

JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

SYMPOSIUM

Jack Kemp, the Bills and Buffalo

Ralph Wilson Stadium Complex
Buffalo, New York

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PANEL 1
QUARTERBACK JACK KEMP
AND THE BUFFALO BILLS

Sponsored by
The Buffalo Bills
and
The Jack Kemp Foundation
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Morton Kondracke: I'm Morton Kondracke. We're here at the Ralph Wilson Stadium in Buffalo to do a day of oral history interviews on the career of Jack Kemp, the Bills' star quarterback for eight years and Buffalo area congressman for eighteen years. This event is sponsored by the Bills organization and the Jack Kemp Foundation as part of the Jack Kemp Legacy Project.

Thank you all for being here. We really appreciate it. Would you please introduce yourselves briefly, say who you are and what your role with the team was and what years you were there, starting with Ed Abramoski.

[Edward] Ed Abramoski: I'm Ed Abramoski. I was the trainer from 1960 to 1997, so I've known Jack quite well.

Kondracke: Larry.

Larry Felser: I'm Larry Felser. I covered the Bills from the start, from their start from 1960 up till the present for Buffalo newspapers.

Kondracke: Al.

[Albert D.] Al Bemiller: I'm Al Bemiller. I came here in 1961, played till '69. I was the center and also played guard and tackle for the Bills.

Kondracke: Charley.

[Charles E.] Charley Ferguson: Charley Ferguson. I was a wide receive from 1963 to 1969.

Kondracke: Paul.

Paul [L.] Maguire: Paul Maguire. I was Jack Kemp's favorite punter and the only guy that on the Buffalo Bills football team that he really liked. [laughter]

[Ernest] Ernie Warlick: I'm Ernie Warlick. I was the tight end for the Bills beginning in 1962 to 1965, and was Jack's favorite tight end. [laughter]

Kondracke: Booker.

Booker [T.] Edgerson: I'm Booker Edgerson, cornerback 1962 through 1969, and just a great fan of Jack Kemp.

Kondracke: Ed.

[Edward J. A.] Ed Rutkowski: Ed Rutkowski. I played from '63 to '68. I was a wide receiver, a quarterback, and it was my fumble against Oakland that got us the number-one draft choice in 1969, O.J. Simpson. And if Ralph Wilson's watching this, Ralph, you owe me a finder's fee. [laughter]

Kondracke: I'm going to ask all of you this question, and we'll just go in reverse order starting with Ed Rutkowski. When you think about Jack Kemp, what favorite thoughts come to mind, and does one particular experience stand out to you on or off the field? This gives you an opportunity to tell your favorite story. Ed.

Rutkowski: I've got a lot of favorite stories about Jack Kemp. In fact, the year that I played quarterback, Jack had injured his knee, tore it up in a preseason practice, and I ended up the last part of the season as starting quarterback. Jack would be on the sidelines or up in the press box. When I came off the field, he would tell me what I was doing wrong and maybe some potential plays I should call.

The first time that I ever went in as quarterback, I think it was against the Houston Oilers, Jack was on the sidelines, sitting on the bench with his leg propped up in a cast. I think I threw like five passes and three were incomplete and two were intercepted. As I came off the field, I came off the field to almost like a standing ovation. I walked over to the bench to sit next to Jack, and he was shaking his head and he said, "Eddie, if only I was Polish and Catholic and went to Notre Dame. It's unbelievable, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant from California." He just couldn't believe it.

Kondracke: Booker.

Edgerson: Well, one of my favorite conversations with Jack is when he first came here. He came here injured in his finger, and there was so much fuss what to do about getting Jack Kemp off the waiver wires, and Buffalo had one of the greatest quarterbacks in American Football League at that particular time, and how [Louis H.] Lou Saban manipulated the system and got Jack in here. I remember talking to Jack, not knowing Jack at any point. To me, at that time, he started talking with his proper talk and everything, that he came from California, went to Occidental and all those things. And I'm saying, "What is this guy coming from?" Because he was so proper and

pompous, and I said, "How can he quarterback us to any kind of wins? And why did Lou Saban pick this guy off the waiver wire?"

Later on, as the season went on, the proof was in the pudding, that Jack did prove to be the quarterback that we needed to put us on the map here in Buffalo.

Kondracke: Ernie.

Warlick: One thing I remember distinctly is Jack used to love to throw the hook pattern to the tight end. That means, for those that don't know, you go down, you run your pattern about eight to ten yards and then you make a turn and face the quarterback. Well, my fingers—it took a long time for my fingers to get any feeling back, and also my chest, because he threw a ball that was so hard that it must have been about twenty or thirty miles an hour. He said, "Ernie, hook up!"

I said, "Do I have to?" [laughter] Because he could really fire the ball.

Maguire: I'm just listening to Booker and it just reminded me of Jack. I met him in 1960 with the Los Angeles Chargers. Jack went to Occidental. I don't know if anybody had ever learned anything going to Occidental, but Jack—people didn't really realize it, this guy is really self-taught. Every day that I knew him in California in the couple years, he'd practice a new word and he'd use it in a sentence. When he got here, everybody thought he was so damn smart.

So one day he came up to me, and I never really knew how to take him because he didn't go out with the guys and he didn't drink and all these things, and I used to go out once in a while. [laughter] He said to me at practice one day—I said, "Jack, how's it going?" He

said, "You know, Paul, I really like your perspicacity." Now, I didn't know whether to punch him or thank him. [laughter] But he smiled, so I figured it was good. I was going to look it up to see what it meant, and fifty years later I still haven't looked it up because I can't spell it. [laughter]

But this guy really was self-taught, and I tell you something. You talk about a leader. Look at what he did after football, not only what he did in football. He was a great leader.

Ferguson: My first experience with Jack coming here and I was on the bench, I'd just played coming into my first game with Jack, and about the last twenty seconds of the game we were playing the Patriots and we were behind. Coach Saban and John [E.] Mazur said, "Ferg, we want to put you in and run a post and run like hell."

So Jack looked at me and Jack said, "You ready?"

I said, "Yeah." So I go out and ran like hell, and Jack threw the ball, and it was there, and I caught the pass and it was an eighty-yard touchdown pass. We won the game.

Jack had been catching hell throughout that game. He did not have a good night. So Jack came over to me and he said, "Fergie, Fergie, if you hadn't caught that pass, both of us would have been run out of here." Both of us. They would have ran his butt out of here. [laughter] So that was my first experience with Jack, and I really enjoyed working with Jack.

Kondracke: Al.

Bemiller: Well, my experience with Jack Kemp, in those years most of the time or all the time the center's position was that the quarterback

was always up underneath of you, with his hands up underneath of you, and I found out through the years that of all the people that were up underneath of me, he had two things there. One, he had very soft hands. [laughter] And second of all, his hands were always warm. [laughter] So that's what I enjoyed about him. [laughter]

Then I found out later that he was going to be a politician and everything, and I always told all my friends, "You know, I think he'll make a good one, one of the honest ones, because he never did anything wrong to me, and I think he's a man that you can trust." [laughter] So that's what I remember of Jack Kemp.

Kondracke: Larry.

Felser: My lasting memory of Jack as a football player was his first game in Buffalo after he came off the injured list in that 1962 season. The Bills had lost their first seven games of the season that year, and it looked like a terrible disaster. But Kemp had started the week before in Oakland. He was rusty because he had just recovered from a very serious hand injury. The Bills won that game 10-6.

Now, they get into Buffalo, his showcase game, against a team that had beaten them really badly in Dallas, the Dallas Texans, which are now the Kansas City Chiefs now. Kemp had a fantastic day that day, threw for a tremendous amount of yardage, the Bills won and against a team that would end up winning the AFL championship. The crowd that day was a record crowd, over 35,000 people, record crowd for the AFL team, and when it was over, the fans swarmed the field, hundreds, maybe a couple thousand, and they were going wild. They picked him up on their shoulders and they carried him into the dressing room. They were probably mostly Democrats, but once and

for all, he was their hero and their leader, and it was a remarkable thing he did for Buffalo at the time.

Kondracke: Paul Maguire, you were with him in San Diego and Los Angeles before he came to Buffalo. Was there any difference in the Kemp style under [Sidney "Sid"] Gillman with the Chargers and Lou Saban with the Bills?

Maguire: I think Jack learned all of his football from Sid Gillman, he really did. Sid Gillman, you did what he told you to do. When he came here, he taught Lou Saban all of his football. [laughter]

I have to tell you that in 1968, I'm just out of college, I'm twenty-one years old, and I was scared to death. We went out on the practice field and Jack is there and I didn't know who he was, and we didn't know each other. So I walked out, and I'm walking on the field and I'm listening to this guy call the signals, and I'm hearing, "Down, seven."

