

Man in the News

Chotiner Back at Nixon's Side

By Charles Roberts

WASHINGTON—(NWS)—How to beat Sen. Edward M. Kennedy this year? "The Republican candidate should say over and over again that he will not make Chappaquiddick an issue. If he says that enough times, I think the voters will understand."

That advice, given recently to a Young Republican leadership training school here, is vintage Murray M. Chotiner.

And Chotiner, who put the cut and slash in the "old" Nixon, is staging a political comeback these days almost as spectacular as that of his onetime protege.

For weeks now, the stocky, 60-year-old Californian has been holed up in an office on the ground floor of the White House shaping the strategy and setting the tone for the GOP's attempt to make some major congressional and state election gains this fall.

Party Liaison

In fact, Chotiner has already outflanked Harry Dent, the former aide to South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond and the undisputed elections expert at the White House until the President made his old sidekick a special counsel five months ago.

Chotiner now is the princi-

pal White House liaison with the Republican Party in no less than 31 states — in which a total of 24 governorships, 25 Senate seats and 273 House seats are at stake.

Not surprisingly, he is making his influence felt.

In Michigan, for example, Rep. Donald Riegler withdrew from the GOP Senate primary after Chotiner made it clear during a White House chat that Mrs. George Romney was the Administration's choice to oppose Democratic Sen. Philip A. Hart.

From his years of experience in political warfare, Chotiner holds a number of



MURRAY CHOTINER
Shapes the strategy

—Newsweek Service Photo

strong theories about how to fight campaigns.

He noted recently, for example, that "when you run against an incumbent the first rule of debate comes into play, and that is, anyone who advocates change must first show that there is a need for a change. In other

words, unless there is something wrong with the person who occupies the office, why make the change?"

Son of a wealthy Los Angeles theater owner, Chotiner had won a name for himself as a successful defender of bookmakers in Los Angeles courts and as former Sen. William L. Knowland's campaign manager when he first met Nixon right after World War II when Nixon was still in the Navy.

Even so, Chotiner saw the young lieutenant commander as a promising candidate for Congress although, he admits, he "didn't think of him" then as a prospective President.

Fight on Voorhis

But it was Chotiner who helped launch Nixon on the road to the White House by quarterbacking his first congressional campaign in 1946 and devising an attack on incumbent Rep. Jerry Voorhis and those "who would destroy our constitutional principles

through socialization of American free institutions."

It was in Nixon's 1950 Senate campaign against Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, though, that Chotiner won his enduring reputation among Democrats as a "smear artist."

At the height of the battle, Nixon distributed 500,000 pink flyers on which Chotiner had compared the "voting records" of Mrs. Douglas and "the notorious Communist partyliner, Congressman Vito Marcantonio of New York."

Most of the votes were on non-controversial matters, but Chotiner makes no apologies for the deceptive tactic.

In 1952, Chotiner countered Democratic attacks on a private fund friends had put together for Nixon by advising the Vice Presidential candidate to go on television and make his now famous "Checkers" speech.

"It was Chotiner who really saved the day," Nixon recalled later. "He was a tower of strength."