EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW 2 WITH ELLIS MOTTUR

November 20, 2006
North Bethesda, Maryland

Interviewer
Stephen F. Knott

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TRANSCRIPT

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Mottur: In our October session, I had inadvertently skipped over one page of my notes on my early years with Ted [Kennedy], and I noticed I omitted another paragraph a little later on. Since then, I've been reminded of a few other things to add in. The page I skipped over is probably the most fascinating situation I ever had with Ted Kennedy, and it's funny that I skipped that page.

Knott: We had a lot of ground to cover.

Mottur: It will make this interview more interesting.

Knott: That's right.

Mottur: In addition to all Ted's work in the Senate, he served, at that time, and perhaps still does, as president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, which had been established in memory of his oldest brother, who had died heroically in World War II. I guess everyone knows that story, about what happened just as he was slated to go home. He had finished his tour as a pilot in Europe, but volunteered for one more very hazardous mission, where he carried a plane full of explosives, from which he was supposed to parachute, then let the plane go on and smash into something. The explosives went off while he was up there and he died in that volunteer mission. This foundation focuses its activities on the problems of retarded people, in memory of Rosemary [Kennedy], Ted's oldest sister. Ted is president of it, but Eunice Shriver, with Sarge's [Robert Sargent Shriver] help, played the lead role in the day-to-day functioning of the foundation.

In 1971, the foundation convened an international symposium on human rights, retardation, and research. It took place October 16, 1971. The tale of what happened at that event is probably the most fascinating episode in all my years with Ted, and will take the longest to describe, but it's so illustrative of how the Kennedy organization operates, and of the indomitable Kennedy spirit, that it's worth covering in detail.

The symposium brought together, from across the globe, 1,200 distinguished scientists, theologians, lawyers, doctors, and other public figures like Germaine Greer, the feminist; Roger Mudd, the TV personality; David Frost, with British TV; Diahann Carroll, a singer and performer; and even Mother Teresa, who was later sainted. There were innumerable speeches,

documentary films, and a series of panel discussions on human rights of the retarded, behavior modification, labeling humans, test tube babies, etc. The foundation would also be giving out awards for distinguished accomplishment in dealing with these issues.

I had to write Ted's speech to open the symposium, which was going to be on Saturday morning. When I first started doing speeches for him, I would try to prepare the speech a week or two in advance, and really do it right. Every time I did that, I found that I had to change it 15 times by the time he spoke, because he's so attuned to actual events and things that are happening that you always have to incorporate something new into it. Finally, I got into the pattern of never writing a speech until the absolute last moment.

We had this office, which I described before, with eight people sitting in it; you could barely move, and typewriters were always clattering. We didn't have computers in those days, so there was much noise. To write a speech, I wanted to be in the office when no one else was there. What I would do, and what I did in this case, was on Thursday night, I went to bed very early, around maybe 8:00. I got up and went into the office a little after 3:00 A.M.; it was nice and quiet and serene. I sat down to write this opening speech for Ted and had it finished by the time people wandered in some hours later. I felt good about that. Of course, I didn't have much sleep, but it didn't matter.

Friday night, Sarge Shriver was having a dinner for all the leading people involved in the symposium, at his estate. I arrived with my wife and no sooner had I come in, where people were getting the cocktails, but Sarge came to me and said, "Ted wants to talk to you." I walked out into the garden, where Ted was, and he said, "Look, Ellis, the speech is good. It captures all the important points, but it doesn't have the personal touch that I wanted, because this foundation, this area, means so much to me, personally. You have to redo it to somehow get a really personal feel in it, so people know how much this is a part of me." I said, "Fine." This was now Friday evening. I wasn't about to give up my dinner at Sarge Shriver's estate, where I had never been before, and all these dignitaries were there. I was sitting next to Roger Mudd and prominent people were sprinkled all over the place. I figured, Well, I'll have the dinner, and then do the speech after dinner, but there was another interference with that.

Ted's AA [administrative assistant], Eddie Martin, was going to have a big party for all the Kennedy staff. It was the first one they were having, and I hated to give up that party. I figured what I would do was bring my portable typewriter to Eddie's house, and somehow steal away and write it there. Also, because the point was to somehow personalize the speech, there would be some people there who knew more about the personal aspects than I did, so I thought I could pick up useful background to use in the speech.

My wife and I went to the party, and I kept talking to people, trying to get background on the personal aspects. One thing led to another; it was a party and I was drinking beer, and before I knew it, the party was over. I realized I hadn't done the speech yet, and it was now midnight or 1:00 A.M. I went back to my house and I figured I'd just get the speech done. The other thing was, I was supposed to be at his house the next morning at 7:00, to show him the rewritten speech. I started working on it, and it took me all night, so I didn't go to sleep.

When you gave him a speech then, a number of ancillary things had to be done. I had directed three secretaries on the Kennedy staff to come into his office on Saturday morning and be there at 7:30, so they could do those things. One thing, you needed a press release, and in those days, they were mimeographed. They had to type it on stencils and run it off, but they also had to type the speech copy for him on 5x8 cards, in very big block letters, so the speech was easy for him to see.

I stayed up all night and got it over to his place at 7:00, and he said, "Yes, that's great, that's just what I wanted." I then rushed back to Capitol Hill, where the secretaries had assembled at 7:30, and had them frantically putting it all together.

The symposium was going to take place in the Kennedy Center, in the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower Theater as its main venue. The Eisenhower Theater had never been used before; that was its opening event. I got there and started looking around to see what needed to be done before Ted would arrive. People had to be checked in and registered for the conference. There were 1,200 people and somehow it wasn't the most efficient process, so there were long lines of dignitaries throughout the Kennedy Center, waiting to be checked in so they could enter the theater. Meanwhile, the TV people had told me that when the curtain opened, not to let him come out immediately, because they first had to get their cameras positioned just right.

Finally, he and his sister, Jean Smith, arrived, and it was pandemonium. They were still doing construction at the Kennedy Center. People were working backstage and higher up in the building, doing all kinds of activities; workmen were going every different way. It was not exactly a serene environment. In fact, when he came backstage, there was absolutely no place for him to be, except for a little booth that controlled lighting. It was a very small room that looked like a big closet with no room for chairs, so he and Jean went in and stood there. He was flipping through the speech on the 5x8 cards, familiarizing himself with it.

The speech was about new efforts to influence human behavior, and one of the dignitaries at the speech was B.F. Skinner, the famous psychologist, who was slated to receive an award from the Kennedy Foundation. It was a check for $15,000 or $25,000, something like that. Skinner had a psychological theory about controlling a subject's conditioned response for behavior modification and had built special "Skinner boxes." Archibald MacLeish, the poet, who had been Librarian of Congress, had written a poem that I had quoted in Kennedy's speech. A couple of lines in it related to the Skinner-type thing. "You're not a man. / You're a rat in a vat of rewards and punishments." There was stuff like that in the speech.

Jean was now hearing it for the first time, while she was standing in this little room with Ted. She said, "Teddy, you can't say that. You can't go out there and actually say that." And he said, "Well, it's—" "No, no, you can't do that." I heard her saying that, so I came in. I said, "No, no, you have to say that. This is the kind of audience that appreciates quotes like that and this is really what you need to say." She said, "No, no, no, you can't possibly do that." She's trying to tear down the speech, they're arguing back and forth, and he's saying, "Well, you know—" I said, "Look, this is the right audience and you should do it."