I said, "Who is that?"

The guy said, "That's Jack Kemp. He's our quarterback."

I said, "Then someone ought to check him for testicles."

[laughter]

Kondracke: Eddie Abramowski, I forgot to let you give us your favorite Kemp story.

Abramowski: I knew Jack when he was with the Lions. He got drafted by the Detroit Lions, and I was a trainer at the University of Detroit, and I was a game day trainer for the Lions because the trainer for the Lions was a Purdue grad, as I was, and we did things together, so I

worked there. But, anyway, I remember Jack playing with the thing, and although the Lions player used to say the only reason [Raymond] Buddy Parker, who was the coach of the Lions, kept Jack was because Buddy was from Kemp, Texas. [laughter] So he had a soft spot for Jack.

But, anyway, there's two other things about Jack from my standpoint. Number one, when he had this serious finger injury, he made sure the ball would fit—it was fused and make sure the ball would fit on the football so he could throw it. And the second thing was Jack was one of the first players to lift weights, and in them days it was taboo for a pitcher or a quarterback or anybody to lift weights, and Jack, as the guys attested, he could throw the ball through a brick wall. He could throw it eighty yards. He was fantastic. So now you see what goes on about the weight training with the players and stuff.

Kondracke: Ernie Warlick, you were here as well before Jack arrived, so when you heard that Jack Kemp had been obtained on waivers for \$100 and was coming from the Chargers, what did you think that this was going to do to the team? What was his reputation as a quarterback?

Warlick: Well, first of all, I had run into Jack in Canada. I came here from the Canadian Football League, and Jack was there. He threw the ball too hard in Canada because most of the quarterbacks in the Canadian League were running as well as passing. So when I got to Buffalo in 1962, shortly after one or two practices, there was Jack Kemp, and I thought it would be good that Jack would do something for our team. Of course, I was just trying to make it myself. I'd just switched from the Canadian League to the Buffalo Bills.

I forgot your question. What was your question?

Kondracke: Did everybody think that this guy was a great quarterback for the Chargers and he's going to make our team, or what was everybody's attitude?

Warlick: Well, you're probably asking the wrong guy, because I was new also. I was just coming into the States, having played in Canada, so I was trying to feel my way around as well. But I can say this, that I'm very pleased that Jack came to the Bills, because he could really fire that ball, and, fortunately, I had a big hand, so I could catch it. I think playing with him helped me stabilize my career with the Bills.

Kondracke: Anybody else want to comment on what the town expected when he arrived? Booker?

Edgerson: I don't know what the town expected, but like I said earlier, Jack, to me, his name wasn't a great name, but I knew where he came from based on a lot of the press that he got coming in here, because I was a defensive back and I really could care less about what the offense did, because, you know, I was always defending against the offense.

So when Jack came in, the impression was is that he was the savior for the Buffalo Bills. What I learned later on is, is that not only that he was a savior, notwithstanding saying that [Charlton Chester] Cookie Gilchrist was basically the savior as well, but Jack lent a lot of credibility to the offensive football team, because the defense was the catalyst of the team at that point. We had some great guys at defense. But Jack's quarterback leadership skills, as Paul Maguire

pointed out, he talked to people, he encouraged individuals to do things, he kept you on the right track, a great leader, and I think that that put us on the map bringing us from a 500 team to a championship team two years in a row.

Maguire: Mort, I was with the Chargers in '62 when Jack got cut, and Sid Gillman got rid of him because he had broken his finger and he just couldn't play. In those days, there were only thirty-two guys on the team. You either played or you got the hell out of town. It was that simple.

But Eddie was alluding to it, when he had the operation for his finger, he went into the operating room with Dr. [Joseph] Godfrey. Is that right, Eddie? And he took the football in, so what they did is they put his hand on the ball and then fused the finger so that he could grip the ball and throw it. You talk about somebody that knows for the rest of his life he's going to walk around. I mean, it's a great finger to have straight. [laughter] But for the rest of your life, you've got that baby. But here's a guy, he wanted to play. That's the character of Jack Kemp.

Kondracke: Al.

Bemiller: I know one thing about Jack Kemp, he inspired me with his warm hands. I wasn't used to that.

Rutkowski: Excuse me. I played quarterback the last half. I mean, how were my hands?

Bemiller: Yours wasn't as good. [laughter]

Ferguson: I'd just like to add one before you go. I noticed when I first came here, and I was not used to Jack, Jack was not used to me, and we had some tremendous wide receivers here: Elbert Dubenion, Glenn Bass, Ed was there, and then myself. The one thing that I gained a lot of confidence with Jack is that he was willing to work after practice. Jack worked, spent a lot of time with us, put time in, and I thought that was extremely important. I thought that with the slant pattern, I thought I was just invisible. Nobody could cover me, and also on the post pattern. Jack would love to throw those patterns, and his timing became so great in working with the receivers. Of course, I just gained so much confidence in experiencing that with Jack.

Kondracke: So I take it the answer is that he had a great work ethic.

Ferguson: He did, extremely good.

Kondracke: Ed Abramoski, was he tough? Did he want to play when he was hurt?

Abramoski: Oh, yes. I mean, just like Paul said, he would play with all the little bruises. He'd get sacked or smashed by a player, and he'd always take his time, pretend he was tying his shoelace or something, to catch his breath in there so they wouldn't know he was hurt. He exemplified the toughness.

Kondracke: Did he have a lot of shots? Did you give him a lot of shots?

Abramoski: No, no, no, no. [laughter]

Maguire: Yes, you did. [laughter] *You* didn't, but I'll tell you what, it was in Houston, Texas, and I went in the training room to get—I don't know what to get, some bennies or something. I went in the training room and opened the door, and Dr. Godfrey is sticking a needle in Jack's shoulder so that he can get his arm up to throw.

Kondracke: His throwing shoulder?

Maguire: Yes. I almost got sick. Is it that good? [laughter] No. But it was the first time. I walked in and I said, "What the hell are you doing?" He had to do that almost for every practice, just to go out and practice. The guy was tough.

Rutkowski: In today's game they tell the quarterback your two best friends are the turf and the sidelines. You don't ever want to get hit, but when Jack would roll out after a play action fake, he would turn up field and take on a linebacker, put his head down and how many times we saw him get knocked out and carried off the field. After one game, the next day in the paper—and Jack always had a cute story about it—the *Buffalo News* headlines, "Kemp suffers concussion." And the sub headline was "X-rays of Head Reveal Nothing." [laughter] He always used that as a cute story.

Warlick: One other thing that I remember is on some occasions Kemp would call quarterback sneak when we only needed maybe a half yard to gain the first down. The quarterback sneak, that means the quarterback would keep the ball and run. Well, there were a couple of

occasions I remember that Cookie, weighing 240, would hit Kemp from the rear to knock him forward to get that half yard or whatever. I remember a couple of times after the play, Jack got up from the ground and said, "Nice play, Cookie. Nice going, Cookie." [laughter] He almost broke his back.

Bemiller: Well, you know who was in front of him, Ernie? I got a few of those too.

Maguire: You know, Mort, there was a thing about Jack and he was into politics and all these things, but the one thing we had a team party on Tuesday nights at downtown, this place called Mr. Anthony's. Upstairs we had a meeting room, and it was kind of neat. In those years we were winning, we'd look at the film and that night all the guys got together and then we'd kind of separate and they'd go over it. "You didn't do this. You didn't do that." Jack never missed coming to one of those parties. He didn't drink, but he was there to represent the team and be with us.

Jack, above all the things, political career and all this, Jack was a team player, really and truly a team player, and the one thing in his mind that you remembered, that every one of these guys will remember forever, the guys that play with him, there's nobody who wanted to win more than Jack Kemp did.

Edgerson: One of the things was, what Paul said about Jack coming to those meetings, as he said how smart Jack was, you know, Jack was laying the foundation for his political career to make sure that we voted for him and supported him. That's what he was doing.
[laughter]

Kondracke: So was he the kind of quarterback who would rally you? I mean, if you were down and losing or something, did he encourage everybody? Did he make speeches? Or what did he say?

Rutkowski: He did it on the field. I recall the one game we were playing, I think it was against Houston Oilers. We were three and out in the first three series, and the fourth time we went on the field, the fans started booing us, and Jack got in the huddle and he said, "Hey, let's shut 'em up," and he threw a ninety-three-yard touchdown pass to Elbert Dubenion and came off the field to a nice standing ovation. So he did it on the field. He didn't have to do it in the huddle.

Maguire: Jack was also the second guy since [Samuel A.] Sammy Baugh, that picture behind Eddie, the jump pass. People don't understand that. I mean, you've always seen them in film and speakers behind tables. Jack was only five-four. [laughter] So he had to really jump and throw the ball over.

