



## EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE RACLIN

November 11, 2009  
Washington, D.C.

**Interviewer**  
James Sterling Young

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TRANSCRIPT

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**Young:** This is November 11, and it's an interview with Caroline Raclin, in Boston, at the Wang Center at MGH [Massachusetts General Hospital]. Caroline, do you want to start at the beginning and talk about your first impressions and memories of this new man in your life and your mother's life?

**Raclin:** Ted [Edward Kennedy] came into my life when I was four or five years old, so I was very young. So even though he was technically my stepfather, he's also played a father figure, a father role. Early impressions of him were very jovial. He always liked to laugh. He was a kid. He was almost childlike to a crazy degree, so he related to us a little too well. We would always play—He loved poems. When I was in second grade, I had a lot of poetry to memorize, and it was one of his favorite things, to help me memorize, especially when we had the *Macbeth* lines, "Double, double, toil and trouble."

**Young:** I see. Yes.

**Raclin:** And he got really into it, so he was like [*exaggerates voice*], "Double, double, toil and trouble!" being the witches.

**Young:** So he would be helping you memorize it?

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** Or would he just be...?

**Raclin:** No, he would help me memorize and he would just do it. He was lots of fun. We'd play card games. He taught me how to play gin, my favorite card game, and we played chess and backgammon. I guess those came later, after I was five years old.

**Young:** I would say that's a pretty hefty. . . .

**Raclin:** Yes. One thing that he did very well was he let Curran [Raclin] and me get used to him in our own time. He never forced himself upon us as I am this new person in your life and thou shalt accept me. Because honestly, I was very shy as a child and I was a little timid or wary of him, but that quickly wore off because he was so warm. I remember being curious, hiding behind my mother.

**Young:** Well, he's an imposing figure too.

**Raclin:** He is an imposing—He's a large man.

**Young:** He's a large man and he's got a big voice.

**Raclin:** He does. It's funny though, because he never—Yes, he has a big voice, but it was never angry or loud. Do you know what I mean? It wasn't overstimulating or anything like that.

**Young:** It wasn't domineering?

**Raclin:** It wasn't domineering, that's a better word.

**Young:** So you said earlier that he was a kid himself.

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** Or he could be a kid.

**Raclin:** He was a kid with a deep voice, put it that way. And so we moved into 636 Chain Bridge Road in Virginia, in McLean, and it was great. We had a swimming pool and a tennis court. We would always go swimming. He loved swimming and the water especially, anything to do with water. We'd have diving competitions, and my personal favorite is handstand competitions. He would do these too. We would grade each other, like in the Olympics.

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** I'm sure there was an Olympics at some point, in one of those years, so we were mimicking those. We'd have combinations: you have to have your legs together and down, and then apart, and then one up, and then this and that. He'd do them as well. I'd always win, of course.

**Young:** Well, this was a competition.

**Raclin:** It was a competition but it was a friendly competition.

**Young:** Right, but I mean the competition was often present in his games.

**Raclin:** Oh, one hundred percent.

**Young:** And it was competition among whom? Just you and him?

**Raclin:** Among him and me. My brother wasn't such a big fan of the water. In other things he obviously joined in, but this was my and Ted's special little thing.

**Young:** Was your mother in the competition?

**Raclin:** No.

**Young:** So this is for you.

**Raclin:** This is us, yes. Speaking of competition actually, everything was competitive. I think, even without Ted's influence, Curran and I would be very competitive, but *with* his influence, we were especially competitive. It's still one of my charming features. I think it always will be. And I don't think that's a bad thing. I mean sports. I'm a big sports person, I love playing sports and watching sports. He taught both of us how to play tennis and I was very into basketball in the beginning. So that was fun.

**Young:** He wasn't the world's basketball star.

**Raclin:** No, he wasn't. He would watch. When I got older, he'd come to all of my games, basketball games and soccer games and lacrosse games, but that's getting more into middle and high school.

I guess another huge memory, general memory, that I had was the Cape, because we always went to the Cape in the summers. I *love* the Cape, everything about it, even the smell. The Cape is basically this place where you have a home base, which was the house. You could go adventuring wherever else around there, but you would always come back to the home base, but you were free to do what you wanted. It was a wholesome place, because the RFKs [Robert F. Kennedys] live right next door, at Ethel's [Skakel Kennedy] house. There were 10,000 cousins to play with at any given point. We would go sailing every day. He taught me how to sail and he taught me that this not called a rope, it's called a line, and this is the foresail and this is the staysail, and that's the fishermen, and how to tie knots. And this was not just me and him, it was everybody. My mom was always there. My mom loved to sail as well. I just have this image of her with her face pointing into the wind and her eyes closed, and her hair is going back.

**Young:** When you were on the boat, was this the three of you or more of you?

**Raclin:** It was more of us generally. We had the boat boys, who basically helped sail the boat.

**Young:** Sure.

**Raclin:** Because other than Ted, we were a bunch of amateurs. There was always some mix of cousins or friends visiting.

**Young:** That's what I was getting at, friends and cousins.

**Raclin:** Yes, friends, cousins. But yes, I mean his friends, my friends. I'd have friends come up to the Cape and we would always have tons of fun. Ah! One of the best things about the boat was this thing called the bosun's chair, which we used to set up. Basically, the official use for the

bosun's chair, it's a piece of canvas attached to a line, or halyard in this case, to the top of the mast, and you can hoist yourself up and fix things on the top of the mast if things get caught. But we used it as a swing. We'd hook it up to the top of the mast and on fairly windy days, so you could get the boat at a good tilt, we would swing. And so you'd send someone out in the bosun's chair and they're flying around and they're hitting waves, because they're skimming the water essentially. And there's someone controlling, almost like a piñata, how high or how low you go, so if there's a huge wave and they want to dunk you, they'll go right ahead.

