

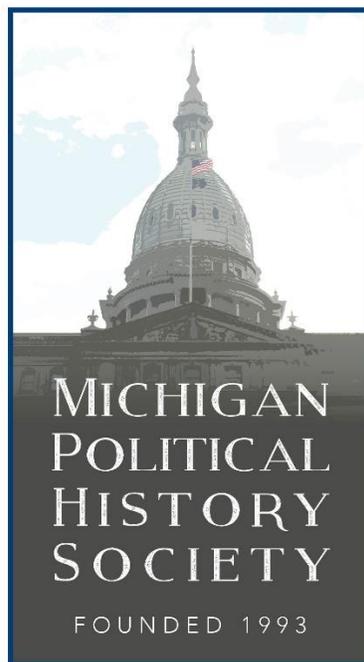
# **BOBBY CRIM**

Interviewed by

Lynn Jondahl

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Lynn Jondahl: Hi, I'm Lynn Jondahl. Today I'm having a conversation with the honorable Bobby Crim. Bobby is former speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, active in the Genesee County Community Flint area, which he represented. We want to talk to Bobby about his perspective on Michigan politics, during this period of time in which he's been active. Good to talk with you Bobby.

Bobby Crim: Good to be here, Lynn, Thank you.

Lynn Jondahl: If we haven't conned you into being here today, talking here, what would be a typical July day for Bobby Crim in 2008?

Bobby Crim: Well, I'd be out running about six, seven or eight miles because I still do a lot of running. I still do a lot of road races as well. And I'd probably be contacting playmakers because I'm working with them on a race in September for special Olympics to help fund Special Olympics in Ingham and Eaton County, it's area eight of Special Olympics.

Lynn Jondahl: So this is an expansion of the Crim roadway.

Bobby Crim: Well, wherever I'm at, I work with Special Olympics. When I'm in Florida, I help with the Polk County Special Olympics. Here this is the Eaton county one, area eight, I helped them because that's a fundraiser. The September 21st autumn classic is a fundraiser for this area. And then many days I'll drive up to Flint because the Crim road race that's coming up and the Crim fitness foundation. So I managed to keep pretty busy all the time now. Special Olympics has always been a special thing for me.

Lynn Jondahl: Are you reading anything?

Bobby Crim: I'm reading a lot of things as a matter of fact. I have the opportunity to go back and read Hemingway again, read Mark Twain again. I read most of the books by Jimmy Carter. I've read the Soapy Williams book. I've read the book by Dempsey on governor Milliken. I got a book on all the presidents and their backgrounds now it's about 2000 pages that I'm starting. So I've got an opportunity now to do a lot of reading that I didn't have before.

Lynn Jondahl: A lot of biography.

Bobby Crim: yeah, a lot of biographies.

Lynn Jondahl: Yeah, but a lot of political biographies, it sounds.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, because that's my interest and I love to go back in and find out things about people that I didn't know about. Harry Truman, I've read everything of course that's ever been written about him or by him because I'm originally from Missouri, graduated from high school there and got to meet Harry Truman on several occasions. As a matter of fact, that's one of the things first started me being interested in politics. I met him and became in 1948 when I was just beginning my senior year in high school, a young Truman Dem, and he came and talked to us and I actually saw him make a stump speech in a corner of a cotton field, when he was running in 1948.

Lynn Jondahl: Talk about that, your initial interest in politics. You were born and raised through high school in Missouri?

Bobby Crim: Yes, yes, I was born and raised there in the southeastern corner, it's called boot heel, Missouri because it drops down into Arkansas and Tennessee. It's only about 90 miles north of Memphis actually. But this was farm country and I grew up on a farm and Harry used to come down with the farmers and Harry was a World War II veteran and he belonged to the American Legion and there was a fair each year down in that area.

Lynn Jondahl: He was in the US Senate?

Bobby Crim: He was in the US Senate at the time. Yes. He was a US senator at the time and he used to come down to that fair and go to the American Legion and play poker with his buddies and drink bourbon and branch water and so forth. So Harry was quite a figure and the people in southern Missouri really loved him and voted for him overwhelmingly and up in Kansas City area. The sailors, pollsters patch used to beat him up a lot. He used to lose in the Saint Louis area, but he came down what he called the cornbread and buttermilk route down in southern Missouri and the southern farmers down there loved him. So we got to see him a lot.

Lynn Jondahl: Do you think he was an influence, a significant one for you personally in terms of liking what you saw in the political life?

Bobby Crim: Yeah, I think he was a unique person. You know, he was one of those people kind of like Bill Ryan who never had a college education, but was extremely bright and well read.

Lynn Jondahl: Bill Ryan who was Speaker of the House.

Bobby Crim: Speaker of the house in Michigan. We'll talk about him a little later. I was impressed with him. Initially I think that's what got me interested in politics. There were other things later on that, that peaked it as well.

Lynn Jondahl: How about your family? Was that unusual for you to have that interest?

Bobby Crim: Yes, because I grew up in a family, I never knew my father. The male in the home was the grandfather who could neither read nor write. He could draw his name. That's the best he could do. Nobody had an education above the eighth grade until my sister and I graduated from high school. So my interest in politics, of course everybody was interested in politics down there, but my depth of interest in politics was unusual in my family.

Lynn Jondahl: So what did you do when you finished high school?

Bobby Crim: Well, I decided just to run around the country and I worked at several jobs, a meat packing job in Albert Lee, Minnesota at Wilson, worked at a canning plant in Illinois, I worked at Caterpillar tractor. I came to Flint and started working in a Buick plant in June of 1950.

Lynn Jondahl: 1950. Do you remember what brought you specifically to Flint? Was it just, Buick was hiring?

Bobby Crim: I hadn't been to Flint and I had an uncle here and he said, hey, great jobs here better than you're getting paid at Peoria, at the caterpillar plants. So, I'm 18 years old, and I decided I'm coming to Flint.

Lynn Jondahl: 1950.

Bobby Crim: 1950. So I came to Flint immediately, got a job at Buick. Of course I was only here a few months in the Korean War broke out and I went into the navy at that time and spend four years in service and came out and came back to Flint at that point.

Lynn Jondahl: So you went from high school? That was two years after high school you came to Flint.

Bobby Crim: Well actually it's a year, a year and a half. I graduated in '49.

Lynn Jondahl: '49, okay, then into the navy, back to Flint which you identified as home at that point.

Bobby Crim: At that point it became that because I had a job waiting for me and I intended to go to college and use the GI Bill.

Lynn Jondahl: You had a job waiting for you, at Buick?

Bobby Crim: My seniority went on, all through the four years I was in service, my seniority went on. And when I got back, I worked for several months before starting to

college, using my GI bill to go to college. Nice thing was CS Mott had put in a great community college and then a branch of the University of Michigan was there.

Lynn Jondahl: So that started as a community college that Mott granted money for.

Bobby Crim: He granted money for the Mott community college and then about 129 million to help establish the third and fourth year, which was a branch of the University of Michigan, a satellite of the University of Michigan. So I was able to get my four-year degree there while working part time and the like.

Lynn Jondahl: Did you do it in four years?

Bobby Crim: Took me four and a half.

Lynn Jondahl: And you worked at Buick all that time?

Bobby Crim: No, I did not work at Buick all that time. I worked at associated trucking, I worked as a bartender, whatever job was available in the summertime. I basically worked at associated trucking, which had a good job. I got in a lot of hours and so was able to bring in pretty good revenue during that time.

Lynn Jondahl: You said if you weren't here today, you'd be running six miles or so, were you running then?

Bobby Crim: No, I wasn't. I didn't really start back running until about 1968, '69 and I weighed about 40 pounds more than I weigh now.

Lynn Jondahl: Ah, okay. Is that why you started running?

Bobby Crim: That's one of the reasons I started running. I looked at myself and I said, Hey, you know, this is not you. So I decided to lose some weight and one of my secretary says about time. So I said, well, I'm going to, and it took me about six or eight months. I got it off and started running, and then not too long after that, started running road races and I've run around 850 to 900 races since then.