Abramoski: Tell them about his famous figure-eights where he'd lose thirty yards when he'd go back. [laughter]

Kondracke: He was a scrambler?

Abramoski: He'd do these big figure-eights. He'd go back and he'd be back thirty yards from the line of scrimmage, and he'd complete the pass and it would be a two-yard gain.

Maguire: He was a scrambling quarterback with absolutely no speed whatsoever. [laughter]

Ferguson: One thing I'd just like to say, add on, and Booker, we were getting ready for the championship game '65 in San Diego, and we had the two buses. The first bus, most of the guys, they liked to get there early, always try to get on the first bus, and Jack was on the first bus. Booker, myself, I'm not sure if Paul—

Maguire: No.

Ferguson: But anyway, going to the stadium, I mean, it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop, and everybody was just really getting ready mentally for the game. I guess about halfway to the stadium, the old Balboa Stadium, it was just so quiet in there, and Booker said, "Jack Kemp, you SOB, you better have a hot hand out there today."
[laughter] And when that happened, everybody just started laughing, it broke the tension, and I think that really had a strong impact on Jack, how he played that game that Sunday, because it was just unbelievable. Jack could do no wrong, the defense, like Paul alluded to, played an exceptional game, and we just shut them out. They couldn't do anything.

Kondracke: So, Paul, was he fun to be around?

Maguire: Oh, no. Hell, no. [laughter]

Kondracke: You're one of the funniest people I've ever met.

Maguire: No, I never like being around him. [laughter] Joanne, his wife, wonderful woman, I mean, really good friends with everybody, but, no. He was the kind of guy that you would talk to, but then he would always revert to politics or something that's going on. You know, I don't care, man. You know, he didn't sit with us and drink a beer, but he sat with us. No, he was very boring as far as that goes.

Bemiller: When we'd go on these trips for any distance, an hour, two hours, three hours, most of us had our playbooks with us and we were studying our plays, you know, so we knew what we were doing. He would start reading a political book or something. He never, never got into the [unclear].

Kondracke: So when did he read his playbook?

Bemiller: I have no idea. He was a smart individual. I guess he must have looked through it and that was it.

Maguire: The question is, when did you read *your* playbook?
[laughter]

Bemiller: I didn't have to. I just fell down. [laughter] Give me the ball and fall down.

Rutkowski: That's true, because we had training camp up at Niagara University, and after our evening meal, a lot of the guys went out and whatever they did up there, Paul, had a couple beers. But Jack said, "Let's go out and do something," so I'd go with him. He'd take me down to the B & B Bookstore in downtown Niagara Falls and get the

Wall Street Journal, U.S. News and World Report and start doing all this stuff.

You talk about on the road. I lived in Hamburg and Jack lived in Hamburg, and we would drive to and from practice. I would always be talking about the game plan and Jack would start talking about politics, "Where were you born? Are you a Republican or a Democrat?"

I said, "I'm a Democrat."

He said, "How can you be a Democrat?" And he started indoctrinating me about Republicanism.

We used to go on the West Coast trip. We didn't fly out to the West Coast and then come back. We would do three weeks. We'd fly out and play the Denver Broncos first, then go from the Broncos to the Chargers, Chargers to Oakland—or Oakland to the Chargers. We were out in California. This is my rookie year with Jack, and after the Saturday practice, he comes in the room and says, "Eddie, I got tickets for this big rivalry game." And I'm thinking Southern Cal-Cal or Southern Cal-UCLA. He says, "You want to go?"

I said, "Who is it?"

He says, "Oxy-Claremont-Mudd."

I said, "Who?"

He said, "Oxy-Claremont-Mudd."

I said, "That sounds like a dirt bike place. No, I don't want to go there."

Warlick: I recall Saban telling Kemp on one occasion in the dressing room getting ready for practice, Kemp would be, as the guys alluded to, he'd be talking politics, political aspirations of so-and-so. So one day Saban said, "Jack, get your mind off that politics and start thinking

about those plays. We got a game Saturday," or Sunday. I recall that very vividly.

Maguire: The thing about it is, too, that you've got to realize what Jack meant to the Buffalo Bills, because we only had four coaches in those days, and the head coach was one of them. Lou Saban coached the defensive line, basically. [Joel D.] Joe Collier had the defense, the secondary linebackers. Johnny Mazur was the offense, everything in the offense. Then [Jerome A.] Jerry Smith was the offensive line coach. So that's all we really had. I think that, honest to god, Lou Saban really depended on Jack for part of the game plan, the things that were going on, because Jack was that smart. Jack knew everything he was going to do when they got on the field, and that's what made him so valuable.

Kondracke: What was his relationship with Saban like?

Maguire: He didn't like him either. [laughter]

Kondracke: But, I mean, the quarterback's calling the plays in those days, right? So they must have worked out the game plan together ahead of time, so they were—

Maguire: These guys, the offensive guys, but I think Jack used to just stand there and nod his head at Saban and say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," and then go in and do what he wanted to do. Jack did what he wanted to do.

Rutkowski: I learned one thing. If you were on the offensive unit and Jack threw an interception, you did not want to walk off the field next to Jack, because Lou Saban would be coming out on the field and he'd say, "Jack, you're killing me. What are you doing? You're killing my family."

And Jack would say, "Jeez, Lou, I didn't do it on purpose." So you would just stay away and let Lou do his thing. He was unbelievable.

Ferguson: One thing I recall regarding that is that Saban would send the play in. Remember, Saban would send the play in, "Run so and so and so, twenty-two trap on four."

And Jack would say, "The hell with that. We're not running that. We're going to run this play."

If it worked, it was great. But if it didn't work, when he came out, we came off the field, that's when Saban would say, "You're killing me. What are you doing out there?"

Kondracke: Booker, you were close to Saban because you played for him in college, so what's your view of the Kemp-Saban relationship?

Edgerson: Like I said, being on defense, back in those days the offense and defense really didn't mingle together. They kept them separate and everything, because we was a lot smarter than the offense. We knew what our assignment was.

One thing about Lou, Lou understood the game of football. I mean, he was a great coach. He was a person that knew talent and he knew how to treat people. He did it individually. He didn't treat everybody the same. But he would see a play develop and he would

say, "No." He'd stop it, and he'd say, "No, that's not the play." Now, he didn't know what the play was, but he knew it wasn't ran properly. So he told them to do it again. That was one of the things I used to see all the time, not only here at Buffalo but when I was at Western Illinois University, is that he knew what play should be called and how it should be run. He didn't necessarily know what the play itself was.

I used to hear him stop the play a lot of times with Jack and Cookie and Wray Carlton. They was running the plays wrong, and I know they always took time out to analyze what they was doing. But like I said, the biggest thing was is that the defense and offense was totally separate, and so we never really got into what was going on.

But I would just like to say that everybody else alluded to Jack being in this politics, is that I used to listen to him and Cookie and [Arthur L.] Art Powell and anybody else would listen to Jack, because he really believed in a lot of social issues and he was very concerned about society and where it was going, but he also tried to advise the ballplayers about the social issues that they need to be taking a look at. So I always admired him for that, that he was always on the lookout for his teammates, you know, even in business situations. When business opportunities came up, he let us know, you know, so we could take advantage of it. However, we wasn't making any money back in those days, so we couldn't take advantage of anything. We were barely able to buy groceries.

Maguire: He used to loan me a lot of money, I know that. [laughter]

Abramoski: Tell about the part that Jack played with the Houston-New Orleans All-Star Game.

Kondracke: Yes, we will get to that. We will get to the All-Star Game in detail. Go ahead.

Rutkowski: This is alluding to what Booker said about social issues. Jack and I would be driving to and from a practice together, and we were coming back home, and we had the itinerary for the upcoming trip, and it was an away game. Jack is looking at the thing, and he said, "Eddie, you got all the white guys rooming together and all the black guys rooming together. Why don't we intermingle the rooming arrangement."

I said, "I don't know, Jack. You're the captain. Find out."

So he called Jack Corrigan [phonetic] and he asked him, he said, "Why do you have all the blacks rooming together and all the whites?"

Kondracke: Jack Corrigan is who?

Rutkowski: He was the Vice President of Public Relations for the Buffalo Bills.

And Jack said, "I don't know. We thought that was what you guys wanted."

Jack said, "No, no, no, we want to start rooming together." So Jack roomed with Art Powell. On the Kansas City trip, I roomed with Booker, and he taught me about black-eyed peas and I taught him about Polish kielbasa. We really had a significant part to play in the Civil Rights Movement, not knowing that we actually did play a pretty good part.

Kondracke: Well, let's go to the '65 All-Star Game, then. Eddie, you ended up being the spokesman for the black players down in New

Orleans about leaving. Why don't you just describe the whole scene about what went on in New Orleans.