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** One of the great days was when Teddy, Jr. [Edward Kennedy, Jr.] was on the boat as well. He basically always was on the boat whenever he was on the Cape. He's a huge sailor. I believe he tied the knot wrong, the knot that connected the line to the chair. At some point the chair became loose, and you hold onto the line anyway for balance. The chair came loose, and I'm sitting in the chair and then it's no longer there, so I'm just holding onto the line for my dear life.

**Young:** The chair had disappeared.

**Raclin:** It was lost in the sea. So here I am, holding on, and nobody's really paying attention, except for Teddy, who is trying desperately to hoist me up. Eventually, of course, I get back on the boat, but it was terrifying for little Caroline.

**Young:** How do you keep from hitting something if you swing back in?

**Raclin:** That's why—Well, if you point the boat into the wind, the tilt sort of—

**Young:** It's on the tilt; the tilt stays.

**Raclin:** Rather, the tilt untilts, so it goes back up perpendicular to the water.

**Young:** And when you come back?

**Raclin:** And then you come back—It's a gradual process. It's not like you're coming smashing into the boat.

**Young:** Yes, OK.

**Raclin:** And then somebody will help you get on. So yes, the Cape was sailing. The *Grand Fromage*, which is still in existence—I'm convinced that boat is 30 years old. It's a motor boat. Anyway, so we take the *Grand Fromage* out and go tubing. Curran especially loved tubing; he was the tubing master and Ted would drive. He loved getting us out of the wake, which I was slightly terrified by but didn't admit it. We'd go in loops, and we'd always be inside the breakwater, so it was very smooth sailing, smooth riding. He loved taking us out and he loved—

**Young:** Explain what tubing is. You've explained the bosun's chair.

**Raclin:** I shall explain tubing. Tubing is basically a large, inflatable, almost an inner tube, with a covering on it, and you drag it behind the motorboat. So when the motorboat goes fast, you're dragged quickly, and then when the boat turns, you act as a pendulum, and so you can go in and out of the wake and you can somewhat steer it, but not really. There's only so much you can do. The wake rises up before you go out of it, and if you're on the edge of the wake you're—or at least I was—trying desperately to stay inside the wake, and he would just tease me, like go a little bit farther and then straighten out again. So it was a fun little game.

**Young:** What if you go over the wake?

**Raclin:** If you go over the wake, then it's bumpier and you have a larger tendency to fly off. So if you hit a wave [*claps hands*], there's no chance. You're going to have to let go of the tube. There are handles, but there's only so much you can do, and then you go swim with the jellyfish.

**Young:** Risky?

**Raclin:** Not terribly dangerous, no. Thousands of people go tubing, so it's not terribly risky.

**Young:** So Curran would do tubing, but sailing was not his thing.

**Raclin:** Not particularly. He would get seasick. He still gets seasick, but at least in the past year, he came with us a couple of times and it was a lot of fun. So we went tubing and water skiing, basically any sport you can possibly imagine. We played with the cousins a lot. We would always play—In front of the house, there's this huge field. I guess it's famous as the JFK [John F. Kennedy] football field. I don't know what they think of it as, but that's the perfect place to play. So the hoards of cousins, from the [Sargent] Shriver and the JFKs and the RFKs and everybody else's, would come and we'd play guerilla tag or red light/green light. This is not so much something that Ted would participate in because there are tons of small, screaming children going very fast, but he would watch from the porch, and so would my mom and all the other adults.

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** I think that was a lot of fun.

**Young:** Was it mixed ages?

**Raclin:** Yes, mixed ages, so you had kids who were four years old and you had kids who were older. I was, in general, the older half of the bunch, just because I was so young for my "generation." So it would be four-year-olds to me, and I—I mean, I'm 23 right now, about to be 24, and this summer I still played, so. [*laughs*] And then some of the adults would play, like Bobby [Kennedy] and Max [Kennedy], they were really into it. I guess they took after him as well in the kid factor. Rambunctious.

**Young:** How long did these events continue?

**Raclin:** Oh, hours.

**Young:** But I mean in terms of time.

**Raclin:** In terms of?

**Young:** Year.

**Raclin:** You mean during the summer?

**Young:** During the summer, but starting at an early age.

**Raclin:** Oh, sorry, yes; starting at a very early age.

**Young:** And were they still going on two years ago, three years ago?

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. Like I said, this past summer, we were still—because my niece Kiley [Kennedy] had her birthday party. For the birthday party, the activity was playing with the cousins on the field, and everybody just loves it.

**Young:** So it was a bit like reunion games.

**Raclin:** Reunion games, but at the same time it wasn't—Sometimes I feel like family reunions have this connotation of being forced, like let's go meet our foreign cousins, you know? But it wasn't like that. It was just because these people are always around. They are your family, they are your friends, they are your neighbors, they're your siblings, basically, and you fight and you laugh and you have high jinks.

**Young:** Sure.

**Raclin:** Various things to play, yes. Just like with Ted.

**Young:** Just like he did when he was a child.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes, definitely. Because he had so many siblings, you can definitely imagine them doing the exact same things with all of their friends and neighbors. I'm sure it's a tradition. Well, it's definitely a tradition, as it's still happening over all the generations. Loads of fun.

On the Cape, he was very—He loved the nature of it. The house is right on the beach, and because of that, you can look out to the ocean and you can—In his and Mom's room, they had a wind meter, telling them where the direction of the wind was coming and how many knots it was, and the tide charts and everything were always out. He was very aware of what was going on, on the ocean, always.

**Young:** Always. Didn't the window look out on the boat?

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. Their room used to be Grandma's room, his mom's room, and it's on the corner. It's on the southeast corner of the house, and it looks right out onto Hyannis Port Harbor. So you have the breakwater right there and you have the pier right there, and you can see *Mya*. It's perfect. There was this pair of ospreys, large sea birds, that live really close to the house. He

was obsessed with the ospreys. I think they lived there since I've lived there, so 20 years or however long.

