarily." McGovern then had the word spread that he would be dining at the Sylvan Lake Lodge that night and it might be advisable for reporters to be there. Many were present, and McGovern hopped from table to table hinting that he wanted Eagleton to quit, but never flatly saying so. He concluded his visits with: "I'm with Senator Eagleton all the way--until he and I have a chance to talk." Even after this, McGovern told Eagleton over the phone the next morning that though he "had been under pressure" about Eagleton's candidacy, he was still "1,000 percent" for him. This gave Eagleton even more confidence and he defiantly told newsmen: "I'm going to stay on the ticket. That's my firm, irrevocable intent."²⁴

²³Dougherty, op. cit., pp. 193-94.

²⁴"McGovern's First Crisis," op. cit., p. 13.

While Eagleton would be on his second "Face the Nation" program on Sunday, July 30, this time with Jack Anderson, Jean Westwood and Basil Paterson, respectively the new chairperson and vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, would be appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press." McGovern had sent word the day before instructing Westwood and Paterson that he did "not want them supporting Eagleton too strongly," because it would make the job of removing him that much more difficult.²⁵ Accordingly, Westwood made the comment that "it would be a noble thing" for Eagleton to drop from the ticket, and Paterson concurred.²⁶ McGovern had tried, also, to stop Eagleton from appearing on "Face the Nation" because, as Hart put it, the McGovern camp "wanted to defuse the public controversy; Eagleton wanted to defend himself and rehabilitate his image. The two goals were incompatible."²⁷

About 11:00 A. M. Henry Kimelman, John Douglas, another advisor, Mankiewicz, Hart and, later, Westwood met with McGovern at his home for an all-day session on strategy. Kimelman gave a "dire financial report," and Hart gave a national political report which said that state

²⁵Weil, op. cit., p. 179.

²⁶"Eagleton was Urged by the party's chairman to withdraw from the ticket," Wall Street Journal, July 31, 1972, p. 1.

²⁷Hart, op. cit., p. 261.

political leaders were "almost universally" opposed to Eagleton, and "each had conducted statewide telephone surveys among local leaders. who supported their judgements." McGovern concluded the session by saying that he "saw no other course but to work out Eagleton's departure . . . during their meeting the next night."²⁸

A meeting came that night instead of the next night for, after the "Meet the Press" program and the strategy session were over, McGovern's "staff members" issued the names of a number of "urban-based Roman Catholic politicians as possible replacements" for Eagleton. The list included Larry O'Brien, Sargent Shriver, Kevin White, Edmund Muskie, Pat Lucey, John Gilligan and Abe Ribicoff.²⁹ Thus, with Eagleton still adamant about remaining on the ticket and McGovern seeking a replacement, a meeting was called to end the standoff and was held at Henry Kimelman's home. McGovern complimented Eagleton on his appearance on the television program, and Eagleton complimented him on Jean Westwood's "hatchet job." They then discussed the pros and cons of Eagleton's candidacy. At the end, another meeting was scheduled for the next night, Monday, July 31, and

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 262-64; "Eagleton Is Firm Despite Pressure By 2 Party Chiefs," New York Times July 31, 1972, p. 1.

²⁹ "Eagleton's Replacement Being Considered," New York Times July 31, 1972, p. 1.

Eagleton left with the feeling that McGovern might yet retain him.³⁰

Throughout the next day, letters, telegrams and phone calls flooded Washington, D. C. strongly supporting Eagleton and urging McGovern to keep him on the ticket. While mail sent to Eagleton's office previously had run 3 to 1 in favor of him, now it ran 10 to 1. McGovern's headquarters received messages, now 5 to 1 in favor of Eagleton, like:

If you dump Eagleton we dump you. Dont let the old politics destroy great hopes.

They also received anti-Eagleton messages in both offices which were similar to this one from a Cleveland correspondent:

We're solid for you, but the voters would never go for it. Please resign.³¹

Vainly, Eagleton referred to the positive reflection of these messages when meeting with McGovern and Gaylord Nelson in the Marble Room, off the Senate Chambers, on Monday evening. Eagleton tried to convince McGovern that the health thing would "run out of gas" in two or three weeks; but, McGovern stressed the narrowness of victory in

³⁰Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972, (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973), pp. 205-206.

³¹"Messages of Support Sent to Eagleton," New York Times, August 1, 1972, p. 24. In one article a McGovern worker was quoted as saying that there were "tons" of pro-Eagleton calls and that they had instructions not to make that information public. "The McGovern Image. 'Candor of Democratic Nominee Viewed as Chief Casualty of Eagleton Affair,'" New York Times, July 31, 1972, p. 12.

November and the fact that he could not afford to lose even one percent of the vote.³²

In the subsequent press conference, McGovern stated:

I am fully satisfied that his health is excellent.
I base that conclusion upon my conversations with his doctors and my close personal and political association with him.

He went on to say that health was not a factor but that:

Continued debate between those who oppose his candidacy and those who favor it will serve to further divide the party and the nation. Therefore, we are jointly agreed that the best course is for Sen. Eagleton to step aside.

Eagleton, after reiterating the essence of McGovern's speech concluded:

My conscience is clear, and my spirits are high.

This is definitely not my last press conference and Tom Eagleton is going to be around a long, long time.³³

³²"Eagleton Quits At Request of McGovern; Says He Does not Want to 'Divide' Party," New York Times, August 1, 1972, p. 24. Although Hart maintains that Eagleton requested the presence of Nelson, Dougherty said that McGovern requested his presence because a psychiatrist had "warned that failure to have a third person present risked the creation of an adversary setting in which Eagleton's resistance would be heightened" Hart, op. cit., p. 266; and Dougherty, op. cit., p. 200.