While they were arguing away, I walked over to the podium at which he was going to stand. For some reason I decided to move it over on the stage. I moved the podium over, maybe about ten feet. As soon as I had moved the podium, there was this enormous, deafening crash, like an explosion. You would have thought a bomb had dropped or something. Don't forget, I had not slept since 2:00 A.M. or so the previous day. You'd get a little jarred by these things. I heard this enormous crash and saw a huge slab of concrete, maybe about three feet wide, lying on the stage, somewhat splattered. Some of it went through—pieces went out under the curtain. My wife was sitting in the first row, and a piece of it came under the curtain and landed in her lap. It was a splattering thing. I see this huge piece of concrete right where the podium had been before I moved it.

My first thought was that it was an attempt to assassinate Ted. With all the threats he kept getting, this was not an unreasonable supposition. I knew the concrete came from above. Backstage they had these ladders against the wall, absolutely straight against the wall, not on an angle. I started racing up this ladder, which was pretty high. From outside, you see this big, flat building, but it's pretty high in there. It seemed like I went up about three levels, racing up. I don't know what I thought I was going to do if there were assassins, but I didn't think. I just went racing up there. Then I saw this bunch of guys pouring concrete. They were doing some building there and it was a total accident. It wasn't anything aimed at Teddy, but I was just so overwrought; my heart was racing, I hadn't had sleep. I was absolutely out of breath and finally I saw them, and they explained to me what they were doing. I threw them off the floor, told them to stop everything they were doing. I chased all the workmen off that floor, then went down this ladder. Incidentally, I don't like heights, and I'm all out of breath.

This next part is hard to believe, but it's the exact truth. As I reached the bottom of the ladder, there was a man standing there with a small cannon, about three feet long and about a foot wide. He was standing with it pointing more or less in the direction of the booth in which Ted and Jean were arguing. At that point, I almost lost it. If you've ever seen any of those old [Federico] Fellini movies, which are surreal—And I was without sleep. I had pumped myself with caffeine and had had plenty of beer the night before, so I thought I was going out of my mind.

I went racing over to him and exclaimed, "What's going on?" Then Sarge Shriver came running up and said, "It's all right, Ellis. It's OK, it's OK." I said, "What's happening?" He said that in order for us to get free use of the Eisenhower Theater, we had had to agree to let them test the acoustics. The way to test the acoustics of a new theater is to fire off these little cannons. There's no shell in it; it's just the gunpowder. By this time, I thought I was going crazy, totally, but at least I knew they weren't trying to kill Ted. We let the guy with the cannon go. The curtain was still drawn. By this time, the audience, the 1,200 people, have all filed in and are inside, and they don't know what the hell is going on. Things are running late; we should have started already and it hasn't started; and all of a sudden, there's this tremendous boom, as the cannon goes off. That would be bad enough, but it created an *enormous* amount of smoke. The smoke was filling the stage and some of it was billowing out under the curtain. They fired it three times, in some way measuring the acoustics when they did that. By this time, it was total madness. The smoke was flying around and everything. At that point, someone pulled the curtains and they opened.

Ted was about to rush out to the podium when I remembered that the TV people had told me he shouldn't come out right away; they had to set their cameras. I said, "Wait a minute. Wait here," and Sarge Shriver came over to me and almost punched me in the face. He said, "What do you mean, 'Wait a minute?' You can't wait. He has to get out there." Ted went out with these 5x8 cards; by now, it was about half an hour after when they should have started. He got out there, looked out through the smoke at the audience, and said: "You know, we're running late and there's been all of this extra activity here, and I'm not going to give the speech." He put the cards down and said, "I want to welcome you all, and we're going to get going right into our various panel discussions." And so what I viewed as a wonderful, eloquent speech was never given.

Knott: That must have felt good to you, huh? How did you react?

Mottur: Let me go on, the day isn't over. Don't forget, this is the morning, on Saturday, and the symposium has just begun. It was going to go on all day. I realized I had to immediately rush out to the front, where we had this stack of press releases on a table with our secretaries, and stop them from being disseminated, because you can't release a speech that you didn't give. I had them throw away all the press releases.

I then went around with him during the day to the various events. One was a seminar that B.F. Skinner gave. He sat through that, listening to Skinner explain what, in my view, is a pretty crazy approach to things. By that night, I still hadn't slept and we were supposed to give out the awards. Ted had to sign the checks to give the awards. A cocktail party was going on for all the recipients, and we were standing in the hallway, in a little stairwell. I had my attaché case with the checks on top of it, and he said, "I'm not going to sign this check to Skinner. I listened to that thing, and he's crazy. I don't want to give him this money." I said, "You have to give it to him, it's already been announced." He reluctantly signed the check to Skinner, and we went into the cocktail party.

The one good thing *I* got out of it was that in the cocktail party, I spent a half hour talking one-on-one with Mother Teresa. She was the most incredible presence of any human being I've ever met. She just emanated saintliness, and it was wonderful. There were all these other dignitaries there, but I managed to corner her. But you know, if someone asks, "Did you ever meet Mother Teresa?" I say, "Oh yes, in a cocktail party." That's not exactly what you would think of with Mother Teresa.

One other aside there. That was one of the perks of working with Ted over the years—you met the most incredible people.

Knott: Yes, sure.

Mottur: It ranged all the way from Mother Teresa to movie actors like Elizabeth Taylor and Robert Redford. I once spent a wonderful long weekend as his houseguest out at Sundance, and went horseback riding. You get to meet all these people, Nobel Laureates and, of course, Presidents and Governors. I remember Jimmy Carter wandering through in the winter of '76, in January, saying, "I'm going to run for President." He came in and shook our hands. It's a nice side effect.

The bottom line was the symposium was a great success. It launched the worldwide dialogue on the difficult bioethical issues that have become so much more pervasive over the 35 years since that symposium, so it was a watershed event. But in that process—and this gets to the question you started to ask me before—there was an enormous amount of staff time, not just mine, but all the secretaries coming in and everything, that resulted in everything being tossed in the wastepaper basket.

While it isn't usually as extreme or dramatic as that event, that kind of thing happens when you're working in the Congress, because in Congress, you have 535 independent power centers. They're all doing their own thing. Leadership tries to channel it. Somebody once said, "Leadership in the Senate is like herding a bunch of wild cats." People are doing their own thing, so you never can predict. Plus, there are external events always impinging on you, to which you have to react. Very frequently, you put an enormous amount of effort into something that's very worthwhile, but then have to toss it away. In the Kennedy operation, the key thing, the spirit of it, was to move on to the next thing. You didn't complain; you didn't express regrets. I never said to him, "Damn it! Why the hell did that happen?" I just went right to the next thing. It's hard to convey, but that's the Kennedy mode of operation. It first started with Jack Kennedy, and all of the others have followed it. You immediately focus on the next constructive thing you can do. You don't sit there crying about the things that go down.

That was in mid-October. On November 9th, we held a hearing that Kennedy chaired, examining a proposal to establish a national advisory commission on health science and society. It was a resolution introduced by Senator Fritz [Walter] Mondale, which dealt with genetic engineering, cloning, test tube babies, human experimentation, and so forth. That was the first hearing on that issue that we held. We didn't get it enacted at that time, but later in the decade, it finally was established, so this symposium was the beginning. I felt it was a very successful event, although somewhat frustrating, and I slept a lot afterwards.

Knott: I'll bet you did.

Mottur: You have to be young to work on these kinds of things. You really do. One reason I didn't stay in the [William Jefferson] Clinton White House after the campaign and transition was because I knew what these things are like. I was too old for it. That's why I wanted to go to the Commerce Department and run some separate thing, rather than be in a constant frenzy—not that I envisioned all the craziness that would envelop the Clinton White House, but I knew it would be hectic.