**Young:** Out on the water though.

**Raclin:** Out on the water, yes. I'm sure someone has talked to you about this before.

**Young:** I've been there, on the *Grand Fromage*.

**Raclin:** Oh, well, there you go. And every time he'd say, "Those are the ospreys. Look at them go. He's hunting, you can see him hunt. Oh, he's diving!" Then you pass the nest, "Those are the baby ospreys. The little heads sticking out." He just loved them. I guess he never lost his sense of wonder, or he never took them for granted, I guess is a better way of putting that. It proves, because he pointed the ospreys out to you. Oh, and the Figawi.

**Young:** Tell me about that.

**Raclin:** The Figawi is a sailboat race from Hyannis Port to Nantucket, and then back again the next day. It's an annual thing at the end of the summer. We would always do the Figawi. I think I started being "on the crew" when I was 13 or 14 or 15. I wouldn't do much. I would just pull in the foresail when it needed to be pulled in, or something like that. Little Teddy and Davbo and later Aaron did all of the hard stuff. But that was so much fun. Basically, you could almost think of this as an allusion to life, but the start is always the most difficult part because you have all these boats in this tiny little area, waiting to cross this relatively small starting line. And so it's chaos, and oh, my God, we're going to hit that boat or whatever it is, and you have to cross at exactly the right time.

Then, after you go through this huge, chaotic time, you have about three hours on the sail through Nantucket Sound, of essentially peace. So it's an interesting race, but he loved it. And Mom would always be there every year. She loved it too. It's another competition theme, but she would always be out there. She had this huge stopwatch on her wrist and would be yelling out the times, "Five minutes to go! Four minutes!" So for the last 30 seconds, everybody's screaming. You can't hear anything, like Ted saying, "Get down." Little Teddy is about to fall off the boat, or something. It's havoc! It's great!

**Young:** Yes. And the captain can get very short-tempered sometimes.

**Raclin:** That is the one time he ever yells, is when he's on the boat. It's really funny. But he gets a "get out of jail free card" on that one. It's the only time. And then there were pirate races. Have you heard about the pirate races?

**Young:** Yes. I've seen a picture of—

**Raclin:** Yes, probably. In the summer there's—It's not actually a race, it's only in Hyannis Port, so it's a couple of small boats, and they create a big square in the harbor that all the boats have to stay inside, and if you go outside the lines then you're out. But there is a pirate boat and they have lots of tennis balls. Essentially, the goal is for them to throw a tennis ball into your boat, and if it goes in, then you also become a pirate boat, and so on and so forth, until the last person



standing wins. And everybody dresses up and “Arr, Matey” is often said. You have trash can lids and tennis racquets to fend off the tennis balls.

A couple of years ago, they actually stopped the pirate race because we Kennedys got a little too rambunctious and took over the whole thing. We’d always win, because the probability is in our favor, there are just so many of us. So we’d pack, I don’t know, 30 little kids onto the *Resolute*, and just go crazy. No one would ever be able to get a tennis ball in because there’s no place to get a tennis ball in. And then we started jumping off the boat and hijacking other boats and it got crazy. It was lots of fun though.

**Young:** Did you go with him on camping trips or educational trips?

**Raclin:** We went on a lot of educational trips.

**Young:** That wasn’t as much fun, I guess.

**Raclin:** Not for me. The general sentiment in my generation was that we got dragged along on the educational trips. The camping trips were a little more fun, but we’d go to all these Civil War sites, being in the [Washington] D.C. area. Shelby Foote would always be basically our guide, so we’d go to Gettysburg and we’d go to Bull Run, and we’d go to all these different places and learn about them. Very intriguing. I was very young; I couldn’t appreciate it. The camping trips were a little more fun.

**Young:** Where were they, out in western Massachusetts or in Boston Harbor?

**Raclin:** I never went to one in the harbor. I would guess western Massachusetts, even though at the time I wasn’t really aware of where I was. I remember one time we camped on a river, and there was a bridge crossing the river and we were all jumping off, and my mom was going crazy. “Oh, my God, you’re going to break your neck!” It was a ten-foot jump.

**Young:** Well, you can, you know.

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** But you didn’t.

**Raclin:** You can also break your neck walking down the street, but I’m not going to say anything. So yes, it was good. The camping trips were a long-standing tradition as well, before Curran and me. I think it was more prevalent in Kara [Kennedy], Teddy, and Patrick’s [Kennedy] generation, just because all of the kids, especially with the RFKs, were so close in age.

**Young:** In age.

**Raclin:** Then you had Ted’s generation. They were the ones who were raised by their parents who were very into learning about all of the things that have happened, and current events and past events and knowing the facts, as far as I have been told about them. So it was passed down. I think it might have been getting a little weaker as time went by, which is good for me.

**Young:** Well, you've talked about outings and sailings. You get a very good picture of him and yourselves on this. In the house, when he was brought up, as you have probably undoubtedly heard, conversations at the dinner table were topics.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes.

**Young:** There were topics. And you undoubtedly heard about Ted and Jean [Kennedy Smith] having to sit at—

**Raclin:** The kids' table.

**Young:** —the kids' table, a form of exclusion.

**Raclin:** That bonded them very tightly.

**Young:** Yes. However, I think she felt that she deserved to be at the table, but she was too young. Anyway, was there any of that at his dinner table? Did you eat with—

**Raclin:** Oh, of course. Every night, without fail, he would always come home from the Senate, and we'd always have dinner at precisely 7:15. Not 7:00 and not 7:13, but 7:15. He was very scheduled, very on time, but it wasn't something you had to study for. They were given topics to talk about, but we weren't given topics. It was more of an informal idea. Yes, we talked a lot about what was going on in the Senate, like funny stories. Well, what did you do today? Oh, I had an art project or whatever it was, but a lot of it was like I said, based around the Senate and the nation.

**Young:** Politics.

**Raclin:** Politics, a lot of which I didn't originally appreciate, to be honest. I thought it was boring, but then I think in high school was when I got into it. Maybe because Curran went to college three years before I did, so maybe I had more one-on-one time at the dinner table and wasn't so shy. I don't know. This is the first time I thought about that, but yes, it was a lot of fun. And then after dinner, it was homework time, so Curran and I would go do our homework, or Curran would pretend to do his homework and I would actually do my homework, and Ted would go do his homework.