Lynn Jondahl: So you're finishing up with a degree in what?

Bobby Crim: Education and minor in political science.

Lynn Jondahl: So you've got a teaching credential?

Bobby Crim: Got a teaching credential and started working in Davison, Michigan, teaching social studies and government there. This is what really got me back into politics again and got my interest back in politics again. Of course, JFK, I think 1960, I

think it was a sort of a peak for all of us and and got us interested, but I was teaching, I'd take my classes down to the local council meetings. I had only been there a couple of years when one of the commissioners had a heart attack and came to me and says, I'm not going to run. Why don't you run? And I said, well, I want to live here a couple of years. So he said, I'll get your petition signed for you.

Bobby Crim: A little sidelight to this, he was the father of John Sinclair. John Sinclair of note who went to jail because he had two or three marijuana cigarettes. He was very, very conservative. John Sinclair senior was unlike a junior and I taught next door to Elsie Sinclair who was the mother of John Sinclair. But anyway, I went door to door and there was I think four or five people running for two seats and nobody had really carried on a door to door campaign before. So even though I'd only lived there a couple of years, I did have a council man supporting me and I went door to door and I got more votes than the other three or four combined. So that started my career again and my interest again in politics.

Lynn Jondahl: This was on the Flint council?

Bobby Crim: This was on the Davison city council, Davison city council in 1961.

Lynn Jondahl: How long did you serve there?

Bobby Crim: I served there and after a couple of years teaching in Davidson, I went to Flint because I got a raise with about \$6,000 to go to Flint where I was the only teacher in the system teaching hall government. Then came the constitutional convention total reapportionment one man, one vote, and there was a district there that was normally Republican, but if you recall in 1964 was a great year for Democrats. So I put my name in the hat and won the primary and then went on to win the general in 1964.

Lynn Jondahl: All right. '64, you had been teaching then in the Flint district?

Bobby Crim: I was teaching in the Flint district at the time.

Lynn Jondahl: Right, and you had sat on but then had to leave the Davidson Council when you moved to Flint?

Bobby Crim: I was still on the Davison council and I resigned from the council of course when I won the election and Dale Kildee who was another teacher in the city of Flint, he and I won at the same time and went into the legislature in January of '65. Interesting thing about it, this was the first one man, one vote legislature, 1965. 55 of us were freshmen legislators. 55.

Lynn Jondahl: Out of one hundred ten.

Bobby Crim: Out of a hundred ten. One half was freshmen legislators. The press got all hyped up and said oh well, maybe the freshmen will take over, the 55 freshmen, both Democrats and Republicans will get together and elect their own leadership and all that stuff. They tried to get this thing going. Of course, that never happened. But it was an interesting thing. 55 people, first time in the legislature and the legislature was different then than now. You had no staff at all hardly, no telephones. It was four or five telephone booths back in the room back there, which is now the Thatcher Room. And if you've got a telephone call, they'd call you and then plugged you in, you went back and took your telephone call there.

Bobby Crim: We had a secretary for about every six people that we shared, and you didn't have much time with a secretary, especially if you had one guy that wanted to monopolize it, like Dale Kildee.

Lynn Jondahl: And I won't forget that.

Bobby Crim: But it was a great experience of course, Joe Kowalski, new speaker, first democratic speaker in forever.

Lynn Jondahl: So that was '64.

Bobby Crim: '65, '66 session.

Lynn Jondahl: So that was a democratic majority.

Bobby Crim: Oh, we had 73 members.

Lynn Jondahl: Preceding year, how many?

Bobby Crim: 48, 50, maybe something like that.

Lynn Jondahl: So it went from about 50 to 70.

Bobby Crim: Well the cows and the trees and the rocks were not voting anymore. Before that you'd have in the upper peninsula or upper lower peninsula, you'd have maybe 5,000 to 8,000 in a district, maybe, and maybe less than that in the upper peninsula. Down in the Detroit area, the urban areas, you would have 20, 25,000 in a district. Now, this all changed. And of course, that was a boom for Democrats, because the urban area was now who's now getting involved and was represented. So we had 73 members. Just one shy of the two thirds majority needed as a matter of fact.

Lynn Jondahl: Where was Kowalski from?

Bobby Crim: Kowalski was from the Detroit area, from the UAW. He was quite a guy. Loyalty was big with him and I always remember him for that. I always remember he had some kind of fungus and he always had to wear white socks. He'd always say, oh the old white socks. He called me and he says, "now Crim, He said, I know you're been a teacher. And he says, now, I've got a special thing for you and I expect you to appreciate it. You're going to be vice chairman of House Education Committee." And that was his way of saying, I'm going to do this for you, you better be loyal to me because he was big on loyalty. He had a lot of these sessions in his room at night up until 11 or 12 o'clock, whole court kind of thing. He was quite a guy, the old wine, Democrat and coming out of coming out of the UAW.

Lynn Jondahl: He had been there prior to this, '64 election.

Bobby Crim: Oh yeah, yeah. He was minority leader, as a matter of fact, the year before.

Lynn Jondahl: Did you spend that term working on education things? Was that where you spent your free time?

Bobby Crim: A lot of it, a lot of it. This was the first time that we really begin to look at the rich districts were versus poor districts and the expenditure of educational funds.

Lynn Jondahl: The gap.

Bobby Crim: The gap between the two and we had to develop, what we did was we had a three tier formula to attack it because it needed to be attacked badly because you had districts that could levy one mil and raise as much as another district that had to raise eight or 10 mils to raise that much.

Lynn Jondahl: Because the value of the property.

Bobby Crim: It was that valuation district of property and everything. So it took us a long time and we fought hard on this because there was a lot of people that were getting hurt, the rich districts were getting hurt, the poor district for getting helped. We finally passed it and Clif Smart, a Republican who later became minority leader was very instrumental in getting that done as well. And we really did a lot of things on worker's comp, unemployment comp, that was years and years behind, in that 65 and 66. I was also chief sponsor of the auxiliary services bill, which said that church schools and private schools would get help in busing, get help in school guard crossings, immunization and things of this nature. It was a very, very active two years because the legislature in our viewpoint was years and years behind.

Lynn Jondahl: When you say in our viewpoint, you're talking about a democratic majority?

Bobby Crim: Yes.

Lynn Jondahl: A that point, what stands out as maybe the major accomplishment. Was it just the change in mood or was it a particular, I don't mean mood. But the change in orientation.

Bobby Crim: It was tremendously different. I mean it was like, you went from the darkness into the light almost. I mean, it was conservative to liberal all of a sudden, and there was so many problems that we as the Democratic majority felt it had to be addressed in education was one of the chief ones. I mean, this was so bad and we had so many schools, we had so many k four, k six, k fives, and we began to consolidate those. We began the legislation, they begin to consolidate school districts because you had these people going to k through eights and you had on k through five and so forth. Then you had small high schools that were graduating classes of 10, 12. What kind of an education could they get? You know, what kind of curriculum could you offer? Could they become doctors, lawyers, engineers? They had no possibility of getting the background to get into college for those kinds of things. So that was one of the things that we really started at that time as well.

Lynn Jondahl: But there had to be at a lot of resistance, even from the schools.

Bobby Crim: There was a lot of resistance from schools, school boards, they all, well it was good enough for me, I graduated from there. And not only that, you had all these people who were on these little school boards and they would lose their positions and all those were important little positions in those communities, I think. So it wasn't without a lot of fight and it wasn't all done in two years. We just started doing it.

Lynn Jondahl: Where did these majority Democrats, these new people in office, what kind of backgrounds did they have? Can you characterize it?

Bobby Crim: You can. I mean it was across the spectrum. Many of them came from unions. Some of them came teachers for the first time.

Lynn Jondahl: How long were you in each year.