³³"Withdrawal Address," McGovern & Eagleton, Vital Speeches XXXVIII, (August 15, 1972), p. 643. Concerning the causes of resignation McGovern and Eagleton gave, McGovern remained mute about his phone conversations with Eagleton's doctors, made during their last meeting, in accordance with medical ethics. Despite his public assurances that Eagleton's health was fine and played no

The following day Eagleton handed in his formal resignation, and McGovern and company stepped up work, started the previous day, on finding a replacement.

part in the decision, many of McGovern's staffers and supporters maintained that it did. Weil stated that Miles Rubin, "the man in charge of soliciting large contributions to the campaign," and Mankiewicz both indicated to the press that McGovern's decision was made on reasons of Eagleton's health. Besides chastising the doctors, as others did, for not adhering to a "patriotic demand" that they should have ignored the sacred doctor-patient confidentiality and told McGovern at the outset about Eagleton's health, Weil also conjectured that the doctors either told McGovern that Eagleton was still sick and might have recurrences, or, that he was ill and for McGovern not to let Eagleton know it. Weil, op. cit., pp. 183-84.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1972 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FROM EAGLETON'S RESIGNATION TO NOVEMBER 7

On August 1 Eagleton formally tendered his resignation as a Vice Presidential nominee in a 150-word letter to Mrs. Jean Westwood, the chairperson of the Democratic National Committee, becoming the first person in United States history to do so.¹ In the letter he wrote that his "personal feelings" had become "secondary to the necessity to unify the Democratic party and elect George McGovern President." Mrs. Westwood returned a formal reply of regret telling Eagleton that his decision to withdraw had taken "great candor and courage."²

¹Two other nominees had said no but had refused while the conventions were still convened and did not have to resign. In 1844 Senator Silas Wright of New York was chosen to balance the ticket with the Presidential nominee, James K. Polk of Tennessee. Wright refused and was replaced by George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania. The Polk-Dallas ticket won with a narrow popular vote of 1,338,000 to 1,300,000. At the Republican convention of 1924, former Illinois governor Frank O. Lowden refused the Vice Presidential nomination. Charles G. Dawes of Ohio was chosen instead and the Coolidge-Dawes ticket won with a comfortable 15,700,000 to 8,400,000 popular margin "Eagleton First to Change Mind, but Others Said No," New York Times, August 2, 1972, p. 20.

²"Muskie Favored In Party's Search For Running Mate," New York Times, August 2, 1972, p. 1.

Immediate reaction to the resignation was, more or less, uniform as Democratic leaders across the country said that while the action was "sad personally," it would "strengthen the party's chances in the November election." There was, however, a bit of negative reaction which later grew to be considerable. A Connecticut member of the Democratic National Committee and president of the state A.F.L.-C.I.O. labor council, John J. Driscoll, maintained that Eagleton was the "victim of 'a grave injustice' and that the pressure on him to withdraw had opened 'a credibility gap on the ability of McGovern to make a judgement without being overruled by his palace guard.'"³

While public reaction was still forming, George McGovern got down to the business of selecting a new running mate. One aide stated that Larry O'Brien was the 'fallback choice," and McGovern himself was believed to view Edmund Muskie as the "safest and most reassuring" choice. These were just two names of a list, issued by "staff members" on July 30, which also included Sargent Shriver, Kevin White, Pat Lucey, John Gilligan and Abe Ribicoff; and, according to McGovern's advisors, there was an overriding

³"Eagleton Withdraws From Election Race at Request of McGovern," New York Times, August 1, 1972, p. 1; "O'Brien Is Backed In Area For No. 2," New York Times, August 2, 1972, p. 20.

new consideration which was "the need to make certain that the replacement had no politically embarrassing moments in his past that complicated the selection process and argued for caution."⁴

Whoever McGovern chose to succeed Eagleton would have to be confirmed by the new Democratic National Committee. This committee already had shown itself capable of resisting McGovern, for the day after the Democratic convention it refused to accept his candidate for national party vice chairman, Pierre Salinger. Instead, the committee chose Basil A. Peterson. This, coupled with a rumor that Senator Eagleton would be renominated, indicated that the confirmation of McGovern's second choice might not be automatic; and, a canvass of the 200 chosen members, out of a total of 303 needed for the session called for August 7 through 9, showed that 90 were solidly pro-McGovern, 60 anti-McGovern, and 50 neutral.⁵

McGovern actually had begun his search for a replacement on Monday, July 31, even before the formal dismissal of Eagleton. That morning, McGovern had flown to

⁴"Eagleton Withdraws From Election Race . . .," Ibid.; "Eagleton's Replacement Being Considered," New York Times, July 31, 1972, p. 1; and "Muskie Favored . . .," op. cit., p. 1.

⁵"McGovern Facing Committee Snag," New York Times, August 1, 1972, p. 24; "Challenge Coming?" The Economist, CCXLIV (August 5, 1972), p. 38; and Gary W. Hart, Right From the Start (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1974), p. 266.

Louisiana to attend the funeral of Senator Allen Ellender. On the return trip, McGovern sat beside Ted Kennedy and tried to enlist his services. He was rebuffed but pursued Kennedy the following day with the same intention. That evening, McGovern and his wife dined with Lawrence and Elva O'Brien at the Jockey Club in Washington. O'Brien was "suspicious of all McGovern overtures after his Miami experience . . ." and admitted only mild interest. McGovern said he would get back to him. On wednesday he tried to get Kennedy again with "an early-morning telephone call to Senator Abraham Ribicoff for intercession." Ribicoff reported back that the Massachusetts Senator was adamant in his refusal. McGovern then tried to persuade Ribicoff himself to accept the nomination, but the Connecticut Senator again refused on the grounds of his age.⁶ Also on wednesday morning "a number of the campaign people" met at McGovern's home to discuss the vice-presidency. "This time," relates Hart, "the characteristics and qualities stressed most strongly were experience, stability, public exposure, dependability, reliability." Names included in the discussion were Humphrey, Muskie, O'Brien, Mansfield, "Ribicoff again, . . ., Governor Lucey

⁶Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973), pp. 207-208. Concerning Ribicoff's initial refusal, see Chapter II, p. 17 above.

again, Governor Askew again, Senators Bayh and Mondale again, Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, . . . , and Sargent Shriver."⁷

In the evening Mansfield refused and McGovern courted Hubert Humphrey then and on Thursday morning. Humphrey declined all three times he was asked and his refusals became public causing McGovern some embarrassment. Florida Governor Reuben Askew, vacationing in North Carolina, refused also on Thursday and, that evening, McGovern tried his fifth choice--Edmund Muskie.⁸

Muskie seemed interested and the staffs of Muskie and McGovern met in mid-afternoon, Friday, August 4. Muskie wanted to liquidate his campaign debt, secure a written apology from Stewart Mott, the columnist who had "waged his own campaign against Muskie in the spring," and have "control over the configuration of the Vice-Presidential campaign jet." There was no discussion about campaign issues, strategies and the like.⁹ Following this, McGovern contacted Larry O'Brien again and said "if Ed Muskie turned down the offer, he might be back to O'Brien once more." Sargent Shriver was also contacted that day and said he would accept the offer if Muskie refused it. The McGovern

⁷Hart, op. cit., p. 266.