He had an office in every house where we lived. The one I'm specifically thinking about is the one in our current house, 2416 Tracy Place. He would go to his little office and he'd have his briefcase. The briefcase was an ever-present part of the life. It was like another arm. And in the briefcase he'd have all the clippings from the day and everything that happened. He'd write all the notes and he'd spend a couple hours every night at the desk doing it, and just concentrating on that. That was a good example for us, who wanted to watch TV or whatever it was. And then after that, we'd play the games that I talked about, like chess and gin and everything.

**Young:** Even though it made your bedtime later?

**Raclin:** No, it wasn't too bad.

**Young:** Not that you would object.

**Raclin:** No, of course not. Not that Mom would object either, because she loved when we'd spend time together with Ted. She always encouraged it. She never pushed it, but was always very happy, because I guess it signified to her. . . . One thing that she said later on about when she decided to marry Ted, the main criterion other than them loving each other, and the birds and bees, was that he would be good with Curran and me. He would be a good father figure, protective, but also we would get along and he would never hurt us or anything like that. And of course he meets all of those points. So she had the three most important people in her life in that house, and she liked it when they played together.

**Young:** So, you maintain relations with your own father?

**Raclin:** Oh, 100 percent. He was not a replacement.

**Young:** OK, and he didn't see himself as that.

**Raclin:** No.

**Young:** As becoming the successor.

**Raclin:** The successor. No, not at all.

**Young:** Well, I think that's important.

**Raclin:** That's a good point, and I didn't even bring that up. No, my dad, despite the fact that my parents are divorced, they always maintained a good relationship. And my dad also always lived in the area, until I went to college, essentially. So we lived in D.C., he would live in Chevy Chase, which is right on the border. I'd see him a couple days every week. Everybody would go to my sports games, and they would all sit together, or for whatever big events, first communions, confirmations, graduations, everything. They all liked each other.

**Young:** Did your father have nieces and nephews? Did you have cousins on the Raclin side?

**Raclin:** Yes, but I guess I'm getting—

**Young:** You had the Kennedys and then you had. . . .

**Raclin:** To be honest, I love my cousins, my Raclin cousins, but we're not as close, because we don't see each other as often.

**Young:** You don't have those—

**Raclin:** We don't have that connection. When we get together, it's nice. But I think the Kennedys, because we spent so much time together, and also just because everybody is so gregarious and easy to talk to and easy to spend time with, yes.

**Young:** So you didn't get any guff because you were not a Kennedy.

**Raclin:** No. No, actually, the one funny thing about our games—all of the games, capture the flag, whatever—you’d have 30 or 40 people on the field at one time and nobody knew everybody’s name because you’re like, well, who’s that blonde kid over there? Oh, he’s Katherine’s [Kennedy] friend, or he’s Kick’s [Kathleen Kennedy] brother, you know? Who knows what it was. So there was never—

**Young:** The ID [identification] was a little bit complicated sometimes.

**Raclin:** Yes. But no, there was never any issue about not being a Kennedy, because they didn’t really care about that. As long as you were a good sport, I think that was the biggest issue.

**Young:** You left the nest, so to speak, I guess, when you went to college. Did that change your...?

**Raclin:** It didn’t change the relationship, or I guess the closeness of the relationship, just because we already had that base. I’ve never been a good person to talk on the phone, so we’d talk on the phone but it would be like a report, more or less. But then when we got together again, because I went home a good amount—I had a car at school and I love road trips, so I’d drive the eight hours to D.C. a couple times a semester, and it would be 100 percent normal, back to what it was.

Actually, now that you mention college, it was my freshman year and there was parents’ weekend, so he and Mom came up. No one at that point knew my connection. I’ve always made it, I guess a point, to not hide it but just not emphasize it because it is a prominent name, for better or for worse, and so I don’t like people judging me because of that before they know me. Anyway, I wanted to make my own way at college. But it was parents’ weekend, from the very beginning of first semester, and I’m excited they’re coming up. They’re going to come to my biology class and then hang out afterward.

I’m not going to say her name, but this is a very funny story. I had a friend and she was very into government and policy and everything like that. And I said, “I have a surprise for you on parents’ weekend.” She said, “Oh, what is it? This is so exciting.” I said, “It’s going to be great; you’re really going to love it.” We had this biology class together and we sat next to each other, and she goes, “What is it? It’s Friday.” And I said, “OK, you’re just going to have to wait.” So then Mom and Ted sneak in. I guess they were a little late.

Ten minutes into class—I remember very specifically that we were talking about parasites, because my mom was disgusted afterward—everybody turns around—and I know who it is because they weren’t there yet and I was expecting them to come. And so everybody turns around and sees these two people, one of whom looks exactly like Ted Kennedy, in the back of the room. She looks and then she looks at me and she just stares. I don’t react or anything, taking my little notes, whatever.

The class ends and all the parents go up and say hi to the teacher or whatever, and then we all go back to my room. So we were sitting in my room and he’s sitting in this armchair right next to the door. The door is open and Mom and I are sitting on the bed. And she comes in—She lives in the same building. She comes in and doesn’t see him, I guess, I don’t know, but she goes, “Oh, my God, Caro—” I was called Caro in college, as opposed to Caroline—“Oh, my God, Caro.

Everybody thinks that your dad's Ted Kennedy, but I know he's not because I'm a government major." [laughter]

And then he stands up, doesn't say a word, and puts his hand out to shake her hand. And she just doesn't know what to do, so she just shakes his hand and then runs away. It was perfect. Then we just burst out laughing. Actually, it's become a very repeated story because it was so funny, because she said it with such conviction. "*Everybody* thinks he's Ted Kennedy, but I know he's not because I'm a *government* major." I mean, she's great. Don't get her wrong, but it was very funny.

**Young:** Wonderful.

**Raclin:** But he'd come up to school. I played lacrosse my freshman year and he would always want the report. And then I played soccer in my junior and senior year and he would always want the report, how did you do? Did you beat Williams? How did you do against Tufts? He was very into that. But even if we lost, he was like, "I'm sure you tried your hardest." Of course.

