EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Interview 5

June 17, 2005
Washington, D.C.

Interviewers
James Sterling Young, chair
Stephen F. Knott

In attendance:

Milton Gwirtzman

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TRANSCRIPT

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Kennedy: ...to Steve Smith's house the evening that Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] had the interview with Walter Cronkite. That interview is in here, and I've read that note several times, and there's no reason for it not to be here. I don't know whether you might have a copy of it. It's what we were all in there and thinking about.

Young: Let's see, that was March of '68. I don't have it. I don't think we have any note of that meeting.

Kennedy: No, you don't have a note of that. It changed. We were watching the interview, and all decided afterward that Bobby had decided he was going to run. The meeting changed from "Should he?" to "What are we going to do?" That was very important. I remember the meeting very clearly. A lot of these others are less clear. When Bobby came back, everybody cheered when he walked into my sister's room.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: We ended up then getting assignments for different places. The assignments for what people are going to do are in here.

Young: Right.

Kennedy: I can remember the meeting. The basic point was the uncertainty, and then the fact that the ultimate decision was really made by Bobby himself on the basis of his own instincts after a lot of anguish. When it came down to it, he knew what was in his soul on this.

Young: Yes. What I've read about that meeting was in Arthur Schlesinger's book on Robert.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: But I didn't see any notes of the meeting here. You say that was in New York?

Kennedy: That was in New York at Steve Smith's apartment.

Young: All right.

Kennedy: I don't remember which floor. But we can come to that. Really, the important part of it was the Walter Cronkite interview in which Bobby talked rather freely, and there was no listening to that and not knowing that he was going to run. When he came, everybody recognized it, and I think it clicked in his mind that he was then the candidate. That's the important part of it, and that part I'm very sure of. Then we spent the rest of the evening dividing up assignments for the campaign. We have the notes in here about what people were going to do.

Young: Whose writing is that on the—

Kennedy: I think it probably is Steve Smith's.

Young: Okay.

Kennedy: That can be checked. Although Steve, I think, had a little better—

Young: There's more than one hand in here, it looks like.

Kennedy: We can come back to that later on.

Young: We can come to that meeting. We're not quite sure who was at that meeting, because we don't have notes of it.

Kennedy: I'm really surprised, because I remember that very clearly, and I thought I'd read it, but it isn't in there.

Young: We'll come up to that.

Kennedy: Yes, let's go back. I asked Beth [Hoagland] to give me the block schedules of what I was doing and where I was and what the events were, because I think that can help me fill in.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: We have the narrative parts, and we have the notes, and that jogs my memory. I have a good sense about what was happening in the build-up to the judgment that he was going to run and the early part of the campaign. I actually enjoyed going back and finding a speech in my handwriting that I gave out in California—

Young: Yes, I noticed that.

Kennedy: —the day of the Indiana primary, and actually, I was rather impressed. It was pretty good. It has the themes that had emerged through the course of the campaign and that were evident in the course of the campaign. We can run through that a little later.

Young: I was reading that over again last night, in your hand, and I remember, Steve, we were discussing it when Milton—

Kennedy: I could almost give that speech again.

Young: Well, yes.

Kennedy: There's a little more fire in it than in the speeches I'm giving now.

Young: It was a wonderful speech because it had a rhythm and a repetition. It was very eloquent. When did you write that? Were you on a—

Kennedy: —plane, going out West.

Young: Well, it really had a lot of fire in it.

Kennedy: I'd been there a long time and inhaled that whole atmosphere up there.

Young: Unless you have another place to start, let's go back to the deep background of this campaign. You and your brother were both in the Senate—this is 1966—and you were both out campaigning for Democratic candidates, at least according to our notes. I wonder if you'd like to talk about what you were finding in the way of what political people you were seeing, what their mood was, what reading you were getting as you went around campaigning for these candidates, and whether you compared your notes, your perceptions, your readings, with your brother's, because he was out doing the same thing, at least according to the chronology.

Kennedy: Yes. Well, I'll have to check. I believe it was Paul Douglas. Wasn't he up in '66?

Young: I think so.

Kennedy: Because that was a very interesting campaign—Paul Douglas, who had been very close to President Kennedy. I wonder if we could check that.

Beth? Beth? Could you find out if Paul Douglas was defeated in '66? Maybe they could just call over to [Richard] Durbin's office. He'll know.

Hoagland: Okay.

Kennedy: Here was Paul Douglas, who left the Senate in the Second World War, went out and volunteered and was a decorated hero—he was very old at that time—and then came back and was a real hawk on the Vietnam War, very strong pro-war. He had had a very good personal relationship with my brother [John F. Kennedy], who knew he was a brilliant economist. Also, my brother had brought him up to New England to look at areas for redevelopment. Douglas had very interesting concepts about area redevelopment, bringing back and restoring old areas, and how to do that. He was really the serious figure in the Senate in terms of economic policy. There was a great deal then to do to try to get the economy moving and going.

Young: Excuse me. You referred to your brother. That was your brother Robert?

Kennedy: No, I'm referring now to Paul Douglas.

Young: Paul Douglas and the relationship with—

Kennedy: —President Kennedy, who was close when they were Senators. One close personal friend had been a fellow named George Smathers, but also the Senator from Kentucky, John Sherman Cooper, was a dear friend. Cooper, I think, was probably his closest friend. And he was a good friend with Scoop [Henry Jackson]. He used to play baseball with Scoop when he first got here, and he had others. But he had a lot of respect for Douglas.

And now President Kennedy's gone, and my brother Bob and I had a lot of respect for Douglas, because of himself and also because our brother had. And in '66, he was in a very hot campaign in Illinois. He asked us to come out there, and it was the beginning of the antiwar sentiment in Illinois. And even though at that time we had not made the strong speech that Bobby made just a little bit later, we were critical of the war. But we hadn't spelled out an exit strategy. We could see the first real divisions, people wondering, *Why are you out here supporting him?* At least I did. I felt that in that campaign.

I traveled at a number of stops—I can't remember whether it was over a period of a couple of days. I used to spend a lot more time; now you just come out and do one, and you're out of there. But at that time, you stayed with him for a while, and it was several stops. It might have been over a couple of days. But what we saw in Illinois was the beginning of this antiwar movement, and it had gotten to the point where Douglas wanted us, Bob and me—because we had expressed reservations about the war—he was strongly supporting the war—but we were together on 99% of all of the other issues—

Hoagland: Defeated by Charles Percy.

Kennedy: Yes, that was '66. Thank you. Here, I'm giving you another one. See if Pat [Patrick J.] Lucey and Gaylord Nelson were both running in Wisconsin in '66, or if one of them was running.

Hoagland: Okay.

Kennedy: I believe it was 1966 when I went to the University of Wisconsin to speak for both Gaylord Nelson—who was moving towards an antiwar position but hadn't declared it—and Pat Lucey, who had been very involved with my brother's campaign. We were at the University of Wisconsin. We went into this big hall, and in the back of the hall were these white sheets with skeletons drawn, dead people, all done in charcoal, graphic—almost ghoulish, but not ghoulish. There were also marks of explosions—big white sheets with black charcoal or black paint on them all across this back wall, and probably three thousand students. We had Gaylord Nelson, who was a very eloquent and capable speaker, a very knowledgeable person, especially on the environment, a very tough, smart person. And Pat Lucey was an extraordinary politician and a former state chairman. He was good on his feet.

I was the first one to get up and speak, and there was a roar in the crowd as I started speaking. There was a lot of disturbance, disturbance, disturbance. I asked if they were going to let me speak. No, no. Then a lot of chanting started against the war, and it just intensified. I finally said, "I'll let one of you come up. I'll listen to you speak, and then you listen to me." One of them finally said okay. Up comes this fellow named Schultz. I can still remember. He was from New York City, and he got up at that podium, and he gave a talk and a half for about seven minutes

about the war, antiwar. The place just cheered and went bananas for this fellow—emotion and feeling ran high in that place. Then he stopped, and he got the roaring, roaring, roaring approval of the students.

So I said, "You can keep going. Keep going." He mentioned a couple of other facts, and then he stopped. I said, "Keep going. This is a major issue. Keep going." And he said, "I don't have anything more to say." "You don't have anything more to say? That's all you had to say?" Then the crowd started getting mad at me for trying to keep after this guy. But he just ran flat out of gas. He went on dead empty.

So he left, and then they let me talk for the same period of time, eight minutes I think it was. I talked generally about Vietnam—I was critical. We hadn't gotten to the point of the exit strategy at that time; it was the following year. I was looking around for Nelson and Lucey to come on up—their home state—and take over, which they never did. At the end of my talk, the authorities and the police came in and took us all out. They never let them speak because they were worried about violence on the campus.

Now Madison, Wisconsin, is known to be a very high-powered place. I went up there in 1980 and tried to finish a speech. Because we had re-codified the criminal code and restated what the Supreme Court had said—that you can have demonstrations up to within 500 feet of the courthouse, but you can have only *silent* demonstrations between 500 feet and the courthouse—they thought that I was taking away the First Amendment right to demonstrate. They thought this was a limitation on the right to gather. They wouldn't let me finish speaking up there. I said that the first time they let me finish was when I was campaigning for John Kerry. [*laughter*] It's a lot quieter on campus now.

Young: What was—

Kennedy: We'd seen this in Illinois. We saw it in Wisconsin and other communities, but not with the intensity and not as dramatically as in those meetings. What they were saying, the message that we brought back, is that there was something very important happening in the country in 1966.

Young: What was your public position at that time, and why were they going after you?

Kennedy: They were going after anybody who wasn't for getting out of Vietnam and getting out then. There probably were a couple of members of Congress like Charlie Porter from Oregon, and one or two others. As I mentioned earlier, in 1962, Stuart Hughes ran for the Senate, and we had lost 13 people, and he was against going into the war. So there had been this latent group, and I think the '66 campaign showed its power, certainly to me. It was evident and it was out there. We were for stopping the bombing, which was considered to be a major step forward, to see if we could get some corresponding action.

We'll have to get the series of speeches out to look at the progress and movement—but we were as far out as any—with the exception of [Wayne] Morse and [Ernest] Gruening, who had been against the war. I don't know whether they were talking about solutions to it, but the halting of the bombing was probably the most out there. But as far out as we were—and we were considered to be far out—the population, the people, had gone right by us.

Young: In the context of that time, throughout the universities—I remember this at Columbia—a lot of anti-establishment radicalism, particularly antiwar, was beginning to grow.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And Wisconsin was one of those places where it developed early and very strongly.

Kennedy: Very.

Young: So they were not really interested in what you had to say?

Kennedy: No, they weren't.

Young: Just wanted to get out and get out now.

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: Wanted to change the world.

Kennedy: It was impressive in terms of their—

Young: What about the political leaders? What about Nelson and Lucey? Did you discuss this with them?

Kennedy: Well, Nelson eventually came. I don't know in detail about his movement, but I believe that by '68 he was against the war and moving. They were both Democratic left politicians. Nelson was highly regarded because of all his environmental work, even though the environment hadn't hit as hard as it did after Earth Day. And Lucey was a highly regarded and respected traditional Democratic progressive leader who had been involved in President Kennedy's campaign. I think he'd already been down to Mexico—maybe not; he was Ambassador—and came back. So he had some prestige. He had been forward-looking and had been a very progressive state chair. But these kids knew what they cared about and what they believed, and they were going to make a statement—and they did. It got very wide coverage at that time. It was a big event.

Young: I'm trying to get a reading from the political people there—Lucey, Gaylord, whoever—if they thought at the time that this was something that one must pay attention to; this is not just a bunch of unruly kids.

Kennedy: I would certainly have thought so.

Young: And beginning to think about how this is going to affect—

Kennedy: —how this is going to work its way through. I think '67 was the year when a number of politicians, including my brother and me, made that transition.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: We had talked earlier about my visit with the French author whose name you remembered and I couldn't.

Knott: Bernard Fall.

Kennedy: Fall, yes, going back to the early 1960s, 1963. So the seeds of doubt had been planted in my mind during that time. I think Frank Church was a prominent antiwar activist, even in the early, mid-sixties. And he was a good friend, particularly to me. I traveled with him in West Africa before I came to the Senate. He had been a supporter of my brother's. He befriended me when I came in. He was a very able, gifted person. And he'd been working with me and others on the war issue. So that had been going on for a period of years before.

Young: Did you have a comparable experience in Illinois?