Warlick: Oh, boy, oh, boy. Well, we went to New Orleans to play this All-Star Game. I think it was '65, I believe. Of course, we were told that everything was fine. We would not be subjected to any segregation or anything like that. So, okay, we go to New Orleans.

So, the night before the game, Jack said that, "Hey, Ernie, why don't we let's go and hit a couple of spots on—." Is that Bourbon Street? "Let's go down. Let's go down."

I said, "You guys go ahead," because just realizing in my own mind where I was and what the history was, I said, "Maybe I shouldn't go." But Jack insisted that I go.

So we go down on Bourbon Street, and we all go to walk into the place, and there was this attendant outside the place that would say, "Everybody, come on in!" When the bodyguard started, "Not you guys. We don't serve your kind. Nope, we don't serve you."

And Jack would be inside, and he'd look around and say, "Ernie, come on."

I said, "They won't let me in." So I didn't fight it, make a scene.

So after a couple of times, I said, "Uh, Jack, why don't you guys go ahead." I think Dubenion was along with us, and I forget who else. I said, "Why don't you go. We're going back to the hotel."

He said, "No. We're going to find a place. We're going to find a place."

Well, we didn't find anyplace. So the next morning—

Kondracke: But Jack would leave with you guys?

Warlick: You know, I don't recall whether he left with us or not. I don't know. I can't say at this point whether we all came back together. I don't think we did. I think it was just a couple of my guys that got a cab.

Kondracke: Did you have to stay at separate hotels?

Warlick: No, we were in the same hotel. But we got a cab and came back to the hotel.

On the matter of the cabs, I've got to add Cookie Gilchrist to this. We were outside and we said, "Taxi!"

And the driver said, "Uh, we don't serve y'all. You got to call a black cab."

And Cookie said, "We don't care what color the cab is. We just want a cab." [laughter]

So we came back to the hotel. Then the next morning, Cookie Gilchrist called a meeting of all the black players, the west squad and the east squad, and we started comparing notes on what we had encountered, all the black guys that had encountered segregation the night before on both sides, the east squad and the west squad. So it was determined at that point are we going to play the game or are we not going to play the game. Of course, Cookie was the one that spearheaded, "I'm not going to play. That's the way it's going to be, I'm not going to play."

Abner Haynes, for those of you who don't know, is black, said, "Well, what are we going to do?"

And we said, "Well, we're not going to play. We're going home. We're going to leave."

So Abner Haynes said, "Now, look. Don't let me get back in Houston and turn on the TV and all you black guys are playing. I'll be mad."

So we decided that we wouldn't play. In this meeting we made that decision, and all the guys got up and started walking out. They said, "Oh, we need somebody." By that time the press was outside the door. I don't know how they found out about this, but they were outside the door. We said, "Cookie, since you spearheaded this whole thing, why don't you talk to the press?"

And of course he said, "No, I'm not talking to the press, because they'll think I'm the one that started all this, so I'm not talking. So we need somebody else. So let's get one of the older guys to talk. Ernie, you be the spokesman."

And everybody walked out and left me there, so I had to hurriedly try to put something together to make it sound a little professional anyway. So I explained why we had decided, all the black guys had made a decision not to play because of the discrimination that we had encountered the night before. But Cookie Gilchrist was really the one that spearheaded the whole thing.

Kondracke: Who else was there at the time? Were you there?

?: No.

Kondracke: Anybody else was there?

Maguire: I'll tell you, in 1961 we were going to Dallas to play with the Chargers. Jack was our quarterback then. Baron Hilton owned the team, so when we went to Dallas, we only had, I think, maybe eight or

nine black guys on the team, and we weren't allowed in the Hilton in Dallas, and the owner of the team owned the hotel. So they said, "Okay, the white guys can stay at the Hilton, but the black guys have to go to Grand Prairie, Texas," which is right outside.

And Jack Kemp went to Sid Gillman and said, "This is not acceptable. Either we stay as a team or we don't play." And Jack Kemp was the guy that actually did it. We all ended up in the crappiest hotel in Grand Prairie, Texas, because of Kemp. [laughter] I want it in the ledger. No, it was absolutely the right thing to do. We had no problem.

Kondracke: In the New Orleans case, he was the president of the AFL Players Association. Did he have a role in getting the game moved to Houston?

Warlick: I don't know whether he had a role in that or not, but I did not say that he was the one that told the black players, the group, "Look, I'm with you guys 100 percent. That's your decision not to play. I'm with you 100 percent."

Kondracke: Larry, were you down there?

Felser: I was down there, yes.

Kondracke: Tell us what you saw.

Felser: Just about what Ernie talked about. We would start talking with these guys, and black players from the other team, the north squad, "What was it like when you tried to go to dinner or you tried to

go to any black club or anything like that?" Same story. It was a shutout all the way, and they had been promised ahead of time.

The guy who sponsored the game was a well-to-do, well-known jeweler in New Orleans [David Frank Dixon], and he meant well. He was not a racist at all, but he assumed so many things, like the color line was going to topple because of him, and there was no such agreement whatsoever, and it was a total mess. It would have been an even blacker—pardon the expression—eye if they had gone to Houston and the black players hadn't agreed to go. I mean, these guys and the other black players on other teams saved an enormous amount of face for the league.

Kondracke: Did Jack have any role in the switch, do you remember?

Felser: I don't remember that, no. I'd like to say he did, but one way or the other, I can't remember.

Kondracke: This is the midst of the Civil Rights Movement time. What was race relations like in the AFL and how was Buffalo different from other teams?

Edgerson: One thing, I don't know how Buffalo is different from any other team, but we had a lot of guys that played that came from southern colleges and everything, but they was the early ones that came in, so they sort of like got indoctrinated to what was going on. I know when I got here in '62, there was still a few guys on the team that really didn't want to have anything to do with black ballplayers, you know, and so it made it very difficult to have some kind of conversation with them. Fortunately, they was offensive linemen,

didn't have no problem, so I didn't have to deal with them anyway.
[laughter]

Maguire: You never really did like the offense, did you?

Edgerson: I didn't like the offense at all. But the thing was, is that that whole racial situation, it just would not go away when we played exhibition game in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Back to what Paul said, Hilton, he owned the hotels and we was at a Hilton Hotel. When we got there, Saban brought me into the meeting, said, "Booker, I want you to have a meeting with all the black ballplayers," because they didn't want to go. Cookie, [Thomas F.] Tom Day, Jim Sorey, Willie [T.] West, all the guys said, "No, we don't want to go down South. We don't want no parts of it."

So we had experience when I was in college, and Saban said, "Well, look, why don't you go and talk to them."

I said, "Why me? I'm just a rookie. They don't listen to me."

"Talk to them."

So I went in and I talked to the guys, and I said, "Let me put it this way. If we don't get treated properly, we don't have to play. That's just the way it is. We don't have to play." So they all agreed to go.

So we got down there, and when we got there, just as sure as the day was day and night was night, they told us we could not stay there, and so now we got to go to the hotel across town and the white players stay in the Hilton. So Saban says, "Look, you guys do not have to play if you don't want to play, but what I need from you is unity. If all do not want to play, you don't have to play. If one decides to play, you play, or vice versa."

There was a couple guys that said that they would play because their livelihood depended on it and they was trying to make the team and everything, and so they said, "Well, we're going to play." So we ended up playing.

But we went to the restaurant that morning to eat breakfast—

Kondracke: This is what town?

Edgerson: This is in Tulsa.

Kondracke: This is the Bills?

Edgerson: Yes, we played exhibition game, New York Jets.

We went to this restaurant to get something to eat that morning, and I'll tell you, people was ordering food and everything, and I'm getting ready to order and I'm looking. I'm looking at the cooks, and the sweat was falling off their heads into the food, and I said, "Hmm. I don't think so."

Maguire: Give me a bowl of that. [laughter]

Edgerson: So when the waitress asked me what I wanted, I just told her, I said, "Give me a bowl of ice cream and a piece of pie." No sweat is going to fall off of that, you know. And that's what I had for breakfast that morning.

But from that point on, everything else was good. The ballplayers here in Buffalo, they finally got on the same page with everybody else, and we really didn't have any problems here in Buffalo in terms of the racial situation and everything. I mean, obviously

there was a few guys, as I said, that we had some problems with, but they finally came over and did all right.

Rutkowski: But all the team parties, you know, when we'd go after a game on Monday, we never segregated ourselves. We didn't go all as a bunch of white guys and a bunch of black guys. Then we always had the great Halloween party.