It's interesting about the hearing we had on that national advisory commission. It was a very successful hearing. All the testimony was good and everything went beautifully. After it, Ted was very irate at me and I couldn't figure out why. If the hearing went so well, why was he testy with me? I remember I turned to Eunice, who was there, and asked, "Why is Ted acting like that? I thought this went so well." She said, "Ellis, you haven't done that many hearings for him. He has to have that cushion at his back when he's sitting in the seat or else he's in constant pain throughout the hearing." I didn't know that and I didn't have the cushion there, so he was sitting in pain throughout this whole thing, when I was thinking to myself how well this is going.

Another little thing about Eunice, which ties into all that, happened around that time. She had just had a dinner at her place for a bunch of top scientists, including the president of the National Academy of Sciences and a number of Nobel Laureates. She called the next morning to talk to Ted, and tell him about this dinner. He wasn't there, so she asked for me. I got on the phone and she was telling me all about this. Then she said, "They were all so brilliant, and we discussed all the issues and everything, but you know, Ellis, I wonder if they really *care*, if they really care about things." Then she said, "Ellis, do you care?" And I said, "Eunice, if I didn't care, do you think I'd be doing this for your brother?" She said, "No, I guess you do care." That's what the Kennedys are all about, really caring.

This was all before the *Washington Post* story about the Cincinnati Hospital and the whole-body radiation of terminally ill cancer patients. Ted's investigation of this subsequently led to the Human Experimentation Amendment to the 1972 Defense Appropriations Act.

Another item omitted from discussion of Ted's accomplishments in his role of overseeing the National Science Foundation was his leadership establishing NSF's program on small business innovation research in 1977. Until then, NSF had given research funds only to academic and not-for-profit organizations, but small-business firms often are the most innovative elements in the economy, and there are many of them in Massachusetts.

Knott: Right.

Mottur: He sponsored this program of innovation in small-business firms, which was an unusual thing for NSF. This program later served as a basis for the Small Business Administration adopting the program under a law that was passed in 1982, the Small Business Innovation Development Act. That law was primarily sponsored by Republican Senator Warren Rudman, because the Senate had gone Republican when [Ronald] Reagan came in, and Kennedy no longer could shepherd it through. He gave significant support to it and it was originally his idea, but Rudman was the lead person at that point. Kennedy was happy to take a secondary role, because his concern was making it happen, not getting credit for it.

As an illustration of how Washington sometimes works, or doesn't work, in the Rose Garden signing ceremony for that bill, Reagan did not include Kennedy in the group of legislators who stood with him while they photographed him signing it, even though Ted was sitting in the first row and even though the idea had emanated from him. I don't think Reagan personally did that. I think it was some vindictiveness on the part of his staff, a clear snub, but Ted didn't mind.

I would like to emphasize the role of trust in the Kennedy organization. In the first interview, I mentioned how Harvard Law professor Abe Chayes's trust in Dan Fenn had led to my involvement in Jack Kennedy's 1960 campaign, and later how Dave Hackett, Bobby's old friend—His similar trust in Dan Fenn led to my position in Bobby's 1968 campaign. Because of that level of trust, there's no need for any further vetting of one's credentials or character or loyalty to the Kennedys. If another person whom you know and trust says something is OK, you do it. That enables you to operate much more rapidly than the cumbersome, bureaucratic

processes that sometimes people go through. The point I wanted to make is that that same level of trust operates on Capitol Hill.

In the fast-moving action of the Senate, you frequently have little or no time to check information given to you by others, so your word, and the word of others, is extremely important. In my case, whenever I would become aware that a staff member of some other Senator had either misstated something or even subtly shaded the meaning of something to gain a short-term objective, I never trusted that person again. It's critical. I wanted to give an illustration of how, because of trust, you can accomplish things.

This took place in 1974, when the Senate passed the national science policy legislation of Kennedy's. It wasn't finally enacted into law until '76, but in '74 we did pass a bill in the Senate. It was three weeks before the session ended in 1974, and I suddenly saw an opportunity because—and this shows the interplay of politics with policy—of the way Congress operates.

Senator Peter Dominick, a very conservative Republican from Colorado, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee on science that Ted chaired, was facing a very difficult election. He was very interested in one particular program. He thought it would be good for each of the states to have what he called a state science program to help states make science more available to stimulate their own economies, to help stimulate innovation and activity in their economies. They would all have their own state science advisor and a committee, and some programs like that. He thought that would help him in the election.

First, I don't mean to denigrate him. He believed that was a good program, but he also thought it would help him in his election, which was tough. When I saw how much he cared about that, I realized we could get him to go along with what we wanted, in terms of science policy, if we gave him that. I gave Ted a memo on a Friday afternoon, and pointed out that there were only three weeks left in the session. It was a very unusual thing, because the legislation would have to be considered by three separate full committees of the Senate: Kennedy's committee, which was then called Labor and Public Welfare, but is now called HELP—health, education, labor, and pensions; the Space Committee, which handled the space program; and the Commerce Committee. All three of those committees had to separately approve legislation in three weeks.

It wasn't as complicated as some things; it wasn't one of these thousand-page bills, but it's still incredible to get three committees to do something. But with Dominick wanting it that much, I thought I could pull it off. I wrote Ted a memo saying that we had this opportunity. If we could give this to Dominick and write a quick bill, I thought, somehow we could do this. I remember, in the margin he wrote, "Go, go, go." I had to redraft the bill, then get the people on each of those committees to agree to it, and go through all this. As we came to the final week—by that time I had gotten pretty much agreement on it—we then had a hearing, because you have to have a hearing before you do these things, too. By this time, the press was beginning to wonder. They said, "What's going on here? You're not trying to actually get this through? You only have another week left."

The key thing, in operating in the Congress, is you always have to be totally honest, but that doesn't mean you have to be frank. I once had a Harvard Business School professor who gave us

that in a lecture. He said, "There's a big difference between honesty and frankness. You don't have to tell everything to people. You should always be honest, never tell a lie, and tell what's exactly true, but you can leave some things out."

The press came to me and said, "Are you going to get that through?" I said, "How can you possibly get something through with only a week or so left? Can you imagine that happening?" I didn't say we weren't going to do it.

Knott: Right.

Mottur: I turned the question around on them.

We had the hearing one morning. We convened an immediate markup of our subcommittee just standing off the Senate floor. Right after the hearing, we got them all in a huddle and quickly got the vote out of them. We then polled the full committee by phone, called each office and got them to agree to the whole thing. I then had my counterparts on the other two committees do a similar thing. Before we knew it, we had the bill going to the floor of the Senate, but it was now the last day of the session. It got on the floor and we were going to try to pass it by unanimous consent.

Of course, it was a bipartisan bill and had Republican sponsorship. But in the Senate, one Senator can block anything, and this is where the trust comes in. It turned out that one of our *Democratic* Senators, William Proxmire, blocked it. The reason he blocked it was he thought it would be a huge spending bill. He was a very strong advocate of not spending too lavishly on things. It really wasn't a big spending bill, but had been in an earlier incarnation. This was an evolution of the bill we had first passed in 1972, which had been well over $1 billion at that time. He put a hold on it because of his concern. It was late in the day and I went rushing in to his appropriations staff person and asked, "Why is he holding it?" He said, "He's worried about the money." I said, "Take my word for it, it won't hurt on the money, take the hold off." He trusted me and Proxmire's hold was lifted, so we passed the bill in three weeks, from scratch. It illustrates how you operate in those matters.