⁸Ibid.; White, op. cit., p. 208.

⁹Hart, op. cit., pp. 266-267.

people were not interested in taking care of Muskie's debts and made it known that many supporters were reluctant to have him. Thus, on Saturday Muskie declined by telephone "for family reasons." After Muskie's call McGovern again called Shriver who was playing tennis at the Kennedy family compound. Shriver already had discussed the proposition with Lyndon Johnson, Richard Daley and Ted Kennedy, and, though he wanted to talk to his family and Ted again, he accepted.¹⁰

At 2:00 P. M. on Tuesday, August 8, the new Democratic National Committee met in Washington's Sheraton Park Hotel. The special meeting had been called to consider the choice of the new Vice-Presidential nominee and coming to make this selection, according to one aide, was "like going to interview the survivors of the South Dakota flood." McGovern did not encounter quite the balk by committee members that had been predicted: and, after "a humorous and charming appearance by Tom Eagleton, a stemwinder in the old tradition from Hubert Humphrey, a brief appearance by Larry O'Brien, appearances by Muskie and Kennedy," Sargent Shriver, the former Peace Corps director and husband to Eunice Kennedy, was formally nominated for Vice

¹⁰White, op. cit., p. 209.

President, two weeks to the day since the Eagleton press conference in the Black Hills.¹¹

A few days later Time magazine used a McGovern/Shriver picture on their cover and covered the story well. "The newsstand sale of the magazine bombed; passersby ignored the story of McGovern/Shriver." Newsweek, on the other hand, offered an off-beat cover story on Chinese acupuncture. The magazine sold the "fourth highest quantity of magazines at the newsstand in all its forty-year history. The nation had tuned the Democrats out."¹²

The McGovern/Shriver ticket had been tuned out, but the controversy over the dismissal of Eagleton had grown considerably from the day of his resignation and Eagleton's actions and reactions are related, to a great extent, to this controversy. August 1 was the day Eagleton officially resigned and also the day that the seat on the Senate Appropriations Committee vacated by the death of Senator Ellender and sought by Eagleton went instead to Birch Bayh (D Indiana). Though these things naturally upset him, the first day of August was not all bleak. After delivering a

¹¹Ibid., p. 210; "Bad Dream Comes to End for McGovern Workers," New York Times, August 6, 1972, p. 29; and Richard Dougherty, Goodbye, Mr. Christian (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1973), p. 200.

¹²White, op. cit., p. 210. Also see cover stories, "All About Acupuncture," Newsweek LXXX (August 14, 1972), and "The Democrats Try Again," Time, C (August 14, 1972).

speech in the Senate on behalf of a McGovern amendment, Eagleton met privately with Jack Anderson for about an hour. Anderson then publicly retracted and apologized for his drunk-driving charges in front of the television cameras and Eagleton "accepted with grace."¹³

Anderson's retraction appeared to be a turning point in Eagleton's fortunes. That same day Eagleton, in the morning news on CBS, praised McGovern and said he did not blame him. He also stated that he would seek reelection to the Senate in 1974. He was anticipating Anderson's retraction and, perhaps, a negative reaction on the part of Missourians to the treatment he had received from McGovern. Whether he anticipated it or not, it came. Eagleton spent much of the afternoon of August 2 trying to calm anti-McGovern feeling, especially in Missouri. Governor Warren E. Hearnes, St. Louis Mayor Alfonso J. Cervantes and Missouri State Democratic Chairman Delton Houtchens attacked McGovern for dumping Eagleton and warned that the Republicans might take the state in November. With these statements by Missouri officials and many phone calls from the officials and private citizens, Eagleton

¹³"I'll tell you who's bitter, my Aunt Hazel," interview ed. by Joe McGinnis, Life, LXXIII (August 18, 1972), p. 30. For more on Jack Anderson's charges, see Chapter III above, pp. 40-41 and footnote #21, p. 41.

remarked: "I'll tell you one thing. From the sound of these calls, I'm gonna beat hell out of somebody out there in '74."¹⁴

The anti-McGovern feeling was growing all over the country, not just in Missouri. An editorial in The Wall Street Journal asserted that:

Many former supporters, at least to judge by the columnists in the press, have been turned against him [McGovern] by the Eagleton episode, and particularly by Mr. McGovern's indecisiveness in dealing with it.¹⁵

In one of the early comments on the affair, the editor also attempted to evaluate and affix blame for the acceptance and rejection of Eagleton. Eagleton should probably have related the matter of his "skeletons" and warrants a certain amount of blame for not doing so. Yet, though he was also the "victim of the haste and pressure that typically surround vice-presidential decisions," McGovern, in seeking to be elected President, must bear full responsibility for his decisions and his staff work. The fact that his aides asked about skeletons only after the decision already had been made "do not exactly leave the presidential candidate fully exonerated."

¹⁴"Muskie Favored . . .," op. cit., p. 1+; "Missouri Leaders See Loss of State," New York Times, August 2, 1972, p. 20; and "I'll tell you who's bitter . . .," op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁵"The Eagleton Episode," Ed., The Wall Street Journal, August 2, 1972, p. 8.

Blame for the episode would continue to be controversial and Eagleton would definitely receive his share of it. But for the time being his popularity was on the rise. On August 3 Eagleton taped a Dick Cavett show on which he and Cavett talked about each other's periods of depression. The audience was very warm toward Eagleton. He felt they even empathized with him. While still in New York, Eagleton and his wife went shopping at Bloomingdale's. Relates Mrs. Eagleton:

People mobbed him, asking for his autograph--on anything they had to sign: they just wanted to touch him, to tell him how wonderful they thought he was.¹⁶

Another article stated:

On the street, in other restaurants, anywhere he went, Tom Eagleton was recognized and, more important, inundated by compliments and warmth. In the very unscientific sample area of the sidewalks of New York, Tom Eagleton had emerged from his ordeal a clear winner.¹⁷

And so it continued. Letters to the editor concerning the Eagleton affair printed in the New York Times on August 4 complained about the undemocratic method of selection leaving no time for an extensive background investigation; cited the awesome powers of the Presidency at the same time saying the job was too big for anyone; praised

¹⁶"Mrs. Eagleton's Own Story," Ladies Home Journal, LXXXIX (October, 1972), p. 111.

¹⁷"I'll tell you who's bitter . . .," op. cit., p. 31.