[Crosstalk]

Rutkowski: Absolutely. We've got some pictures that we can't show today, to this day, but some of the costumes were kind of unique. Jack Kemp had a shirt on that said "Burn, Baby, Burn. Stokely Carmichael for President." We had some good times, and we made some friendships during those times that today, you know, last a lifetime, Booker, Charlie, and Ernie.

Maguire: You know, the surrounding things that were there, Mort, we could control in our locker room and the word always was, what happens in our locker room stays in our locker room. It was about us. It wasn't about the people in Buffalo or the people in San Diego. It was about the Buffalo Bills.

With Jack—and this is about Jack—Jack was a hell of a leader for us. He really was. I mean, he took charge. I remember that we had a strike in '67, whatever it was. We were on strike and we were working out. Jack was the head of the Players Association, I guess, at that time. He said, "We're going to strike."

Then all the wives said, "Well, if you strike, you ain't getting' any." So the strike only lasted a day. [laughter] It's true. Come on. The wives broke the strike. The players didn't. [laughter]

Kondracke: Charley, you haven't weighed in on the subject of racial. We'll get back to the strike.

Ferguson: Well, I would just like to say that between Jack, Paul was very instrumental in making a lot of things helping the team stay together. I mean, his humor was really so important to the guys, and I think that you may not realize that, but, Paul, you really made a lot of things happen to the team together, along with Jack with his leadership, and I think that's what really had us to work extremely close together as a team. We just worked together. We did a lot of things together, and it was not a problem.

I know Paul and Jack, they heard Tom Day call me "Newpy" [phonetic], so they fell in line and they had no idea what Newpy meant. They never asked.

Maguire: I don't know what perspicacity means either. [laughter]

Ferguson: But that was a fraternity call. Tom and I were frat brothers. So they started calling me Newpy, because that was the way Tom addressed me, is by Newpy. So Paul and Jack used to always do that themselves. Then it picked up. I think Ed used to call me that.

Maguire: I still do.

Ferguson: That's right.

Kondracke: So I think we're done with the civil rights issue. Let me ask you, Ed, how did Jack handle booing? Because he got a fair amount of it. And they threw stuff, right? Is that true?

Rutkowski: His favorite joke was, after he got through with football, when he was going to run for Congress, he said, "You know, these guys today, they get criticized. They're too sensitive. People criticize them and everything. When we played, if I threw an interception or we had a bad play, he said, the people would throw garbage at us and beer cans and rotten tomatoes, and that's when we were coming out of our house." [laughter] His famous line was, "If you could take the boos of 47,000 people in War Memorial Stadium, you could take the political heat in politics."

Maguire: Isn't it true, though, one thing at War Memorial Stadium, which we all had to, they said when you come down the steps, and you're heading onto the field, because we had to go out a tunnel, always keep your helmet on. Always. I'm not talking about after a game when you won or not. Always keep your helmet on.

I was with the Chargers, we came in here in 1960, and we used to play these guys on Friday night. Sid Gillman said—because we beat them—"When we leave this game, keep your helmets on."

And I'm thinking, "What the hell?" Right behind us on our bench are guard dogs in Buffalo. And I went, "Oh, my god." I put my helmet on. The guy throws a full can of beer at me. I say, "Hey, thanks, man." [laughter] Can't wait to get to the locker room.

But they were very friendly. I mean, they didn't just throw stuff at those guys; they threw stuff at the Chargers, too, when we were there. They did not segregate anybody.

Kondracke: What happened when he threw an interception or a receiver missed a catch? Did he get mad?

Bemiller: Well, in those days, as the offensive line, as Booker would say, we never had too much to say.

Kondracke: Well, what did you hear?

Bemiller: Well, we just heard a lot of bitching, which he already said, "Why didn't you catch it?" Or, "What's wrong with you?" Or this and that.

Kondracke: Did you hear it from Jack? Did Jack criticize?

Bemiller: Jack was fairly quiet person, as far as I'm concerned. He was a very smart individual, and he knew that he wouldn't let a screwed-up pass bother him, and that's what kept him—he just kept going. He wouldn't quit. Jack was a tough—the thing I remember about Jack the most is his toughness. He was very strong, tough. Although he wasn't a very big person, he was very tough.

No, we didn't get into—the offensive line, we didn't say too much.

Kondracke: How about you receivers? What happened if he—

Maguire: They're the talkers.

Rutkowski: Yes. When we were playing the Miami Dolphins and I was playing split end at that time, when we got down to the fifteen yard line—

Maguire: You lost that one too. [laughter]

Rutkowski: It was in December. It was cold. You know, your feet are cold. We didn't have the hand warmers and all this stuff that these guys have today, and my hands were like ice.

Maguire: Jack had a hand warmer. [laughter]

Rutkowski: Anyway, he called a quick post pattern, where you go down about seven yards and slant to the inside, and I was wide open. I had two steps on the cornerback. He threw a pass, and it hit me right in the hands, and my hands were so cold, it bounced out of my hands. I came back to the huddle, he chewed me out. He said, "You know, you got to hold onto those things. There aren't that many times when you're going to get open like that."

I said, "Jack, I can't feel a thing. Next time don't lead me. Hit me in the numbers so I can try to trap it against my shoulder." But that was the only time in my career and relationship with Jack that he really ever had nasty words about me.

Maguire: And he never threw a pass to you again. [laughter]

Rutkowski: That's right.

Warlick: Well, I remember in the huddle sometimes when Jack would ask Dubenion, "What you got, Dooby?" Meaning what is open, what can you get open?

And Dooby said, "I don't have a damn thing. They're beating me up soon as I line up." [laughter]

He'd say, "[Glenn Alden] Bass, what you got, Bass?"

And Bass would say, "Uh, Jack, well, I don't have anything. They won't let me off the line."

I used to crack up with that. I made a joke of that. I said, "Well, Jack, throw an incomplete pass like you always do." [laughter] It was a joke, though.

Kondracke: So, Charley?

Ferguson: Well, I can go back and remember an incident where Jack and I used to communicate a lot, and one day Jack said, "Fergie, let's keep this to ourselves, and let's work on the alley-oop pass." [Raleigh C.] R.C. Owens with the Forty-Niners developed that pass. They used to call it the alley-oop. So we were right on about the ten yard line. I can't recall who we were playing at that time, and Jack looked at me and he called the play. It was like a curl, and I was supposed to go and turn in, and he was going to throw it high. But somehow the ball didn't come high to me, and the ball was intercepted in the end zone. I never said any more to Jack about it. Jack never said any more to me about it. [laughter] So that was the end of our alley-oop at that time.

Kondracke: Okay. Now I have to ask about the quarterback controversy. Saban would play Jack, and then he'd pull Jack if Jack wasn't performing and then put Daryle Lamonica in. So what was Saban's philosophy about who he played as quarterback? Larry, what do you know about that?

Felser: I think it was his mood at the time, to tell you the truth. [laughter] I mean, he had enough of Jack, he'd just gained enough confidence in Lamonica after his starting with the second year, that he put Daryle in there. Daryle was a very confident guy. Eddie tells the story. Tell them about the—

Abramoski: He was playing this game and he missed his first eleven passes, was all incomplete or intercepted and everything. Like Eddie would always say, when you'd come out, Saban would say, "You're killing me. What are you doing?"

And Lamonica's standing there listening to all this diatribe, and then he says, "Coach, don't worry about it. I'm going to complete my next eleven passes."

And Saban says, "How the hell do you know that?"

"I'm a 50 percent passer, Coach." [laughter] So that was Lamonica.

Even though there was a great rivalry there, it never spilled over where one guy was mad at the other one. You know, they handled it civilly.

Kondracke: So in what sense was there a rivalry?

Abramoski: Yes, there was a rivalry, yes. I used to stand on the sidelines next to Lamonica, and Lamonica would call what play he would call. "I would call this, Eddie," and, "I would call that, Eddie." Then if it worked, okay. If Jack did okay, then he didn't get in, but he was always in there, and the same thing with Jack. Jack always was in the game. If he wasn't playing, he was at least, like Eddie said, taking part in what plays to call.

Rutkowski: But that's how Lou got the best out of all of us. I mean, he knew how to get that out. He knew that Jack was a fierce competitor, and if you'd pull Jack out of the game, Jack was going to want to fight like heck to get back in the game and make up for whatever he did, and that's how Lou treated us.

I recall we were playing a game against the New York Jets, and Dooby was injured, the other wide receiver was injured. I was going to start that game along with Glenn Bass. We were at the end of a practice, and when practice was over, we were all going in, and Lou came walking over and he said, "Young man, you know how we're going to win this game, don't we?"

I said, "You've got to score more points."

He said, "No, it's all on your shoulders. You're going to have a hell of a game. If you don't, we're going to lose."

