

CHICAGO—He's on trial for obstruction of justice, but thanks to the potent issue of crime in the suburbs, State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan is running away with what is perhaps the most fateful political race in the country — including the race for President.

At stake in the Hanrahan race is the succession to Mayor Richard Daley as Democratic boss in the Chicago area. Thus the race involves not only what slight chance George McGovern has to carry the must state of Illinois, but also the whole future of the Democratic Party nationally.

The nature of the office explains one reason the Hanrahan race is so important. Since the state's attorney is the prosecutor in Cook County, which includes Chicago, Republicans could use the job to investigate, harass and maybe even jail many leading figures in the Daley organization.

To keep the office Democratic, Mayor Daley has to go all out for Mr. Hanrahan. Since the organization's basic strength lies in partyline voting, that means going all out for the whole ticket including Sen. McGovern.

ANOTHER REASON the Hanrahan race is so important is the nature of the man. He is the James Cagney of American politics — scrappy, fast talking and direct, with large quantities of spleen and charm. "He defies you not to like him," a suburban matron who thought she hated him once said after hearing him speak.

Until the notorious 1969 police raid on Black Panther headquarters in Chicago, Hanrahan was a man with a sure future. But investigation of charges that the police had killed two Panthers without provocation yielded some phony evidence purporting to exonerate the officers. Hanrahan was indicted on charges of obstructing justice and brought to trial.

The Panther episode turned opinion virulently against Hanrahan in the

black community which supplies about 30 per cent of the organization vote in Chicago. In the primary last spring, the organization backed another candidate for state's attorney and the black community voted heavily against Hanrahan. But thanks to Democrats in the ethnic wards of the city, and to suburban Republicans who crossed over, Hanrahan won the Democratic nomination.

The Republicans still had a shot at him, and they nominated a former FBI man and alternative candidate, Bernard Goetz. But a recent string of suburban murders, some allegedly traced to a black gang called De Mau Mau, has charged with the drug money in a deep suburban suburb spreading like a virus. By playing on that issue, Hanrahan has been turning up the trash in a truly remarkable campaign.

HE PUT in a typical performance the other night at an organization dinner held at the Martini Club restaurant in a white working-class district. He was introduced as the man "who does something about law and order" and "who will lead the Democratic ticket in 1972."

Hanrahan started mildly. All he wanted was for people everywhere to live together in the same harmony, the same equality, the same respect for law that he found among the crowd at the Martini Club. Then he rounded on a recent finding by a committee of the Chicago bar that he was "unfit by temperament" for his office. By some magic, the world temperament suddenly became an unshakable Protestant shibboleth aimed at hurting Catholics. "They're talking," Hanrahan said, "about a Catholic Irishman who doesn't have the kind of temperament to prosecute about crime." He turned the crowd at it.

Performance of the kind that have made him more popular than just about any other candidate for re-election.

lieved that he will move for the mayoralty and the succession to Mr. Daley who is now 70.

Without exactly making a point, Hanrahan says that the black community in Cook County is the backbone of the Democratic Party. At the dinner the other night, the audience he told a story about a man who had broken a jail which meant certain death by hanging into a ditch. "When the man looked to the moon, he said to be saved, 'Give faith, my son, let go; you will be saved.' Finally, in desperation, the man hanging by his fingers called to the moon and said out: 'Isn't there anybody else up there?'"

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Joseph Kraft  
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