Bobby Crim: Oh, we were in, I would say, eight months to nine months. We had long sessions because there was so much we thought had to be done and so many things we wanted to do that we didn't have many vacations and many much time.

Lynn Jondahl: I interrupt you. I raised that because I'm trying to think. So people were really having to give up jobs to be there.

Bobby Crim: oh yeah.

Lynn Jondahl: So what was the kind of background they reflected?

Bobby Crim: It came from all sorts, we even had some housewives. We had janitors, we had factory workers, we had teachers, we had, you know, I mean, you name it and it was across the spectrum. And in most cases or not most cases, but many cases, they had no idea they were going to get elected. I remember one guy from Macomb county, I believe it was who said, "I filed in the last half hour. They came and got me and wanted me to file." He said, "I had no idea that I was going to win." That's how many we picked up. We picked up at least 25 to 30 seats, I think it was, 25 I'd say in that election. Then, the sad story came in 1966.

Lynn Jondahl: What happened?

Bobby Crim: In 1966, the election of 1966, we lost 19 seats in the house, 19 seats. It went from becoming a huge democratic year in 1964, to a down year for democrats, big year for republicans, 67. Off year election, no national election.

Lynn Jondahl: We should remember that '64 was a big year for democrats nationally. LBJ versus Goldwater.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. That was a huge year for democrats. It went all the way down to the courthouse, to the White House in terms of electing Democrats that year. The next year we lost 19 seats. I lost my seat by a little over 100 votes. It was the closest one. When people say votes don't count, I lost my seat by about, less than a vote a precinct, on the average. That decided who controlled the Michigan legislature for the next two years. That one seat, that one vote.

Lynn Jondahl: In '66, the election turned out 55.

Bobby Crim: 55.

Lynn Jondahl: 55 democrats, 55 republicans. Who organized them? What happened?

Bobby Crim: Well, because we had a traitor in our midst, O'Brien, a representative from the Detroit area, decided that he would join the republicans and give them the opportunity to organize. For that, he got a committee chairmanship, and the ability to travel. I never forgave him. Neither did a lot of other democrats.

Lynn Jondahl: What committee did he chair?

Bobby Crim: I don't remember what they gave him because it wasn't that important. He just wanted to travel I think.

Lynn Jondahl: Right.

Bobby Crim: It wasn't a major committee. I don't recall exactly what committee it was.

Lynn Jondahl: There were equal number of democrats and republicans. But on the votes to organize, who would be the speaker and the leadership, he chose to support the republican candidate.

Bobby Crim: Yeah.

Lynn Jondahl: What did Bobby do after the votes came in and he no longer was a member of the house?

Bobby Crim: There was a study by a university of Chicago professor, on K-12 education. The Thomas study it was called. I was asked to join that. I did for the next year. The Thomas study still is worth looking at. There's a lot of good things.

Lynn Jondahl: The study of Michigan.

Bobby Crim: Michigan, well and K-12 education and principally in Michigan. There were professors from UofM, Michigan State University, Wayne State University. A lot of staff people. Thomas brought some people with him, and made some recommendations about K-12 education after a year. I spent one year on that and I was working on my masters at that time as well.

Lynn Jondahl: Were you down at Flint, at UofM?

Bobby Crim: No I had to go down on campus to get most of my masters. But one of the things that came out of that and I think Minnesota adopted, was base revenue sharing. In other words, an urban area like Minneapolis Saint Paul, would share the base with all the surrounding area and the surrounding area was getting great growth while the urban area wasn't. It didn't share the base going back forever, it started at a point. From now on, we'll share tax base. That's something that I think would have been good and would have done a great deal for Michigan if we had adopted something like that.

Bobby Crim: The Thomas study basically has, and he wanted to share also another recommendation, was to share the industrial tax base. It's been looked at a lot and there's a lot of good recommendations in there. It should be dusted off again and looked at because a lot of time and effort and I think good recommendations.

Lynn Jondahl: That largely funding matter, I mean it was largely education funding. Was it also curriculum?

Bobby Crim: There was not much about curriculum. It was mostly because the problem in most area and most states is the funding and trying to get equal opportunities

for students in no matter where they may live. That was the principal portion of it was looking at the tax base.

Lynn Jondahl: See that issue as the key issue, the funding gaps and inequities and adequacy sounds like today, doesn't it?

Bobby Crim: It's not as bad as it used to be. But it's getting bad again. There is still that discrepancy there, as I say, not as bad as it was post 1965, '66. But it's still there and it still should be addressed and the taxation and the evaluation problem. The revenue sharing, the base revenue sharing, that's extremely important. I don't know how you'd ever get it done at this point. But that's extremely important and would do a lot for education, would do a lot for people coming in, perspective employers and everybody else I think.

Lynn Jondahl: In moving from the Davidson schools to the Flint schools, was there a big difference in terms of what you could do in the classroom just in terms of resources.

Bobby Crim: Oh a lot more resources in Flint because you had the community school concept being funded C.S. Mott foundation.

Lynn Jondahl: All right, yes, private funding there.

Bobby Crim: Private funds. So it was a tremendous thing you could do. I had two classes that were special classes. A, B students, high IQ students, and that sort of thing. You could do wonderful things. We did mock trials. We studied the constitutional convention that was coming up and the proposed constitution, the new constitution. We did a lot of things and we had the resources to do them and Davidson didn't have. That was a situation where it was rich versus poor. But it was private funding more than anything else that made the difference there. It was C.S. Mott foundation.

Lynn Jondahl: All right, you come back and served a term. You came out, worked with the folks on the Thomas study. Did you get involved in or stay involved in the community, political activity.

Bobby Crim: I went back on the city council in Davidson as a matter of fact. There was a vacancy there. They reappointed me and I went back there. Then I was appointed by the council to serve on the county commission which was about 60 some members at that time.

Lynn Jondahl: So you were still a member on the council but you were a representative to the council.

Bobby Crim: Yes, yes. There was about 60 some member at that time. That was before the one man, one vote.

Lynn Jondahl: Yes.

Bobby Crim: It extended to county commissions at that time. Then I went to work for the Tennessee Intermediate School District as the State and Federal Director of Programs. Back then, craftsmanship was big. I mean we wrote programs for everything. Got a tremendous amount of help and then the county commission went one man, one vote, came to me and said we'll give an extra five to eight thousand dollars to come and help us set up the county commission. The new county commission. So I went there and helped do that, got them all set.

Lynn Jondahl: The commission had been a representative body of people sent from local.

Bobby Crim: Local units of government appointed them. And this was one of those situations where the city of Flint had about eight or 10 reps, a small township might have three.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay.

Bobby Crim: Then it became one man, one vote. Nine members of the commission rather than 60 some, and I became the board coordinator for them and my assistant wrote all the rules and regulations and the pay scales and everything else.

Lynn Jondahl: This was then a staff position.

Bobby Crim: Yes.

Lynn Jondahl: You still were on the Davidson Council?

Bobby Crim: Oh yeah, I was on the Davidson council and sat on the old commission until the new commission, the old county commission, until the new commission was elected. Then of course after that I was tapped by the speaker to come in for various things and then finally asked to be the executive secretary for Bill Ryan.

Lynn Jondahl: When did Bill Ryan become the speaker? He was the representative from Detroit.

Bobby Crim: Yep. He became speaker 1969 after the 1968 election when we took over again, when democrats took over the house again.

Lynn Jondahl: And so he hired you, contracted with you for a specific project.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. I was to be chief of staff for him and at that time the staff was kind of a misnomer. We had four or five people in one room and reps came in, there was no privacy or anything else. There weren't enough staff members. Can you imagine 65 or 70 legislators with four or five staff members, that's what it was. So when I became executive secretary, Bill Ryan said, "You got to build a staff. That's your baby. Go build a staff." And I said, "We don't have any room." He says, "We'll get some room." He built over floors, if you remember the over floors.

Lynn Jondahl: Before the capital was restored.