Kennedy: Well, yes. The people who were showing up at these rallies were making it clear with their demonstrations about war policy. They were raising it with banners, shouts, petitions, whatever. I don't remember them stopping us from speaking, but that was the first place that I saw, in a very determined way, the fissures and divisions that existed in the crowd. Many people in Illinois provided the traditional Democratic support, historic support, the great respect they had for Paul. But there was another group out there that might have—probably did—shout at him or heckle him about the war. Me less so, but I certainly was a part of the whole thing. I picked up the vibes, certainly, during that time. And he lost. I think a good part of that loss was because of the Democrats who stayed home. There were other complicating factors in this, but that was certainly a major contributor.

Young: Did you sense any movement in the Senate or out in the country for opposition to LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson]—as distinct from his policy—opposition to his continuing in office?

Kennedy: No, I don't think at that time—

Young: It wasn't that early.

Kennedy: No, it wasn't. It was the policy, and the handful of Senators, as I mentioned, who were thinking and bothered by the continuation of the policy.

Young: Where was [J. William] Fulbright during this period?

Kennedy: I think those hearings had started at some time, and they were continuing and playing along. I can't put an exact date on this, but they were having, clearly, some impact. I believe they started just after the '66 elections. Maybe they had them before; I don't remember. But they clearly had an impact here in the Senate. One of the people who moved rather dramatically—this is an interesting story, and I can't recall it from memory. You'd have to go back and take a look at the records of these people—someone like Stu [Stuart] Symington, who had been a successful businessman, a successful politician, the Secretary of the Air Force, I believe—somehow involved with the Air Force. He started as a strong hawk and then transitioned into strong antiwar, but that was later. You'd have to see.

There were a series of Senators and a series of changes over the historical timeframe, but I'm not quite sure which particular year. I know that for Bobby it was '67, and I did something after that. I spent a good deal of my time and effort with regard to refugees and the humanitarian aspects of the war. Most of my speeches were about what was happening to the people, and the failure to take care of the refugees, the creation of the war refugees and the free-fire zones, the bombings of villages where people had no idea they were going to be bombed.

Young: You had been to Vietnam before?

Kennedy: Yes, I'd been there before—

Young: In '60, and then you went again in January of '68?

Kennedy: That's right. That one was completely on refugees. Five or six people went over beforehand and set it up, advanced it, so that we weren't going to be dependent upon the military to do it. The first time I went over there, I became acquainted with a fellow named Dr. [Thomas S.] Durant, who eventually went back to Mass General Hospital and organized all of their humanitarian programs. He recently died. Mass General sends out these medical teams. They did it in Vietnam, they've done it in Darfur, and they've done it in Iraq. They organize a very highly specialized group who go for 18 days, and they work 20 hours a day until they're exhausted; then they ship them back. Durant was the one who got me interested in the refugees and what was happening to the people over there. I stayed in very close contact during the first trip, all the way through the second trip, and I did subsequently on other humanitarian issues. He was the one who really got me interested in the human aspects of this terrible tragedy, and the extraordinary loss in human life and the suffering that was taking place in the population.

Young: Yes. Did your brother Robert ever go to Vietnam?

Kennedy: He had been to Vietnam, but I don't think he'd been during the war.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I think he was in the Far East in the late forties, but I would have to find out. He used to talk about General [Jean] De Lattre, and I'm pretty sure he did. I just can't remember.

Young: When you came back in January of '68 from your trip to Vietnam, you gave a very strong speech or statement. It's in here.

Knott: *Face the Nation*.

Young: It was on *Face the Nation*, and you were speaking not just about the refugee problem, the killing and the human cost to the Vietnamese, but you were also talking about the corruption of the regime. You were quoted as saying, "Our message to them ought to be 'Shape up, or we'll ship out.'" Was that in your mind when you went to Vietnam? Did you see evidence of that corruption there or was it in the general knowledge of the situation?

Kennedy: I think it was general knowledge, as you learn, but once you see it and experience it, it has real meaning. I was always concerned that an awful lot of the refugees—not all, but a lot of

the refugees who got out—were people who had the contacts and had the money. And the people who had been the most loyal to the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and to the military got left there. I was for the refugees coming here, but I was not one waving the flag on that. I was following when those people were getting out of those forced camps. I don't know what they called them. They were effectively concentration camps.

A lot of them wanted to come here, but we had gotten tired of taking in Vietnamese, and I made special efforts to look after those individuals who had been great friends to the United States and had been working and had risked the most and didn't take part in the corruption and who were the ones at greatest risk. That's an incidental aspect of it, but that was something we followed closely for a long, long time because of this problem.

Young: Dave Burke was with you on this trip, I believe.

Kennedy: Dave**,** yes. And I think John Nolan was here, and we had two or three other people who did advance on that trip, who gave up Christmastime to go over there.

Hoagland: Sorry this took so long. Pat Lucey won the primary in '66, but he lost to Warren Knowles. But Gaylord Nelson ran—he was Governor from '59 to '62, ran in '62, but didn't run for anything in '66.

Kennedy: He didn't run, but Lucey did.

Hoagland: Mm hmm. He won the Democratic primary.

Kennedy: And he lost the election. That's why I was out there, for him. Nelson became involved, and that's what happened. That was the end of Pat.

Young: Early casualties of the administration. Very soon after you came back, I think it was the end of January, the Tet Offensive came. What I'm trying to get at now is the movement of events and the way they were affecting Robert's thinking, your thinking, and the mood of the country. There are a lot of different variables to put into the mix here, but major escalation had taken place in terms of numbers of troops and casualties, and so it was a worsening situation.

Kennedy: Yes. I think history—and reality—would show that through '67, with the increase in losses and the increased futility of a military solution, there were increasing questions about how we were going to change the policy. Even with the Fulbright hearings, it didn't appear that there were going to be the votes in the Congress to change it. The only place it was going to be changed was the executive branch. It was about this time, '67 or so, that there were a series of polls taken by different national organizations that showed Bobby in a strong position, even ahead of LBJ for the Democratic nomination, which is very heady stuff. He made his speech—I believe, I didn't have it in my notes—in February of '67, his tough speech about getting out, and Hubert [Humphrey] responded, "That's like putting a fox in the chicken coop," almost questioning his patriotism. I believe that was around February or so.

So he was increasingly campaigning on that issue and about the withdrawal, and that became something central in terms of his life and his politics. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly apparent that President Johnson was wounded by this war, and the political

landscape was very unsettled. Around this time, my brother Bob used to go over on Saturday mornings and meet with Bob McNamara. He had a long series of meetings with McNamara, and McNamara was very candid and very honest and very frank. There's no question that Bobby had a very important impact on McNamara, and McNamara, on the other hand, had a very important impact on Bobby. And these were never really reported.

He'd go over in the morning. We'd say, "Can we come out?" He'd always tell us to come out for lunch or something, and we'd play in the afternoon. But he'd always go over for a couple of hours. I think subsequently LBJ moved McNamara over to the World Bank. He began to pick up these wisps directly from McNamara and the generals. McNamara was beginning to have very serious second thoughts, but was unwilling or unable—or both—to be able to change it. I think talking to McNamara deepened Bobby's concern.

Young: Would that have been as early as '67?

Kennedy: Yes, because he was removed probably in '67.

Young: They had known each other, of course. He was in Kennedy's administration.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: So they had a relationship?

Kennedy: They had a very strong relationship. Bobby was very high on McNamara and liked him, and liked Maggie [Margaret C. McNamara]. They skied together out West; they had social contact. He was a friend and somebody Bobby had a strong relationship with and had, as I mentioned, these conversations. During this period—now we're talking '67, mid- to late-'67—he had made the talk in February about an exit strategy over there, and he had been criticized by Humphrey and Labor. They were strongly supportive of the war, very strong. [George] Meany was very strong, and this caused tensions between Labor and Bobby. They already had some tensions from past investigations.

And then you had the actions of people who had talked to Bobby. You had the polls going up, the polls going down. There was the [William] Manchester affair, the book written by Bill Manchester, and Bobby's interventions on behalf of Jackie [Kennedy], which was very public and costly to him. People viewed him as trying to censor the work of a distinguished writer. Nonetheless, by the end of the year he was moving back up again.

And then you have somewhere in the middle of the year—I don't know, maybe it was earlier—the idea from other people of a challenge to LBJ, a series of different people who would come in and talk to Bobby about the possibility of running. Al [Allard] Lowenstein was one.

Young: Lowenstein, yes.

Kennedy: And some others.

Young: And Jesse Unruh, apparently, about the same time as Lowenstein, was in talking with him about that. When do you think these feelings about policy began to gel—in your mind or in

your observation or in your brother's mind—into a view of a political movement or a political move to unseat LBJ or to run against him?

Kennedy: It's difficult to put a time. There was the obvious background on Bobby and LBJ. It was tense right from the beginning—

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Bobby had been in favor of Jackson, actually, and he had had a very strong relationship with him. To my knowledge, he never spent a lot of time worrying about the relationship. He just didn't have it, and he had other things to do. President Johnson wanted to have a good working relationship. He worked at it with President Kennedy, and he did with me. He was always attentive, willing to talk or having meetings on a lot of the things that we were working on, textiles and shoes. I'd go down with other people, and he'd always pull me aside and ask about the family.

As this whole war issue developed both in intensity and emotion, my brother Bob, probably earlier than '67, took a trip over to France. He had a meeting with some dissidents and came back and had a meeting with President Johnson. There was a lot of hostile reporting about those meetings. Both of them were very edgy about it and looking out after their own positions.

But when he came back, Bobby said to Lyndon, "Look, if you want to appoint me to be the Ambassador over there, I'd be glad to do that," which was extraordinary. All of us were very surprised that he would do it. But he felt that intensely about it, and he thought that that might have one attraction: you get rid of Bobby. John Kennedy had been involved in getting into the war; let Bobby get us out. You could, after a period of time, cut some slack on that kind of thing. Gets rid of him before the other—

I never understood the creative thinking that Bobby had as a political leader. That was an ingenious thought. I think I mentioned before that he was the one who—when he saw the Ambassador from Algeria among a lot of Ambassadors—asked the Algerians to help get Gary Powers out. He was a very creative political thinker. He thought in very large terms. President Johnson thought it was some kind of a trap.

Young: A trap.

Kennedy: Or something like that.

Young: Were negotiations—

Kennedy: They hadn't really gotten started on this.

Young: There was no talk about Paris negotiating—

Kennedy: No, there wasn't, although Bobby had met over in Paris with French diplomats who were in touch with the North Vietnamese.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: He thought that there might have been some possibilities, but the negotiations that we were used to were the [Henry] Kissinger negotiations that came much later. He thought that there were some possibilities. I don't know whether he was right. But in any event, this is intensifying now. He's not running—we've had meetings about it, and there are conversations about it.

Young: There was a meeting on October 8th—your notes of it are in here—1967.

Kennedy: This is October 8th, that's right.

Young: If I remember correctly, Pierre Salinger had suggested this. His book had just come out.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And this is the first evidence we have in the record of a meeting with a number of different people about what to do.

Kennedy: Prior to that, individuals had talked to him, but this was really the first meeting of people that reflected the thinking of some of those who had talked to him, plus very close political supporters. Pierre Salinger obviously had worked with Bob. Chuck Daly and Ted Sorensen had been in the White House. Dick Goodwin had been in the White House and had started in the '60 campaign. Kenny [O'Donnell] was very close to Bobby. Bobby knew Ivan Nestigan from the '60 campaign in Wisconsin. He'd been a very strong mayor for Jack. Steve Smith, my brother-in-law. Joe Dolan, who was his administrative assistant, from Colorado. Fred Dutton, who spent a lot of time on Bobby's campaign, had been in the White House, and was a very shrewd, good, political person. And [William] Vanden Heuvel had been in Bobby's Justice Department as a deputy and a friend.

So this was at the Regency Hotel in room 212. As we look through some of Bobby's notes, Pierre opened the meeting, and we thought we'd lay out some different alternatives. One was a confrontation with Johnson, with a decision to confront him, how would we lead up to the confrontation?

Young: What was meant by that word, "confrontation"?

Kennedy: Well, running against him. I think that's probably another way of saying running against him.

Young: All right.

Kennedy: You'd be taking him on on issues with the idea that you'd run against him. And then a second one was if LBJ did not run, what should we be doing in the meantime in anticipation so that we'd be able to take advantage of the situation? Which I think was rather prophetic, obviously, when we found out what did happen. And then, third, if something happened to LBJ, and the Vice President took over, what would we do? There was a thought that he might get out, and if the Vice President took over, then what would we do? Then, finally, should we make any effort to try to secure the Vice Presidency for Bobby in '68? Those were at least the four subject matters that were talked about at that time. And the follow-on from those was that different people had different ideas about things that ought to be done.

