



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer's Briefing Materials

William J. vanden Heuvel Interview, 07/19/2005, 12/07/2006

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

Miller Center Documents¹

- William vanden Heuvel Timeline.

Secondary Source Materials

- R. W. Apple, Jr., "Ex-Kennedy Aides Weigh Strategy," *The New York Times*, 08/26/1968.
- John Herbers, "McGovern Bid Buoyed by 'Draft Teddy' Boomlet," *The New York Times*, 08/28/1968.
- Milton Gwirtzman oral history interview, John F. Kennedy Library, 04/04/1972, pp. 139-140.
- William vanden Heuvel and Milton Gwirtzman, *On His Own: Robert F Kennedy, 1964-1968* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970) pp. 56-66, 189-191, 278-284, 288-291, 303-313, 314-319, 331-336, 363-371.
- Burton Hersch, *The Education of Edward Kennedy* (New York: Morrow, 1972) pp. 284-287.
- Adam Clymer, *Edward Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: Morrow, 1999) pp. 73-77, 103-114, 117-126.
- "Prince Edward Negroes to Get Schools After 4 Years Without Them," *The New York Times*, 08/15/1963.
- Richard Reeves, "'...It Swings. We're Part of an Adventure'," *The New York Times*, 02/12/1967.
- Milton Gwirtzman oral history interview, John F. Kennedy Library, 02/10/1972, pp. 53-54.
- Theo Lippman, Jr., *Senator Ted Kennedy: The Career Behind the Image* (New York: Norton, 1976) pp. 38-40.

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WILLIAM J. VANDEN HEUVEL TIMELINE

Prepared by Christopher Loomis

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 06/23/2005

- 1952** William J. vanden Heuvel graduates from Cornell University Law School, where he was editor-in-chief of the *Cornell Law Quarterly*. He had previously done his undergraduate work at Deep Springs Junior College and Cornell. (*The New York Times*, 03/12/1960, 11/01/1960)
- 1952-1953** Vanden Heuvel serves in the Air Force as an officer in the Judge Advocate General's department. (*The New York Times*, 03/12/1960)
- 1953-1954** Vanden Heuvel is executive assistant to William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan during Donovan's term as U.S. Ambassador to Thailand. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004, <<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005; *The New York Times*, 03/12/1960, 01/08/1970)
- 1958-1960** Vanden Heuvel is special counsel to Governor W. Averell Harriman of New York. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004, <<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005; *The New York Times*, 01/08/1970)
- 1960**
- March* Vanden Heuvel enters the race for the House seat in the Seventeenth Congressional District on the Liberal-Democratic ticket, opposing Republican incumbent John Lindsay. (*The New York Times*, 03/12/1960)
- August* Senator and presidential candidate John F. Kennedy (JFK) appoints vanden Heuvel to be his special assistant on housing and urban affairs in Congress. Vanden Heuvel had supported Adlai E. Stevenson for president earlier in the campaign. (*The New York Times*, 06/28/1960, 08/19/1960)
- November* Lindsay defeats vanden Heuvel in the general election. (*The New York Times*, 11/09/1960)
- 1963**
- June-August* Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) appoints vanden Heuvel special assistant for civil rights. RFK sends him to Prince Edward County, Virginia, where local authorities had closed public schools since 1959 in order to avoid integration. There, he is a key player in the creation of the Prince Edward Free School Association, which provides free education for black children. Senator Edward M. Kennedy's (EMK) efforts to create a national Teacher Corps evolve from the Prince Edward project. (Theo Lippman, Jr., *Senator Ted Kennedy: The*

Career Behind the Image, New York: Norton, 1976, pp. 38-40; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978, p. 345; *The New York Times*, 06/13/1963, 08/15/1963)

1964

- June* Vanden Heuvel is among the first to visit EMK in the hospital after the Senator's plane crashes during its landing approach in Southamptton, Massachusetts. EMK was flying to accept his party's endorsement at the Democratic state convention in West Springfield. EMK asks vanden Heuvel to stand in for him at an event in upstate New York. (Burton Hersh, *The Education of Edward Kennedy*, New York: Morrow, 1972, p. 201)
- August* Vanden Heuvel resigns from the Attorney General's office to become deputy campaign manager for RFK's Senate campaign in New York. (*The Washington Post*, 08/22/1964)

1967

- April-Sept.* Vanden Heuvel serves as a vice president during the New York State Constitutional Convention, where he is regarded as RFK's "top man." (*The New York Times*, 02/12/1967, 04/06/1967; *The Washington Post*, 08/22/1967)
- October* EMK meets in New York on the 8th with a group of Kennedy advisors, including vanden Heuvel, Stephen Smith, Kenny O'Donnell, Ted Sorensen, Fred Dutton, Pierre Salinger, Chuck Daly and Ivan Nestigan of Wisconsin, to discuss whether RFK should challenge President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) in 1968. EMK argues that RFK should wait until 1972 to run. The group reportedly agrees that RFK should not consider challenging LBJ unless LBJ's position grows much weaker. Joe Dolan is instructed to set-up a "low key political operation," in which polls would be taken in New Hampshire. (Schlesinger, p. 829)
- December* RFK holds a meeting at vanden Heuvel's house in New York on the 10th to discuss the 1968 presidential campaign in light of McCarthy's recent entry into the race. Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin are reportedly the two strongest advocates of an RFK candidacy. EMK, along with Sorensen and vanden Heuvel, argue that he should wait and RFK is reportedly still concerned that his candidacy could split the party, even though a challenge has already been mounted against the sitting Democratic president. (Hersh, p. 286-287; Schlesinger, p. 832)