Bobby Crim: Yep, we built the over floor. Every staff member had their own little cubical and phone, and typewriter and so forth. We set up a structure to determine if they were people who could do a good staff job. They had to write papers, they had to come in answer questions, all kind of things and we began to build a staff. In four years, by the time I ran for office again and became majority floor leader, we had about 25 staff members, good staff members, the best staff in Lansing. I don't care where. That was the best staff. Later on that became a real plus for me because that staff was a good staff. They were so good, they even made me look good at times and that was an accomplishment.

Lynn Jondahl: How did you get by with it. I mean wasn't there political outcry that you're building an empire there of legislators and staffers.

Bobby Crim: There was. The press began to question it some and we began to tell the press, look, our legislators have to be knowledgeable legislators. How can they do that without staff people, without help, without research. And also it didn't become a political problem because the republicans got their share of staff members too. We sort of set it up on a structure of how many reps you have, how many staff members you get. So the republicans were pleased to be getting their staff members to help their representatives as well. So over a period of four years, we built pretty good staff. So, I think ours was by far a better staff.

Bobby Crim: The republicans, I think made a mistake of hiring some of their republican friends and that. We set up a structure. I had some organizations that would say to me, "I want you to hire this person." I'd say, "Well let's look at them and let's see how they pan out." They'd write a paper and it would be terrible and I'd say, "Can't do it."

Lynn Jondahl: These would be organizations that were active in the party and so on.

Bobby Crim: Exactly. Yep. And we'd turn them down. They'd say, "Well, we got to hire them." I'd say, "No, we don't because you expect this staff to produce. You expect this legislature to produce. Can't do it unless we have adequate staff and good staff." And so we got away with it and we built that staff.

Lynn Jondahl: Right. What were the numbers now in terms of the majority in the house.

Bobby Crim: At that time, I think, we had 70. I think we had, no 68, I believe it was.

Lynn Jondahl: Yeah.

Bobby Crim: I believe it was 68 that we had and either 66 or 68. Then we built it to 68, then built it to 70 because I remember Cawthorne.

Lynn Jondahl: Dennis Cawthorne

Bobby Crim: Dennis Cawthorne was a minority leader later and he says, "Gee I don't know what's going to happen." I remember the press said to me, "You've got 70 members now, what do you want." I said, "I want the republicans to meet in their caucus in a telephone booth." I said, it was 70-40 at that time. And I said that would make me happy at that point. Anything less than that is not happiness.

Lynn Jondahl: All right. So you were then working for the speaker and then chose to run again?

Bobby Crim: Yeah, I chose to run again. Redistricting was coming about again, every 10 years of course. So as a result of the '70 census, well the redistricting in 1972, a district in my area looked to be about 51, 52 percent democratic and so I decided to run. The speaker wanted me to run. He said, "I view you as a potential, future speaker. You've got to get back in." So I decide to run and won fairly easily as a matter of fact and then was elected by my caucus which I thought was nice. Before I was sworn in, the caucus met and I was elected majority floor leader actually before I was sworn in.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay.

Bobby Crim: Because the caucus met in late November. I wasn't really sworn in until January. So I was still technically the executive secretary until the first of the year.

Lynn Jondahl: Oh so you moved from the staff position to become the floor leader.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. And that was in 1972 to 1974.

Lynn Jondahl: So those two years. Talk to us a little about Bill Ryan and working with him. He was a representative from Detroit, became speaker. You talked about him a while ago in terms of a person with a background not unlike your own. I think he worked in the labor movement.

Bobby Crim: He was in the labor movement. He was an ex-marine and he worked in the labor union and he actually edited a newspaper for the labor union as a matter of fact

and did quite well at it as you might know. Bill Ryan to me was, he was my mentor. He was a father figure. He was the best person I've ever known. He had least self-serving motives than anybody I've ever seen in my entire life. He had a great effect on me and my outlook about people, about legislation, everything just about. So he was my mentor.

Lynn Jondahl: Where did he get his values?

Bobby Crim: He almost became a priest.

Lynn Jondahl: Oh is that right?

Bobby Crim: Yeah, yeah. He was in the seminar and a very religious person. Everything to him was about fairness, about equity. In other words, everybody should have a chance to succeed. Everybody should have an opportunity. Even in his community, and he lived in mostly a black community, he would have the kids and he would put them on unemployment comp. He'd say, okay I'm going to hire four of you. But two of you are going to be working this week and two of you aren't going to be working. But I'm going to still give you some money. This is the kind of guy he was.

Lynn Jondahl: This is work on his yard.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, he was working for him on his yard and stuff of that nature. He was like this in everything. I mean he was the epitome of fairness and honesty and the best speaker that this state has ever seen by far, and we've seen a couple of good ones and some not so good. But he's the cream of the crop, there's no doubt about it. He just got tired out. He just got tired out and wore down and he wanted to get out of the speakership so that he could do some things on his own, some issues that he wanted to really pound on. So in 1974, he said to me, I'm not running. You've got to run. So I decided to run for speaker and my caucus was gracious enough to elect me in 1974, November, and then started the '75 session.

Lynn Jondahl: Let's talk about your term as speaker. But before we do that, another question about Bill Ryan, he then stayed in the legislature, and as I recall, did he chair the housing urban affairs committee. He focused on housing.

Bobby Crim: He focused on that and it was always laughable. He'd have these projects and he'd come to me, I need a staff member because, and I'd say, I don't care what you need it for, who do you want? So I'd give him whatever he wanted in terms of staff and he knew he was going to be treated that way and so he could follow some of the things that he wanted to do. He was a workaholic who 70, 80 hours a week. I remember when I was executive secretary, we used to come in on

Sunday afternoons and get prepared for the next week for the calendar, for his press conference that he held, weekly if they wanted him to.

Bobby Crim: As long as they would show up, Bill would have his weekly press conference. We used to come in say Sunday afternoons, spend hours getting ready for the next week. That was another trademark of his, preparedness and logic. He was the most logical person I've ever met. If you want to get into a debate with him, you'd better not let him set the first brick. You're in trouble. You better challenge early on or you're in trouble. But needless to say he's the best person, the best man I've ever met in my life.

Lynn Jondahl: Yeah, it's a tribute to him I think, great man. The '74, you became, well '75.

Bobby Crim: '75, became speaker.

Lynn Jondahl: All right. You became speaker. What was happening around then? There was a lot of racial tension wasn't there in, I don't know, did it come out in that?

Bobby Crim: Yeah, busing, all these kind of things were big ...

Lynn Jondahl: School integration.

Bobby Crim: It was always big, especially in the suburbs. One of things, just on the side light, one of the things I attributed losing my election in 1966 was there was black family that moved into Grand Blanc which was a suburb, one of the richest suburbs in the area. I went out and sat with them one night. It became well known. I lost a lot of votes in that area because of that and it might have cost my party the majority.

Lynn Jondahl: Majority.

Bobby Crim: The majority the next year because of it. But I thought it was the right thing to do and it was the Bill Ryan thing to do. But yeah, there were a lot of racial tensions.

Lynn Jondahl: Did that show up in the caucus and in the legislature?

Bobby Crim: To some extent but I don't think it did a lot. One of the things that I'm pleased about that I was able to do was to put three blacks on appropriations where there had been blacks before Joe Young, Sr, Morris Hood, Earl Nelson. And we had several black chairman of committees and so forth. I continued to do what Bill Ryan had started and that was to break the precedent of seniority in appointments to appropriations and other things. I began to use a formula that took into consideration several things that Ryan and I developed.

Lynn Jondahl: That only you knew.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, well I would tell him about experience. I would tell him about geography, I'd tell him about to some extent the seniority would play a part of it. We had four or five points that we'd use. When it came down to it, I had made up my mind who I wanted to appoint and then I applied the formula, and pretty soon people again say, he is, no, no, who, you know, what's going on here. And one of the things too is during my time as speaker, we had people begin to come into the legislature, like, for instance, David Hollister, Mary Brown, Jeff Padden, Lynn Jondahl, David Bonior. Known to some as the Kitty Caucus. This was one of the things that played a very important role. Many people don't really, I don't know, don't know the kind of role that the Kitty Caucus played. The new members of the legislature began to want to open things up a little more, especially appropriations. The older members of course, on appropriations, wanted to keep things tight because they could then put appropriations in that helped their areas, and sort of control the appropriations process.