Young: I'm looking at your notes of the meeting. We have this in front of us, October 8th. I notice you say, "I then suggested what some of the alternatives would be." It seems to me that this suggests that the thinking in the meeting was to push for this, and you were putting a cool hand of restraint on it, saying we need to think. Is that a right interpretation of these notes?

Kennedy: I think so. There were varying degrees of intensity about him running. I had reservations about it, because I thought it was very important that Bobby be President, and I thought it was inevitable that he would be President. And it seemed to me that, if that were so, we ought to think about how he could be President and would be President, and it was going to be high risk in terms of '68, high risk in terms of challenging the President. If the President lost, he was going to be blamed.

It was going to be not only the party leaders, but members of Congress and the Senate, and history would do that, and you wouldn't advance the cause that you were most interested in—ending the war. So I was very cautious all the way through. I thought he'd be a slam-dunk, really, the next time around, and I thought—

Young: That would have been '72.

Kennedy: That would have been '72. We could have worked on the war in the Senate and tried to do it. So that was one side. Then the other sides were the obvious ones—that he felt so intensely about the war. And the other part that's missing in this, he felt also extremely concerned about what was happening to the cities, the deterioration of the cities.

Young: I wanted to mention that.

Kennedy: Because you don't see that. This is all about running. And we've all talked about what was happening in terms of the war. He was very bothered by the general deterioration in the cities, the growth of violence in the cities.

Young: Watts had happened. Detroit, Washington.

Kennedy: Watts, yes.

Young: And the [Otto] Kerner Commission.

Kennedy: And he didn't see anything that Gene McCarthy was doing about it, which we'll come to, because it was the subject matter of my conversation with McCarthy and why I went out to see him.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I'm convinced that if McCarthy had begun to talk about the cities and what was happening, then Bobby still wouldn't have run. He would not have run. But McCarthy had no interest whatsoever—by nature, disposition, he had none, and demonstrated none. For the war, yes, but that was pretty—You look back historically, his interest in the war came pretty late, too.

Young: Yes. One of the things that tends to get omitted in the documents we have here is precisely the urban violence, the unrest, what was happening to blacks and to whites and—as the Kerner Commission put it, the movement toward a divided society of blacks and whites. And it's historically very important, I think, your mention that into this mix was not just the Vietnam War and the developments in that war and the development of sentiment about it, the escalation of the war, the body bags. But there was, on the domestic side, an important factor here, which tends to get lost. And I think you're saying your brother Robert—and probably yourself—were very much concerned about that. It wasn't just the Vietnam War.

Kennedy: I remember walking into Bobby's house, probably '65, '66, and he mentioned the draft and who was fighting the war. It was all the poor and the blacks—and the people who were getting the education deferment, the marriage deferment, the skill deferments. He said, "I can't take that on." I had an interest in that, so I started offering these amendments, which we were getting beaten on. But we had very good debates on them. It was all of '66 and '67. And finally, at the end of '67, we got a commission to study random selection, and that turned into the random selection system. And Jim [R. James] Woolsey, who I think we added to your list—Someone has to come up here and see him for half an hour, because this is the only interesting part for Jim.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: He told me the other afternoon that [John] Stennis thought that I had conducted these debates in a very constructive and positive manner, and very straightforward. There was a great effort to try to drop it in the conference, and he said, "No, out of a personal respect I've developed for Senator Kennedy, I'm going to keep that in." And McNamara then was appointed as chairman. He came up with the random selection system. Kay Graham's son was drafted. The Tet Offensive came, and the war ended.

It's not quite that sharp, but I'll tell you, there's a scenario there, the Tet Offensive and the random selection. You'll find out the people who went to that. Bobby was involved in that. I offered the amendments and worked on that part, but probably the inspiration for me was from the conversations with him. He said, "Look at what's happening to these people." We spent a lot of time on that. It was reflective and indicative of, one, the injustice about the war, but also what was happening to our people, and who was paying the price. It was people from the inner cities, the poor. And this was something that Bobby was very strongly committed to.

You have to take his trip down through Mississippi and his work in hunger also in that period—I don't have the timeline for these interviews, but we ought to have those timelines—where they were going, too. His interest in Indian education. I succeeded him. He was chairman of the Indian Education Committee. He had hearings on Indian education and about the boarding school abuses that were taking place. After '68 I filled in as the chairman of the committee and we had our report. But he had had hearings all over on what was happening to Indians, the working poor, the people in the inner cities, and what was happening on the issues of race. They were all out there, and then the war.

But you're absolutely right. These other forces were pushing him and driving him, but people weren't talking about that. It's an accumulation of things, the war and this lack of attention to urban issues. It was definitely cumulative, definitely cumulative.

Young: Yes. I think it may be worth us spending a little time—maybe not today—talking about what was concerning you and him in the Senate, because history, Vietnam, tends to just obliterate everything else—

Kennedy: That's right. You see, he got started the Bedford-Stuyvesant program in the Senate.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And this was all Bobby's idea. It was made up of locals and high-powered people. He had Tom Watson on it, and Frank [Franklin] Thomas, who eventually became president of Ford, I think.

Young: Yes. Was Benno Schmidt?

Kennedy: Yes, Benno Schmidt was on that. He had a crowd on there that was just unbelievable. He thought the local people should say what they needed and the other people would help them get this thing developed. That whole area had almost a million people. And one of the parts of it was—I think I've gone over this—the restoration of the neighborhood streets.

Young: Yes. You mentioned that.

Kennedy: Jake [Jacob] Javits heard about it, got in, and he found all kinds of problems until he had a part. I mean it was so typical. I like Jake and I respected him and I always will, but this thing was Bobby's, Bobby's, Bobby's, and he nosed into it.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: This was interesting, the sequence to this thing. They got that thing started, and then [Jack] Kemp eventually came in, Republicans, and they reshaped the concept of it and really got away from what Bobby—although there was still a whisper of what Bobby wanted to do. It was a reflection, again, of his interest in the cities and in people and in getting people in those local communities to be involved in their community and their streets.

Last week in Boston, I went to the Boston streets event. The Boston streets event was started by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which is Richard Moe [urban Main Street program established in 1994]. And Richard Moe got a good part of that idea out of Bedford-Stuyvesant and what they were doing. They're trying to do it with the streets in Boston, getting people involved in cleaning up their streets and getting companies to find streets that they will become involved in, which they're doing successfully and have been doing for ten years. I attended the event up there. They had 3,000 people, and [Thomas M.] Menino says it's the best thing he's done with the communities.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: But we're just back to the point that, for the underprivileged, the under-served, issues on civil rights, what was happening to them in our country and society, what was happening to the cities, the injustices there, the inflaming of the cities, the failure to really deal with all of these kinds of issues, the cutting back on the appropriations, on the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] programs—President Johnson just would not back those up because the money was all being expended on the war. Bobby felt, and legitimately so, that that was such a key part of President Kennedy's legacy. He was certainly enormously impressed—as all of us were—in the very early years with the passage of the '64 Act, the '65 Act—those were the heydays of that. But after that, it deteriorated—the '68 Act on housing was actually meaningless. We had to pass one in '88 that dealt with it. But in any event, I think we've described the—

Young: So the escalation of the war was not only itself having an impact on young people's lives through the draft and things like that, but it was also siphoning money away from the remedial programs and the attention to them, siphoning it into the war. Again, I think it's very important that the historical record here show that those things are proceeding in tandem. This is with respect to Robert's decision to run and your own thinking about the war during this time.

Kennedy: Absolutely.

Young: It was more than just the war. It was what the war signified.

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: And what its effect was.

Kennedy: In terms of the whole society, in terms of the direction of the country, why we were in public life, what was happening in terms of the legacy of President Kennedy, all of this wrapped in together. The question was, when people came here and said, "You can change this. You can do it, it's possible, it's feasible, and we're prepared to help you do it." It's very heady stuff.

Do you want to just take a break for a second?

Young: Sure.

[BREAK]

Knott: Senator, we were wondering what your reaction was when you heard that Allard Lowenstein had approached your brother to run. Do you recall?

Kennedy: I wasn't really surprised. He had been around in political circles, organizing and speaking to antiwar groups. Al Lowenstein and my brother had some common friends, so it wasn't really much of a surprise to me. I believe that my brother mentioned to me afterwards that he had talked to him and that Al had made a good presentation, and a tempting one, but that it wasn't in the cards at this time. The door certainly wasn't slammed completely closed. He was

the most prominent, but there were other people who were urging him to do it. He was certainly, I think, the most identifiable with the antiwar movement at the time.

Knott: And during this time, you thought this was just not a good idea?

Kennedy: For the reasons I outlined previously.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I thought it was very important that Bobby be elected President at some time, and sooner rather than later. I thought it was in the cards. At that time, I thought he would be elected in 1972, and I thought they were risking a lot that might make it even more difficult to both end the war and be able to be around to pick up the pieces if they had a disaster election. So I just felt really strongly from the beginning—all the way through, actually. Once Bobby made a judgment decision, I was all for it and was desirous that it was all going to work on through. But I didn't change my position until that time.

Young: Referring to the October 8th meeting and the various questions or considerations you had suggested—the four here—there isn't any mention specifically of who the Republican candidate would be. Did that figure at all in these calculations?

Kennedy: Not that I really remember, no. I think there was some discussion about [Richard] Nixon, and I think there was some discussion at that time about [Nelson] Rockefeller.

Young: Rockefeller got in. [George] Romney had put his name in early; withdrew early. [Ronald] Reagan—

Kennedy: I think there was casual interest in this. It's interesting that you mention Reagan because I think Bobby had two appearances with him. One was on this global television that I remember about American power, whatever it was. I remember we all watched this thing, and we were impressed that Reagan was able to get his points across as well as he could. And then he had one other time. I don't remember quite where it was. It might have been out in California, and Reagan, I thought, did surprisingly well. I think there were low expectations about him, but I think he handled himself rather well. That made an impression on me very early. But I don't think any of us were thinking about what the opposition on that side was going to be.

Young: But wouldn't there be a logic to thinking that, if there was a buildup of antiwar sentiment or anti-Johnson sentiment, the beneficiary of that might be a Republican candidate, not another Democrat?

Kennedy: Well, it would, and certainly Nixon understood that, because he very early on talked about a secret plan. So he understood that, and that was the way he made an appeal to this group. I would have to go back in history. I don't think that had very much of an appeal to the antiwar group, that Nixon had this secret plan. I don't think that had much juice to it. I don't have the details, but I think there was the sense that Rockefeller was moving, and I don't know where [Barry] Goldwater was at this time.

There was the beginning of stirrings against the Eastern establishment. It looked like it was going to be a rather raucous Republican convention as well. In thinking about whether Bobby ought to run or not, I don't think it really was that he would run if so-and-so looked like he was going to get it, or not if somebody else was going to get it. But there was an awareness that there might very well be turmoil within the Republican Party.

Young: You mentioned earlier that there was this history of personal antagonism between LBJ and your brother. Several times in these materials, in these notes, it appears that it was a real matter of concern that, whatever your brother did, there was always a risk that it might be interpreted as a personal antagonism against him, or revenge or something.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: You know the story that went around. Was this one of your concerns about his entry in the camp against Johnson, that it might be seen—?

Kennedy: Well, yes, very much so. It was going to be blind personal ambition for power and using the war as a lever to try to steal away the nomination because the Kennedys felt that they were entitled to it. And secondly, it was going to reaffirm a view about Bobby being particularly aggressive and ruthless and letting nothing get in his way. Those were some of the characteristics that he had, and this played into that. He understood that very well. Bobby understood that. But there was no question that that was the real danger, that enemies would play that up, and if you have a series of facts that lend themselves to that kind of explanation, it's a pretty dangerous potion you're serving up. Because this would fall into that definition of ruthless, ambitious, power hungry, trying to seize power in a war which his brother had gotten started, and he's not giving the support.

So you have that versus how in the world can we continue as a country failing to understand that we're not going to get a military solution to a political problem, and that it's costing this country both lives and treasure over there, and we're failing to deal with the problems here at home, and we have an absolute abdication, really, of Presidential leadership. These are dramatic poles.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And these aren't easy differences. These are big-time differences. And some of us thought they could very well be the destruction of Bobby, should he pursue it.

Young: Yes. You know, he's quoted in here himself as being concerned that, "If I do this, they'll say I'm ruthless" and all of these things.

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: All the more reason, it seems, why what we might call the moral issue or the policy issue, the reason for running, has to be very clear, very dramatized, in order for him to move.