Eagleton while predicting a bright future for him; and, praised Eagleton some more while blasting McGovern for his lack of candor, integrity and good background investigation.¹⁸

Eagleton tried to soothe the heated feelings of many people and stated that Sargent Shriver was a good choice to succeed him and he would ". . . do everything I can to see the McGovern-Shriver ticket elected."¹⁹ But that which George McGovern hoped he would end by removing Eagleton from the race, the debate over Eagleton's candidacy, did not stop. An article in Time contained the question:

What effect does Eagleton's medical history have on his fitness for the vice presidency--which means, potentially, for the presidency?

The answer it provided was:

Past U. S. Presidents have had their emotional problems: John Adams had several nervous breakdowns, Franklin Pierce was an alcoholic, Abraham Lincoln had recurring periods of near-suicidal depression, Rutherford Hayes as a young man wandered about the streets of Sandusky, Ohio, weeping uncontrollably. Lesser officials have also been afflicted. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal committed suicide in 1949 while hospitalized for involutional melancholia. Alabama Governor George Wallace, . . . , still receives a 10% disability check from the Veterans Administration because of "psychoneurosis" received during World War

¹⁸"The Unmaking of a Candidate," New York Times, August 4, 1972, p. 30.

¹⁹"Shriver Praised As A Good Choice," New York Times, August 6, 1972, p. 29.

II. As for Eagleton's illness, medical experts know neither what causes depression nor why electric-shock therapy is effective against it, but most of them insist that it is a relatively common ailment and by no means a permanent disability.²⁰

In the same issue of Time, the results of a sampling of 1015 eligible voters was printed. In the poll 76.7 percent indicated that the news that Eagleton had "undergone psychiatric treatment for nervous exhaustion" had no effect on their choice for President; that a total of 5.2 percent switched from either McGovern or neutral to Nixon; that 3.8 percent were more likely to vote for McGovern; that 13 percent did not know; and that 1.3 percent might not vote.²¹ This indicated a net gain for Nixon of merely 1.4 percent to that date.

²⁰"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), p. 14. Later, Time reporters interviewed a number of former electric-shock treatment patients across the country to find out what they thought about Eagleton's dismissal. The report stated that "most depression patients who had been 'cured' or were well on the way to recovery questioned Eagleton's fitness to withstand the stresses of the presidency or even the vice presidency." It was indicated in another article that the decision for Eagleton to withdraw was the only one to make. Saying he was more stable than Nixon and referring to the physical and psychological problems of Adams, Lincoln, and Wilson, were not strong enough to stand on their own. The author reiterated the words of Dr. Mortimer Ostow, author of The Psychology of Melancholy, who argued in a letter to the New York Times that "in Eagleton's case the possibility of relapse was too great to risk Eagleton in the Presidency." "The Eagleton Decision," Commonweal, XCVI (August 11, 1972), pp. 419-420; and, New York Times, July 28, 1972, p. 30.

²¹"A TIME Poll: How the Voters Feel About Eagleton," Time, C (August 7, 1972), p. 12.

However, negative reaction to McGovern's maneuvers continued to rise daily. In the August 8 New York Times, columnist Joseph Rhodes said he felt Eagleton did not need to reveal his medical history for he was not incapacitated by his mental state when McGovern asked him to run with him. He also chastised the news media, politicians and McGovern himself for forcing Eagleton's resignation which would, if followed as a precedent, "prevent aspiring young politicians from seeking psychotherapeutic help when and if it is needed." On the same date an article in The Wall Street Journal noted that the St. Louis Labor Tribune, an AFL-CIO organ, assailed McGovernites for dropping Eagleton. Despite the AFL-CIO's neutrality in the matter, that paper cried that millions "who have undergone psychiatric treatment, and who take an additional occasional drink would have voted for Eagleton." In the Times of August 9, James Reston related that his mail indicated a number of voters who have had psychological problems either themselves or in their families regarded the dumping of Eagleton as "insensitive, unjust and unscientific," and most of them followed their attacks with promises to vote for Nixon "as a rebuke to McGovern." Still another writer felt that since Eagleton's entrance into hospitals for fatigue, depression and shock treatments came before his career in Washington, the American public should not be expected to "think that his four-year performance in the Senate, under

far heavier pressures than he could have experienced as a state official in Missouri, count for little or nothing."²²

Then the press went back to the problem of "placing the blame." According to one writer, McGovern "comes out of it all with his armour tarnished and his white horse mud-spattered." He [McGovern] seemed to have been "hasty and lacking in judgement" when making his choice for a running mate and "indecisive and unfair" in getting rid of him. The writer continued:

Part of the blame is also attached to Mr. McGovern's famously efficient staff who should have saved him from at least some of the mistakes of the Eagleton affair.²³

A columnist named simply "Sedulus" blasted the press for actions which he called "hysteria." He also attacked them for their "dazzling insensitivity" to their power role in forcing Eagleton's resignation and creating the significance of the "great Eagleton affair."²⁴

²²Joseph Rhodes, "The Eagleton Affair," New York Times, August 8, 1972, p. 33: "Eagleton wins belated backing," The Wall Street Journal, August 8, 1972, p. 1; James Reston, "Psychology and Politics," New York Times, August 9, 1972, p. 37: and "Tom Eagleton," New Republic, CLXVII (August 5 and 12, 1972), p. 9.

²³"The Eagleton Affair." The Economist, CCXLIV (August 5, 1972), p. 14.

²⁴Sedulus on TV, "The Press as Mob," New Republic, CLXVII (August 19 and 26, 1972), pp. 19-20. Others besides Sedulus attacked the press for their role also. Of the sixty-five persons selected at random from telephone listings in the Akron area by the School of Journalism at Kent State University, 48 percent said "the newspapers should not have published stories concerning Eagleton's history of

Eagleton also received his share of the blame in the judgemental journalism of the day. In two separate articles in subsequent issues of the Saturday Review, Ronald P. Kriss merely chided McGovern for his "vacillation" and his lieutenants for not being "thorough enough" in their investigation of Eagleton, but strongly assailed Eagleton for seeing fit to "conceal" from McGovern information about his mental history and informing him of it "only after he had been virtually forced to do so because of the likelihood of disclosure by a newspaper."²⁵

This debate among the press and the public continued while both Eagleton and McGovern tried to "change the subject." In his first appearance in support of the Democratic ticket two weeks after leaving it, Eagleton told four hundred National Student Association representatives at a Washington, D. C. convention that the Nixon Administration had "embarked on a course of raw retaliation" in Vietnam. McGovern, according to Gordon L. Weil, "became more desperate to strike a clear contrast between himself

mental illness and electric shock therapy," 38 percent felt the information should have been published, and 14 percent were undecided. "Many in survey rap papers for Eagleton story," Editor & Publisher, CV (September, 1972), p. 50.