Bobby Crim: Ryan and I discussed this several times, and said, you know, we've got to do something about it. The Kitty Caucus played a large role because they begin to put pressure on; hey, we want to know what's going on in appropriations. I began to go to the older members, say, look, the press is beginning to ask questions about these things. And these guys are asking some legitimate questions; you know, we've got to loosen up some. Oh, yeah, but they want to take over. That was the thing. No, no, they just want information. They want to know what's going on. The upshot was that when it was all over, the caucus held a caucus for each appropriation bill. Everybody came, the members of the subcommittee in charge of that appropriation explained it, and answered questions about it.

Lynn Jondahl: So prior to this, a bill would come from appropriations, go to the floor, and be voted up or down, whatever, and now you were putting in another step in which the caucus would meet to have an analysis, a review of what was in that bill.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. Strange enough, after a while, the Republicans began to adopt this, you know. But it was something, because it would take sometimes two hours on one bill in caucus with the questions and everything that occurred. The thing that happened was that appropriation members began to understand that they were going face questions about what was in that budget. And why it was in that budget. So it had a great effect on the appropriations process; it had a great effect on the process, because when it got to the floor, people knew what was in the bill. When somebody offered amendment, they understood what was happening as a result of that amendment. Before, they said, what does this amendment do? You know, everybody was running around. Because they didn't

know what was in the bill initially anyway. So it changed the process a lot, so you and the new members, the younger members, had a tremendous effect, a lasting effect on the process.

Lynn Jondahl: There was, speaking of openness, that was an era where major freedom of information, those kinds of legislative proposals came law as well, right?

Bobby Crim: Yes, it did. Yeah, they did. That was the real openness area, I think, of the legislature, and they applied it outside the legislative process as well. Yeah. It really was, and that was a time when I got along well with Bill Milliken. Let's talk about him a little bit.

Lynn Jondahl: Bill Milliken the Republican governor.

Bobby Crim: He was there the whole 14 years that I was there, he was governor. The four years I was executive secretary, two years of majority floor leader, the eight years as speaker, we paralleled each other. And I got to where I got along with him very, very well. As a matter of fact, he played an important role when it came to taxation. We had a system developed under Ryan, and when I was floor leader, if a tax vote came up, Republicans had to furnish part of the votes, and the leadership had to vote for the taxes as well. Governor Milliken played a role in urging them to be a part of that system, and when my people were on the floor pushing for the vote, Bill Milliken's people were on the floor pushing for the vote as well. And this was a time when I developed a great respect for Bill Milliken.

Lynn Jondahl: So that, you're essentially saying here that probably the most partisan, divisive, political votes are those on tax matters, frequently. And in this case, people were sitting down with the governor and the legislative leadership, and saying, okay, now. We're not gonna let this become a partisan issue. We're gonna figure out a way.

Bobby Crim: And the quadrant meetings, so called because the majority and minority leader of each party and each house would meet with the governor regularly.

Lynn Jondahl: Is that when he started the quadrant meetings?

Bobby Crim: Yeah, yep.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay.

Bobby Crim: Yep. And this is I think played a great role in solving problems. And we had two or three executive orders during these times as well.

Lynn Jondahl: When the governor would say, we need to, in order to balance the budget, make across the board decision to cut programs.

Bobby Crim: And we didn't have much of a problem with that. I think the first time he sent us an executive order, and we just rejected it. You know, said no, that's not it. After that, it was a negotiating process of putting the executive order together. So when it came to the floor, it pretty much was ready to pass because a lot of negotiations had gone into the process. He didn't just send it to us, and say here it is. That you're gonna take it, but the thing about it, an executive order was, you couldn't amend it. It was take it or leave it. So we got into the negotiation process with that. And we didn't run into any problems after that.

Bobby Crim: We ran into a problem once, this is a little aside. We had all the votes for the tax, to pass at this time. We passed two taxes during my time as speaker. We had all the votes, all the Democrats were on the floor. We put a call of the house in.

Lynn Jondahl: A call of the house means?

Bobby Crim: Call of the house means everybody comes in, and they go out and get ya, the state police or whoever, sergeant in arms, whatever, to bring you in, then the doors are locked, and you can't leave. So we put the call of the house on, and there was one Republican missing. And one of my sergeant at arms says, "I know where he is. He's over at the Jack Tar in room so and so."

Lynn Jondahl: Jack Tar is the hotel across the street.

Bobby Crim: It's the hotel across the street. So I told the governor, I said, "Your vote is over there." What do you think we should do? I said, "if he was my Democrat, I'd go over and get him. The governor marched across the street with a state policeman, got him, and brought him back. Meantime, of course we were standing at ease, the board was open for a few hours while we put all the votes together. But he went over and got him, and brought him over, and we passed the vote.

Bobby Crim: But this is the kind of thing. I respected Bill Milliken because he was a man of his word, he wanted to accomplish something, not just get a political handle on something, like a John Engler. I have no problem saying that. And so, you didn't have to go back, once you reached an agreement with him, you didn't have to go back every 15 minutes and say, "How we doing? Is this okay?" We only had two kind of major problems in those eight years that I was speaker.

Lynn Jondahl: You and Governor Milliken?

Bobby Crim: Me and Bill Milliken. And that was PBB. That was when the fire retardant got mixed with cattle food. And there had been some mislabeling, and all kinds of things occurred, and nobody was taking blame, and everybody was pointing fingers. So I assigned a staff member, Edie Clark, because she was very interest in it. She got in contact with Dr. Sokilov, who was a person who was very knowledgeable in this area. Brought him in, and we finally nailed it down that somebody in the farm bureau, I think it was, had mixed this stuff in, and thousands of cattle had to be killed. Thousands of cattle had to be killed and buried as a result of this. Otherwise, our beef in Michigan was null and void; it was no selling or anything else. And David Dempsey, in his book, claimed that I tried to use this as a political thing again the governor.

Lynn Jondahl: This is Dempsey's book on the Governor.

Bobby Crim: On the governor. Yeah, of Bill Milliken. He didn't talk to me. He called me; I tried to get back with him, we never did in contact. It wasn't political, it was something that had to be, we had to get to the bottom of. And I had a good staff member who did that. But Milliken thought, they convinced him, somebody, that this was all a political thing. And so we had a problem on that. The other problem we had was on rules and regulations. When we passed legislation, it goes into the department where they promulgate rules and regulations to implement the legislation. And there was, the law was that if there was 45 days expired, they could pass them, and we didn't get a look at them.

Lynn Jondahl: So the department could just say, here are the rules.

Bobby Crim: Here are the rules and regulations; you weren't here during these 45 days; 45 days has passed and you're not in session.

Lynn Jondahl: And those rules had the effect of law.

Bobby Crim: They really do; they really do. So what they would do, is they would stock pile them for 15, 20 days or so, and then we'd be out of session for 30 days, the 45 days would go, and they would kick them out by the crow. So we passed legislation to set up an oversight committee on rules and regulations. The governor vetoed it. I tried to talk, I said, "Look, it's us against them." I said, "We pass legislation, you sign it. They change the legislative intent with their rules and regulations." But, once again, somebody had convinced him, I think, at that point, that we were encroaching on the executive branch, its power. So he vetoed it. And so it came down, and I was a little chagrined about it because this was, I thought was a very important point. And you do not allow bureaucracy to legislate through rules and regulations that they promulgate, and that's what they were doing.