Kennedy: I think that's right. You see in these notes that he's also concerned that he would become in the future too much of a lightning rod in terms of the politics of the time. That's what happens around here, there's a general kind of swing. When you arrive here, you're

inexperienced, you're not knowledgeable, you ought to stay around here and learn. Then you stay around here and learn a bit, and you take some votes—on guns or the death penalty or privacy in abortion or healthcare—and you're labeled in terms of national political— He was a smart enough political leader to understand that, as someone who was at the cutting edge in domestic and foreign policy, time was not necessarily going to work on his side the longer he stayed in here. Because he wasn't going to duck issues, and it was going to be costly.

Young: So from his thinking, there wasn't a clear case for waiting until '72?

Kennedy: That's right. No, no. He had seen what had happened with the Manchester book where he dropped a good deal in terms of public support. And he certainly had seen Lyndon Johnson drop in public support. And he was well schooled in the vicissitudes of life and politics, and he had an appreciation of his own role as a cutting-edge politician. He realized that these opportunities were going to be limited.

But it wasn't just blind ambition. Bobby never had this drive for power. His whole life experience was really quite different. I mean, my father—as we've gone over—wanted him to move to Maryland, to get in line to be a Senator. And he just didn't, this was not his bag. He'd take these things as they came. But he also believed in the use of power, political power, and he wanted to have a chance to have a use for it.

Young: Sure.

Knott: Senator, you mentioned earlier that President Johnson at times seemed very focused on your brother and concerned about your brother and why he didn't seem to like him. But your perception was that your brother didn't spend a lot of time thinking about President Johnson. I was wondering if maybe you'd elaborate on that a little more, because this perception is still out there that there was a blood feud between your brother and Lyndon Johnson.

Kennedy: Well, it goes back really to the Vice President nomination where my brother had favored Scoop Jackson, and my brother Jack selected Lyndon. Then by nature of their personalities, they were not easy allies or friends. They had entirely different kinds of personalities, entirely different friends, entirely different interests, entirely different approaches to problems.

Their worlds were really somewhat different, and the more Jack relied on Bobby to be involved in crucial decisions like the Cuban Missile Crisis and civil rights, the more it isolated Vice President Johnson. He was not the one my brother listened to on those issues. So I think Johnson wondered *What, really, am I doing here?* and *Why are they excluding me?* I think so much of this is explainable. Lyndon Johnson was not Bobby's type of guy, basically. I think it was really as simple as that. It happens around here, it happens in life, and it just happened in those two.

People who observed it, political writers and all the rest, made a good deal of it, and then it all developed during the time of the antiwar movement, where it appeared to be a threat to him, going back even to '64, the apparent threat of Bobby trying to get the nomination in Atlantic City. I learned recently that Lyndon had FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agents up there checking people out. In the wake of this [Mark] Felt decision, there was an FBI agent I talked to who had been up in Atlantic City for Lyndon Johnson, checking out. They had 150 agents up

there, because Lyndon was worried that Bobby might try to get hold of the FBI, so he had his loyal people there, trying—

Young: Checking out what?

Kennedy: Checking out the delegates, checking out communications, checking that nobody else was coming around, there were no other movements, that everything was the way it was presented, checking out all the security, that there wasn't going to be a rush on the building, all the rest of these things they were asked to do. I think that's how it developed.

Bobby was disappointed that they didn't fund the OEO and poverty programs, so those things didn't work well for the basic relationship. The rest, then, is history in terms of the war.

Young: Why don't we move ahead? It's now clear from the Cronkite broadcast and what immediately follows that your brother has made a decision to run. And the next step, very quickly, is getting organized, making the announcement, and so forth.

Kennedy: We had one other meeting—I have the notes—in later October, with EMK, Joe Dolan, and Dave Burke in my office. That's on Tuesday, October 17th.

Young: Yes, yes. I'm sorry.

Kennedy: We met with Congressmen [John] Culver, [Edward] Boland, Dave Burke, and we went through some cards. We had agreed at the earlier meeting that we were going to have a laidback strategy. We were going to do some soundings with people in different states to find out who were the likely political supporters should he go. We got that much of a green light from Bobby. So we had subsequent meetings down here—

Young: Right.

Kennedy: —that I mentioned in terms of the members of Congress we knew and knew well, to sound out some of the leaders, and also some of the Governors. We were going to try to see if they were handy, if they were around. Bobby ought to have a chance to visit with them, maybe go to some of their fundraising efforts. We thought there may be a few Governors—I mentioned here Ken Curtis of Maine, whom I was going to talk to, who came aboard—who would come aboard (even though Bobby hadn't announced), and would be a helper on this. The bottom part of the meeting shows that we decided to do some polling, and we were going to try to frame some of the questions about Vietnam, about personality. Here are the words, again, "Vietnam" and "personality," which are the kinds of things we've been talking about.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Then we went out and reviewed Iowa, California, Montana, and I got the names, loosely, of people in probably 25 of the different states, the principal states. It was sort of a soft organization. We were sounding people out, talking to people, what did they think, what did they have— People had been urging him to run, he's certainly not made the decision, he's not running at this time. What are you hearing? What are you doing? Who are those people who might be—? I think December 10th probably was the night that—I think this is later. This, I think, was at the

home of Bill vanden Heuvel. Well, that would be different. Then we have a December 10th meeting in New York at the home of Bill vanden Heuvel.

Young: Your brother and you were there.

Kennedy: Yes. This is Sorensen, Schlesinger, Dutton—

Young: But I'd like to go back to that other meeting for a moment where you and Joe Dolan and Dave Burke were following up on taking soundings, taking readings, and assessing the situation, keeping your ears to the ground. That's what that was about. That was happening in October, very soon—

Kennedy: Sixty-seven.

Young: —in follow-up of your October 8th meeting. What was the result? Were you encouraged?

Kennedy: Well, if you look at the end of October 9th, the general conclusions: we have the contact with the Democratic organization in different parts of the country. This was to be worked out in Washington, and that's the next meeting we referred to, to include much more extensive contact, and no confrontation considered with LBJ. Bobby avoids the endorsements. We can work with some of the peace groups. John Burns will work the state chair, and we meet again in November.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Then we meet on October 17th to go over what we had agreed to: going over the states with known personnel who were sympathetic. For the most part we were in touch with a number of the people and would report back to Dolan. We'd get our report when we got together again.

Young: Do you remember anything about the result of these explorations and this program that you followed up on, October 17? Was it encouraging? Was it "it depends"? Were you finding a lot of the party feeling?

Kennedy: It was mixed. It was very mixed.

Young: Very mixed?

Kennedy: Yes, yes. Not clear. These are the wrong people to be checking with, because they're the traditional political leaders who were very happy with the way things were going.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Go on, Sunny. Go ahead.

[Exit Sunny]

Hoagland: Is this the person you're asking about? David Schoumacher?

Kennedy: Yes.

Hoagland: Is that it?

Kennedy: Good. Good for you.

Young: That was a reporter.

Kennedy: It's the reporter I ran into on the back stairs. We'll come to that.

Young: McCarthy.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Okay.

Kennedy: So now we've gone through these meetings, and we're talking about these general subjects that keep coming up. We're going to have LBJ for four years. He's just going over these points again. They've talked to some of these people. Arthur Schlesinger has his comments here that if Bobby didn't run in '68 it was going to be the end of the party, and he thought there was a good chance of winning. And Dutton, who was very politically shrewd, said the longer we wait, the more difficult it is to assume that McCarthy's supporters would go for Bobby. Now McCarthy had just announced.

Young: Yes, McCarthy had entered the thing since the last—

Kennedy: He had come down and talked to me on a couple of different occasions prior to that, saying that he was going to get into the race. It was fine with me, and I indicated I might have to preserve running as a favorite son in Massachusetts. It was more of a notice. It wasn't asking. It was a courtesy and a notice, those meetings, looking back on it. But he was in now, and the point at the December 10th meeting was that Dutton was saying, the longer you stay in, the harder it is for Bobby to win over some of the people who are supporting McCarthy but would have supported Bobby. And we had other ideas, vanden Heuvel talking about the Vice President and other thoughts.

Young: Your comments here, also in the last paragraph, you were weighing in again on possible scenarios.

Kennedy: Yes. Sorensen said that he assumed everyone there wanted to see RFK President, which of course led him to the second point, what would be the best way to proceed, that it might be better to try in '72 when he had greater things going for him than in '68. That was basically my position. This stimulated discussion as to what shape RFK would be in in '72; whether he'd be more controversial then than he is now; whether, by the fact that he does not challenge, he will have lost the support of many young people and liberals who are looking to him for leadership. Would they now be looking for another candidate in '72?

That's the other side of the coin. We generally considered that we'd take a look at the situation after the first of the year and see what kind of impression McCarthy was making and continue the contacts.

Young: That was a real tough one, wasn't it? Seventy-two or—

Kennedy: Yes, that's a very tough one. Those are the arguments, and they can be made with a good deal of passion on both sides. And that was a very troublesome one.

Young: LBJ could always declare a pause, stop the bombing, and it would affect very much the thinking—

Kennedy: That's right. Opening negotiations just ends that.

Young: Right.

Kennedy: So we go on through a couple of meetings I had with Gene McCarthy on November 28th of '67 and December 6th.

Knott: Senator, he would tend to use you? You were the conduit between McCarthy and your brother?

Kennedy: I had the best relationship with him, yes, having served in the Senate with him. Bobby had, too, but I'd been in for a longer period, and it was easier for me to do that with him. In that December 6th meeting, I have that funny little part about me asking McCarthy who's running his campaign in Massachusetts, and he mentioned "Professor Fluks." I asked if he was talking about [Lawrence H.] Fuchs. He said, "Yes, he's from Boston University." I said, "Isn't he the professor at Brandeis?" He said, "Yes, that's right." But as one who has trouble with names myself [*laughter*], I don't—

Young: I bet you don't have trouble with the names of those who are running your campaign!

Kennedy: I think I have that pretty well set. Now we have the December 10th meetings. You can see now where we have the 8th, the 17th. These meetings are now every two weeks. And New York, there's a slight change. Milt Gwirtzman is at this, Jerry Bruno, Dave Burke. Well, this was get in touch with the 15 or 20 leading figures of the convention of '68 through third parties. See RFK assessments. Dolan and Burke had a list of key people, and that had been worked through at our previous meetings. We'd gone through those meetings on October 17th, and we were going to go through—and contacts: Unruh and [former Kentucky Governor] Ned Breathett and [former North Carolina Governor] Terry Sanford. They would get back after the first of the year and report the results. And then there was general discussion about LBJ's strengths and weaknesses.

Young: Then you had to make, or you did make, a public statement about McCarthy.

Kennedy: Yes. I don't have that right here, but I know we did.

Young: There's a draft here, and it has a question mark on it. "Issues" question mark.

Kennedy: I don't really know whether I can find out.

Young: Is that a statement—

Kennedy: It could have been a press release. It could have been a statement that was developed that I had on hand in case I was asked. I don't remember. It isn't the kind I would have issued unless I was asked or pressed on it—but maybe.

Young: The last sentence, about not associating yourself with any candidate or involving yourself in the Massachusetts primary directly, I take it is yours, a speech for you, not for your brother.

Kennedy: Yes. It might have been in response to whether I was going to get in the primary. I don't have any recollection. I don't remember seeing that printed anyplace. I don't know quite whether it was used or just prepared. At this time, Christmastime, when I went over to Vietnam, I was to be over there seven days. I had planned to stay in Hawaii for two or three days. I remember getting off the plane and going into the hotel and getting undressed, getting ready to go to bed, and being really tired, and the phone rang. It was Bobby, and he said, "Come on back now. We're going to meet out at McLean, either tomorrow or the next day." I remember getting dressed and going to find out about getting a plane and coming back. I've seen the pictures of that meeting out there. I know Bill vanden Heuvel was at it, and a number of other people.

Young: This was at Hickory Hill?

Kennedy: At Hickory Hill. I don't have any notes on it, but I remember that. It was when I felt he had moved—just from the conversations he had with me, something had moved in his mind. There was an intensity. I remember we came out and had, again, the general discussion. We ought to get the date. As I say, I received the pictures on the wall, with the people who were there. Vanden Heuvel would know. Miltie could find out from Bill vanden Heuvel, whether he remembers anything about it, and we could go over it. At that time, we planned to meet in New York on the 14th at my sister Jean's [Kennedy Smith], and it was the night of the 14th that—well, maybe not. When did he do the Cronkite? What night was that?

Young: Cronkite was—

Kennedy: That's the 14th. So he did this, the transcript, Thursday, the 14th. And this other organizational meeting is the 16th. So that was a different time.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: The meeting was to decide that we'd change from further discussion to campaign mode, and then three days later, they had this meeting where they assigned people to different things. And that was when Bobby came up and marched in the parade with me on St. Patrick's Day. See, this was Thursday. I believe that was Sunday.