Well, talk about putting pressure on me. And then—

Maguire: You lost. [laughter]

Rutkowski: No, no, we won, and I had a heck of a game. But at the twenty-fifth reunion when we had everybody back, I told Glenn Bass that story. He said, "You know, Saban said the same thing to me. He

called me over and he said, 'Glenn, if you don't have a hell of a game, we're going to lose, and we're counting on you to make this happen.'"

Kondracke: I read somewhere that the Bills went like 0 and 3 one year and Saban refused to talk to anybody on the team for weeks. Is that true?

Maguire: No, no.

Kondracke: No?

Maguire: Might have been before I got here. No. No, we wouldn't allow it. We didn't talk to him. [laughter]

But you have to understand something. You know, the rivalry and everything was made up—sorry, Larry—by the press and by the fans. Had nothing to do with these two guys. Jack would not allow it. You know, Daryle wanted to play. I mean, hell, yeah, I wanted to play. You didn't want to sit on the bench. You wanted to play. You've got to remember, there were only thirty-two guys on the team at that time. You didn't do your job, the guy behind you is going to go in and play, and when he screws up, they're going to put you back in the game. This is the way the game was.

There were games when Jack didn't play well, Daryle came in, he wouldn't play well, Jack went back in the game. It didn't matter. The fans made it something that it really wasn't. If you sat and listened to these guys, before a game, man, they talked to each about the game, the strategy, and what the hell was going on. If something happens and you're in there, this would happen. When Daryle got in, Jack was right there to help him. I mean, this stuff was done by

media and fans, not by the players. This football team would not allow it.

Edgerson: I think this is something that I talked to you before about, one thing about Lou, hey, if you produce, you stay. If you don't, you go. And he had no qualms about yanking Jack and putting Daryle in, and if Daryle was not on par, he snatched Daryle right back out and put Jack back in. As Paul was saying and I said before, it was media-driven, it was fan-driven, just like today. Everything comes up, but you never hear about a running-back controversy or wide-receiver controversy. It's always a quarterback controversy. I mean, even right now. They got quarterbacks being drafted right now.

?: It's all your fault. [laughter]

Edgerson: So it's always bad, you know. But that's what media's about. That's what the fans are about. They have opinions and they understand the game of football. But as people ask me, they talk about the game, why don't the coach put so-and-so in and why don't the coach do this and why don't the coach run that play? And I say, "Look, the coaches and the players know more about what they're doing out there than the fans and anybody else, because they the one that put the game plan together." So whatever they put together, they know what they doing.

But it's strictly media- and fan-driven, which is fine, because they paid their dollars to have that opinion. But Lou Saban never had a problem with that, and Jack, even though Jack was competitive and everything, he understood what the game was all about, and that's winning.

Kondracke: Did the fans and the media have a favorite in the—

Maguire: Well, it depended. We're in an ethnic town, so they'd check the gate, and if there were a lot of Italians at the gate, Daryle was definitely going in. If they weren't, Jack could play the entire game. [laughter]

Rutkowski: When Jack was running for Vice President with Dole, he called me and said, "I'm going to be in Erie, Pennsylvania. Why don't you and Marilou meet me in Pennsylvania, because I'm going to be speaking at the courthouse with Governor Ridge."

So Marilou and I drove down there and met [Thomas J.] Tom Ridge at the airport, and Jack came up and we drove in the motorcade and went down to the courthouse. They introduced us all and said some nice things about me, and then Jack got up and he started speaking. Jack's up there speaking and talking. They had a bunch of demonstrators, about fifteen demonstrators, and they put them across the street, and they had cordoned the area off with this yellow tape, because they didn't want them disturbing anything.

Jack's talking and he keeps looking over to his left, and he says this good-naturedly, he said, "Hey, you over there!" And everybody looks over there. He said, "You know, you can make fun of my economics and you can make fun of my politics, but don't ever make fun of my football."

And there was a guy with a big sign that said "Put in Lamonica. Put in Lamonica." [laughter]

But that's not the end of the story. So we drive back to the airport and Jack and Joanne get on the airplane, and Marilou and I get

in the car and we're driving back and we're driving back. He gets me on the cell phone. He said, "Eddie, the press was there and they're going to take that out of context. I know they're going to call Daryle and he's going to say something stupid and it's going to embarrass me."

I said, "Jack, don't worry about it. I'll track Daryle down." So it took me two days to find Daryle, and I told him the situation.

He just started laughing. He said, "Don't worry. I support Jack and the President. I won't say anything embarrassing."

Abramoski: You're talking about my hometown, Eddie.

Rutkowski: There you go. Erie, Pennsylvania.

Abramoski: That's where I grew up.

Kondracke: There was a game, I think it was the end of the '64 season, that snow game that you won, I think 24-14, and the question was who was going to start. And Jack, according to *Rockin' the Rockpile* [Jeffrey Miller, *Rockin' the Rockpile: The Buffalo Bills of the American Football League*], the book, goes to Saban and he says, "Look, you've got to decide who your quarterback is." So it did get to Jack a little bit, didn't it?

Rutkowski: Well, anybody who's a competitor, given the choice between me and my competitor, you want me in the game, and Jack was a very confident individual and he thought he could pull us through, and he did.

Maguire: Mort, one of the things you've got to take into consideration when you read that and take it in context, but when you read that, you've got to realize something, that the starting quarterback, there's only so much time you spend on the practice field. Wednesday is offensive day, Thursday is defensive day, and they combine the two of them on Friday. The starting quarterback gets most of the work, so the quarterback needs to know who the hell's starting. Is it going to be me or is it going to be him? It was a legitimate question to ask. Now, everybody says, "Well, there's the controversy." There wasn't. There was none. Just wanted to know, "Am I going to be your start or am I not?" It's that simple.

Kondracke: The media needs to defend itself. Larry.

Felser: They're just about right about all this stuff. As far as playing favorites or anything like that, that didn't exist. I mean, I'd rather see the quarterback in there with the hottest hand who's playing best at the time. I think most sportswriters are like that. Both of these guys were good quarterbacks. We had situations here the last few years where the fans are split between one quarterback or another, when in fact neither one of them could play. Kemp and Lamonica, both of them could play. It's inevitable that there be a split with the fans, and as far as the media goes, we're just looking for a good story.

Maguire: And it really is true, Mort, you could boo Jack and he walks on the field and throws a touchdown pass and 41,000 people go nuts and they love him. Then if he throws an interception, they're going to boo him coming off the field. It's just the way it is, and it always will be that way. If you get into politics or sports with a thin skin, you're

never going to survive, not in this business. I'm going to tell you, it's in the media business, the journalism business, same thing. You better have some tough skin.

Kondracke: So, Al, I have to ask you this. What was the difference in having Jack and Daryle under you? [laughter]

Bemiller: It really didn't make much difference to me. At that particular time, as I said before, they always was up underneath. You didn't have to snap the ball back or anything, worry about anything like that. They were both great people, and everything that these people are saying here now, they all got along. We got along with everybody. In my situation, I was just very, very happy, very, very lucky boy to be where I was.

Kondracke: But could you trust Daryle? [laughter]

Bemiller: They could have put him behind me [indicating Maguire]. [laughter] Because I heard about his hands.

Abramoski: You ought to ask Eddie how he was torn between guys, a Notre Dame guy and his best friend, Jack Kemp.

Felser: I just want to add a little something about that. It could really get crazy with the fans. Paul was talking about someone throwing a can that was still half full in Baltimore stadium because they were upset at Jack or something like that. There was one game, I can't remember which one it was, but when they swept away after the game, when they cleaned up the field, there were dozens and dozens

of cans that weren't even opened. It was the same deal with the wife of [David M.] Mike Stratten, who was a great linebacker for the Bills; somebody threw a full can of pop, hit her right in the back, almost in the head, and that led to, at least the same moment, they barred cans and full containers in War Memorial. If you wanted a drink, you went to the concession stand and got it in a cup.

Maguire: Well, that's where the team used to go right after the game, to the field. [laughter]

Rutkowski: But didn't we have used to have to go up through the stands, remember, to get into the locker room at halftime? I'll tell you what, the fans in Buffalo, they're great, but if you're having a bad game, you would hear some comments going through those stands, boy, I'll tell you. Hurry up, walk faster if you're having a bad day.

Kondracke: But answer what Ed was asking about. Were you torn? You had a Notre Dame teammate and your best friend sort of rivalry.