Bobby Crim: So it came down, it was on the calendar, a message from the governor, veto. So word got around that I'd been talking to some Republicans, and that we try to ride the veto. So Dennis Cawthorne, the minority leader at the time, called a caucus; the governor came in, and he questioned each and every one of them. Of course, they didn't have everybody there. I had six commitments that I needed from Republicans. But they were convinced at that point because of that caucus, that we no longer had the votes. So Cawthorne came down from the caucus with a big smile, and said, "I think we got that taken care of." That irritated me a little bit, so I began to call my six Republicans that previously had committed. Four, yes, five, yes, I finally found the sixth one, and he says, "Oh, yeah, I'm still there."

Bobby Crim: So I looked at Joe Forbes, the majority leader, and I said, "Let's go to messages from the governor on the calendar." He said, "What's happening?" I said, "We're going to override the veto." So he goes to message the governor, Cawthorne looks, and says, "What's going on?" I said, "Well, you know. We have to give it a shot. So I told McKneely, who's the speaker pro tem, tell me when we got the votes up.

Lynn Jondahl: Matt McNeely.

Bobby Crim: Matt McNeely's the speaker pro tem, he's in the chair at the time. So they get the votes, pow! The override comes, and that's the first one in 50 years, probably, and hadn't been one since. And since they overrode something with Soapy back in the late 40s, early 50s. And the governor's very, very, very distraught about this. He gets in his car, says, "I understand," and screams out of the parking lot. They have tee shirts, the dirty half dozen, and all this kind of thing that they make up about the Republicans. They go through a little charade for a while of, they'd take a typewriter, a secretary, or something, over. Finally, I get to Cawthorne, and I say, "That's enough. No more, or I'll be your personnel officer, and then you will not fare well."

Bobby Crim: But that's the only two incidences, the PPB and the rules and regulations that we really had a problem over. I still respect him. We had breakfast in Traverse City about a year ago or so, for an hour and a half, and reminisced about old times and everything. Still a great guy, I still like him.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay, when you became speaker, you talked a moment ago about the conflict with the executive over the issue of rule-making. When you became speaker, you pushed the legislature and gave it direction to play a much stronger role in accountability; making the executive branch accountable, if I recall. You were yourself involved very aggressively in reviewing the civil service commission.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, the civil service commission, we began to get a lot of complaints while I was still majority floor leader, about the fact that they really weren't sticking to the civil service rules in terms of the way that people could apply, and testing, and that sort of thing.

Lynn Jondahl: All state employees outside the legislative branch are civil service employees; they're under that system.

Bobby Crim: Yes, under civil service system. And there's a set of rules, how you post jobs, the testing, and everything that's involved, so that you're supposed to be able to get the most qualified people as a result of that system. We begin to get all kinds of telephone calls about, hey, you know, the system is not working; it's not being done that way. So after a while, I approached Frank Kelly, and said, "Maybe we outta have a look at that."

Lynn Jondahl: Frank Kelly, the attorney general.

Bobby Crim: The attorney general gave me an assistant attorney general, and we began to call people in. And sometimes we'd have to subpoena. And in the initial review, nobody seemed to want to talk, hardly. Pretty soon we got a little information, and they began to see that we were serious. We began to get telephone calls saying, "Hey, you outta call Jerry so and so in." And so I said, you know, Jerry, would come in, and I would listen to his voice, and I knew that was Jerry that he called me. So we began to get a lot of information, it soon appeared that they had what they called midnight exams, where they post them very quickly, and very few people get a chance, only the people that they wanted to see would get a chance.

Bobby Crim: And then they had a band, in other words, they had one, two three, maybe you finish first, and I finished third in the test. Well, they had a band that said, well, if you did within this band, I can pick anybody I want. So they picked me, and number one and two is out. So it was pretty much aborted. I mean, the system was not working. And the deeper we got into it, the more help we got from the people inside the system, who was up to here with how it was being run.

Lynn Jondahl: Now the issuing, for example, of a subpoena, by the legislature, was almost unheard of up to that point.

Bobby Crim: Yep. I can't remember, I couldn't pinpoint any time when it had been used, as a matter of fact. I'm sure somewhere back it might have been, but we began to use it, and we used it several times during that process. The upshot was that the director, Sidney Singer at the time, resigned, two or three members of the board resigned, and we had an oversight committee set up to review civil service, and the rules and regulations there. And that was one of the first times

that we began to really use the oversight. Later on, as we discussed earlier, the Wolpe committee to look at PSC.

Lynn Jondahl: This was Howard Wolpe.

Bobby Crim: Howard Wolpe.

Lynn Jondahl: Representative from Kalamazoo area.

Bobby Crim: Representative from Kalamazoo, who later run, was a candidate for governor, as a matter of fact. And he took that committee, and I think sort of did a replica of what we did with the civil service commission, and did the oversight there. And that was the beginning, I think, of the legislature saying, "Hey, you know, we want to have a look, a little oversight; the executive branch isn't free to do whatever they want in some of these instances." And probably there's several areas today that there should be reviews, and a license and regulation, many things that probably the legislature out to be doing.

Lynn Jondahl: Probably the oversight function of the legislature is one of those things most restricted by term limits, is it not? Because you don't have people who have a history of watching and looking at programs. So there's greater independence, if you will.

Bobby Crim: They're not there long enough to really know any history of the issues, to know what's going on, to get the education of what these departments do and what they shouldn't do. So there's no oversight now, that's my view of it. And until it's changed, until you have people who are around long enough to develop expertise, to develop a background of the history of issues, and what the function of these departments ought to be, and what's actually going on there. They don't have time to do that now, so there's just, obviously, little or no oversight, and won't have any opportunity to have any until the term limit situation changes.

Lynn Jondahl: I know you're not a fan of term limits, I've heard you speak about that. Do you ever visualize what your task a speaker would have been, how it would have been different, if you had serve in a term limit era?

Bobby Crim: Well, first of all, I wouldn't have had the experience I had. When I became speaker, I had served a term in the legislature, I spent four years as executive secretary to the speaker and I had served two years as majority floor leader. And therefore, I had a pretty good background in order to become speaker. Today, poor Andy Dillon, two years, and he became speaker. So he had no opportunity to even know the rules, hardly. And certainly he doesn't know his colleagues, and certainly he has no history of issues, and certainly he doesn't know how the departments are operating or how they should be operating,

hardly and doesn't have time to do that. So it would have been impossible for me to function as I did back then, if we'd had the term limits.

Lynn Jondahl: You worked with some long-term, long serving legislators, one was the chair of the appropriations committee, Dominic Jacobetti from the upper peninsula, who was always remembered as a colorful figure. Who was an interesting, at least, person in that role.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, I appointed him when he first became chairman because Bill Copeland had been chairman of appropriations. He got beat in the primary by Jeffrey Padden. And so therefore, when I became speaker, the chairmanship was open. So at that time, I basically had two choices. Rusty Hellman, or Dominic Jacobetti.

Lynn Jondahl: Both from the upper peninsula.

Bobby Crim: Both from the upper peninsula. I appointed Jake, and you're right. He was the most colorful guy in the legislature. He liked to imitate the godfather. And he liked to perceive himself kind of as that. Jake told me, he became speaker, when I became speaker, and I appointed him, he says, "I'll never embarrass you." Every now and then, he would slip and an amendment in, or something, and you know, we'd have to go through the process. And then I couldn't find him, you know, he'd be gone. I'd find him to chew him out, and he'd say, it must have been one of the staff members put that in. And I'd say, "Well, look, we found out, we're gonna fire that staff member." He said, "Well, I don't know who it was exactly."

Bobby Crim: Jake was the kind of guy, he was a real yoooper. He was a real "UP-er" and he took care of his constituents, and of course he had this little saying on his pencils, "If you like spaghetti, vote for Jacobetti." Very likable, he had a great deal of power. Not as much as he thought he had sometimes, but he did, and as we went through it before, we began to open up the process, too, and members of the appropriation lost a little bit of their power at that time, at least because they couldn't come to the floor with bills that most of the members didn't know what was in them, so that process changed.