Young: Which was Thursday?

Kennedy: The parade. The top picture, with Bobby, he's sort of pushing me away because he found out that he's getting a good reception up there. You know, he was going to march with me. I had been marching, and he flew in and landed, and then he marched by himself a couple of blocks. He got a great reception up there, so I went up to join him, and he said, "I'm doing fine, Teddy. You don't have to join me. I'll see you later." In the picture you can see he's pushing me away with his right hand. That was the St. Patrick's Day parade, which was the first political event after he announced. These were all within three days of each other. It gives a pretty good indication of his thinking and the Cronkite interview, the fact that people embraced the idea, and then that they went ahead very quickly in setting up a campaign structure.

Knott: Were you surprised, Senator, that in the midst of all of this, McCarthy did quite well in the New Hampshire primary?

Kennedy: Well, there were some other intervening points. I wish we had the date of the New Hampshire primary.

Knott: That was March 12th.

Kennedy: Yes. After March 12th I went out to Wisconsin to see him. That's when I ran into Dave Schoumacher. You know about that meeting.

Knott: You went out to Green Bay on March 15th.

Kennedy: March 15th, and my brother was now 90% of the way in, and he asked me to go out to see whether there was anything that could be worked out. He had two messages. One was if McCarthy was going to talk about the cities and urban policies as much as about the war, he wouldn't get in. And secondly, if that wasn't going to be his choice, could there be a possible joint way of defeating Lyndon Johnson. If he wasn't going to do that, my brother would get in. Those were the two points to find out. I went out. It was nighttime, and for security I came up the back stairs of this hotel in Wisconsin. I don't know where the note is; I think it tells you what hotel and what city.

Young: It's Green Bay.

Kennedy: Green Bay. And as I went up in the hotel to the floor, like the eighth floor, there standing in the stairwell is David Schoumacher, who was the principal reporter covering Gene McCarthy, at nighttime, with his camera. He said, "What are you doing here?" It probably didn't make a lot of sense in any event, by that time, but it was a last chance. We had a very difficult meeting. It says in here I just talked to Abigail [McCarthy]; I talked to him. I waited about an hour, hour and a half. He came in and just was basically completely uninterested.

Young: Had he been told by this time—by you or anybody other than his own people—that your brother was going to run?

Kennedy: Well, he probably had seen the Cronkite interview. There was a lot of ripple after that.

Young: Okay.

Kennedy: I think he had a pretty good sense that Bobby was going to get in it.

Young: Right.

Kennedy: And he certainly got from me that he was going to get in it unless they were going to talk about urban issues, poverty. This was really my brother's last way of closing the door on this aspect: I've done everything I could have. I tried. If they'd talk about the cities and what's happening there, I'll still hold. But once he didn't, it cleared in his mind that he could. It was a green light to go ahead. And McCarthy was just basically tired, uninterested, rather disdainful. He was on a big high. It had all moved for him. He was pretty much in the catbird seat, wondering why in the world he was being disturbed. Then he gave the whole story, flipped in his way, to Schoumacher.

Young: Well, Schoumacher figures again later on at the '68 convention. This is jumping ahead, but his name comes up again when Steve Smith went up to have a conversation with McCarthy, and Schoumacher—

Kennedy: —is there again. At the door. [*laughter*]

Young: Well, whether he's there or not, he's somewhere in the wings. And Steve Smith comes back to the Standard Club where he was staying, and here *CBS News* has a report that he's just been over trying to bid for support for you, trying to get Senator McCarthy to support you for the nomination, which wasn't discussed at all. He put that spin on it.

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: That he'd been over soliciting on your behalf. So that's Schoumacher's second time—

Kennedy: Yes, he was very unreliable.

Young: Well, the story was that Abigail McCarthy told whoever called on her first—and somebody else was there as well, tried that evening to get to see him.

Kennedy: I see.

Young: And the story was that she said, "He's in bed," or "He said he's going to bed, he's not waiting up for anything like that." And somebody said, "I'm going to wake him up if you don't." Anyway, he got up. I think that was maybe before you actually came over to have the talk with him.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Earlier in these documents—or maybe it was in Schlesinger's book—Robert is quoted as saying to McCarthy—this is before your visit—"If you run, don't run a single-issue campaign."

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Again, you have to talk about things other than the war. But apparently McCarthy was so taken with himself as the leader of the antiwar movement that he didn't think about much else.

Kennedy: Absolutely, absolutely. And then the interesting thing, McCarthy comes back to the Senate after the election, and we have our first steering meeting. And he says, "I'm glad to give up the Foreign Relations Committee if other people want it. I've done foreign relations." He doesn't come back after all that period of time to see what else is going to be done. He basically gave up the Foreign Relations Committee. We have the documentation on that. I was on the Steering Committee, and I was in complete disbelief. I think I might have told you; I'm repeating these stories because we jump around—in '69 I had the honor of watching at the inauguration when LBJ came out and got on the plane and left.

I was in the Senate, not the caucus room, but off the telephone room. There was one other person in there, and it was Gene McCarthy, and one or two people sitting down there, just sitting. It was an interesting irony, you know, to see the plane come out, LBJ get in it, and the plane go off. All three networks are on it, and seeing McCarthy down at the other end. I was just sitting at the other end. There just wasn't any emotion between us.

I had a decent relationship with him, although he voted against me with Vance Hartke on the poll tax. I thought he always had a little edge for the Kennedys. I inherited a lot of these things. He had an edge for me, or always had that thing: he was more Catholic, more liberal, more intellectual than John Kennedy.

Young: And the working class—

Kennedy: Yes. All of that's interesting. The world was moving faster then.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: The Cronkite, the organization at Steve's place, the setting of the campaign two days later, Bobby going out and campaigning and getting a great response in several of these places.

Young: Events were moving fast, too. You asked very early on what would happen if LBJ should pull out of the race.

Kennedy: Yes. I don't think we ever looked at that. It was rather prophetic, but I don't think we ever gave it any consideration. The first thing we did was decide about the primary, back at Bobby's house. He'd been out campaigning. The whole question then was whether to go into the Indiana primary.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: There were long, long discussions about that because it was so difficult: the home of the Ku Klux Klan; a tough Governor who was strongly against it; the Teamsters, who were a very big union—one of the two biggest unions—and were strongly against it; and a big agricultural community. There were blacks, but they were in pockets, not a great population, and basically very conservative. So if you announced that you were going in, and you got licked right

away before you ever got to the other states, this would be a major, major setback. I effectively moved out to Indiana for three or four weeks.

Young: How was that decision made, to go into Indiana?

Kennedy: We didn't have an alternative.

Young: You had to—

Kennedy: You had to go if you were going to announce. The focus and attention was on whether to get in, the circumstances were going to be uncomfortable getting into this thing with all the implications, and there were efforts to reach out into different states and all the rest. But it hadn't been thought through that the first primary would be Indiana, and he had a very good chance of getting licked there. I don't remember that subject ever being discussed until after. Which primaries now are you going to have to go into, looked at globally? Jesse Unruh has 250 votes there, and you're going to get the ones in New York. You look around at different pieces that you may be able to get, but suddenly you're confronted with this. And the early polls did not look terribly good. They show that he was somewhat behind in the very beginning.

Young: So the pre-decision thinking did not really connect with the question of where he'd have to go first and what he'd have to do.

Kennedy: It did not.

Young: It was only March 16th or 15th or somewhere around there that that began to be thought of, and I guess you were the person who put that into the mix.

Kennedy: Yes, I was looking through these notes from that night, and it says, "Indiana, TK," and "South Dakota, Ted Kennedy."

Young: But the interesting thing is the date. It's 3/16. That's the date your brother announced.

Kennedy: And if you look back at the other meetings, the meetings we had had here in Washington at this time—the rundown of the states is California, Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana. There's a very thin list on this. "Gordon St. Angelo [Indiana Democratic State chairman], not to be trusted."

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Birch Bayh, I was a good friend of his, but it says "RFK uneasy with him. Should try to be more friendly," which he should have. Bob Keefe was a very good fellow, but just an attorney. Andy Jacobs was a big supporter. Bob Nix. But it was very thin.

Young: It was thin there, and that list—

Kennedy: Even with the people they had, it was very thin.

Young: And this was only to find out who you might call upon?

Kennedy: That's right, to get you started, and you had four weeks to get into—

Knott: The primary was May 7th, so—

Kennedy: Oh, May 7th. I said March.

Young: This was very late to start a move.

Kennedy: But he spent a lot of time there, spent a lot of time.

Knott: And you sent Gerry Doherty into—

Kennedy: Gerry Doherty went there, and he had a number of people from Massachusetts there. Gerry eventually went into Chicago, as we were getting closer to the end. But there are some people still in Massachusetts—this fellow Gene Dellea, and Don Dowd, who are on those lists—went into Indiana. They still keep in touch with those people out there, which is amazing.

Young: You said you moved, in effect, to Indiana.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Do you want to talk about how that went and how it developed? You started with almost nothing out there.

Kennedy: Well, the important difference between the primaries, even in my brother Jack's day and Bobby's day, is that they had a small number of primaries. President Kennedy had ten primaries, but Wisconsin and West Virginia were the decisive battles, for all intents and purposes. They had Oregon, but that wasn't really very much; it was all over, really. He had those two. Bobby had Indiana—which he won narrowly, but we said it was a big, big win—a loss in Oregon, and then the blowout in California, the big win out there. That would have given him enormous impetus.

But you can stay in these states for a period of time, five or seven weeks. You say it was May 7th, so we were out there for close to two months, and we *stayed* there for two months. He would come in for two or three days at a time. But everybody we had, friends we had, just stayed, lived in that state. And in that period of time, you can get around in the state, and people begin to form impressions. You can have some impact.

In the 1980 campaign, there were 31 different primaries. The most you do in most of these states is land at the airport and take off again. Your supporters come out, you greet them, and boom, you're gone to another place. But in 1968 they could get a different feeling—and they did, because of the dramatic moments. You had the death of Dr. [Martin Luther] King [Jr.]. These were momentous moments, where people were transfixed. And they were transfixed by the beginning of this, the wild enthusiasm for Bobby.

Then he could see that that was scaring people, and the whole change in his appeal, all softer television, which made a big, big difference. One of the funny stories is in the black areas where they had these little—

Young: There's a very good and extensive oral history at the Kennedy Library that Gerry Doherty did about the Indiana campaign.

Kennedy: Good.

Young: It's a quite good, almost blow-by-blow, account of how he moved in there, and the tensions between him and Jerry—what was it?

Kennedy: Bruno.

Young: —Bruno. And St. Angelo, of course, was not to be trusted. But how little he started with and how quickly he got it organized, just having to get signatures, and he started with almost nobody out there. [Roger] Branigan was—

Kennedy: That's right. The Governor was trying to shortchange him.

Young: It's a fascinating account of that effort.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: It's an amazing victory.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: I was asking what your memories of that effort were, if you have any.

Kennedy: Well, for Bobby it was a transition from being a super-hot candidate, which he was, with a lot of emotion and feeling and crowds, to sitting around and finding out that watching this sort of thing on television was turning people off, that Indiana didn't like that. What does it in New York and Massachusetts—we have an exciting candidate, a hot candidate, one I can see, understand, hear, who gets me worked up—that isn't what they were looking at. It was a whole transitioning of the campaign—which Bobby did, and you can see it in the course, changing the schedule and the time he spent with people and all the rest. But the other part was—most important—the beginning of the changing of the press.

Every night, after the events, he would sit down and have a drink with members of the press. They would talk until 2:00 in the morning, and then he'd go to bed. He could last three days, and he was exhausted. It was a very interesting thing. But he had a compulsion of wanting to be a straight talker, a kind of John McCain. By natural disposition, he would sit down and talk to them. And at the end of that campaign, those press people had an entirely different view of him. I always thought that was probably the most interesting aspect of it. And you look, after his loss, the press formed this group that stayed together and created the press awards in which Dick Harwood, who died, was very much involved— Sandy Vanocur, there's a whole group.

They formed a group that each year gives a press award for a high school essay or editorial on the subject of poverty or civil rights—the television programs, the books that are coming out, radio broadcasts. They do it down here one evening, and it's very moving. They were the ones who structured, organized, and raised the money to do it. And at the end of that campaign, he had them absolutely locked in. They all wanted to maintain their journalistic independence and declared it and all the rest, but they became so emotionally involved because they really had a chance to sit with him.