Knott: Sure.

Mottur: While effectiveness in the Senate depends on characteristics like trust, it also requires that you be very practical in terms of what you can realistically achieve. As an illustration, one afternoon, Senators Kennedy and Mondale and I were walking from the Capitol to the Russell Senate Office Building, following some Senate discussion of problems with public education. Fritz Mondale turned to Ted and said, "Ted, I've figured out how to make all the nation's public schools first-rate." Ted, very skeptically, looked at him and inquired, "Fritz, how are you going to do something like that?" Fritz said, "It's simple. All you have to do is abolish all private schools. The people who had been sending their children to the private schools would make damn well sure that the public school system became first-rate." Ted smiled wryly, looked at him, and said, "Fritz, I think I'll let you get out in front on that one." You have to be practical, too, as well as have trust, but I always thought that was amusing.

Knott: Yes.

Mottur: I'm now picking up back with OTA [Office of Technology Assessment], which I covered in our last interview. An amusing incident illustrates the dedicated determination that Ted would instill in the people working for him.

The Office of Technology Assessment had a Congressional board, which oversaw its operations, of which Ted was chairman, called the Technology Assessment Board. We were going to have the first public meeting of the board. OTA was a big, new thing in Congress, so all the network television was there and the room was crammed with media and people waiting to see this thing. It was held—because OTA was a joint Senate/House entity—over in the Capitol, in a room called EF-100, which is not very large. It's not as large as many of the hearing rooms, so it was absolutely packed. I had had staff set up where the Senators would be sitting, leaving room behind for staff people to the various Senators and Congressmen to sit, with the chairs behind it.

The director of OTA, former Congressman Emilio Daddario, wanted to control the meeting. There was tension between him and the Congressional board. Having been a prominent Congressman before, he didn't like the role of being beholden to a bunch of other members. He viewed himself as an equal. He wanted to control the flow of information in the situation so that he could run the meeting the way he wanted it to run. He wasn't seated at the table with them. He was going to be testifying to them about the office.

While I went to get Ted to come over to the meeting, Daddario had his staff come and rearrange the room from how I had arranged it. There were chairs behind the Senators and Congressmen, and they moved them all out and moved the tables back, closer to the wall, so there was no room to put chairs behind the Senators anymore. Mim—that's what we called Emilio Daddario—thought this would stop the staff from interfering with how he wanted to do things, but the Kennedy staff doesn't get deterred very easily.

When I came in and saw the room, and realized what he had done, I figured I'd have to stand behind him. There was no room for a chair, but I would stand. I was standing behind him, and there were all these cameras and media. Ted had a very strong desire that staff were not to be singled out. For instance, when I would give an interview, I'd generally be anonymous. I would never give my name.

Knott: Yes, sure.

Mottur: There was a big article written about the legislation I did, where I was the key person doing the whole thing, and I was the only person who refused to give a picture to the *National Journal*. They had zillions of pictures of everyone else, but because of the way he operated. I wouldn't allow my picture to be used. That's the way it should be, because the focus should be on the Senator. It's important for his political capital, which he needs to accomplish his goals.

For this meeting, I was standing behind him, with all these cameras on him. It dawned on him that I was standing there, so, he put his hand back and motioned with it going down, for me to get down—not that I'm exactly very tall. At that time, I was about 5′5″, and I've shrunk an inch

since. [*laughter*] He motions for me to get down. There wasn't any room there. If I got down on my knees, there wasn't enough room between the back of his chair and the wall for me to kneel facing forward. I'm not very bulky, but I still couldn't do it. The only way I could do it was to kneel sideways with his back perpendicular to the way I was facing.

I did that. I kneeled, and if I had to talk to him or give him a note, I would do it. It was working fine, but naturally my knees got tired. I would then shift and get on the other knee and face in the other direction, and try that for a while. I'm sure Mim Daddario was steaming throughout this, and no other staff had come back, because there were no chairs. Mo [Morris] Udall, who was the ranking Democratic member of the House on this board, was seated next to Ted. Mo has this wonderful sense of humor. He wrote a note to me, while I kept shifting my position, kneeling in different directions, "Ellis, I didn't know you had taken the vows for the priesthood." That's the year, actually, that Mo was running for President. I thought if he had ever gotten in, I'd frame that note.

Knott: Absolutely.

Mottur: But the point is, on the Kennedy staff, you have to be dedicated to doing what you have to do, and whatever it takes to do, you find a way to do it.

Talking about his building political capital and not letting the focus be on the staff, when you're on the Senate floor, they have chairs for the staff, when you happen to be sitting with a Senator. There are couches in the back, but if you're right with the Senator, you get these chairs. The only thing is, they're made for kindergarten students. They're extremely low chairs, and I'm low to start with. What Ted would do, whenever a lot of people would come into the gallery above, he'd give me that motion with the hand, that I should crouch down even lower on this little stool thing.

It seemed silly, but it is important, because political capital gives them the ability to accomplish things. It's similar to a business firm that invests capital in plant and equipment, so it can produce various things. The Senators and Congressmen invest political capital in issues, which they can then deal with effectively. Many people don't understand this, which was one reason I showed you that particular photo of Ted with Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and Senator Barry Goldwater and me, where he wrote that comment on the side, "To Ellis, who keeps science policy and me out in front." I had a friend come to the house once who saw that and said, "My gosh, Kennedy must be so conceited, because he wants to keep himself out in front." Many people just don't understand; it's exactly similar to investing capital in a business firm. They have to do that. I thought my friend's remark was a very telling comment as to the public's lack of understanding of what it takes to shape public policy.

Another thing that occurred during the OTA years illustrates the functioning of the Kennedy organization, more back in Massachusetts than in the national things I've been talking about. This was on Labor Day Weekend.

I had been vacationing on Cape Cod with my wife and my young son. I had a VW [Volkswagen] at the time. We had just gotten off the Cape, and my car started steaming up and all kinds of

smoke was coming out of it. It was inoperable. We weren't in town; we were on a major highway going by Fall River, Massachusetts. Here I am, on Labor Day, with an inoperable car, packed to the hilt with all our belongings. We'd been up there for a couple of weeks, with the wife and kid, and what do you do on Labor Day? Well, it was Massachusetts, so I got on the phone, and called the woman who was at that time the head of Ted's Boston office, Mary Frackleton.

Knott: Oh, sure. We've interviewed her.

Mottur: I called Mary and said, "Mary, it's Labor Day, here I am, my car is full, what do I do?" She said, "Ellis, don't worry about a thing. Write this phone number down." She gave me a name of a person and said, "Call that number and ask for him, tell him you're with Kennedy, and don't worry about anything." I called this guy. I didn't know who he was, but he said, "Don't worry about anything, I'll be right there." He came driving out in his car, loaded up his car with all our possessions, and took us. A tow truck came out from a guy who had opened his garage on Labor Day, and took my car into his garage. He said, "They'll have it ready next weekend, so don't worry about anything. Why don't I drive you to Providence, Rhode Island, so you can get an airplane to get back to Washington?" I said, "Gee, that's so nice of you." He drove us to Providence Airport and there was time before the flight to have dinner, so I figured I'd buy him dinner. We had a nice dinner, then he grabbed the bill and insisted on paying for it. I went back the next week and got my car.