1968

- March* EMK travels to Senator Eugene McCarthy's house in Green Bay, Wisconsin to explain why RFK has decided to enter the primary and to discuss how RFK and McCarthy might work together to avoid splitting the anti-Vietnam vote, but

McCarthy refuses to consider making any deals. EMK returns immediately to RFK's estate, Hickory Hill, in the early morning of the 16th to pass on the news to RFK, Sorensen, Schlesinger and vanden Heuvel. Later that morning at breakfast, EMK ends Sorensen's, Schlesinger's and vanden Heuvel's questioning of whether RFK should enter the race, arguing, "No. He's made up his mind... We can't talk about it any more." RFK announces his candidacy later that day. (Adam Clymer, *Edward Kennedy: A Biography*, New York: Morrow, 1999, pp. 105-109; Schlesinger, pp. 854-855; Gwirtzman interview, 03/16/1972, pp. 111-113)

Following LBJ's withdrawal from the race on the 31st, vanden Heuvel confers with EMK. He later recalls that EMK and RFK alone immediately recognized Johnson's withdrawal as a setback to RFK's campaign for the Democratic nomination. (Hersh, pp. 301-302)

April Vanden Heuvel is among those sent in to try and help shore up RFK's primary campaign in Oregon, but RFK's more experienced staff is hampered by Congresswoman Edith Green, who had been charged with directing the campaign in that state. McCarthy defeats Kennedy in the Oregon primary the following month. (Hersh, pp. 324-325)

June After winning the California primary, RFK is shot in Los Angeles on the 5th. He dies the next day.

Summer Vanden Heuvel accompanies EMK on a sailing trip off the New England coast. (Clymer, p. 120)

August Vanden Heuvel helps monitor the Democratic convention in Chicago for EMK, where he also reportedly works for Senator George McGovern. After being informed by Senator Russell Long that Louisiana's delegation would stand behind Kennedy, vanden Heuvel calls EMK in Hyannis Port. "You know, this is a long hill, the Presidency," vanden Heuvel reportedly tells EMK. "It's a hard hill to climb, and all I'm saying to you, and I'm not trying to persuade you, that the nomination in my judgment is yours, if you're willing to be available to it. And I'm not pressuring you in any way, but it will probably be a long time before we're ever this far up the hill again." EMK ultimately resists heavy pressure to accept either the Democratic nomination for the presidency or vice presidency. (Clymer, pp. 123-125; *The New York Times*, 08/26/1968)

1969

Spring At lunch with EMK, vanden Heuvel tells Kennedy the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination is his if he wants it. EMK expresses concerns that he will be assassinated if he runs. (Clymer, p. 136)

EMK and vanden Heuvel both actively oppose President Richard M. Nixon's Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile program. (*The New York Times*, 03/30/1969, 04/18/1969; *The Washington Post*, 04/01/1969)

July EMK drives his car off a bridge at Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts on the 18th following an appreciation party held for former members of RFK's campaign staff. EMK manages to escape but his passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, drowns in the accident. Vanden Heuvel is sent to meet with Kopechne's parents at their home in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey. He later accompanies EMK and Joan Kennedy to Kopechne's funeral. (Hersh, pp. 407, 412)

1970

Jan.-April Vanden Heuvel mounts a brief, unsuccessful campaign for governor of New York. (*The New York Times*, 01/08/1970, 04/01/1970, 06/24/1970)

Spring *On His Own: Robert F. Kennedy, 1964-1968*, authored by vanden Heuvel and Milton Gwirtzman, is published. (William vanden Heuvel and Milton Gwirtzman, *On His Own: Robert F. Kennedy, 1964-1968*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970)

October Mayor John Lindsay appoints vanden Heuvel chair of the New York City Board of Correction. (*The New York Times*, 10/19/1970)

1973 Vanden Heuvel steps down from his post at the Board of Correction to run for Manhattan District Attorney. Frank S. Hogan, who had held the office since 1941, defeats vanden Heuvel in the Democratic primary in June. (*The New York Times*, 06/05/1973)

1975-1976 Vanden Heuvel co-chairs Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign in New York. (*The New York Times*, 12/15/1975)

1977-1979 Vanden Heuvel is named U.S. Representative to the European Office of the U.N. in Geneva. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004, <<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005)

1979-1981 Vanden Heuvel serves as Deputy U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004, <<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005)

2002 The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute awards vanden Heuvel the Four Freedoms medal. The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York, also renames its Special Exhibits Gallery in his honor. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004,

<<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005)

2003

Vanden Heuvel receives the Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Medal. (William J. vanden Heuvel biography, Council of American Ambassadors, 2004, <<http://www.americanambassadors.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Members.view&memberid=26>> 06/23/2005)