Rutkowski: We knew Daryle was a good quarterback, but Jack he had the arm, the leadership capability, and he led us and he won for us, and he was the man. We knew that. When Daryle got traded, that was the best thing that ever happened to Daryle. I mean, he went on and he had a cast of characters that were unbelievable. I used to follow his stats because Daryle and I were competitors at Notre Dame. We both went there as quarterbacks. I'd see where Daryle threw Hewitt Dixon, their fullback, a sixty-four-yard touchdown pass, and I'm thinking, "Hewitt Dixon, yeah." And Daryle drops back, and I'd see the film, and he'd dump this little four-yard pass to Hewitt Dixon and

he would run over about five or six people forty-six yards down the field. That's the kind of talent he had around him. So it was a great move for Daryle.

Maguire: Mort, the one thing that all of these guys understand and it is today with all athletes especially and on a team, if you didn't want to play, if you were just happy to be there, you know, it tore a guy apart that he couldn't play, and it did Daryle and it did Jack. You want to play. I just remember this guy, just real short, I remember when somebody got hurt and Al had to move to guard, and I'm going to tell you something, he was the best center in the league. He had to move to guard. Not one word was said. He just moved. It was for the betterment of the team, and these guys understood it.

As Larry said, the only thing that's important is winning, for god's sake. All this other crap that goes on, that's what people perceive and they think that, "Well, we know what's going on in the locker room." No, you don't. Like some jackass—I walked out of the stadium one time in Buffalo, we got beat 41-nothing, and the guy pulls me up and he's half-smashed and he goes, "Hey, what happened?"

I said, "Hey, you had a better seat than I did, man. You tell me what happened."

Kondracke: But isn't an exception to that whole rule the Cookie Gilchrist controversy where Cookie refused to play at a point because Jack was passing and he wanted the ball? How did that go down? How did it all happen?

Maguire: Again, I'm with Booker. We don't care about the offense.

Abramoski: I can give you my take on it. What had happened is Cookie had something in his contract, if he got so many yards, he got a bonus. And in the game, the defense, they were showing us we were passing more, and he walked off the field at halftime and just refused to play. So Lou put in the other guy, and Lou fired Gilchrist.

But we wanted to win the championship, and Jack and the other guys, I don't know who, these guys would probably know better than I do—Jack and the others guys went to Saban and told him, "Hey, you always told us we're a family. We need Cookie to win this championship."

So Lou said, "Okay, I'll take him back, but he's gone at the end of the year." And that's exactly what happened. But Jack was very instrumental in having Cookie come back.

Edgerson: One of the things with that was Cookie and I, we was roommates, first we was great friends forever, you know. He was my mentor and anything else along the way. As Eddie was saying, it's part of the contract, and I think I mentioned this before. All players have incentives in their contract, and I'm quite sure Jack had something about how many passes that he completed and how many yardage and stuff like that. And Cookie had the thing about carrying the ball, you know, thirty times a game, thirty, thirty-five times a game. He was the first American Football League player that gained a thousand yards, that scored five touchdowns in one game. So there was incentives in his contract that if he got X, Y, Z, then he would get paid. Same thing, he said, "Play me on defense as a linebacker, but you better give me another contract."

So when this whole thing came down, Cookie didn't want to leave Buffalo. He never was a quitter, he never was anything, but it

was an instinctive thing. He did what he did. The old story says once you did it and you thought about it, you're sorry, it's too late, it's already done. So when Jack called him and they talked and Cookie stated that he would apologize and everything, then it came to a public apology, you know. That wasn't what it's supposed to have been. It was just supposed to have been an apology. That's all. So I think that got into Cookies' craw is that he had to make a public apology to the team and everything about what happened, because there was more to it than what people had said it was.

But all in all, Cookie, I've always said in the past, is that, hey, it was the right thing to do. He had no animosity towards Jack. In fact, him and Jack were very good friends. They talked along the way after football and everything, and Jack was very instrumental in a lot of things that Cookie did after his football career. So, no, Cookie and Jack was like this, and Cookie never, never denied the fact that "I did the wrong thing when I walked off the field. Not only did I disappoint myself, I disappointed my teammates."

Kondracke: Anybody else have a take on this? Watching it? No? Okay.

What was Jack's relationship, since he was the president of the Players Association, with Mr. Wilson? Ed.

Rutkowski: He had a high degree of respect for Ralph Wilson. In fact, I recall when Ralph's dad passed away and we went to the wake, Jack and I drove together. When we went up to the casket, he saw Ralph Wilson's dad in the casket with his hands crossed, with the Buffalo Bills championship ring on his finger, and he just couldn't believe it.

Although Jack was president of the Players Association, we didn't do anything that was that controversial or that demanding at that time. He was just trying to get better benefits and better money for the ballplayers. It wasn't as contentious as it was years ago or even today when they're trying to redo the CBA [collective bargaining agreement]. It was more making sure that we tried to provide some new—like he had a thing, he proposed a CAP, Career Adjustment Pay, so that when you retire from professional football, you would get a certain amount of money to make a transition from football into the private sector so that it wasn't an abrupt change, and he was very sensitive to that. But, no, it wasn't contentious, and he did a great job for us.

Kondracke: But you did strike once?

Rutkowski: Yes, we did. It was '67? It wasn't [unclear]. It only lasted a couple days.

Kondracke: Do you remember what the issue was?

Maguire: Money. Isn't it always? In those days, you know.

Kondracke: What did you get paid at the beginning, and what was your highest pay as a Bill?

Maguire: I started in 1960. I know Ernie didn't make anything in Canada. In 1960 I made \$8,000 my first year, and I got a \$1,000 bonus when I signed a contract, and I played eleven. My last year was \$25,000, and that was a lot of money. I don't ever complain about

any of it. I said to Mr. Wilson once, "You know, you owe me some money, pal. You're paying all these guys now."

He said, "How much did you make?"

I said, "Twenty-five thousand dollars my last year."

He said, "I overpaid you by 24,500." [laughter] And that ended that.

Kondracke: Was that about the pay scale for everybody?

Bemiller: My first year I got \$1,500 bonus and \$8,500 was my salary. I went down and played in the Blue-Gray game. Detroit, they wanted me to play there, and so the scout came up and asked me, "Did you sign with the Buffalo Bills?" And, of course, I lied to him. I didn't want him to know. I wanted to find out how much they would offer me, how much NFL at the time would offer me instead of the AFL. The difference was, I think, \$1,000 either way. My highest pay—yours was \$25,000, mine was \$23,000. I played ten years. Nine years. And that was a lot of money. That was a lot of money in those days. I had a brand-new house. I had a brand-new car. My wife and I had three, four, five kids. I was doing good.

Kondracke: So, Charley, go ahead.

Ferguson: I was just going to say when I came here, I started in Cleveland with \$7,500 and was traded to Minnesota the next year, and then the leading receiver on the '62 team, I was a holdout in '63, and I was trying to get a \$1,500 raise, and I didn't get it. [Norman M. "Norm"] Van Brocklin let me go, and I came here. Lou asked me, said, "What was your contract?"

I said, "Well." I started stuttering, thinking this might be my opportunity to get that little \$9,500 that I was after. But I told him, I said, "Well, Lou, I was after about \$10,000 contract."

He kind of looked at me. I ended up signing for \$8,500 when I came here. I went out at \$25,000.

Kondracke: Joe Namath gets \$467,000 contract. So did everybody get a bump? I mean, did that help you?

Edgerson: No.

?: No.

Maguire: Mort, first of all, you've got to understand something. With the players, there's some guys that, "We've got to get more money. We've got to do this." All these guys, all they ever wanted to do was play.

Warlick: We would have paid them.

Maguire: Money had nothing to do with it. So help me god, it didn't. It was never brought up. [Thomas J.] Tom Sestak and I roomed together the whole time I was with the Buffalo Bills. We went into business in 1968, and I had no idea for five years how much money this guy made. And he's my roommate. Until the day we signed the papers to go into business together, then I realized how much money he made. But you never asked. Does anybody here have any idea how much Jack Kemp made?

Rutkowski: He made about 45 [\$45,000] at the end of the year. He was the highest paid on the team because he was the quarterback. But you've got to realize, we would have paid them to play if anybody asked us.

Maguire: I wouldn't. No, no. [laughter] Maybe offensive guys would. [laughter]

Rutkowski: They would send you during the off season your contract with your salary in it, and they expected you to sign it and send it back. I forget what year it was, I think it was '67 or '66, it was during the preseason, and after one of the practices, Harvey [P.] Johnson, who was our player personnel guy, after practice he says, "I want to see Rutkowski, [Mike] Stratten, and [Roland O. "Ron"] McDole," and somebody else, "after practice."

And we're thinking, "What's this all about?"

So we go in there after practice, and Harvey said, "You SOB's. You're holding out." Didn't realize it, but I had my thing in a drawer in my cabinet in the bedroom. I forgot to send it back in, and all of us forgot to send our contracts back in, not that we were holding out. He said, "I'm going to give each one of you guys a \$1,500 raise. Take it or leave it," and he walks out. [laughter]

Well, we all started laughing, because my contract had a \$500 raise and the most anybody had was Stratten; he had \$1,000 raise. So now he's going to give all of us \$1,500. So we're laughing. We're trying to think who can best go out and represent us with a straight face. I think it was Mike Stratten.