He was the vice mayor of Fall River. The point is, every town and hamlet in Massachusetts has a guy like that. The Kennedy organization is really an organization. Whenever I'm in Massachusetts, I feel at home. You don't worry about anything.

I'll tell you another story about Mary Frackleton. I don't know if she told you this in her interview, but Mary is a very devout Irish woman, who adores the Kennedys, and disbelieved the negative stories about some of his alleged personal escapades. She didn't believe any of that junk. At one point, she encountered a woman somewhere—I'm giving you my secondhand version of it—who started telling her about an affair she had had with Ted Kennedy. She talked about it in minute detail, and gave exactly where it was and when it was, every single aspect of it. Mary, again, had never believed any of these kinds of things about Ted.

This story was so graphic and detailed that Mary was shaken and felt that her faith in Ted had been undermined somehow. She told Eddie Martin, the AA, "I'm going to resign. I'm not going to work for him anymore, when I hear something like that." Eddie said, "Wait a minute, Mary. Before you jump to conclusions, let's try to investigate it." They got all the various records and it turned out that he wasn't within 1,000 miles of the place she was talking about at the time. The woman had made the whole thing up. It was abundantly clear that there wasn't a shred of truth in the story. The woman had made up that story. Of course, Mary then stayed. It illustrates how many crazy people are in our society. So many of these tales are just outrageous.

It's a totally different thing, but during Watergate, I remember it came out in the public record that the Nixon people had been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to put investigators on Ted, when he traveled. They never found anything, and they put a big

investment into it. That doesn't prove there never was anything, but it sure wasn't as pervasive as people purported it to be. All I can speak to are these couple of incidences.

One other thing I left out earlier came after I had been discussing [Newton] Gingrich's elimination of OTA and before I discussed what I did in the [Michael] Dukakis Presidential campaign.

During Ted's Presidential campaign against Jimmy Carter in late 1979, I drafted a major speech that Ted gave to a Wall Street audience, setting forth his proposals for government incentive programs to stimulate private-sector technological innovation. The focus of the speech was on incentives for the private sector. The headlines the next morning in the New York papers said that Ted Kennedy took a hard, right turn on his drive from the airport to Wall Street, because he was talking about these incentives. This is because of the caricature that the media and his enemies sometimes make of him, that he's only interested in big-government, liberal programs. It neglects the fact that he led the way on deregulation of the airline industry and the trucking industry, and was an early advocate of small-business innovation programs, giving them incentives. While he clearly deserves the appellation of "Liberal Lion," he also fully appreciates the role of incentives in a free-enterprise society, and has done significant things on that.

[BREAK]

Mottur: I've now completed covering all the things I had inadvertently skipped or didn't have in my first interview. I'm now picking up from right after I discussed the 1992 Presidential campaign. During the Presidential transition, I continued as deputy political director for the business and high-tech constituencies.

Knott: This was the transition of '92?

Mottur: Ninety-two, yes. That campaign, Bill Clinton's '92 campaign, was definitely the most fun you could imagine. Of course, we won, but the campaign itself was thrilling, exciting, and fun. The transition was, I think, the worst thing I ever experienced in my life. It is so horrible to go through a Presidential transition. Everybody in the country wants a job in Washington. I was supposed to vet the jobs for people from the business community and from science and technology and was overwhelmed. It was this huge number, and everyone was calling their Senators and Congressmen, "You have to do this," and "You have to do that," and people were grabbing and clawing their way here. No one knows what kinds of jobs they're going to get in the administration. I never worried, because I already had a personal relationship with both Hillary and Bill Clinton, and [Albert] Gore, too. I didn't care how I wound up. I knew it would be something good. But people who didn't know were clawing to somehow show what they had done. It was horrible.

Right after the transition, I was on the White House staff for some months, until I got my appointment at the Commerce Department. Over at Commerce, I was responsible for international trade in all the high-tech industries: aerospace, telecommunications, computers,

software, medical technology, semiconductors, all of that. Later, I was responsible for trade development across all U.S. industries. It was in that later period that I worked with Northern Ireland.

Knott: Correct. Was Ron Brown the Secretary?

Mottur: Ron was the Secretary when I first stared, then he died in that terrible crash, on a trip on which he had invited me to accompany him. The only reason I wasn't on that plane was that I was already committed to leading a trade mission to Turkey and Egypt at the same time. It was all committed and I couldn't go with him, otherwise, I would have been killed, too. Ron was the first Secretary, then Mickey Kantor came in for about a year, after Ron's death. Mickey is very close to Clinton. Mickey *hated* being Secretary of Commerce. He's not a guy who likes to administer big things, that's not his forte. He's a wonderful guy. He took that job for a year, but didn't enjoy it. After him, Bill Daley came in, and he enjoyed it, although he wasn't quite ready for it when he came in. His first speeches left something to be desired, but he became much better as he learned. I remember a later speech he gave when we were on a trip to Northern Ireland that was absolutely spellbinding. To be suddenly thrust into the public spotlight like that, you might not be ready for it, but he grew in the job and enjoyed his time there. When he left, Norm Mineta came in, a wonderful guy, and was Secretary at the end. I went through four Secretaries of Commerce.

One of my special responsibilities was for economic development in Northern Ireland, which would be a spur to the peace process, and which is very close to Ted's heart, of course. That assignment actually meant more to me personally than anything else I did in the eight years of the administration. It was much more rewarding to be doing something like that.

Actually, the thing that meant the most to me was just a simple little thing. There was a terrorist massacre in the city of Omagh, which is not in Northern Ireland, but is right at the northern part of the Republic of Ireland, and many schoolchildren were murdered, killed in the explosions there. I convinced Michael Dell, the head of Dell Computers, to donate 100 computers—and all the accessories, the printers, and other kinds of equipment, plus all the software to go with 100 computers—to those schools in Omagh, so the kids who survived would have the opportunity to learn some skills and have something to work for.

It's a little thing, but when you can do something like that. . . . So many of the things that I did were abstract, in terms of major programs, but when you can do something special like that, that you know a lot of kids are going to get something tangible out of, it's really rewarding. That was the most fun of anything I did there. The people in Ireland are so wonderful, despite everything they have gone through, all the terror and the killings and everything. They call it "The Troubles."

Knott: Yes.

Mottur: They have this wonderful sense of humor. It's hard for Americans to understand these tremendous hatreds that go back centuries. In all the conversations I had there, people would say, "Well, 800 years ago, they did this and this." They live with that.

I remember Tom Hayden, the guy who was a leader of the left-wing activities in the 1960s and married to Jane Fonda for a stretch, then was a Senator in the California State Senate. He was taking a personal interest in Northern Ireland, and had written a number of books on it, so he took me on a personal tour of Belfast. There's one cemetery there, an old cemetery. Many years ago, the Protestants and the Catholics were both buried in it, but they were buried at different sides of it. During The Troubles, in recent years, they dug a deep, deep trench down the middle of the cemetery and poured concrete down it so that, over the decades and centuries to come, the remains of the bodies won't ever mingle.

That is so absurd and yet shows you the depths of the animosity. In Derry, or as the Protestants call it, Londonderry, I brought together the community leaders of both sides, the Catholics and the Protestants, and had them meet at the airport. Neither would go into the other side of the city, into the neighborhoods that belonged to the others. You look at the Iraq or Palestine situations, which are even much worse, but it's bad enough in Ireland. It's hard for Americans to understand it, because we all find a way to live together here. We don't realize how unique it is to have that pervasive, perpetual animosity.

Knott: Right. That's right.

Mottur: Back to that Irish thing. I, of course, let Ted know what I was up to, and stayed in close touch with his staff on it.