But it was at an incredible cost. I always looked at it like an athletic contest. You have to get to bed at 10:30 if you're going to get up at 6:00 or 6:30. You have to go to bed. It's a training course. You can't go out; at least I couldn't, and I was young then. But he would stay down. I'd tell him, "This thing is crazy." He'd get up at 7:30 in the morning and go on through, still could do two or three days; then he'd have to come back here for a day and a half to get rested and then get back at it. But this was a major transformation that took place from the press from this cynical, arrogant figure.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: It altered among the national press in a very—

Young: These were the press people from—

Kennedy: —who followed him, national political writers. It would be worthwhile just to get that list, you know—

Young: Yes. Sander Vanocur was—

Kennedy: He was NBC, probably. Harwood was the *Washington Post*.

Knott: Jules Witcover, too.

Kennedy: Jules Witcover was one of them.

Knott: Jack Newfield. Is this the RFK journalism awards?

Kennedy: That's it, yes. That's how that whole thing got going. At the end of this thing, they were just so passionately involved. It was very interesting, because they were very guarded, but I always said it was Indiana. He came out of Indiana, and he was involved in a national movement. And then in Oregon—they say it's only suburbs out there—he had difficulty getting started, and he spent a relatively short period of time. Then California—that thing was moving so rapidly, he didn't really have the chance. But Indiana, in those evenings downstairs at the Sheraton bar, those guys would sit around, and they'd be after him, talking about it. He'd talk about [Albert] Camus and poetry and books that he had read. And they just got blown away.

Young: We ought to get the names of that—

Knott: Sure, sure.

Young: Because we will be talking to some journalists who were involved, and it's very important to get them. There is one piece in the book here, written by a writer from one of the Indiana newspapers, about your brother. It's a very touching piece about his walking past some place where there were some black kids, and reaching fingers through the thing and talking with them. It's a good reflection of this new perception of your brother on the part of the press. There's none of the ruthlessness—

Kennedy: Yes, that's right.

Knott: Senator, you were given responsibility to handle the non-primary states as well, which I would have thought was probably a pretty tough task since you're dealing more with party leaders. I was wondering if you might share with us how that task unfolded and how well it went.

Kennedy: We stayed in Indiana the whole time. I might have come out and made some calls on different people, but I was in Indiana. I did a very light touch-over in Oregon. And then I was in California for the most part. I can remember going to Iowa and seeing the caucuses there, and just being amazed. You had a thousand people at that time. Now, it's 3,000 or so—or bigger in some communities—where they all go in, they hang out, and people have a chance to talk to them. Then they all divide in the different parts of the room and select their own people. There's a big blackboard, and people put the numbers up, and that's the number of delegates. That was really the startling thing about how the process worked, so different in so many different areas.

I went to South Dakota briefly, where we had some good contacts, and Iowa, which was important. But by and large—I ought to go back and get the particular notes at the time—we found that Humphrey was making very major—

[Dogs enter.]

Kennedy: Come on. Come over here.

Humphrey was making major inroads because of his very strong stand with Labor and on the war. And this was true in Indiana as well as in some of the other states. We didn't have very much in terms of the agricultural appeal. Most of the party people were still for President Johnson, and increasingly antagonistic that other people were going to divide the party.

So it wasn't a rush to sign up or join up. I went to the selected states or areas or conventions where it looked like we might have some opportunity for delegates, but after that, I went to the primary states. I think in our notes we have the talk I gave out there in Los Angeles. I think it was the eve of the Democratic convention, and I guess it was in Indiana. I talked about the challenges that we were facing, about how if Bobby could appeal in Indiana, which was conservative, fighting the state organization, and with the possibility of Republicans potentially crossing over—which I think had an adverse impact, but not enough to change the outcome.

And then the organization, how they tampered around with the levers of the voting machines and the ballot machines, and how the newspapers had been very tough on Bobby, and still he had done extraordinarily well.

Young: Turned it around.

Kennedy: Turned it around. I don't have them here, but I believe the polls would show that he started out behind and was able, even against a lot of this kind of opposition, to be successful.

Here, Splash, stop. Splash! Splash!

Young: There must be a text also of this talk that you gave.

Kennedy: I don't know.

Young: It's nice to have it in your own handwriting.

Kennedy: Yes. I'm not sure that we had it. I usually write the thing out and then I put it on cards and try to give it off the cuff. That's what I basically try to do. See, I had "Five weeks ago, the campaign started." So this must have been in some other time, in California.

Young: Well, it looks like, from what was scratched out up here, that "Indiana" was scratched out, and "California"—

Kennedy: Yes. "Notes of California talk, night of Indiana primary."

Young: You might have used this in Indiana and then—

Kennedy: —used it there.

Young: Thought of it for California. But anyway, it's an accounting of what happened in Indiana—

Kennedy: Bobby's trip.

Young: —and what it tells you about your brother and his potential.

Kennedy: There was one wonderful story. There was a Teamster official in Charlestown, Massachusetts. I'd see Bobby and talk to him usually in the late afternoon when he took a tub. I'd come in and give him a report of what was happening in the state. And this fellow who was a member of the Teamsters, from Charlestown, Irish, came in to see me and said, "Look, if Bobby Kennedy tells me that he will take the parole board report on Jimmy Hoffa when it comes up—" This assumes he's going to be elected, and it's going to be some time during his term that the parole will make a recommendation. "And if you tell me that he will accept that parole, the Teamsters are prepared to support Robert Kennedy in Indiana, and we will make a contribution of a million dollars to you."

I said, "Well, I don't think that's going to fly, but I'll run it by the candidate." Bobby was in, putting the soap on, and he said, "What's going on?" I said, "Well, we heard from so-and-so up in Charlestown." He was absolutely clean, but very close to Hoffa. He used to go home every day and take care of his disabled wife, and he had an incredible work ethic. He was crazy about Hoffa because of what he did for the Teamsters.

Anyway, I mentioned this to Bobby, who was sitting in the tub. And he said, "You tell so-and-so—I know him and I like him—if I get to be President of the United States, Jimmy Hoffa is never going to get out of jail, and there are going to be a lot more of them in jail. Do I make myself clear?" I said, "Okay, okay. Let's go to the second item." [*laughter*]

I never took the chance of giving the report back to the guy. You know what's interesting is that I think Nixon took it, took the money and took the endorsement. And I wouldn't be surprised to find out that McCarthy made that pledge to them, too, because we saw this money come into both these campaigns at the time. And as I say, they are one of the two hot unions. I forget who the other one is, but I'll never forget the story. Bobby didn't flinch about any of these kinds of things.

Young: Going into California, what was the assessment of his chances for the convention?

Kennedy: We had some important assets in that state. Unruh was an important figure there and knew the political leaders, and we had family members out there who were supporters. It was much more of an imbalanced state than it probably is today. Bobby was by this time a hot campaigner, and he had that message down well. He felt the surge that was moving for him. He identified with the people who were going out and supporting him. He enjoyed the enthusiasm that was building and developing there, and it was just a fit between Bobby and California. That whole momentum, all of it, just took off, and we could feel it, see it, and it caught him up.

Young: He had been out earlier. There's something in here and some of the books about a trip to California where he and Cesar Chavez had gotten to know each other, and they had an event together. It was a remarkable account of that electricity.

Kennedy: Yes. Well, when I first came to the Senate, he talked about the Bracero program, and I remember talking to him when he was down at the Justice Department. He said, "We ought to get rid of that Bracero program. It's an absolute disgrace in terms of exploitation." The chairman of the committee had been Pete Williams, and I'd talked to him and Bobby had talked to him about it. We had a set of hearings. We went to southern Texas, all along the border down there. It was an unbelievable set of hearings, no air conditioning in these places, hot beyond belief, but people came in and told these stories of exploitation that were just breathtaking, not only the workers, but the contractors and housing and all of it. We went to California, and we ended the Bracero, ended it just about the time Bobby came into the Senate. I think he was there probably at the end. And the very important Hispanic leader who was out there was Cesar Chavez.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: They developed a personal relationship, because Cesar saw what a leader he was in terms of these kinds of things. And Bobby kept that. I had a relationship, but not nearly like Bobby did. And then in, I think it was '67—you'd have to check the dates on it—he went through this fast about organizing, about the unwillingness of the farm owners to give him the opportunity for organizing. He had this long 20-day or 30-day fast, a very serious one. When he announced he was going to break it—I think it was on an Easter Sunday or something like that, Ascension Thursday, one of the holy days—it was a big deal.

Young: Yes, it was.

Kennedy: Bobby went out there and spent the whole day, went to the Mass with him. He was very weakened and enfeebled, and it was an event that just electrified California, the Hispanics generally and in California in particular. I don't remember it being at the time of the campaign. I think it was before this campaign.

Young: It was before.

Kennedy: It was a year before.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Maybe it was the spring of '67 or something like that. I can't quite remember it. But in any event, it is still remembered.

Young: Chavez was too weak to speak, so his speech was read for him.

Kennedy: Yes. He was a real visionary. He talked in philosophical and theological terms. He was a very simple person, but he had an eloquence that was very deep and breathtaking. I can't remember the particular speech, but I listened to him a couple of times, and you didn't want to follow Cesar. He was very powerful.

So the campaign itself was very uplifting and moving. Bobby left it a few times and went up—I think there was about an eight-day difference between Oregon and California or so. So when he was out there, he did a couple of stops up in Oregon and came back and might have gone to the state of Washington. But it was just basically California.

McCarthy spent a lot of time out there. The money wasn't flowing in at this time. Bobby's campaign was ten weeks and cost $10 million. And at the end, after California, he had a probably a $6.5 million debt.

Young: Yes, I know, that you had to—

Kennedy: This thing was the big enchilada, whether you were going to look like you were moving towards it, which would have brought in the dough or the resources. Everything was laid out on the line in California, and it was a great response. It had this enormous emotional buildup because this was where it was. You couldn't keep roaring at this pace. The campaign couldn't have kept it up unless we were going to have a breakthrough, and of course, that night we got the breakthrough. I think he had a good opportunity to win the nomination.

I never was one who thought, even with California, that it was going to be a slam-dunk. I think that thing would have been a tough slog all the way down the rest of the trip. Humphrey and the others had reached in too deep by then. I forget what the numbers were. Even at the end of California, Humphrey still had a big chunk of delegates. Bobby had a good chunk, but I don't know where—who would have known? Who could tell?

Young: Well, at that time, it was still, to a certain extent, an open convention. You still had favorite sons, didn't you? You have very little of that anymore; you already know the result ahead of time.

Kennedy: Yes, that's it.

Young: It's a big "if" that will never be answered.

Kennedy: Yes, that's right. It's a big, big if, a big if.

Young: I know your brother when he was out there on Sunday—the festival day or whatever it was—was giving a speech and he had learned Spanish phrases to use. And there was a very interesting, funny little byplay to hear Spanish spoken with a Massachusetts accent and a little bit of nice joking between him and—

Kennedy: He had a great, great sense of humor, and he could play with the crowd. Once he got started on a roll of what he was talking about, it was a different pace. He had a very easy, very good sense of humor, and he could see the humor in just about everything.

Young: Is it too early for a break?

Kennedy: No. We could do that.

Young: And then we can come back and talk about the convention.

Kennedy: Let's do that.

Young: And how you were brought then into it in a different capacity.

Kennedy: All right. We have until probably, I don't know, about quarter of 2:00.

[BREAK]

(Milton Gwirtzman present, though difficult to hear as he was beyond the microphone's range.)

Young: [speaking to Gwirtzman] I had mentioned to the Senator the Doherty oral history—

Kennedy: Oh, the history on Indiana.

Young: —on Indiana, which was very detailed.

Kennedy: One thing, Miltie, you might remember. I always thought that the time Bobby spent in the evenings with the national press really turned them around in Indiana. I think it was those nights. He used to sit up and schmooze with these guys. They'd have a drink, and he wouldn't go to bed until 2:00. He'd get exhausted. He could campaign for only two and a half days because he was so tired all the time. But the mood of the press changed. And then they did that organization of writers, the events for Bobby in Bobby's name.

Gwirtzman: Oh, yes. Well, they fell in love with him.

Kennedy: That's what I thought. You could give us the eight or ten names.

Gwirtzman: Okay.

Kennedy: We had Jules Witcover, we had—

Gwirtzman: Walter Mears.

Kennedy: Walter Mears, who was the AP [Associated Press], I think.

Gwirtzman: Yes.

Kennedy: I think Sandy Vanocur was around at that time.

Gwirtzman: Yes.

Kennedy: You had Dick Harwood.

Knott: Was Jack Germond part of that?

Kennedy: I don't think he was ever part of—but Harwood, Richard Harwood of the *Post.*

Gwirtzman: Yes, Harwood wrote a wonderful thing.

Kennedy: Well, in any event, we can get those names for you very easily. We can just check with the RFK [Library], and they'll give us the names.