²⁵Ronald P. Kriss, "An Unforgivable Omission," Saturday Review, LV (August 24, 1972), p. 24; and "A Difficult but Necessary Decision," Saturday Review, LV (August 19, 1972), p. 26.

and Nixon." He hoped promoting this contrast of "Good vs. Evil," with himself as "Good," would overshadow the debate about his former running mate. He used this tool as he courted the "ethnics" by what Weil called "an ill-considered announcement that he favored tax credits for the parents of parochial school children"; as he courted the Jews; and as he "sought identification with the traditional Democratic Party in joint appearances with Kennedy, Muskie, and Humphrey."²⁶

Such maneuvers merely added to the growing uncertainty about McGovern's credibility and candidacy; so, he decided to adopt a "more statesmanlike style" in his campaigning for the month of October. He would use "half-hour fireside chats on Vietnam, the economy, and corruption in government" in the hopes of emphasizing the contrast between himself and Nixon and playing down the Eagleton affair and his other blunders.²⁷

Try as he might, George McGovern just could not shed himself of the Eagleton stigma. One letter to the editor

²⁶"Eagleton Says War Policy Is 'Raw Retaliation,'" New York Times, August 17, 1972, p. 24; and Gordon L. Weil, The Long Shot: George McGovern Runs for President (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 222-223.

²⁷Weil, Ibid., p. 224. His "other blunders" included the "Salinger Affair" in which he denied giving Salinger permission to negotiate in his name with the North Vietnamese in Paris when, in fact, he did, and changes in his welfare and tax programs.

of the New York Times even suggested that McGovern appoint Eagleton to a Cabinet Post if elected in order to restore McGovern's credibility to voters and to help dispel "bogies" about mental illness by having the "obviously-capable Eagleton" restored to the political scene.²⁸ McGovern in Missouri, Weil in Ohio and Eagleton wherever he campaigned faced questions about the affair as the debate about Eagleton continued.²⁹ McGovern was becoming looked upon as the "lesser of two evils" and some members of his staff added to his rapidly tarnishing image by attempting to set Eagleton up as the scapegoat in the event that Democrats lost the coming election.³⁰

²⁸"Letters to the Editor," New York Times, September 8, 1972, p. 32. Eagleton said he would decline such a post if it were offered for he'd rather stay in the Senate ("Eagleton Would Not Accept Post in McGovern Cabinet," New York Times, September 20, 1972, p. 35.)

²⁹Eagleton continued to campaign for the McGovern/Shriver ticket and in a great many places for, as one article put it, "demand for speaking engagements and his mail both remain heavy . . ." The article also stated that Eagleton "has not sulked or fumed or retired into the seclusion of the Senate. He has kept working the campaign circuit for the man who bumped him--by November he will have plugged McGovern in 50 appearances in fifteen states." "We're Still For You, Tom," Newsweek, LXXX (October 9, 1972), p. 34.

³⁰"Students Now Apathetic on Elections," New York Times, October 2, 1972, p. 30; "We're Still For You, Tom," op. cit., p. 34. Many aides had requested Eagleton to accompany McGovern and state "unequivocally" that McGovern made the right decision in replacing him. This Eagleton refused to do and even continued to indicate that he thought the original ticket would have survived the "electric-shock

On October 8 Eagleton was filmed in St. Louis by the McGovern campaign people for television commercials. In the film he stated that he had "the fullest, unqualified faith in--and belief in--George McGovern that one human being can possess on this earth." This film was never used on television because the McGovern people were afraid it might remind people of the problem of the Eagleton affair which, according to Frank Mankiewicz, like "all our problems" was diminishing. Even Eagleton was quoted in late October as saying that though his withdrawal may have hurt McGovern at first, the McGovern/Shriver ticket was now "climbing steadily." Tom Wicker of the New York Times appeared to feel otherwise. In an ominously foreboding article Wicker stated that the Eagleton affair had at least four "disastrous effects" on the McGovern candidacy. Firstly, the mere selection of Eagleton once his record had been disclosed made McGovern look incompetent. Secondly, the fact that McGovern spent a week finding a replacement added indecisiveness to his incompetency. Thirdly, McGovern looked

thing." He continued to campaign but was upset by statements attributed to campaign fund-raiser Miles Rubin, among others, which said the "full story" about Eagleton's mental problems had not been revealed because to "make public what really happened goes against what George McGovern stands for," suggesting that he was campaigning under some secret obligation to McGovern. "The Eagleton Impact," New York Times, October 7, 1972, p. 18; and Christopher Lydon, "Democrats to Use Eagleton on TV," New York Times, October 9, 1972, p. 25.

"ruthless" to many because of his "1,000 percent" backing and subsequent "stab-in-the-back" dumping of Eagleton. Fourthly, the "decent and honest" man turned out to be "just another politician" after handling Eagleton the way he did.³¹

On November 7, two days after Wicker's article appeared, the "disastrous effects" proved to be just that. In a Presidential election which saw only 55.7 percent of the eligible voters turn out, Richard Nixon received 47,167,319 votes to George McGovern's 29,168,509. This 17,998,810-vote margin was the largest in U. S. history. Nixon's percentage, 60.7, was second only to Lyndon Johnson's 61.6 of 1964; and, his electoral votes, 521, were just two short of Franklin Roosevelt's record 523 in 1936.³² This disastrous defeat indicated that McGovern's popularity was at rockbottom; but, as the debate and quarrel over the Eagleton affair continued, Thomas Eagleton's popularity was on the rise.

³¹Christopher Lydon, "Democrats to Use Eagleton on TV," ibid.; "Eagleton Sees Progress," New York Times, October 22, 1972, p. 50; and Tom Wicker, "McGovern With Tears," New York Times, November 5, 1972, p. 36.

³²Officially one elector from Virginia voted for John Hospers, Libertarian, giving Nixon 520 electoral votes. For a breakdown and analysis of these figures and the landslide victory, see Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973), pp. 342-349.