I came back home and I said, "Honey, you're not going to believe this. We just got a \$1,500 raise." Unbelievable.

Kondracke: Let me ask you, Ed, since you're the closest politically to him. Who coined the term "The Senator" about Kemp?

Rutkowski: I don't know who coined the term.

Abramoski: Tony Marquette [phonetic].

Rutkowski: Was it Marquette?

Abramoski: Yes.

Kondracke: And Tony, who was that?

Abramoski: Tony Marquette was the old-time equipment manager, and because he was always talking and he'd always say, "What do you want to be, a senator, Kemp?" [laughter] So it just stuck.

Rutkowski: Eddie Abramoski used to say that we used to call Jack the "statesman of the Bills," so if anybody ever referred to him as "that SOB," they knew what they were talking about. [laughter]

Kondracke: Did he try to get people to vote for Goldwater and Nixon?

Abramoski: I'll tell you this. My dad was a union representative, worked in the steel mill, and Jack used to always run by his theories about everything about politics. He even gave me the book. He was telling me the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and decadence is going to set in. "Eddie, I want you to read this book." I can

remember he would talk to me about Social Security. He'd talk to me about that, and I'd always kid him, I said, "Jack, to get elected, you know that bell-shaped curve, you've got to be in the middle of it. You can't be on one end or the other, because you aren't going to be elected." We used to tease back and forth, but he always used me as a sounding board. But I knew he was going to go, and I would have voted for him every time, although his views were entirely different than mine.

When he was at HUD, he worried about the people. He really was concerned about things that mattered to the little guy, too, although he had his trickle-down theory from [Arthur] Laffer. I always told him, "I don't know how smart you are, but you're well read."
[laughter]

Maguire: He never read books with pictures in them. [laughter] He never did. You know, I said, "Do you want to read this?" "How many pictures?"

Kondracke: So when did everybody realize that he actually was going to run for office? Did he talk about it?

Felser: Oh, yes. At first, when they had the AFL days, this was unheard of now, I think the coaches would be going out of their minds, but the press used to travel with the team to the road games, and we were gone for a long time. Even the flights were using prop, and you didn't get a lot of jets, so you spent a lot of time together. Well, Jack used to come down to my seat, looking for a debating partner, and I had a lot with him. He was fun to debate with, never raised our voices ever, respected what we had to say. I was an FDR Democrat, still am.

He was always an interesting guy. I remember how he used to refer to himself as a bleeding-heart conservative? He was. That's exactly what he was, a guy with a huge heart, thought about people, thought about people who didn't have a lot. I've met a lot of people in sports and a lot of people in business and so on. One of the most admirable people I ever met.

Maguire: I've got to tell you one thing about Jack Kemp, and with all the players, I don't think there's anyone here at this table or on the football team, wherever he was, we all knew how to get a hold of him, especially with Eddie. If you said to Eddie, "Call Jack," he answered. I don't care how busy he was, he always had time. This was a team. This was a family, one of his first families. Not immediate family, but first family. Never had a problem. He was just that kind of guy.

Kondracke: Did you help with his campaign when he decided to run for Congress?

Maguire: No money. No, I don't ever give politicians money. I give them support.

Kondracke: What about appearances and stuff like that?

Maguire: Appearances?

Kondracke: Yes. You're famous in Buffalo. Did you go help him get elected?

Maguire: No.

Edgeron: You know what? All the time that Jack ran, he never personally asked me to participate. People around him may have, but I don't ever recall going out and campaigning for him. I went to a couple of his functions and everything. But just to go out and beat the bushes and campaign for him and everything, he never asked that of us. He didn't put that on us.

Rutkowski: It was all Rutkowski's fault.

Rutkowski: He had a great line. He said that he went out and he told the people of western New York that, "If you didn't elect me to Congress, I might have to go back and play quarterback for the Buffalo Bills." He said, "So that reassured my election."

Kondracke: Did anybody ever campaign for him?

Maguire: I'll tell you. It's amazing. All of our wives did. They were the supporters at the campaign headquarters.

Rutkowski: Kempaigners, yes.

Maguire: Kempaigners. The girls did, yes.

Felser: Didn't two of his former teammates on the Chargers or any of that [unclear] campaign for him?

Maguire: You're absolutely right. They did, because they were so glad to get him out of San Diego and make sure he didn't have to come back to California. No, but they did. Yes, that's true.

Kondracke: Larry, you're on the Hall of Fame Selection Committee, right?

Felser: Right.

Kondracke: So is there ever a chance that Jack Kemp will be in the Hall of Fame?

Felser: Probably not. As Peter King from *Sports Illustrated* coined a line several years ago that's brought up every year at the meeting, so-and-so belongs in the Hall of The Very Good, not the Hall of Fame.

Kondracke: Billy Shaw actually has made a petition to the Hall of Fame that there be sort of a separate category for public service or something like that.

Felser: Contributors and so on. Yes.

Kondracke: Is there any chance of that?

Felser: Honestly, no, I don't think so, because there's a long line of people who are in that category who have not been elected. It's not easy to get into the Hall of Fame, and that's why they have a seven-hour meeting every year, and people storm out, quite angry at one another. It's not easy to get in.

Kondracke: I think we're about done, but I just want to give everybody an opportunity if you have one thought about how Jack Kemp ought to be remembered. Anybody want to conclude with—

Warlick: Well, I'd like to say this. I had a story that I wanted to tell, and it's leaving me.

Felser: That happens to me ten times a day. [laughter]

Bemiller: I'd like to say for a small kid, a little kid like me, came up from a town in Pennsylvania as a football player, I was very, very, very lucky and I'm very, very, very proud of saying I played with Jack Kemp, because there's not too many people can say that.

Maguire: You know, it really is kind of neat. It's hard to believe that we're sitting here and a guy that was so young and vibrant as Jack, and Jack never aged, never stopped working, never stopped doing things, that he's not here. That's the sad part. But what Jack gave to all of us, as you've heard, what he's given to all of you and all of them in every endeavor that he's ever taken on, he may not get to the Hall of Fame, Larry, and I agree with you totally, but with us he is in the Hall of Fame.

Rutkowski: I always recall Jack as a great family man. I admire and respect him tremendously. In fact, after the championship game, my vivid memory of him is of being carried off the field, but he had his son—was it Jeff or Jimmy?—on his shoulder. That exemplified what he was all about. He was a family man first, and he loved his family.

Kondracke: Was Joanne some kind of a den mother for the team? What was her role?

Rutkowski: She was the glue that kept the Kemp family together, because Jack had so many interests and was always going off on tangents, whether it's football or politics or whatever, working for Goldwater. But Joanne was the glue that kept the Kemp family together.

Maguire: She brought him back to earth.

Ferguson: I'd just like to say, Morton, that the things that I used to notice about Jack, for whatever reason, he had to come back to Buffalo, politics or whichever, Jack never forgot his teammates. He always wanted a group of us to be there. I used to wonder sometimes, I'd say, well, gee, Jack is spending more time talking about football than he did politics at times. But that's the way Jack was. He really wanted to get us there, to let people know that we're still with Jack. We supported Jack whenever we could, whatever we could do, and I just always appreciated Jack for being that kind of person. He was a people's person.

Warlick: On the note that Charley just made, this is what I want to say. Jack used to come back and would invite some of his fellow teammates to lunch. On one occasion, we all went to lunch and Dubenion were there, you [indicating Rutkowski] were there on one of these occasions. Our son, who was in college at the time, was at

home, and we told him we were going to have lunch with Jack Kemp.
“Oh, I want to meet Jack Kemp. I want to meet him.”

So we all go to lunch, and Jack mentioned to my son, “You know, there’s a young lady in our office back in Washington. She’s nice-looking. Maybe you should meet her.”

My son says, “Oh, that would be nice, Jack, but I don’t know what my wife would say about that.” [laughter]

Maguire: We were never invited to lunch with Jack Kemp.

Walick: Oh, you weren’t?

Maguire: No. When did you guys go to lunch with Jack Kemp?

?: I wasn’t.

Ferguson: Ed didn’t tell us about that one. But that’s true, right?

[Crosstalk]

Kondracke: On that note, listen, this has been wonderful. I think this is going to provide such great memories for so many people and fans in Buffalo and also people who consult the Jack Kemp Collection at the Library of Congress or on the Kemp Foundation website. So thank you all for participating in this, and thanks to you, Ed, for organizing it.

Rutkowski: My pleasure

[End of interview]