Young: Do you want to get to the preparations for the convention? Where would you like to go next?

Kennedy: We stopped in the RFK part. There may be a time that we can go through and talk a little bit about that, but I'm not quite sure that we're here today to get into that.

Young: Okay, yes.

Kennedy: We ought to mark out a couple of these areas that we're going to come back to. I'll get a chance to think a little bit about that—

Young: Surely.

Kennedy: —and I'll be glad to talk about it a bit. But we ought to mark down some of these areas, and we can try to revisit them. Are you talking about the '60 convention?

Gwirtzman: No, '68.

Young: Efforts were made to get you to enter the race.

Kennedy: Well, prior to the convention in Los Angeles, I had had a meeting—I believe it's down here—with Humphrey.

Gwirtzman: Chicago.

Kennedy: Chicago.

Gwirtzman: He came out to your house.

Kennedy: He came out to the house in McLean, and I spent half an hour, forty-five minutes with him. It was clear that he was going to get the nomination. We have a very warm and touching conversation. It was about the Vice Presidential nomination and about how he understood the difficulties, personally, and how strongly we all felt about the issue. He was going to try and work that issue through. We never had any real specifics about how that was going to be done, but he understood that this was something that was absolutely—

Gwirtzman: Vietnam?

Kennedy: Vietnam. We had always had a good relationship, even though Humphrey had run against my brother Jack. I think I recounted to you my father saying, "Haven't you got somebody besides Humphrey working with you?" He and Bobby always used to change the conversation in a joking way. He and I worked easily in the Senate. Because of the competition, there's a lot of blood boiling in these circumstances, but underneath it all, it was a very strong friendship. I think I mentioned that he asked me out to speak at his final dinner before he passed.

So at this time, I liked him, but I wasn't prepared to sign on. The basic feeling was that it was too much too soon. I was going to be putting my family through all this. I was uncertain about where he was going to go. This was a cause that people had been so worked up in support of my brother, felt so strongly about, and I was a part of that. Humphrey hadn't separated from Johnson on Vietnam and didn't see clearly where he could. This would be betraying this whole effort and movement. So it really wasn't a close choice or decision.

Young: But people kept coming after you.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Not only for Vice President but then, later on, a draft.

Kennedy: Yes. Oh, Beth! Just open that door. She's barking. Just leave the door a little bit open. If she's here she wants to be there; if she's there she wants to be here. Thank you.

I had some other conversations along that line. I felt also that if I was going to make a run for the Presidency, I wanted to do it on my own. I didn't want to have it in the wake of all these other circumstances and tragedies. I always felt that if I was going to have that opportunity, I wanted a free and clear time for it, and not to be into this.

Secondly, I remember very clearly that, even though my brother sought it in '56, it's a real holding operation. And at this time, with the involvement in the issues I had already started in the Senate, I didn't see a holding pattern for eight years with possibilities then of getting a good crack at the Presidency. It just didn't seem to me to be worth the wait and the time with everything else that was happening.

The Democrats had 65 or 66 Senators at that time. And in the Senate, things were happening. It just didn't make a great deal of sense. I guess we had the convention going on now, and the great focus was going to be the peace plank. We had an interest in it. I personally had an interest in it. People—the delegates, our supporters, whom I'd worked in a relationship with all during the course of the campaign—cared very deeply about it. This was their cause now. And I couldn't not have at least some kind of a presence, although I wasn't going to go to Chicago. So Steve Smith went out there, and I think he was puttering around to see what the mood was and the sense of the convention itself, where the plank was going, what was developing. There's one story about that issue, about the peace plank and the modifications and the changes. You had another part of the convention, which was the violence out there.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: [Abraham] Ribicoff and the group of demonstrators, about which I don't have any special things to add, other than the general observations. Then as the nomination was being thought about, I talked again to [Richard] Daley.

Young: Daley.

Kennedy: And one other. I talked to them from a phone booth in Stonington, Maine. By this time I had sailed up there. But I really had not had an interest. And the other thing that was very clear to me was if I indicated an interest in going for the number-one job, I couldn't then turn the party down for the number-two job. If I was able to, willing to, risk my family and risk the kind of violence and other possibilities in running for the first one and going for it—and not get it because Humphrey was there—it's a very dicey situation. If you're willing to do that, you couldn't very well say no to number two, I didn't think.

And to be honest about it, I never was really quite sure what some of the— I had very good supporters and people who wanted me to run and thought we could have maybe gotten the convention on it. But I also thought that there were other people who wanted me to go in, and—if I didn't get it—would have insisted that I be number two, and that I didn't want. That would have been the worst, to have made a stab—not that you mind taking a chance and trying to run at it—but if you were in for that part, you were in for number two, I thought. I didn't feel that I could separate those. And that really was a matter of concern for the reasons I mentioned earlier.

So it was a combination and not really clear—the personal equation was very weighty and heavy, and I think I felt I could do something myself later on. There were a number of both emotional and political concerns— I think the emotional was probably the right calculation. The political might have been different when you're looking back historically. But I don't have any regrets, and certainly didn't at the time.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: After they got the nomination—now Humphrey had the nomination—they made some adjustments on the plank.

Young: By the way, where was McCarthy in all of this at the last minute?

Kennedy: I think he was in Chicago, but I can't remember—

Gwirtzman: In a hotel room watching—he was concerned about his kids, who were getting beaten up. You're asking whether he said he would throw to Kennedy—

Young: Yes, whether—

Gwirtzman: There's a story about that.

Young: —if you went in, he would go with you. It's hard for me to follow.

Kennedy: It was very hard. It was very murky, who the messenger was and what exactly the message was. It didn't have a ring to it. Humphrey had given me assurances on some things. I think it was probably too raw with McCarthy to think that—

Young: Did you have the feeling—this wasn't the point of the game—that Daley and the rest were trying to play you into a strategy of their own?

Kennedy: I wasn't sure they weren't.

Young: Yes. You couldn't be sure that they weren't.

Kennedy: And it wasn't even definite assurance. I'm not as cynical as most politicians, quite frankly, or skeptical about that. But it was too much of a risk. He'd be the kind of politician who would say, "Well, we did the best we could for that part, now the party really needs you. You've said yes, you would do this, and now you can't let us down."

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And you were in. You were in on this thing. From the beginning, I never really moved off my position on it.

Gwirtzman: Also, didn't he say you'd have to go out there, and the security people said that it really wasn't—

Kennedy: You'd have to come here.

Young: Yes.

Gwirtzman: The Johnson Secret Service said you shouldn't.

Kennedy: There were security issues and questions of concern. I didn't feel that was something that was bothering me.

Young: But you probably would not have gone anyway?

Kennedy: I wouldn't have gone, no.

Young: Because that puts you into play again?

Kennedy: What's your purpose out there? We were monitoring the plank, and the plank was moving. They were changing words, and people were having some impact on it. I can't describe what that plank was at the present time, but it ended up being fairly reasonable from the antiwar groups. But Humphrey still wasn't there. After he got the nomination, he called and asked me if I'd reconsider. And we had a similar conversation.

Young: But he wasn't, himself—or am I wrong?

Kennedy: He called. I talked to him personally.

Gwirtzman: Then he asked you about [Edmund] Muskie.

Kennedy: He asked me about Muskie, and—was it Fred Harris? Or was it [Walter] Mondale?

Gwirtzman: Fred Harris.

Kennedy: Fred Harris. Yes. He said he thought he was trustworthy and logical, prefers Muskie to [Harold E.] Hughes, although Hughes was a good Governor. I knew Fred Harris was working on it. The other names that were in were Terry Sanford and John Gardner. I asked him whether he would consider McCarthy, and he said he might have McCarthy forced upon him. He thought McCarthy had a cynicism about life that he could not tolerate. He felt if he was Vice President, McCarthy would go away and sulk. [*laughter*] He said he could not conceive a circumstance where he would take McCarthy. He said he would be in touch on the Vice Presidency, and again, RFK got into the campaign because of the Vietnam issue, and he felt strongly about it, as Bobby had. Whatever the dilemma was, he hoped it could be resolved.

Young: Humphrey wasn't moving strongly toward the peace plank, or at all, was he?

Kennedy: No.

Young: Until later. Until after he was nominated.

Kennedy: No, no.

Young: And then it happened rather late.

Kennedy: Yes, then it was the Salt Lake City speech.

Young: Yes. It was quite late.

Kennedy: And then history shows he was gaining a point a day. From that time on, he was gaining a point a day. If that speech had been made four days earlier, or if the election had been three days later, he would have been elected. It's most extraordinary to see that thing moving. But, you know, those were all the complicated issues between him and Lyndon. I guess we talked about Sarge [R. Sargent Shriver]. I see in these notes here.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I said that all the members of the family were very close to Sarge. Bobby had his disagreements with him. He felt Sarge was being used by the President. This was on the poverty program, where they named Sarge to be the head of the OEO and then cut the program back.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Bobby wanted to keep the focus on the program and what was happening to it, and because they appointed a Kennedy person, he thought they could cut that back and escape from getting criticism, which I think he was probably right about. But on the other hand, Sarge was interested in these issues. He felt Sarge was being used, that an effort was being made to bring the Kennedy wing. By going to Sarge, he thought it'd be difficult to take the nomination because of all the things K. was interested in and believed in during the campaign. That was basically the fact that he had not been a part of that whole movement in terms of coming back and working in the campaign on the antiwar issue.

Young: Shriver?

Kennedy: Sarge, yes. I think it would have been difficult for the Kennedy people to understand or accept or take on anybody. There was a very powerful emotion and feeling on this thing.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I don't know how much more Humphrey thought about that. The meeting he arranged, the evening before—I'd like to meet EMK again. I guess we came down and had another meeting. To be honest about it, I think I did meet with him twice and talk to him once.

Young: With?

Kennedy: Humphrey.

Knott: You appeared with him in late September.

Kennedy: Yes.

Knott: And then he met with you at your home in mid-October.

Kennedy: Yes.

Kennedy: [papers rustling] These are other notes on the convention, about talking to Jesse Unruh.

Young: Birch Bayh.

Kennedy: [reading] Talked to Birch Bayh. I have a quote here from Hubert saying, "You can understand what my problem has been up until now. I can work out the problem of my Vietnam position. I'll be right on those issues." He said he was meeting with Daley. We called and congratulated him. There are some other notes in here. These are convention notes after a conversation with Steve Smith. I don't think I've read through those.

This is the next-to-last tab for the ’68 fall campaign. [reading] McCarthy says, “Well, in that case, really there’s only one choice, I would like to see my name in nomination. I indicated before that it was perfunctory and that I’ll stay on the floor and take myself out,” he added without explanation, though he could not nominate Kennedy, he might be able to support Kennedy. Direct, even gracious. McCarthy gratuitously remarked that while he was willing to do this for Ted, “I never could have done it for Bobby,” *Newsweek* reported. Tears of gratitude came as McCarthy told him someone must have my support. Teddy has a chance, a real ballgame. Lasted ten minutes.

Young: This is labeled “Convention Notes, August ’68,” and written after—

Gwirtzman: That’s the article.

Young: This is the article by Peter Maas.

Gwirtzman: It appeared in *New York* magazine.

Young: He was drafting it at the time, and this is where Schoumacher crops up again.

Kennedy: Yes. There he is again.

Young: Steve Smith didn’t think much of that comment about tears in his eyes.

Gwirtzman: That may not be Steve’s version of what happened in Chicago. He certainly talked to Peter a lot—

Young: Yes, yes. But the purpose of the meeting Steve Smith had with Gene McCarthy, going up to the room, came out in the Schoumacher story as a last-minute solicitation of support from McCarthy for Edward Kennedy. That’s the way it was played, and that was why it was on *CBS News*.

Kennedy: But I have no recollection that Steve ever said, “I think I’ll go over and sound out Gene, and maybe if you can put Gene and Chuck together, and Jesse has the thing, I think the package is done.” I’ve had those conversations with Steve, but this wasn’t one.

Young: Okay.

Kennedy: As I say, I’ve had similar conversations with him, but it wasn’t this. Steve Smith was churning. He’d been very emotionally tied into Bobby’s campaign, and he was personally frustrated by all of this. I think he was constantly trying to think of what’s out there and what can be done. I might have talked to him about my concerns about whether this was real. I may very well have. Steve was very frank and honest about everything, so I might have talked about that, and he might have thought, *Let me just explore this further.* That might be an explanation. But I don’t have any recollection, sense, or feeling that he ever said to me that he was going to go over and find out about this.

In any event, sometime after—what was the date of the convention? August what?

Knott: Late August.