CHAPTER V

EAGLETON FROM THE NOVEMBER 7, 1972 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TO THE PRESENT

The Eagleton affair was termed the "handiest" reason for McGovern's disastrous defeat, but it was only one of many reasons from McGovern's "misreading the country's temper" to Arthur Bremer's attempt on the life of George Wallace. Over the several months following election day, the impact of the affair and several other factors on the outcome of the election were assessed and reassessed by a number of people, most notably McGovern and his campaign aides and staff.

No one attributed the defeat solely to the Eagleton episode, though it was implied that it was a major factor, and McGovern paid relatively little attention to the influence that it did have. Initially, he indicated that the Eagleton affair could possibly have been avoided, but that the major responsibility for it lay with Eagleton himself; and, he felt he should have been more cautious about backing him. He agreed with President Nixon's assessment that the dismissal of Eagleton as the nominee and his replacement by Sargent Shriver "had probably not

been a major factor in determining the election's outcome."¹

Instead, McGovern attributed Nixon's overwhelming victory to "the President's ability to attract Democrats and others who identified with the views of Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama." He believed had Wallace not been shot he [Wallace] would have drawn enough votes from Nixon to allow him to have a shot at the Presidency as the election probably would have been thrown into the House of Representatives; but, he himself stood little chance of appealing to the Wallace voters in Florida, Michigan, Maryland, etc., because "racism still runs deep in the United States."²

Gordon L. Weil mentioned several other factors which McGovern felt contributed to his loss. He thought the American public was "so imbued with cold war propaganda" that it was not ready to accept a shift in national priorities from excess military spending to meeting domestic needs; that his "moral outrage over American military involvement in Vietnam was not shared by most Americans"; that the charges of radicalism, "so carefully nurtured by

¹Gordon L. Weil, The Long Shot: George McGovern Runs For President (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 225; James M. Naughton, "McGovern's Defeat: A Look At Some Factors," New York Times, November 9, 1972, p. 24; and James M. Naughton, "McGovern Vows To Press Nixon on War and National Priorities," New York Times, November 14, 1972, p. 1+.

²Naughton, "McGovern Vows to Press Nixon . . .," ibid.; and Weil, op. cit., pp. 225-227.

Humphrey," resulted in the questioning of McGovern's own abilities to be President; and, that part of the blame goes to his income redistribution proposal--the \$1,000 proposal--whereby every family in America would be guaranteed an income of \$1,000 per annum. McGovern also believed that members of the press were his "villains." In the early days of his campaign he worried about lack of press coverage, but later complained that the reporters "paid too much attention to the mechanics of his campaign and to him personally. . . ." Then, in the general campaign, there seemed to be a double standard. The press was "remarkably soft on Nixon in part because it was intimidated." The administration had striven for "full disclosure of reporter's sources," and it would not mind "stooping to petty harassment in order to show their disapproval of their coverage. . . ." ³

Weil continued to say that the McGovern people "should be careful not to blame the defeat on Humphrey or Eagleton; we can only blame the disaster on them." ⁴ The defeat, he believed, came as a result of the above-mentioned reasons as well as the fact that McGovern was a man who experienced difficulty in communicating with his staff and did not demonstrate confidence in them so that the campaign "suffered from a fatal lack of organizational strength."

³Weil, ibid., pp. 226-232.

⁴Ibid., p. 241.

In a New York Times article, James M. Naughton agreed with Weil and stated that all the "medium-echelon" campaign staff contended the campaign lacked central direction and suffered disorganization as a result. According to Naughton, Gary Hart, Lawrence F. O'Brien and Frank Mankiewicz, the campaign manager, campaign chairman and political coordinator, respectively, were "constantly engaged in intramural scrimmages"; Jeff Smith, a traveling assistant, and Gordon L. Weil, the executive assistant, "got in one another's way trying to do the same tasks"; and, Richard Dougherty, the traveling press secretary, and Kirby Jones, who ran the press office in Washington, "seemed never to be advised of what the other was doing." As Naughton concluded in the article: "It was the year of the ungifted amateur."⁵

Others felt that the Eagleton affair had caused the first serious crack in McGovern's image as the anti-politician, the basis of his support. It may have been just that, but the crack was widened by the "Salinger Affair" involving McGovern's denial that he had authorized Pierre Salinger to approach the North Vietnamese at the Paris Peace Talks for private negotiations in McGovern's

⁵Weil, op. cit., p. 220; Naughton, "McGovern's Defeat . . .", op. cit., p. 24. For a comprehensive discussion of the disorganization of the McGovern campaign and headquarters, see Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973), pp. 313-318.

name. What really shattered this image, however, was McGovern's switch from the "new politics" idea, which he used in the primaries, to that of courting Lyndon Johnson in Texas, revising his economic program to satiate Wall Street, and endorsing the whole Deley Democratic machine in Chicago, thus becoming "just another politician."⁶

Near the end of the campaign several McGovern staffers tried to use Eagleton as a "convenient scapegoat" for what appeared to be the inevitable results of the upcoming election; and many, like Gary Hart, still regard his short candidacy as shattering "any chance McGovern may have had to emerge as a competent leader." McGovern himself appeared on the Dick Cavett show on ABC-TV in December and placed more emphasis on Eagleton's failure to divulge information about his "serious" medical history than he had previously; and, several months later, McGovern was quoted as saying that he would do "anything that was necessary" to frustrate a 1976 Presidential campaign by Senator Eagleton, indicating that he felt Eagleton's medical condition was more serious than earlier contended and he should never have accepted the nomination.⁷ At any rate, debate still

⁶Gary W. Hart, Right From the Start (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1974), pp. 271-272; Hunter S. Thompson, Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), pp. 406-407 and p. 430.

⁷Hart, op. cit., p. 329; "McGovern Calls Eagleton Affair 'Saddest Part'," New York Times, November 16, 1972, p. 24; and Joe McGinnis, "Second Thoughts of George

continues over Eagleton's and McGovern's actions and there is little agreement among the participants. Although Eagleton's candidacy was an important factor, it certainly cannot be espoused as the greatest cause of McGovern's defeat, just the first one.