Bobby Crim: But Jacobetti never changed. Jacobetti was Jacobetti. I loved him, and sometimes you hated him for a little while, but you loved him again.

Lynn Jondahl: There was an era there of real veterans, Jacobetti, George Montgomery, who chaired the taxation committee for a long time, was another person with a lot of expertise, and a lot of

Bobby Crim: And colorful.

Lynn Jondahl: Go ahead, what did you say?

Bobby Crim: And colorful.

Lynn Jondahl: And colorful. Right.

Bobby Crim: And colorful, yeah. Yeah, George was one of the people that took me under his wing. When I first was elected to legislature way back in 1965, '64, '65, '66, I learned more from him about taxation and about education from anybody. He was quite the guy. He had more knowledge, and he would sit with you for hours and dispense that knowledge. Ask him questions, and he had a vast amount of knowledge, and he was very good.

Bobby Crim: I'll tell you the story that I told you before off-camera. George got very, very old and was dying, and he called me down to his office, and he says, "You got to do me a favor. You got to do it," and I say, "Well, tell me what it is, George." He says, "You got to do it," and I say, "Okay, what? I'll do it." He says, "When I die, I want to lie in state on the House floor." Never been done. I said, "Okay. You got it."

Bobby Crim: George died, and then it was a lot of problems that we went through, but I'd made a promise to him. Even had to bring him up the stairs because you couldn't get the casket in those small elevators and everything, of course, but he did. He lay in state on the House floor for about 48 hours with the sergeant of arms, and members of the legislature was there, and as I said then, "This was George's life. This was his house as much as anything. This was his house," so it was fitting that that occur. But he was another one of the very colorful people in the old-timers.

Lynn Jondahl: Right. Who was your counterpart in the Republican caucus when you were speaker, was it Dennis Cawthorne?

Bobby Crim: Oh, it was Dennis Cawthorne, it was Bill Bryant, it was Mike Bush. They changed along the way.

Lynn Jondahl: As Republican leaders.

Bobby Crim: As Republican leaders, yeah.

Lynn Jondahl: And you met regularly with them in the quadrant meetings, along with the governor and the senate leaders as well?

Bobby Crim: Yes. Whomever was the Minority leader, I would meet with them and with the governor. Bill Bryant was kind of colorful, too. He wrote a book. I don't know if you ever read his book?

Lynn Jondahl: Yes.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. He sent me a copy of it, and I never really understood it, I guess, but I read it anyway. But Bill was always, it seemed like to me, he always thought I was trying to put something over on him, and so the way I dealt with him was I dealt with him straight up, just straight up. It drove him nuts, though, sometimes, because he was trying to figure out what I was trying to do to him. He was a nice guy, very, very intelligent, very intelligent person. It seemed they had all kinds of Yale and Harvard guys on the other side of the isle, too, and Mike Bush was probably the most likable of the bunch, and the most moderate of them as well, but I got along with all of them pretty well. Occasionally we had a problem, the problem we had with the override was a brief one.

Lynn Jondahl: Oh, right. And they were trying to get retribution.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, with some of their members, but all in all, I usually got along very well with them, but I tried to, something I learned from Bill Ryan, deal with them straight on. Don't try to have hidden agendas with them, tell them what you know, tell them what you're going to do.

Lynn Jondahl: You were faced with an unusual situation when a member of the legislature, a member of the House, Monte Gerald, he was an attorney, and he was charged in criminal court with felony charge. The constitution of the state gives a responsibility for determining whether that person can sit in the House of Senate to that body to make a decision. There is a provision that says, "If the person is guilty of violating the public trust," I believe is the phrase, that they are automatically out of there, but in this case, as I recall, the Attorney General did not find that there had been a violation of the public trust. You were then left with the responsibility of how should the legislative body deal with that.

Bobby Crim: I set up a committee to deal with the problem, to give Monte Gerald a hearing, and to look into all the facts of his accusations and indictment. It came back with a unanimous vote that he had to go. That's what they basically said, "Look, he's committed a felony. He has misused funds of one of his clients, and may be involved otherwise with the client," whatever, but we gave him every hearing, every opportunity, and looked into all the accusations. The person who accused him was interviewed. The whole thing was gone through, and when it came back, they made the recommendation that he had to go. So, I met with Monte and said, "Monte, it's obvious to me what's going to occur. It's going to be, if it comes to a vote, it's going to an overwhelming vote that you get tossed. That's it, period." So, he said, "I'm not going to do it."

Bobby Crim: I met with him two more times. Once the day before the vote, and I said, "Take your colleagues off the hook on this one if you will, because that's what's going to happen. It's obvious to almost everybody what has occurred." He still refused. As you know, the vote was overwhelming to expel him, and he was,

and of course later on he was convicted of a felony and was disbarred, as a matter of fact, as a result of that.

Bobby Crim: Not the same thing, but representing Woganowski, who was charged with taking a bribe involving a lottery license, and Joe Forbes conducted the same kind of hearings and came back, same thing, the vote to expel. In talking to Woganowski, he agreed given a period of time that he would resign, and so Woganowski ended up resigning. Of course, he was convicted, and served some time as well.

Bobby Crim: But those are hard times. Those are difficult times to deal with a colleague, but there comes a time when it has to be done, I think, and those were two of the times.

Lynn Jondahl: You had the experience of being the floor leader, and then as speaker. Your floor leader was Joe Forbes, and so you knew what you wanted, I guess, from a floor leader and so on. Talk about Joe Forbes and your working relationship. How did he complement your tenure, how did you work together?

Bobby Crim: Joe Forbes, my friend, and I'll tell you, he was a very good friend as well as a great floor leader. Joe Forbes and I would meet on the calendar, and when we got to the floor, we knew pretty much where we were going, and I never had to worry about Joe Forbes coming out of left field on something. If it was a question in his mind, we'd sit on it, he'd say, "Okay," he'd go back, and that's what we did.

Bobby Crim: He was another colorful guy, too, Joe Forbes. Great guy, everybody loved him. Had great stories. Always smoked that cigar, of course, and I'd put it out every time I got a chance because he sat right next to me on the floor. But he was one of my leadership group. He, Matt McNeely, and Gary Owen, who were the backbone of that eight years, because they were with me the whole eight years, they were loyal, I never had to worry about getting stabbed in the back problems and everything. We met, we worked together, and it worked out very well, and Joe Forbes was floor leader under Gary Owen in his term as well.

Lynn Jondahl: Who succeeded you. Right.

Bobby Crim: Yeah, so he just continued that. But he was outstanding. He knew how to run the calendar, he knew everybody on both sides of the aisle. He had the respect, and that's very important, just as important for a floor leader as it is a speaker, I think, because a speaker has to deal with some things sometimes that he has to make some bad decisions on, some tough decisions on. The floor leader has to keep their respect, because he has to run that calendar every day, every minute. All the time, he has to be there running that calendar, and he has to treat everybody pretty well in terms of giving them a shot at their bills and

everything, so it's very important to have a good floor leader, and Joe Forbes was outstanding as a floor leader. He was an outstanding individual, period.

Lynn Jondahl: I think people generally have some difficulty in understanding how do people fight political battles, and then come out being good friends and honoring each other, and so on. I'm thinking of that in the context of Joe Forbes. Joe ran after you were speaker, Joe ran for the position of speaker against Gary Owen, who won, and yet after that, they worked very well together. How does that work in politics?

Bobby Crim: Well, it's like you're mature. In politics, if you're successful, if you're going to be successful, you better have some maturity. Most people in politics are mature, and can deal with adversity and problems. This was a very difficult time for me. Both of these guys were the backbone of my team, and both of them wanted me to support them. I said, "Guys, I can't do that. I can't support either one of you. Love you both, but I can't support either one of you." When it was over, I did do a lot of talking to Joe. Gary wanted him to be his majority floor leader. Joe was backing off, but Joe came around, and continued to be that great majority floor leader that I knew he would be.