Young: I don't know when the nomination occurred. Yes, your conversation is at the last minute.

Gwirtzman: The 28th.

Young: The 27th, 28th.

Knott: The 28th, Humphrey wins the nomination.

Kennedy: There was a question in my own mind then about when and how to get involved. I'd have to get the Salt Lake City speech date. I don't know what that was, whether we came out for him before that or not. There was every indication that he was going to change his position. And I remember clearly it got delayed, and delayed, and delayed by weeks. But the word had gotten out that he was going to shift his position on it. And with that awareness and understanding, I thought it was important to be involved and engaged and explain the reasons why I wanted to get back into the fray in that speech in Worcester.

Young: Your telegram to him here, congratulating him—

Kennedy: "...address the nation this evening." Well, that was September 30th.

Young: That was September 30th.

Kennedy: Okay.

Young: That was on TV. Is that when he announced his new—

Kennedy: It must be.

Gwirtzman: On what?

Kennedy: On the Salt Lake City speech, where he changed his position on Vietnam.

Knott: That's later.

Gwirtzman: Much later.

Kennedy: Much later than that?

Knott: Yes.

Young: But there's a telegram—

Kennedy: "... to address the nation to all who look for peace in Vietnam, you've given great encouragement and hope..."

Gwirtzman: He was the first person— Maybe the date's wrong.

Knott: I think the date is incorrect.

Young: I think it must be.

Kennedy: "I believe you deserve the support of all who have worked and prayed for peace."

Gwirtzman: That would have been the day he made the speech.

Kennedy: "...called last night and told me that he thinks the campaign is— Said he had the biggest crowds in Tennessee, feels his speech was a breakthrough." See, this is October 2nd. "...and I was the first person he heard from. He said that my support has made a difference in the campaign, and he'll never forget it...keeping our fingers crossed." I mentioned that we were going to cut tapes for him sometime soon. He said, "You've done enough for me, but obviously, this will be very helpful."

Young: Well, this is confusing, because your conversation with him is October 2nd.

Kennedy: It was after I sent the telegram.

Young: After you sent the telegram.

Kennedy: Yes, and he calls to thank me for the telegram, and I have a conversation with him.

Young: We don't have the text of the speech, but it was presumably on Vietnam.

Gwirtzman: The speech in Salt Lake City?

Kennedy: Salt Lake City was on Vietnam.

Gwirtzman: Your speech was also on Vietnam.

Kennedy: But what we're talking about here is me congratulating him for something he said, and that we have to find out. I thought it was probably the Salt Lake speech. I don't know. If it's not, we have to figure out whatever it was at that particular time. My talk was in September up in Worcester. That was September 10th or something like that. I don't have that. It's in one of the books.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I think it's just a question of getting those dates. If he made that speech in Salt Lake City, and that was the big change, I wonder why I sent that kind of a telegram to him and why we had that conversation.

Knott: Your speech at the Worcester Chamber of Commerce was on August 21st.

Kennedy: August 21st.

Gwirtzman: Later than that.

Kennedy: Before the convention.

Young: Milton, do you have any recollection of the sequence here?

Gwirtzman: This is Rob's [Martin] timeline, not mine.

Knott: This one's Rob's.

Gwirtzman: No. It's also confusing because of another speech where you blasted [George] Wallace.

Kennedy: That was in Massachusetts.

Gwirtzman: So these were all—

Young: These are not Rob's.

Gwirtzman: You didn't do a lot of campaigning. You made a lot of TV with candidates.

Knott: You had the one public appearance with Humphrey in late September.

Kennedy: Yes, at Tremont Street and the other park, which was a real— There was a demonstration against us. I think it's reasonably into the campaign. And the interesting thing was, we drove down the street earlier to go to the Parker House, and we saw these same people who were the demonstrators. You know what they were doing? They were practicing how to get on one another's shoulders, and what they were going to do.

We said "Isn't that interesting?" what they were doing on the corner of the Commons. And when we went up and came in through Filene's, I looked out there and I saw them all, and they did the exact thing that they had been practicing over there, to hassle us. They got on each other's shoulders so they could rise up and spread out a big banner and hassle us. It would be worthwhile to get that date.

Young: Yes, we have some confusion in dates here.

Knott: That was September 19th, that rally.

Young: Okay. Somewhere in there after that, Hubert Humphrey made an address to the nation, which you congratulated him on. We have to get the text of that to clear this up.

Gwirtzman: That's the Salt Lake City speech, September 24 or 25.

Knott: Which comes very late. It's absolutely true that it came too late.

Gwirtzman: Lyndon was pressuring him on the other side not to.

Kennedy: The Humphrey people were getting out that "We changed," and "We're going to do it soon," but it kept getting delayed and delayed and delayed. They finally made it, but that was the climate, that they were going to do it, and this is what it's going to have.

Young: And you don't—

Kennedy: I'm surprised that I made that speech in Worcester prior to the time of the convention. But evidently that's when it was, because I indicated in that speech that I can't remain silent and I can't be quiet and I want to get back in the thrust of all the other kinds of things. I don't know whether I made any comments in that speech about the Presidency. Maybe I said something more about it in there. I don't remember.

Young: You don't have the text of the speech in—

Kennedy: There is. I saw it. It was around. I read it during the—

Gwirtzman: The fallen standard speech?

Kennedy: Yes, "I pick up the fallen standard." You know that one, Miltie.

Gwirtzman: Great knowledge of Latin. There were two Gracchi brothers in Rome.

Young: Yes. [fumbling with papers]

Gwirtzman: Making an analogy.

Young: Oh, I see. Well—

Kennedy: July 26.

Young: Trying to get our ducks in a row here—your meeting with Hubert Humphrey on August 27th that you were looking at earlier, where you talked about Shriver and other things—

Gwirtzman: A telephone call.

Kennedy: I have August 22nd in there.

Young: Yes. And your speech in Worcester was the day before that meeting with Humphrey.

Knott: That was a phone call.

Young: A phone call.

Gwirtzman: The phone call came after he was nominated and the meeting was earlier.

Young: 21st, Worcester; 22nd, Humphrey.

Kennedy: Okay.

Young: This was a meeting with Humphrey in McLean. Humphrey had asked for this meeting, you note here. And whether it was prompted by your statements in your Worcester speech, surely it had something to do with the nature of the meeting, your public statements. Anyway,

did the course of the campaign on the Republican side after Nixon's nomination surprise you at all?

Kennedy: I don't think so. Nixon was a talented campaigner, a bright, smart person, and I certainly had seen that previously. But I thought the whole effort about "I have a secret plan to end the war" was so phony, all of it. But it was so difficult getting started with Humphrey. That was a real dilemma; that was the enormous tragedy of it, getting that going and started.

And then Muskie had done very well in the campaign. He was getting a lot of recognition, acceptance; he was a real addition to him. I don't know whether I had any predisposition about what the outcome was going to be. I was certainly pulling for Humphrey, and enthusiastically so at the end when it became apparent that he had altered and changed his position on Vietnam and would have done something important.

Young: In retrospect, it would have been better for Humphrey to make a change earlier.

Kennedy: Oh, I think yes. When you figure that it didn't change with Nixon.

Young: Until very late.

Kennedy: Yes. The last people out of there were in '75. This is '68. This is halfway. He went all the way from '68 to '72, and you still had people in there later on. Half the people we lost, we lost after the '68 election. So an awful lot of people were killed after this. And then, you know, you had the whole Cambodian situation, which was a disaster. He gets credit, obviously, for the opening of China. Historically it was certainly moving in that direction in any event, and he gets some credit. But Southeast Asia, the rest of it was just so bad.

Young: The Humphrey campaign after the convention was a disappointment. It was too little and too late.

Kennedy: Too little too late.

Young: Otherwise, you think he—

Kennedy: I think he would have. I'm sure he would have won. That drive at the very end was so powerful and so uplifting, and it ended so narrowly. I don't think there was any real question in people's minds that, if this had gone on for another day or two, or if he had changed his position a week or ten days before, it really would have had a dramatic impact and change.

Young: As an observer, what do you think accounted for it? Was it LBJ's pressure?

Kennedy: Oh, clearly. But it's always a question, once you have the nomination. Of course, I suppose he thought that President Johnson could undermine him in some important ways. But he had a lot of supporters and constituents. Labor was very anti-peace movement. Very strong. George Meany was around here all the time. I remember that. They were really upset with Bobby. Just strong, strong. Meany, and who's the fellow who followed him?

Knott: Lane Kirkland.

Kennedy: He was a rabid anti-communist. He was just rabid about this. So you still had a very divided country and society. And his whole base was very hawkish, a lot of hawks around in military, Labor. And he was reluctant to leave his base, not knowing where he was going to go. He just didn't see it. He didn't see it, feel it, was not willing to taking a chance on it.

Young: Some day, some historians are going, I hope, to look at Vietnam in the context of what happened in American politics and American public life during that period and compare it with Iraq.

Kennedy: Oh, absolutely.

Young: And the way this is playing out.

Kennedy: Oh, I don't think there's any question.

Young: There's a noticeable absence right now of the kind of peace movement and agitation that there was then.

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: I'm not going to ask you to comment on that unless you wish to, but the parallels are considerable in terms of—

Kennedy: Oh, absolutely.

Young: —the comparability of events and what's happening now and what was happening then on the domestic side, what it was doing to the lives of people. The economics of it are similar.

Kennedy: Truth was the first casualty in Vietnam, and the whole escalation, the dramatic escalation in terms of the war, the attack on the United States, and the resolution. What did we call it?

Young: Tonkin?

Kennedy: The Tonkin Gulf Resolution. And the complete manipulation of the truth in this war, demonstrated again by the Downing Street memo that says that the Brits concluded that this President decided to go to war in July. July! This is what we got criticized so much for, when I said the decision had been made in the summertime. I said "cooked up in Texas." I missed it by a little bit. It's step by step, both incompetence and failed accountability and denial, the basic overall concept that there's a military solution for political problems when history shows that there isn't. We're just getting set in there and paying a fearsome price for all of this. I think people draw the separations, and you can do it, and I think history is going to show exactly where it's going to be. The numbers are so much more dramatic over there.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: We're 1,700 there; they were at that time in '68, 25,000. The numbers are just very considerable. Look at the Boland Amendment. It took us five years to stop that. The first time I

offered the Boland Amendment in the Senate, we got 24 or 25 votes, and it took five years. Then [Daniel] Inouye offered the exact same amendment and was successful with 51 votes. That stopped all the funding. It took five years to do that.

It won't take that long now, the way this is moving in Iraq. It may take until this thing bubbles up and we have an antiwar candidate. There'll always be the question of a somewhat different framework, because we have still the overlay of terrorism, which is an uncertain factor in people's minds. Then they were just faced with the fact that this was not a military solution for a political problem.

Now they still have in the back of their minds the terrorism, and whoever talks about getting out of there faces the threat that we may leave a terrorist state that will form some kind of a danger for us. We have to get through that aspect and the aspect that in a chaos, we're just cutting and running. But I don't think the American people are going to hold on with this much longer, myself, nor do I believe they should.

Young: Comparisons have also been made between the then-Secretary of Defense and the current Secretary of Defense, and the way they moved. McNamara was getting very skeptical and second-thinking—

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: Exactly the opposite direction of movement, it seems, here with [Donald] Rumsfeld.

Kennedy: Rumsfeld—I talked just before my last speech in January with [Zbignew] Brzezinski, whom I find enormously interesting. I don't agree with him an awful lot of the time, but I find I can have breakfast with him, and in 35 minutes, he has ba boom, ba boom, ba boom, ba boom. You may not agree with him, but it's a viewpoint that's very precise, and he has very strong reasons for it. He told me an interesting thing, that Rumsfeld has him come in. He comes over and talks to him about every five or six weeks. He says he's been over there four or five times.

"I don't tell them what they want to hear, but I tell them," he said. I said, "I'm rather impressed," which I am, that Rumsfeld would be willing to listen to people with a differing view. The more vocal critics— Jessica Mathews at the Carnegie Foundation, although that's a foundation. You'd think you could probably have Jessica Mathews come in, or any of the former [William J.] Clinton people—Jim Steinberg or any of these other people who have been around for a time. But I don't notice that they do. But at least he says that he does listen to other people. It certainly hasn't had any—

Young: —visible effect.

Kennedy: Yes. And you always wonder, at the end of the day, how much of this thing is really driven by the hard line, [Richard] Cheney and all the rest.

Young: Yes.

Young: Ready to break off?

Kennedy: Good. Okay.

Young: Next week, we're going to do the '94.

Kennedy: Okay. We'll do Vicki [Victoria Reggie Kennedy], too. That'll be very good.