Knott: Do you recall hearing much from his staff on any Ireland-related issues?

Mottur: I'm slipping on her name. I forget the young woman who was handling Irish issues.

Knott: It wasn't Trina Vargo?

Mottur: Yes, Trina, that's who I stayed in touch with. She was very knowledgeable, so I would pick her brain on different things and get her advice. It wasn't something I had dealt with over the years.

Knott: Sure.

Mottur: I invited her to some meetings I had. The other fun thing was that I got to catch up with Jean Kennedy Smith, then Ambassador to Dublin. We were reminiscing about the time she tried to get me to pull the plug on the opera singer, Patrice Munsel, when Ted was giving the speech at the American Chemical Society.

Knott: You told us about this, yes.

Mottur: That was fun. What I was doing was trying to get American companies to invest in Ireland and build more trade. I did get to know Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, and David Trimble and, of course, John Hume. I got to know all those people. About a year or so ago, a delegation from Ian Paisley's group, that very extreme Protestant group, came to the Woodrow

Wilson International Center for Scholars and had a session. I was in that session and met with them. I prepared a briefing on it. I summarized it for Teddy, so he would know what they were thinking at that time. The bottom line was, I didn't see that they were likely to compromise in the near future. Paisley is intransigent, absolutely intransigent.

Knott: Right, right.

Mottur: They were trying to put on a better face with the Americans, but it was pretty clear they weren't going to do anything. There wasn't much interaction with him on this, just a little bit.

After the attacks of 9-11, Ted asked me to see whether it might be possible to resurrect OTA, which was defunded in 1995 by Newt Gingrich. He thought there might be an opportunity—not just an opportunity, but a real need—for OTA to be revived for Congress. Dealing with terrorism and homeland security, there are so many technologies, new technologies, for discerning damages—like are there liquid explosives in luggage or whatever—and new ways of identifying people through looking at their retinas, all kinds of sophisticated technologies for identifying people and detecting explosives. OTA would have been *extremely* useful.

Ted asked me to see if I could figure out a way to get OTA resurrected. I went to Lee Hamilton, president and director of the Woodrow Wilson Center, and who chaired just about every commission established. He's a wonderful guy, and gave me an appointment as a public policy scholar at the center. I wrote a report titled, "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security: The Role of OTA." I tried to show that there would be a tremendous need for Congress to have an organization like that, that was totally nonpartisan and objective, could evaluate all these technological things, and give guidance on what we could do in those areas. The report also showed that OTA still technically existed, because Gingrich didn't get a law passed to *abolish* OTA; he just stopped appropriating money for it.

The law still exists. There is an OTA and under the law, the Technology Assessment Board still exists, and Ted is still technically a member. They haven't met in 11 years, and no one's about to meet, because they can't do anything, but on paper, the thing exists. I thought that maybe we could get a small appropriation, a $1 million appropriation, that could be used to survey the committees of the House and Senate in terms of the needs they would have for this kind of research on homeland security and terrorism technologies. That would find out what the real needs were and would build political support for reestablishing it.

Ted wrote a letter. In addition, Fritz [Ernest F.] Hollings, who had been chair of the Commerce Committee—Let's see, it was Ted and Fritz, then Orrin Hatch and [Charles E.] Grassley, because the four of them had all been members of the OTA board. They signed a joint letter, which I drafted, that was addressed to Senator [Robert] Byrd, who was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and to Ted Stevens, who was the ranking Republican then, to try to get them to put $1 million into the Appropriation Bill and then negotiate with the House to try to get OTA going again. We thought, with that lineup, that we'd stand a chance on it, but it was late in the session and things happen behind closed doors. Somehow, it just didn't fly.

Meanwhile, the scientific community wanted to get it going. I had a session with Jack Gibbons, the former science advisor to President Clinton, who had been the director of OTA. He said the science community wanted so much to do this, and we decided that if we did well in the 2004 election, that we would then make another concerted effort on it. What happened in the 2004 election was that the Democrats got an even worse situation, and it seemed that there was no way to revive OTA in that kind of a setting. Of course, now we have control of the Congress.

Knott: Yes, what are the odds?

Mottur: Somebody asked me about it the other day, and my feeling is that at this point in time, I wouldn't go for it. It would be wonderful to have it, but I think right now, the Democrats should go for the really pressing issues. They need to build up with the public things that will affect the public right away, that people can understand, number one. Number two, they don't want to get into unnecessary battles with the Republicans. That's also going to happen. It's going to happen as the Congress goes on. I don't think this is the propitious time. In a while, it might come up, but right now, I'm not advising it.

To summarize the comments I made in both interviews, for over two decades, Ted was the leading voice in the Senate to strengthen the nation's scientific and political enterprise, and to more effectively apply it to the betterment of society, the enhancement of the environment, and the health of its citizens. He was pivotal in the restructuring and strengthening of the National Science Foundation, bolstering the National Institutes of Health, and while always providing strong support for basic research, he was key in promoting programs that applied science and technology to meeting national needs, and providing incentives for innovative small-business enterprises.

At the same time, he played a key role in promoting science and technical education, improving the skills of the American workforce, and enhancing opportunities for women and minorities in science and engineering careers. He also facilitated the establishment of the National Advisory Commission on Health Science and Society, and was critical in sponsoring environmentally sound energy alternatives.

As the Senate author of the Technology Assessment Act and the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act, he established and oversaw the Office of Technology Assessment's 23-year record of providing Congress with objective, nonpartisan assessments on policy issues involving science and technology. He was pivotal in creating the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, which has provided significant input to national decision making on science and technology issues for the past 30 years. Although he was an indifferent science student in his youth, as a Senator, he early on appreciated the great potential of science and technology, not only for national security, but for economic development, the enhancement of the environment, and the quality of life and health of all our citizens.

My time in Little Rock, Arkansas, during the '92 Presidential campaign, traveling with Clinton, then to the White House and Commerce Department during his administration, all were exciting, wonderful years, but they still don't compare to the multitude of achievements and all the great

fun that I had working with Ted Kennedy over the years. I'd like to summarize my thoughts about him as a person.

Knott: Sure.

Mottur: Ted is not only a great Senator, but he's a great human being, who has gone through tremendous trials and tribulations over the course of nearly three quarters of a century. The qualities I most admire and love him for are his deep compassion for and dedication to helping those who most need help; his optimistic faith that ideals can infuse practical political action; his passionate commitment to the Constitution and the guiding principles of the American Republic; his hard work ethic, combined with a pervasive sense of humor, so that working with him was always fun, regardless of the incredibly intense pressures involved; his always seeking the widest range of points of view and inputs to an issue, so that he could understand its substance before considering the political factors involved; his persistent determination to pursue constructive action, regardless of what obstacles he encountered; and his ability to work with Republicans and conservatives to achieve meaningful compromises.

For example, over the years, in the things in which I was involved, I watched him work with Jack [Jacob] Javits, Dick Schweiker, Peter Dominick, Orrin Hatch, Alan Simpson, and Mark Hatfield. While I wasn't involved with it, he's recently been working with John McCain, and of course he was working with George W. Bush on the No Child Left Behind legislation. Whatever the provocation, Ted Kennedy always refused to stoop to ad hominem attacks.

One thing that meant so much to me is the fact that he always made me feel comfortable to speak my mind to him, fully and freely. On those few occasions we did disagree on something, I always felt free to argue vehemently with him. Above all else, I will always be deeply indebted to Ted Kennedy, for he gave me the priceless opportunity to make a real difference in helping chart America's adventure into the 21st century.