Bobby Crim: But once again, I go back to this deal with the term limits. You don't have a chance to get to know each other. I remember having really tough battles on the floor, and then going out and having dinner with people. Well, that's because you know them, and you respect them. They may differ with you on this one, but you respect them. These people now don't have a chance to get to know each other, hardly, and it creates a lot of problems as a result of that because they can't have a big debate and then say, "Oh, it's all over. Let's go have dinner or something."

Lynn Jondahl: Because they don't know each other.

Bobby Crim: Because they don't. They don't have the camaraderie. They don't have the basic background of dealing with each other over periods of time, and the respect, and everything that comes from that.

Lynn Jondahl: Over this period of time, what have you seen change most significantly in terms of politics and campaigns? Has it been the funding, the finances of things? You became a lobbyist, and set up a very successful lobby firm. You certainly were involved in work on issues as well as campaigns and so on, but how has it changed?

Bobby Crim: And the fundraising as well. This is the thing that has me pretty distraught about politics, is the amount of money today that's spent in elections.

Lynn Jondahl: What's the most you ever spent for a House race?

Bobby Crim: I think I spent \$15,000 once, and my opponent spent 12.

Lynn Jondahl: What would that race cost today?

Bobby Crim: Well, I went back about 10, 15 years ago when Rose Bogardus and Sandy Hill was basically my old district, about three quarters of it, there had been some changes, but it was basically my old district. It was a contentious race. By the time they were over, the money that came from the national, from the state, local, the party, their fundraisers, they had spent between 4 and \$500,000 in the same race that my opponent and I had spent \$27,000.

Bobby Crim: Now, that's what's happened all across politics. The costs have just gone up exponentially, just about. Now then, I remember when the first race for governor spent a million dollars. Last time, DeVos spent 50 or \$60 million. I think Jennifer Granholm spent 20, 21, \$22 million. We're talking 75, \$80 million now. Look, if you run for Congress, or if you run for the U.S. Senate, the cost now is almost prohibitive. That's the one reason that Bob Vanderlaan and I got out of lobbying as quick as we did.

Lynn Jondahl: Bob had been a Republican senate leader.

Bobby Crim: He was the Republican Senate leader, and I was the Democratic Speaker of the House, and we went together. It just boggled our minds at how fast it was going up in the six or seven years we were there, and that was the thing that we did not like about lobbying, was the money aspect of it, and the cost of how campaigns were increasing so rapidly, and the pressure to set up funding groups and everything. So, it's just gotten out of hand at this point.

Bobby Crim: One of my friends, one of my old buddies down in Missouri, said, "You know, you used to just straight out bribe politicians." He says, "Now you just give them a lot of money for their campaign, and then you go to them and say, 'I'm not going to give you any next time unless you listen to what I want.'" So, I mean, this is what it's come to. The minute the election's over, you have to start raising funds for the next election, and I've always said all those funds that's given is not for good government. They expect something from it, and that's the principal thing that I've seen change that affects politics so drastically, and so negatively now.

Lynn Jondahl: Where does that lead you in terms of what kind of reforms?

Bobby Crim: Well, if I had my druthers, I would set up something like this. If you're running for the state Senate, you can spend 50 or \$75,000. Half would come from the checkoff system, the other half would come from campaign donations of \$50 or less. The House, eh, maybe you spent \$35,000, or whatever. Same system, same system. You don't have any outside independent committees that can give

money, you don't have the party contributing to money. You have a cap that says, "This is what it is." That's a level playing field.

Bobby Crim: Now, there are several reasons that'll never happen. One reason is, of course, incumbents have the push. They can raise the money. The second reason is, that I maintain, is that the media, no matter what they might say, or how they may gouge about how much is being spent, where is that money going? Couple billion dollars every cycle, and it's getting more and more all the time, goes into media. Now, if it got too close, you can bet that they would start feeling a pinch, and they would start coming around and saying, "Well, now, this First Amendment thing here ..." That's what they always fall back on, is the First Amendment.

Bobby Crim: Well, I'm with Bill Bradley. I don't think that our founding fathers meant that the First Amendment that you could have an open wallet, and spend whatever you wanted to in order to buy an election. I don't believe that's what they intended in the First Amendment. So, that's the biggest problem that I see today. It's the root of a lot of other problems. So, I think if you wanted to change one thing to improve the political scene today, it would be to come up with a real, meaningful reform in campaign financing.

Lynn Jondahl: Bobby Crim. A lot of people know the name Crim because of the Crim Race.

Bobby Crim: It's a four-letter word.

Lynn Jondahl: The Crim race. Well, that too, but the Crim race. You started supporting, I guess, out of, what, your long interest in human service, but also as a runner, this support for Special Olympics.

Bobby Crim: Yeah. In 1975, when I was speaker, they invited me out to, no, it was 1976. They invited me out to a Special Olympics track meet in my district at Pursley High School. I knew a little bit about Special Olympics, but not a great deal, but I went out that day, and I saw something. Here were these people, they were intellectually challenged, and most of them physically challenged as well. They were winning ribbons, and laughing, and winning trophies, and getting hugged. I'm thinking, these are the kind of people, when I was growing up, they were in the basements and in the bedrooms. They had no life at all. Here these people are having fun, their parents are out there with them.

Bobby Crim: So, I went back to staff and said, "Gee, we got to do something." Somebody said, "Well, you're a runner. Why don't we put on a race?" So, the Crim race was born in 1977 to raise money for Special Olympics. It's gone broader than that now, but we have raised a few million bucks for Special Olympics in the process, too, and now it's grown into a fitness foundation, the Crim Fitness Foundation. We have 15, 20, 25,000 kids that have no phys-ed in their schools, now that we

have in the Crim program. We're taking it to Oakland County, taking the whole program, putting on a race for them, Saginaw County. We're beginning to branch out.

Bobby Crim: We figure we'll have 50,000 kids pretty soon, and as you know, youth obesity is one of the largest problems that we have in this country. Kids in their teens and preteens are already showing signs of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and if you think that the cost of healthcare is big now, wait for 10 years down the road when these guys start hitting. It's going to be like the oil thing. It's just going to explode on us. The cost is going to be tremendous unless we get at it now. We've got some plans now to buy the old hotel, the old Regency there.

Lynn Jondahl: In Flint?

Bobby Crim: In Flint. Make a regional fitness and health program. Regional, many states coming in. We're going to Washington to get money, C.S. Mott, two or three other foundations. It's going to take quite a bit of money to do it, but we see the possibility of doing it, so that people will come in for a week, take the whole program back to their area, their state, or whatever. We've had all kinds of inquiries about it. I hope to get former governor Milliken, former governor Blanchard, Brooks Patterson, who will help down there, the current governor to go to Washington to get some funds there. They had a hundred-million dollar program last year, they cut it out, for youth obesity. We'd like to see that restored, and we'd like to get some of that money to put in a regional foundation fitness area here in Michigan.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay. How fast are you running?

Bobby Crim: I used to run by a stopwatch. Now I run by the calendar, but I'm still running. In this area and most areas of the state I'm number one in my age group.

Lynn Jondahl: Oh, okay.

Bobby Crim: I remember when I started running 40 years ago and started running races there was probably a 150, 200 guys I knew. That 150 has boiled down to the half a dozen now that's still running. But I've run my race in Flint, the 10 miler, in a little over six and a half minute miles. Now if I do it in nine, nine and a half minute miles, that's outstanding.

Lynn Jondahl: Okay. That sounds outstanding to me.

Bobby Crim: But it's kept me in good physical condition, and quality of life's very important to me.

Lynn Jondahl: Yes.

Bobby Crim: And the better you're off physically, the better you are off mentally, and I need all the help I can get there, so I try to keep physically fit to help that other.

Lynn Jondahl: All right. Thank you, Bobby Crim for spending this time with us. This has been fascinating. I'm sorry to feel like we need to cut this off, but I really appreciate your reflections.