**Young:** Did he ask you about subjects?

**Raclin:** Oh, of course.

**Young:** Did you talk with him about what you were thinking of doing with yourself after college?

**Raclin:** Yes, but he wasn't—

**Young:** Or was it more with your mother?

**Raclin:** My mom is very career-oriented for me, and so the "what are you going to do with your life" questions, a lot were the ones that she asked. He never asked them. Like I said, he's never one to push, at least with us. If I wanted to tell him, I told him. At one point, I was thinking about med [medical] school. So, "I think I want to go to this med school and I really like my biology, but I'm a Spanish major. What do you think about that?" We'd talk about classes a lot. For some reason, I was embarrassed to tell him my grades. I got relatively good grades, As and Bs, but I always felt like that was almost bragging. Actually, now that I'm thinking about this, maybe, or definitely I guess, it's because he never really bragged, so I felt almost bad about bragging to him or in front of him. I mean, he had so many accomplishments, and he's never one to tell you about them. You know they exist, but he never pointed them out or rubbed them in your face or whatever it was, so you didn't really want to do the same thing, except for with sports.

**Young:** Did he ever talk about himself very much to you?

**Raclin:** No.

**Young:** Experiences he had had that might—?

**Raclin:** He told stories.

**Young:** But not about himself.

**Raclin:** No, they would always include him, but they would be funny stories. They wouldn't be stories with a moral, "and therefore, thou shalt not do this." It wasn't really like that. It was funny stories from college when he was growing up. Mountain climbing with his—I think it was John Tunney.

**Young:** John Tunney, swinging over the abyss.

**Raclin:** I can't believe that story. So yes, things like that. I guess his and my relationship was, I want to say happy-go-lucky but that's not the right word. Positive-oriented, never really discussed bad things. Not to say that there weren't bad things, like oh, I broke up with this boyfriend, or whatever it is. It just wasn't that type of relationship. I don't know why.

**Young:** But he was always there if you wanted to talk to him.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. I mean, you call and he's there, you call the office. I had the office on speed dial, actually. I have memorized the number still, even though I guess it no longer exists. So you always knew where to track him down, and if you couldn't find him on the phone, you could watch C-SPAN [Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network].

**Young:** Tell me about Ted's and your mother's relationship.

**Raclin:** I have never seen a marriage like it. I'm not just saying that. It's slightly scary, it's so good. They just love each other so much. Even when they fought—They didn't fight that often, but even when they fought, for whatever reason, it was with passion. It was very funny. My mom loves to sing and he loves to sing as well. I think that she might be a little better than him, but they would always sing together, to the point that Curran and I would beg her, especially, to stop. He would get the hint the first time, but she just wouldn't get the hint; she would just continue.

Actually, speaking of singing, this past year, especially this past summer at the Cape, when he was sick, we were trying to find things to lighten the mood. Well, first of all, he was always the one who would first lighten the mood. You know, all of us would get pensive or depressed, and he would be the one to think of something funny. It really should have been the other way around, but I guess that's who he was.

But at dinner, we still obviously had dinner every night, and he would be sitting there at the head of the table, and Mom would be sitting right there, to the right of him, and I would be sitting there, right next to Mom. Kara was there a lot, and so she would be sitting just to the left of him. It was all these positions, and Aunt Jean would be sitting right next to Kara, so it was a nice little dinner. We would have—well, I guess it started as what we called spontaneous song syndrome, with Mom just singing show tunes. She really liked show tunes and Motown and stuff like that. So singing. Then it got to this point where every night, we would have to have something prepared. You were expected to sing or perform or do something. It was generally singing. Aunt Jean had the famous "The White Cliffs of Dover" that she was...

**Young:** She'd sing it?

**Raclin:** I think she recited it. I didn't even know it was a song.

**Young:** Oh, it was.

**Raclin:** Oh, was it? Maybe she was trying to sing and I just thought she was reciting it.

**Young:** "There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover someday." This was a World War II song.

**Raclin:** Oh, that's funny. Anyway, she would sing that almost every night.

**Young:** It was a very sentimental song.

**Raclin:** But she made it funny, because that's what she does. Aunt Jean is one of the funniest people I've ever met. And the two of them, Ted and Aunt Jean together, are just a pair.

**Young:** Goading each other on.

**Raclin:** Oh, my God, it's unbelievable. It's just constant. They just crack each other up too, and nobody else understands what on earth they're talking about. It was so funny, because she— They loved imitating British accents, I guess from when they lived in England, I don't know, but it's always been this thing. And so, especially this past summer, she would just be like [*imitates accent*], "Oh, Teddy." I can't do a British accent but, "Oh, Teddy, what are you doing over there, sitting in your chair?" He would retort, "Oh, I'm just looking at you, you ugly thing." And they would go back and forth, like, "You smell." I don't even know how to describe it, but it was so funny. [*laughter*]

**Young:** She stayed up there, didn't she?

**Raclin:** She stayed up there, yes. She came up and she rented a house for weeks and weeks, and even when that expired or whatever, she stayed at the house. Yes, she was always there. She made him so happy, you know? Even just sitting. He really wanted to be outside a lot, so he'd sit on the porch and he'd have his little chair. He had two spots on the porch that he liked, both of course looking out to the ocean, and he would just like to sit with people. You didn't really have to talk. [*chokes up*] Curran was right.

**Young:** I think the silence. I sat on the porch too. He wasn't sick, before that, sitting on the porch, and it was remarkable. He'd sometimes say a few things, but he's looking.

**Raclin:** Yes, at the ocean.

**Young:** And he's listening.

**Raclin:** And watching the ospreys.

**Young:** He was very observant, just watching every little thing.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. It was unbelievable.

**Young:** Well, you said you had never seen anything like your mother's and his marriage.

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** It's a romance.