That concludes my notes, so if there are things that have come up or questions or anything.

Knott: Some of the things you've mentioned there in your summary may not be what the folks outside of this room think of when they think of Ted Kennedy. If you listen to talk radio, for instance, you would get a caricature of Ted Kennedy that's not particularly flattering. Why do you think he has become, in some quarters anyway, a polarizing figure? I'm taking you *way* beyond here, but I—If you don't feel comfortable. . . .

Mottur: No, no. I think that's a very crucial thing, and is something I'm very conscious of and have thought of.

Knott: For instance, you mentioned that he can compromise with Republicans.

Mottur: Yes.

Knott: He's done it repeatedly, and yet he's "Mr. Liberal." He's the "Liberal Lion."

Mottur: It's clearly no single thing. It's a mix of things. It goes all the way back to Jack Kennedy. You have to see it all within the context. Jack Kennedy came. He had this wealthy family. He had privilege. He had all this stuff. He fought hard and he did all these things. He was elected President, and there was, somewhat similar to Franklin Roosevelt, a kind of resentment among people with privilege: "Why is he going out and trying to lead for the common man, and not sticking to some of the things we want?" That was the way Roosevelt was excoriated by people for doing that.

You see it more with Bobby Kennedy. Bobby, after Jack's assassination, became so much deeper and so much more introspective, reflective, philosophical, and caring for people so much. He had much more contact with the downtrodden than Jack Kennedy did. When Ted picked up the torch, that has been his life, to stand for people. Many people think he's hypocritical. I get that in comments to me. He's the most sincere, dedicated guy you could find, yet you have people believing that he's just a hypocrite, that he couldn't possibly—That he's doing these things for political gain. You have that whole history.

I think I had talked, in the other interview, about how so many times, walking around with him, when he'd see a person in a wheelchair or something, he didn't care what obligations we had. He would stop and focus and spend time with that person, with no media around, no cameras, nothing to gain out of it, just doing that because he really cares. Many people can't understand and believe that he really cares about these things, that it matters so much to him. They think it's phony.

The other thing, along with that, and I see this a lot with Bill Clinton, but I think it applies to Ted as well, is that there's an industry of right-wing people who put enormous amounts of money into trying to destroy anyone that they view on the liberal side. There are liberal millionaires who put money into politics, like [George] Soros, but you don't find them pouring money into groups that will deliberately try to tear apart another person, which was always done with Bill Clinton, right from the time he became Governor, and has always been done with the Kennedys. There's a whole industry devoted to that.

Also, he lends himself to it, because he is raucous and he is funny, and he'll get out there and yell. It's easy to caricature him. Where was I watching him a few weeks ago? Somewhere on TV, something to do with the election. I don't remember if it was right before he went on or right after he went on, but he was up there just yelling away. I can't remember who followed him, but whoever it was, was so bland by comparison. He enjoys it.

There is that industry to destroy any powerful liberal figure who can change the tax code or something, so the richest people in the country don't just rake it all in, and he lends himself to it by the way he is. Then, he has had these personal problems. When early in his life he presumably did play around, sexually—I assume that, I've never personally seen any evidence of it, but I assume, at some point, it was occurring early on in his years. They can use that against him, too.

The Republicans are much, much better at tearing people apart. On our side, we don't do that. You'll do negative things against somebody you're running against, but it's against the person's positions, not against the person's personality and character. I guess George Allen was torn apart

on his character, but that was his own—he did that himself. I don't think anyone was orchestrating that. He's an easy target.

There's a guiding principle in political combat, that you want to identify some kind of devil, somebody to develop all this hatred for, to propel your base. Ted lends himself to being a target. Contrast him with Hillary Clinton, whom I love. She's wonderful, but there's no way. They can talk about her being cold, which is all bull. She's actually a warm person, but they can't make her into a screamer. She doesn't get up there and scream and rant, but Ted can really get going when he's up there. I don't know how else to answer it.

Lindskog: Have you noticed any changes in the Senator, from his early career to now, his development?

Mottur: The main change, of course, is the growth in his base of knowledge. When I started out with him, there were many things he didn't know. He just didn't have that much experience. He's learned so much and has such a voracious appetite for information, and he integrates it all. He sees the relationships among so many different things. He has a vast background of knowledge now, that's the biggest change that I see. Obviously, there's a change in his physical appearance; I wish for his health that he would lose some weight.

I think I've said this before, in the other interview, his staff operation is much more hierarchical than when I was there, where just a few key people all interacted directly with him. Now, everything funnels substantively much more through Carey Parker, which gives more consistency to everything. People down the line don't have as much direct contact. He certainly likes to get all kinds of views. He loves to get people arguing on both sides of an issue, let them tear at each other, and just hear it. Jack Kennedy and Bobby always wanted to do that; it was their modus operandi. I don't see any other changes.

In terms of the issues, he's deepened. His core beliefs have become clearer and more prominent over the years, but they were always there. They talk about flip-flopping; they use that in politics a lot. I've never seen a flip or a flop on his part anywhere, any time. You know that phrase, "sailing against the wind"? He'll sail against the wind to move toward what he's going for.

One of the big changes was when he finally reconciled himself that he wasn't going to be President of the United States. That was such a sad thing at Chappaquiddick. James Reston wrote a column right after it and said, "This finishes Ted Kennedy as a prospect for the Presidency." I remember at the time, thinking, *How can he say that?* But he was right, it did. But he's done so much more as a great Senator. In the Senate, to last that long, just that number of years, and he's shaped so many different laws. Even take all that I've been talking about; no one knows he's done any of this, mainly because there are so many other things he was doing, that who would have even paid any attention to the issues I was involved in? What happened was, his committee lost jurisdiction of much of the science, then OTA was knocked out, and people forget about these things.

Early on they always used to say he was "just a playboy," and "it's because he has such a bright staff." That's baloney. He always had a bright staff, and still does, but you can't put a bright staff

with a klutz and expect something to happen. The guy running that staff, for whom the staff is working, has to have it.

I have to tell you a funny story. He was so new to all the science issues, he just didn't have the background. The editor of *Physics Today* was going to interview us, and we were going to have lunch together in the Senate dining room. Ted didn't know the issues yet. It was all new to him. I had given him a two- or three-page, single-spaced memo. He and I stood and talked about it for about 15 minutes, then went into the lunch. That was all the preparation he had for it. When it was over, this editor of *Physics Today* said to me, "God, he's so on top of the issues. He knows everything backward and forward." It's because he could not just absorb it, he really understood all the interrelationships of the information in the background memo.

The funniest thing about that lunch was that they had a photographer taking pictures, and he shot 100 shots to get one decent shot. The reason was, Ted was eating some kind of fish, and kept pulling the bones out while he was eating and talking, so every shot had him pulling these bones out of his mouth. [*laughter*]

Knott: You worked for both the Clintons and Senator Kennedy. Can you compare President Clinton with Senator Ted Kennedy?

Mottur: Yes.

Knott: Strengths and weaknesses?

Mottur: Yes. Clinton is more of a genius. Ted is an extremely capable guy, but Clinton is literally a genius. If you measured his mental capacities anywhere, I'm sure any psychologist would put him in the genius range. He's not a genius in everything, because I remember his saying he wasn't that good at math, but he sure as heck is a genius on all the nonquantitative things. That's one difference.