How did Eagleton's short candidacy affect his own career? His political life since that time can best answer that question. Aside from gaining national recognition, or notoriety as the case may be, Eagleton developed greater power and respect in the Senate as a result of his ordeal. During both the 93rd Congress of 1973-74 and the 94th Congress of 1975-Present, he has sponsored and/or cosponsored over sixty major bills and amendments concerning such things as authorization of \$543.6 million for the Older Americans Act Amendments, a \$268.7 billion ceiling on federal spending for fiscal 1974, the establishment of an Institute on Aging within the National Institutes of Health to research the aging process, the requirement that insurance companies reduce their premium rates if gasoline

McGovern," New York Times, May 6, 1973, pp. 31-32+. McGovern denounced the McGinnis article as "full of inaccurate and fabricated quotations," and was a "disreputable and shoddy piece of journalism." ("McGovern Denies Magazine Report," New York Times, May 6, 1973, p. 42). McGovern was supported by Gloria Emerson who had accompanied McGovern on a trek through South Dakota at the same time as McGinnis and claimed she was with them most of the time when the two conversed. "Further Thoughts About McGovern," New York Times, May 20, 1973, p. 16+.

shortages resulted in a reduction in casualty claims, a bill to provide public financing of primary and general elections for the Senate and House, and the authorization of assistance for demonstration projects designed to develop reform in the criminal justice system in the United States. Many, like the Older American Act Amendments passed Congress; others, like the \$268.7 billion ceiling failed; and, still others, like the reduction of insurance premiums, are still pending. The diversity of the concerns of these and the other bills and amendments are as diverse as the committees and subcommittees on which Eagleton serves and, in most cases, are related to the work he performs on these Senate appointments. Since the election of 1972, he has been on the following:

Committees: Appropriations
 Agriculture & Related Agencies
 District of Columbia
 Environmental and Consumer Protection
 (Off since 94th Congress)
 Labor, Health, Education and Welfare
 State, Justice, Commerce, & Judiciary
 Transportation
 Treasury, Postal Service, General
 Government

Special Sub-
 committees: District of Columbia Municipal
 Affairs (Chairman)
 Aging (Chairman)
 Arts & Humanities
 Labor (Off since 94th Congress)
 Labor & Public Welfare
 National Science Foundation (Off
 since 94th Congress)
 Special Committee on Aging

Senatorial Campaign Committee
Transportation (On since 94th Congress)⁸

During these two Congresses there have been several controversial and important bills advanced by Senator Eagleton. The first one of major importance, and one, incidentally, which kept him in the limelight in the Senate and the public, concerned Indochina bombing funds. The Appropriations Committee adopted Eagleton's amendment to the second fiscal 1973 supplemental appropriations bill "prohibiting the use of past and present appropriations for military activities in Cambodia and Laos."⁹ This broadened a previous amendment which only barred funds from being used in Cambodia. The amendment was adopted along with its parent debt ceiling bill on June 27, 1973. However, the House failed to adopt a similar or sister bill. A compromise amendment was offered by J. W. Fulbright which would cut off all past, present and future funds for U. S. combat activities in North and South Vietnam, Laos and

⁸"Major Congressional Action," Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1973, XXIX (Washington, D. C., Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1974), pp. 222-747; Congressional Index 93rd Congress 1973-74, Vol. I (New York: Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1974), pp. 1870-2182; Congressional Index 94th Congress 1975-76, Vol. I (New York: Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1975), pp. 1869-2091; "Senate Committees, 94th Congress, First Session," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report XXIII (May 1975), pp. 4-17.

⁹Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1973, op. cit., p. 102.

Cambodia after August 15. Eagleton opposed the dropping of his immediate ban statement for Fulbright's August 15 one, stating:

The continued bombing of Cambodia is not an issue that yields to compromise. Congress cannot sanction an unconstitutional and illegal endeavor for "just a little while." There is no way of being just a little bit unconstitutional or just a little bit illegal.

This speech was made to no avail for the House and the Senate adopted the compromise amendment on July 29.¹⁰

The next controversial bill was associated with the U. S. Air Force's airborne warning and control system, or AWACS. This was supposed to be a "computerized, flying command post" designed to direct interceptor planes against the thousands of low-flying Soviet bombers which might be anticipated during an attack from that country. The plan appeared to be obsolete from the beginning because the Soviets only built a few hundred of these bombers instead of thousands, and because the 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev ABM treaty made each country vulnerable to the other's land-and-sea based missiles. Eagleton, apparently recognizing that it might have some shortcomings, proposed an amendment to bar funds for procurement of the system until it was studied for feasibility. After the adoption of the amendment on September 22, 1973, a running battle between

¹⁰Ibid., p. 120.

Eagleton and the Nixon administration developed which lasted for most of 1974.¹¹

Eagleton took time-out during this battle to carry on a campaign for reelection in 1974. He announced his candidacy on April 27, two days after Republican Thomas B. Curtis, the man Eagleton had beaten in the general election in 1968,¹² announced that he would run again. Eagleton, still quite popular in Missouri following the episode with McGovern, gained even more support after he received the second commemorative Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award on May 7, the birthday of the late ex-President. Then, Mrs. Harry S. Truman gave her first political endorsement ever to Eagleton, and she and baseball great Stan Musial served as honorary chairmen of the reelection campaign. Eagleton, still carrying on his battles in Washington, was renominated by a large margin in August and reelected with a 60.1 percent of the vote in the November general election over Curtis and Independent Clifford E. Talmadge.¹³

¹¹Peter J. Ognibene, "The Pentagon Budget: Eagleton's Knife," The New Republic CLXXI (November 16, 1974), p. 9; "Major Congressional Action," op. cit., p. 897.

¹²See Chapter I, p. 6 above.

¹³"Eagleton Makes Re-election Bid Official," New York Times, April 27, 1974, p. 15; "Notes On People," New York Times, May 8, 1974, p. 51; "Notes On People," New York Times, July 9, 1974, p. 43; "Eagleton Renominated," New York Times, August 8, 1974, p. 25; and "Official 1974 Returns for Congress, Governors," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXXIII (April 5, 1975), p. 719.