**Raclin:** It was a romance.

**Young:** That grew perhaps deeper, but it was more than that, wasn't it?

**Raclin:** Of course. But I think, I mean they'd just rely on each other so much, and they never were apart. I guess with a lot of marriages, it seems that you maybe grow used to the person, but you might not really have the passion or whatever it was, or have the spark or have the joy or the fun, just going through the routine. It wasn't like that at all. They were dynamic.

**Young:** They were dynamic. She became a partner, didn't she?

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. Oh, 100 percent, and she was behind every single political statement, every speech she went over, as well as the office. And then they would practice every speech and he would highlight the—I don't know. I've never seen anybody else prepare for a speech other than him, so I don't know if this is common practice, but he'd go over it dozens of times, and highlight the words that he wanted and put the pauses in the speech so it became natural. Anyway, so that's just what they would do. They constantly would talk about politics and policies that he was working on and what exactly the next move would be. They were always looking into the future but still keeping the whole picture in line. She's just amazing at that by herself, so the two of them combined were like this dynamic duo, Batman and Robin.

**Young:** She gave him advice too.

**Raclin:** Yes. I think a lot of his decisions had—

**Young:** I don't know whether that was there from the beginning, but by the time this project started.

**Raclin:** When did this project start? Years ago.

**Young:** The first interview I did with him was in January of 2005. I think your mother was a major supporter or originator of the whole idea of doing the oral history. I think she had a lot to do with it, and she was an enormous help to me in interviewing him. I did a lot of interviews with him over the years.

**Raclin:** Yes, I remember.

**Young:** You know, he wasn't an easy person to interview.

**Raclin:** Because he never talked about himself.



**Young:** That's right. But he came to. I think that was in part because he came to trust me and started calling me a friend, but in part it was because your mother had the right idea too, and knew how to bring him out and how to move him.

**Raclin:** Oh, they knew each other back and forth.

**Young:** Also, she had some very strong political ideas too, and she'd preach them.

**Raclin:** She is an intelligent woman. You think he's observant. She's almost even more observant, especially with the psychology behind and everything. She's a political mastermind in her own right, and I think that she will continue to make a big splash. She's not done. He loved to torture her.

**Young:** What?

**Raclin:** That sounded bad, but he loved to torture her. He would goad her unbelievably, and then she—I still don't even know to this day whether she took him seriously or she was playing along. Let's see if I can remember something. I'm thinking especially at the dinner table. It would be something like, I don't know, I would say I really want to go bungee jumping. Actually, this was a real example. "I really want to go bungee jumping." Mom, of course, "That is 100 percent out of the question. Absolutely not, young lady." It escalated, but he would go on my side and he'd say, "You know, I think that's a really good idea." Obviously joking. "Let's call that guy out in New Hampshire, and we'll just do that. He'll let you do the thing and it will be great." "No, Teddy, what are you talking about? Teddy, why are you telling her this?" "Oh, come on, every kid needs a little experience." And it would just go on and on, and then, finally, somebody would crack. It was very funny.

Have you ever heard the word, "ruff-tuff-'em?"

**Young:** No.

**Raclin:** I'm the first one to tell you about ruff-tuff-'em?

**Young:** Yes, tell it.

**Raclin:** Oh, my. That was one of his favorite words.

**Young:** Ruff-tuff-'em.

**Raclin:** Ruff-tuff-'em. He made it up, obviously. Basically, if you were complaining about something, he'd say, "Don't you want to be a ruff-tuff-'em? I'm a ruff-tuff-'em, he's a ruff-tuff-'em, let's go all be ruff-tuff-'ems." Like oh, I don't want to go in the water, it's too cold. "Be a ruff-tuff-'em." It was constant, throughout the whole thing. Actually, one of the last conversations I had with him was very funny, because I was whispering in his ear and I said, "You're a ruff-tuff-'em." He just laughed, it was so funny because he hadn't laughed that day or whatever, or that I'd seen. He is a ruff-tuff-'em.

I didn't even talk about the dogs at all.

**Young:** Now is your chance.

**Raclin:** Now is my chance. There's nothing really new, I mean Splash was right there next to the briefcase.

**Young:** Did he have these dogs when your mother married him?

**Raclin:** Oh, no. They came after. We got Splash after we moved into Tracy Place. I don't know when that was. I think he's 13 years old right now, 12 or 13, and he was two when we got him, so 10 years ago approximately. They've been married for 17 years. So yes, we got him when he was an adolescent. It was so funny because they went to a breeder in Virginia looking for a puppy, and they knew they wanted a Portuguese Water Dog, they researched it. Believe me, they researched it. They researched everything. And they went and they didn't really connect with any of the puppies.

But there was Splash, and Ted was just automatically drawn to Splash. And it was, "Oh, this dog is not for sale, sir. He's a show dog and we're training him to be a show dog and he's been in a couple of shows," or whatever it was. But he was dreaming, I'm convinced, of Splash and visions of sugarplums dancing in his head with the dog. And so I don't know how they convinced him or what they did, but they got the dog and they were just inseparable. It's unbelievable. I mean, Splash would go everywhere with him, to the office, on political campaigns during campaign season, just everywhere. He's a very well-behaved dog.

And then Sunny came and she was a rascal. We got her when she was a puppy, and she just wreaked havoc with the best of them. She was supposed to be my mom's dog, and of course that didn't happen because she just automatically gravitated toward Ted. So then they both became his dogs. And then we got Cappy, again in the hope that he would be my mother's dog. I think this one might have succeeded. He's still a puppy. I think he's around a year old now.

**Young:** Sunny and Splash are audible in almost all the interviews.

**Raclin:** I'm sure. I mean, they're everywhere. What did everybody else have to say about them is the question, because I know my grandfather, my mom's dad, is not a fan of dogs.

**Young:** Well, I didn't know that. But yes. I can't help but wonder what people two generations hence are going to think when they hear Ted saying, "Splash, what are you doing?" Right in the tape. "Come over here."

**Raclin:** That's a good boy. They're like, well, who is he talking to?

**Young:** And then the barks.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. Are those in the written transcript as well?