They both have a wonderful way with people. I once said to somebody that Clinton would have been the most wonderful clinical psychologist. This person said, "Like hell he would have. As a clinical psychologist, you have to listen occasionally. You can't just talk all the time." Clinton is much more voluble. He wants to talk, talk, talk all the time, on everything under the sun. Ted keeps things more to himself.

One reason Ted's so good politically is that he never commits himself to anything that he doesn't want to commit himself to. So many politicians make statements, then say, "God, why did I say that?" or their staff says, "How the hell did you say that?" and the media gets on him. That never happens with Ted, never. Look at his career. I can't think of one instance where he made some kind of a blooper in terms of what he talked about on policy or anything else, and that's incredible. That is really incredible. I know what it's like under those pressures, and people are always talking and asking him questions. He has in the Senate, what is it, 44 years? I can't think of one time he ever has done that. One of the reasons is that he doesn't commit himself unless he's really ready.

He has strong commitments once he's made the decision to commit; and he'll fight to the hilt for them, but he doesn't, just to please somebody, say something. On the other hand, he is so good—I have been in meetings with him, where people would walk out and say, "Oh yes, Ted." They felt he was in tune with them on everything they were saying, but he didn't agree to anything specific they said. It's not that he disagreed, but he never committed himself to any of it. He can convey this—which is genuine—real understanding and empathy, but that doesn't mean he agrees with the specifics of what they're saying.

I'm trying to think of contrasts between him and Bill Clinton. Clinton is much more interested in the arcane details of subjects. I wrote this national technology plan for him during the campaign, which was a pivotal thing, that convinced the Republican CEOs in Silicon Valley to support him, then the 700 other CEOs we got supporting him, and then showing the American people he was a different kind of Democrat.

I had worked it out with all the leaders in Silicon Valley: John Young, who was CEO of Hewlett Packard; John Sculley, who was CEO of Apple Computer; and Larry Ellison, who was CEO of Oracle. They were the principal ones, but the others got in on it as well. We worked out this national technology plan, and vetted it with all kinds of people. I pulled the final draft together, and Clinton was up in the plane, traveling around during the campaign. I sent it up, and told them everyone was in agreement and we wanted to release it. We were going to have a meeting in San Jose, have a public forum on this.

Well, Clinton will fiddle with this sentence and that sentence. He gets into the minutia of it in a way that Ted wouldn't. Ted will care about an important speech, where he wants to make sure it says what he wants. Very basic principles of the substance he cares about deeply, but he's not going to spend his time worrying about some little technicality. That's what you have staff for, to do that, whereas Clinton will get into it personally.

Clinton kept changing things and going back for another draft and another draft. Finally, we were scheduled to go to San Jose to meet with all these CEOs, and I still had to line the CEOs up to come. I called up to the airplane, and said, "Listen, tell him that if he doesn't give me final approval of the technology plan by 5:00 this afternoon, I'm going to cancel the meeting in Silicon Valley." The guy I was talking to said, "You can't talk to him like that." I said, "What do you mean I can't? I just did." He said, "No one talks to the Governor like that." I said, "Well, I just did, and you tell him I'm serious. I'm going to cancel the meeting unless he says yes now," because he would have kept going forever.

They came back and said, "OK, he's in agreement." Then we just barely had time to get everyone lined up to do it. Ted would never get into things like that; he wouldn't spend his time on it. He cares about the fundamentals and getting things across. He's not a policy wonk. You get into healthcare policy, he knows every in and out of it, backward and forward, but it's not in his soul to focus on the details that way unless it's essential to achieve his goal. He's not a policy wonk, whereas Clinton *really* is a policy wonk, just incredibly so. Hillary is, too.

Kennedy and Clinton both give wonderful speeches. They're both wonderful in dealing with people one on one. It's different, how they are, but I don't know how to characterize the

difference. Clinton didn't understand Congress at all when he first came to Washington. That's one of the reasons they screwed up and lost the House in '94. He had been in Washington a lot before; he knew people, but understanding how to deal with Congress is very tough.

Jimmy Carter didn't understand it a damn bit. He alienated Tip [Thomas P.] O'Neill before he even was inaugurated. He had an engineer's mentality, where an engineer designs the solution and gives it to the client, hands it to Congress, "here's the solution." You don't deal with Congress that way. That's, of course, what happened with Hillary's health plan in '94, particularly getting Ira Magaziner, who is a wonderful guy, but the absolutely wrong guy to present a plan to Congress.

Obviously, Kennedy understands Congress backward and forward, whereas Clinton didn't understand it at all. I think Hillary definitely understands it now. One of the things that impressed me a lot was that—My son worked for Fritz Hollings, was on his staff right when Hillary started in the Senate. Fritz Hollings would *rave* about her to the staff, when he was talking candidly about her. He was so impressed with her. When you can get a conservative curmudgeon like that totally impressed, you know she had something going for her. Congress is a world of its own.

I've been a lucky guy. The only people I've ever worked for—At Commerce, I was working for Clinton. I wasn't working for Ron [Brown] or Bill Daley or those guys. I don't mean to denigrate them; they're all great guys. Because I had the personal relationship with the President, I could give a memo to his personal secretary, who would give it to him. I didn't do it on Commerce business I was involved in, because I felt that was wrong, to go around channels, but I would give him my thoughts on other matters that didn't pertain to my immediate responsibilities.

But I've been a lucky, lucky guy, to work for Ted. I never viewed it as working *for*; I viewed it as working *with*, and I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. When you think of what he's gone through. . . .

It's wonderful that you're doing this project, because someday historians will give him the recognition that he's due because of it, because it's hard as hell in the din of current politics to see that.

Knott: That's right. Well, that's our hope.

Mottur: I think it's great that you're doing it. When I think of all the people—How many interviews do you think you're going to do in the end?

Knott: Well, we've already done—this is our probably 71st, 72nd interview, and we still have maybe four years to go. Of those 72, Senator Kennedy has done 12 or 13, but still. . . .

Mottur: That's so wonderful.

Knott: He's very much behind it.

Mottur: He has a real sense of history. It really matters to him. How far along is the Clinton oral history project?

Knott: It's pretty far along. There are probably two years or so left with that. I would say they've done about the same number, maybe 60 or 65 interviews for that.

Mottur: When I first met him—Hillary took me to dinner with him in the fall of '91. I was so impressed with him, and thought, *Boy, this guy's going to be another Franklin Roosevelt*. He had that capacity, has it, but what happened is so sad. I'm extremely proud of everything we did in the administration, and I think he was a terrific President, but he could have been even much greater if that hadn't all happened. Of course, Gore then, would have been elected. Actually, Gore *was* elected, as far as I'm concerned, but Gore would have been inaugurated as well.

Now all the speculation on TV is whether Gore's going to get back in. I don't think he will, but if he did, I think he'd be very formidable. He's the one person who could conceivably beat Hillary for the nomination, if he got back in, but I don't think he will. I know that his wife, Tipper [Mary Elizabeth], doesn't want him to. It's such a hellish thing—you can't imagine. Presidential campaigns are absolutely lunacy, total lunacy. I remember in Bobby's campaign—I go to this image all the time. When you're doing something, it feels like, "I shot an arrow into the air, It fell to earth, / I knew not where." You're just sending these things out into the sky and hoping some of them land on something.

Knott: Right.

Mottur: In Little Rock, I traveled a good bit, but still, mostly I was dealing with people on the telephone. You have to size a person up on the telephone and decide whether to entrust them with something. Should we do this or not? You have to make the judgment. Presidential campaigns are absolutely wild.

Knott: Well, thank you very much.

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