Eagleton returned to Washington after the election to continue the battle with the administration. After public release of the fact that the AWACS system would not apply to the Soviet bombers, Eagleton asked Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger why the U. S. should spend \$2.5 billion on it. Schlesinger decided that the aircraft could be used to attack the Soviets. Now, we would use it for tactical offense instead of strategic defense for which it was intended. Shortly after this confrontation between the two, the General Accounting Office reported that the system's radar was subject to inexpensive jamming equipment; then, several conscience-stricken workers in the corporations building the outfit reported that books were juggled and, in one case, two sets of books were kept. One was the true set, which fell short of air force specifications, and the other contained "more rosy statistics to show inquiring members of Congress."¹⁴

Eagleton's assistant, Brian Atwood, obtained this information and the two of them passed it on to the Armed Services Committee and to the General Accounting Office. He was thus provided with the opportunity to write into the Committee's Defense spending bill the requirement that the Secretary of Defense certify that the plane would be able to perform its mission and be worth the cost before money

¹⁴Ognibene, op. cit., p. 9.

could be spent on it. The result was that the original \$2.5 billion sought for the project was ultimately cut down to \$580.7 million, not only saving a great deal of money for the public but also gaining Congressional and public praise for the newly-reelected Missouri Senator.¹⁵

Eagleton's longest, and perhaps the most historically pertinent, battle in the Congress was over the War Powers Bill. This was and still is a highly-contested matter both in and out of the Washington arena. Until the Vietnamese fiasco, the President and Congress had not come to the position of deciding what was meant by the Constitutional clause concerning the President's power to engage in hostilities in a foreign country without a declaration of war by Congress.¹⁶ Eagleton began consideration of the legality of U. S. Armed Forces' presence in Southeast Asia almost upon his entry into Congress in 1969. In that year Senator Charles Goodell of New York proposed that:

. . . all American military personnel be withdrawn from Vietnam on or before December 1, 1970; so that retention even of noncombat military training personnel after that date . . . [will] not be permitted without the enactment by Congress of further legislation specifically approving such retention.¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶For an historical background-sketch, discussion and analysis of the War Powers question see Thomas F. Eagleton, War and Presidential Power (New York: Liveright, 1974).

¹⁷Ibid., p. 115.

This was the first open attempt by any member of Congress to assert the rights of that body and end the "illegal" Vietnamese war. Eagleton, who supported Goodell's efforts, used the New York Senator's ideas in Senate Joint Resolution 59, introduced in March, 1971, which was the culmination of a two-year effort by both House and Senate members to pass some sort of War Powers legislation. The bill would curb the "undefined" powers of the President to engage American forces in hostile action in foreign countries. But this bill was not destined for passage either. Instead, a watered-down version of the bill was worked out in a House and Senate Conference. Whereas Eagleton's bill called for immediate cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of American troops and prohibited the use of troops without Congressional approval, the compromise bill limited to sixty days troop commitments abroad which had not been authorized by Congress, and allowed another thirty days for the "safe withdrawal of U. S. troops." The compromise bill was passed by Congress, vetoed by President Nixon, and adopted by Congress on November 7, 1974 by overriding the veto. Eagleton turned abruptly about and opposed the compromise bill calling it "worse than no bill at all," and "an open-ended blank check for 90 days of war-making anywhere in the world by the President of the United States."¹⁸ It appears

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 121-208; and Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1973, op. cit., pp. 907-916.

to be just that and the controversy will probably arise again in the future if and when a President sends troops to a foreign country for the purpose of hostile actions.

The last major battle Eagleton has waged, and that recently, involved aid to Turkey. On December 4, 1974 an amendment cosponsored by Eagleton and Representatives Benjamin S. Rosenthal of New York and John Brademas of Indiana was attached by Congress to foreign aid legislation cutting off all military aid to Turkey "in reprisal for the Turkish use of American weapons in the invasion of Cypress." During the early months of 1975, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger placed great pressure upon Eagleton in an effort to prod Congress into allowing the resumption of aid to Turkey. Ford put Eagleton on the spot in January stating that the arms cut-off "will adversely affect Western security generally, with serious consequences to the strategic situation in the Middle East." Eagleton called the Administration's statements "dangerously irresponsible," and warned that:

If Turkey misreads the American political process, as I believe the Administration is, they may be mistakenly encouraged to take initiatives which contradict their own national interest.¹⁹

¹⁹Thomas F. Eagleton, Pro, "The Controversy Over Proposals For Immediate Cutoff of U. S. Aid to Turkey," The Congressional Digest, LIV (April, 1975), p. 108+; "New Sale of Arms to Turkey," New York Times, January 23, 1975, p. 1+; Clayton Fritchey, "A Comeback in Washington: Senator Eagleton of Missouri," Nashville Tennessean, February 27, 1975, p. 6.

In February Congress adopted the embargo of arms shipments to Turkey and a diplomatic tug of war began between the two nations while a similar battle continued between the Administration and Congress for the next several months. In early July, after nearly five months of the embargo, Turkey warned of the impending closing of U. S. bases in Turkey in an effort to force the House of Representatives to lift the embargo, something the Senate had voted to do in June. The House rejected the attempts at "blackmail" by Turkey and "persuasion" by the Administration on July 24, and two days later Turkey took control of all U. S. bases in that country, closing them shortly afterwards. On August 1 it was Eagleton who led the fight to prevent passage of a hastily assembled bill which would allow Ford partially to lift the embargo. He was successful in preventing the passage for the time being. However, the House reversed itself on October 2 and voted partially to lift the embargo, thus giving the Ford Administration a victory and Eagleton a loss. Even with this, Turkey allowed U. S. operations to resume at only a few of the former U. S. bases, so that the Ford victory was not complete.²⁰

²⁰"House Refuses Arms To Turkey, Rebuffing Ford," New York Times, July 25, 1975, p. 1; "Turkey Is Halting Most Operations At Bases of U. S.," New York Times, July 26, 1975, p. 1; "House Maneuver Upholds Arms Embargo on Turkey," New York Times, August 1, 1975, p. 1+; and "Congress Eases Turkish Arms Embargo," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXXIII (October 4, 1975), p. 2095.

Today Eagleton is still the hardworking, dedicated man that he showed himself to be upon entry into the Senate in 1969. The events of 1972 in which he was involved have more than likely ruined any and all chances for Eagleton to rise to the executive level in the federal government. This seems not to have daunted his spirit. He was quoted in April, 1975 as saying he had no plans to enter the race for President or Vice-President in 1976, remarking that he had reached the peak of his political career. He stated, "I have reached the full limitations of my ambitions."²¹ To date he has not entered either of the races or given an endorsement to anyone who has. Even after the exposure he received in 1972, Eagleton appears still not to be very widely-known across the country by the public. If you ask someone who Thomas Eagleton is, eight times out of ten he or she does not know unless you mention his name in conjunction with George McGovern and the 1972 election. But, he is widely-known and well-respected in both Missouri and the Senate and, since the "limitations" of his ambitions have placed no limit on his ability to perform in the Senate, it looks like he might be a member of that august body for some time to come and with considerably more power than he had before 1972.

²¹ New York Times, April 27, 1975, p. 21.

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