**Young:** You've got your ear-shattering moments, because they're right next to the microphone.

**Raclin:** Why would they bark?

**Young:** Somebody comes up at Hyannis Port, somebody comes in the drive.

**Raclin:** Oh, yes. No, they're very protective of him. Splash is very protective of him. Yes, I guess you guys would sit in the sun room at the Cape, wouldn't you?

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** Yes, that makes sense.

**Young:** Your mother had a boat.

**Raclin:** *La Bohème*.

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** He gave her *La Bohème*. It was a perfect gift. Of course it's named after—

**Young:** Did she know how to sail or did he teach her?

**Raclin:** No, he 100 percent taught her how to sail. She adapted quickly. But no, he taught her to sail and then he bought her books even, technical books about what to do at this point of sail, when the wind is coming from here, at this many knots. You know, put the sails wing-on-wing if there's no wind whatsoever, things like that. So he bought her this little Herreshoff twelve-and-a-half, and she named it *La Bohème*, because that's the opera where he proposed to her. She just loved it. She'd go out on it every day, and he would follow her in the *Fromage* or maybe the dinghy, which is a little inflatable boat, and shout instructions to her, because she wanted to do it herself. She was not about to let him go and take the tiller. She was going to learn. And so he'd tell her where to go. At first she stayed inside the breakwater, where it's easier, and then she'd venture out. It eventually got to the point where he didn't have to follow her around in the boat. But every summer, there was always some sort of emergency. I remember it well. Boy, let's see.

Mom and I were out on *Bohème* and we were trying to get the mooring, and it was very windy. We were both ardent, and so we're trying to do—You know, you take the tiller and you grab the stick, or whatever it is, and then we'd run into Fred Floyd's boat, which is incidentally moored right next to our boat. Nothing really happened, but it was this big chaotic thing, and what will he do and we have to tell him. Oh, my God. That was one summer, and the next summer we couldn't get the mooring again because the wind had picked up so much, because it's a smaller boat. If it's very windy, I would say about like what, ten knots or something, it's hard to handle if you're not an expert sailor. And so we beached it. We couldn't get the moorings; we tried ten times. And again, we got ardent, and we just went up and beached it and we walked home, and we're like, "Ted?" He said, "I saw the whole thing." Because he watched from his room or from the porch, and we didn't know he was watching at the time. But I guess he would do that a lot.

My personal favorite *Bohème* story was he, Mom, and I went out on it, only the three of us together, and I was learning how to do it. So I had the tiller and I was feeling adventurous and went out of the breakwater, and it got larger waves. I guess I jibed or something too hard, I don't know, but I tilted it so much that the water came in on their half of the boat. Oh, sorry; it was Mom and me on one side and he was on the other side, because Lord knows, we need balance.

So I tilted him on the other side and he was underwater. It was very impressive actually. I don't know how the boat didn't just completely keel over, but it was a dramatic tilt. And so he's soaking wet and gargling and underwater, and Mom's screaming, "What are you doing to my husband?" Of course, we right the boat and he laughs at the whole thing. Mom's horrified and I'm horrified. I'm sure I cried or something and gave him the tiller. That was so funny.  
[laughter]

**Young:** How old were you then?

**Raclin:** Oh, I was old. I was 17 or 18 years old, maybe even older than that. It was funny.

**Young:** Maybe you've already said it, but why don't you take a shot at putting yourself in the position of somebody two generations hence, somebody who is looking back, trying to understand Ted, his time, and his life. Sometimes it's very hard to get a picture of that when you—Historians tend to look at documents, and some of those documents, it's necessary, and some of those documents are very revealing, his own notes and everything.

**Raclin:** Oh, he always wrote notes.

**Young:** But here's a guy who doesn't talk about himself very much, who relatively few people really knew, and you're one of them. So, how would you help people, say of your age even, studying politics and trying to understand this man, this time? What kind of person was he?

**Raclin:** He was—That's a strangely broad and difficult question. He was a hard worker, jovial, fun loving. I guess there were two sides of him, or primarily two sides, if I wanted to go into that. There's one side of him that was his personal side, the side that loved costume parties and dressed up as Barney, for God's sake, at the Christmas party at the Senate, and loved to tell stories and jokes. Always a happy person, despite everything that he had been through before.

And then you have the worker part of him, with all the behind-the-scenes work. Yes, you have all the documents telling everybody these are his accomplishments, but there's so much work that went behind that. He always did his homework, and we had all the clippings come in every morning and he would read them, hundreds of papers of clippings.

He always wanted to know every angle of everything, whether it was related to work or related to us or related to anything. Very compassionate, didn't really—He just cared about other people. He definitely sacrificed himself. I'm not saying Jesus here, but I'm saying he spent a lot of time helping other people, when it might have been more beneficial—more selfish, more beneficial to himself—to spend that time on him. He wore himself thin. I don't think anybody else could really do all of those accomplishments.

For instance, when they resected his tumor, he had brain surgery. Since I work with people who have brain surgeries for various reasons, and then I see them that day and the next day and the next day, I know for a fact that they don't get up and walk, they're not able to, that's it. He got up and he walked, you know? He's just disciplined. It's creepy. I am going to do this and I am going to get better. His will—I can only aspire to do that.

And then yes, he had this amazing ability, and I keep referring to it, but again, to go through so much terrible hardship and then come out of it. He gives himself a little bit of time to mourn or be pensive or whatever it is, but then he comes out of it and he say, “OK, well, that’s OK and I’m going to continue.” And whether that was healthy or not, whether he should have given himself more time is a question that I ask. But there is a lesson to be learned by it because now, with his passing, I have a much bigger tendency than he did to get sad and depressed and pensive and whatever you want to call it. But because of his lesson and because of everything, basically the way he lived, you say, “OK, that’s true, I’m going to use this and I’m going to continue to be productive and I’m going to continue to live my life.” And this is what Ted would want, this is what Ted would do. What would Ted do? We should make bracelets.

**Young:** A little bit of this comes out now, recently, after his death, but people theorize about what made him tick. They don’t put it that way, but that’s basically it. And they come up with a lot of themes of speculation, and one of them is that he was a driven individual.

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** And that there was something that was compulsive about this with him. These people tend to think he was always proving himself to his father or his mother. These are people who—

**Raclin:** There is probably some truth to that, to a degree. He’s the youngest kid out of how ever many kids, and his brothers were all huge successes.

**Young:** But in a sense, wasn’t he the biggest success of them all?

**Raclin:** I would like to think so. Yes, because of the compulsion, as you put it.

**Young:** And then he’s often used, he’s the red meat for the people who want to beat up on the liberal—

**Raclin:** And he doesn’t care about it.

**Young:** He doesn’t care about it, but it’s interesting that the people who know him, including his Republican colleagues in the Senate, don’t think of him that way at all. He has enormous respect from—

**Raclin:** Well, wasn’t that what he was known for politically, for being bipartisan?

**Young:** Well, but he’s very partisan.

**Raclin:** For liberals. For partisan politics, for partisan beliefs, but in the way that he operates, one-on-one conversations. I mean, he would actually go to other Senators’ offices and talk to them. That wasn’t done. Maybe in the old Senate, the old school Senate, it was, but not now.

**Young:** Yes, but that part of him is not as clearly recognized from the outside, looking in from the outside.

**Raclin:** That’s probably true.

**Young:** You see it when you hear other Senators, and it became apparent at the memorial service, people would talk.

**Raclin:** He just knew how to relate to people. If anything, that was his biggest gift, other than his motivation, for whatever reason his motivation was. Even if you didn't like his politics, you liked him.

**Young:** He always cared about people, it seems to me. His caring of others and caring for others was a very important part of it. Politicians don't have a good reputation at times. You know, they're in it for themselves or they're running for reelection and so forth. Don't you think it's important, that's not the kind of person you saw, in it for himself?

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** You made that point already.

**Raclin:** I think it bears repeating though. No, he never did—I'm trying to think of something that he did that was 100 percent or 50 percent selfish. Maybe the camping trips, but that was for our own betterment, even if we didn't know it at the time. I am an expert on Gettysburg, thanks to Ted and Shelby Foote.

**Young:** And that expertise has served you very well.

**Raclin:** Oh, every day I use my—yes. The Gettysburg Address, I recite it every night with my prayers. Wait, that was slightly different, wasn't it?

**Young:** So is he a role model for you?

**Raclin:** Yes.

**Young:** In the sense that you're—

**Raclin:** This is something that I didn't get into, which I really wanted to talk about actually. He was about public service, that was his theme, and that 100 percent got transferred to me. I'm applying for a master's degree in public health, specifically because I think that was what he was passionate about. And again, he never pushed it on me and he never did any of that, but I just. . . .

To go back to high school. He was behind—There was a service learning project at my high school, at Maret in D.C. He was the motivational factor, the prod that really made it happen. He and my Spanish teacher, incidentally, who is also another role model. She was Eliza Davis, now she's Eliza Alexander. They started this thing together, where we had service learning projects, where students could go and be in a group with Latino immigrants, and they teach us Spanish, we teach them English. No teaching was actually done, but it was more like a communal effort. Then we created a magazine, and there were various other projects. That was just my year, but it continued and it's continuing, and that was his doing.

And I think that experience, even at the time I didn't know he did that. I only knew that after because Mom told me, because Lord knows he didn't tell me. That was what started my interest. I was a Spanish major at school because of this experience. I won the community service award in high school because I enjoyed it, you know? And that's just him. I'm not saying other people didn't influence me in my life, but he's one of the three major players there. You've got Mom, you've got Ted, you've got Dad. So we'll see what will happen with my public service.

**Young:** It will happen.

**Raclin:** Curran got the political aspect of it a little more than I did. I got the nonpartisan aspect of it. Curran loves giving speeches. He's very good at it. I'm sure you saw that he was a good speaker yesterday. He speaks off the top of his head and he's genuine, and he got that from Ted. I'm a little quieter, even though you might not see that in this interview, because I'm talking all the time, but I generally don't do that. But I like the individual—I like the idea that you can create policy and organizations and projects that help, directly, marginalized populations. I mean, that's what he did. He stood up for the little man, or whatever it is you want to say. That's what I love.

**Young:** And you got that from him.

**Raclin:** Yes, I like to think so.

**Young:** Your mother?

**Raclin:** Yes, but she's not the same thing. It's like they're in the same genus but they're not in the same species. She is 100 percent for helping people, but that, I don't think, is the drive behind her. I don't really know how to describe it. She's obviously huge into antigun violence. That's one of her passions, and I think that that is obviously helpful to people, because they will not be shot by accident. But I think that's more geared toward the policy of it than the person. I'm not saying this is a bad thing. I think that he is geared more toward the person and goes about it by creating the policy. Is that understandable?

**Young:** Yes.

**Raclin:** You're asking me so many things I haven't thought about before. I was hoping to be prepared.

**Young:** Well, that's what—

**Raclin:** I guess that's the point, isn't it?

**Young:** That's the point. So, I guess our time is about up. Is it?

**Raclin:** It's 1:00. What time did we start, 11:30?

**Young:** Yes. That was the time that appeared on my sheet.

**Young:** This is a footnote to the Caroline Raclin interview.

**Raclin:** We were just talking about your interviews with Ted and it reminded me of something. Ted and Mom would always have huge, raucous dinner parties. And everybody would be having a good time, etc. But he would get tired. He'd take a little glance at his watch. Then, in the middle of a sentence, as somebody else was talking, he'd say, "Well, it was so great to see you. Thank you so much for coming." [*laughing*] And everybody was just—if they had just met him—okay, this is very interesting. But if you knew him, you understood that he wasn't being rude.

**Young:** No.

**Raclin:** And he wasn't being socially awkward or obtuse or anything like that. That was just what he did. "Thank you for coming. Good night." Then they'd slowly get their coats and leave. The end.

**Young:** There it is.