



EDWARD KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND REGGIE AND DORIS REGGIE

August 8, 2005
Nantucket, Massachusetts

Interviewer
Stephen F. Knott

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TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND REGGIE AND DORIS REGGIE

August 8, 2005

Knott: Perhaps the best place to begin would be to ask both of you how you first came to know the Kennedys—in particular, John F. Kennedy. That was your first connection, if I’m not mistaken.

E. Reggie: It was.

Knott: If you could tell us about that, that would be terrific.

E. Reggie: Well, the transcript that you have from the Kennedy Library pretty well sums it up. I think that’s pretty accurate. I had never heard of him, didn’t know anything about him until we got to the convention, and didn’t even know he was a candidate for the Vice Presidency.

It was my first convention, and it was exciting. Doris was big and pregnant for Gregory [Reggie], and it was a wonderful time. I went there to support Frank Clement for Vice President. He was the Governor of Tennessee, and he had come to Louisiana, and we had a fundraiser built around his attendance. He was a great speaker. In fact, he seriously considered going with Billy Graham for a while. He came and we had a fabulous time, and he told us he was hopeful for the Vice Presidency. We said, “We’re with you.” We didn’t know anybody else, so we said, “Sure, we’d be glad to support him.” We thought I would be in the delegation and it would help. So at the convention he made this phenomenal keynote speech. It was unbelievable. It was long, but like a preacher kind of thing, and it was very good.

The next day, Camille Gravel, [who] was the Democratic National Committeeman and my very dear friend, he and I both had pledged to Frank Clement, so we went to see him the next morning, and he was flooded with telegrams. I never saw that many telegrams in my life, all over the floor in boxes everywhere. He said, “I got a lot of telegrams, but I’ve got to tell you, I know you fellows are for me, and I appreciate it, but I want to formally release you.” “Why?” we said. And he said, “Well, I’ve got [Estes] Kefauver from my state, and I’ve got [Albert, Sr.] Gore. They’re both running and there’s no more room for anyone from Tennessee. Both of them are in my state.” So we thanked him and left.

Then they showed a film. It was a sort of a documentary, a hopeful film put on by the national convention, and John F. Kennedy was the narrator. Of course, he just brought the house down. We were sitting alphabetically across the aisle from Massachusetts, so I got to know some of the delegates. I have relatives in Massachusetts; my grandmother lived in Massachusetts, in Springfield, at the turn of the century. [She] had two children there. So we have Massachusetts relatives and so we felt some commonality with the delegates near us.

They started talking about this fellow John Kennedy, and, of course, we knew all about him by now. We had seen him the night before, but we didn't really know anything about him. [We] had no idea that there was such a Senator until that film was shown. So Camille and I decided that we would try to make a connection—maybe we could support him, could meet him, see if he would cooperate with us in getting our support. We weren't asking anything; we just wanted a winner. He looked like a winner. And we three were all Catholics.

Camille and I had supported Earl Long for Governor. The two of us had been all over the state of Louisiana stumping with him, just as friends, not as candidates. Out of 64 parishes, it was the last stump speaking that we did in Louisiana. It was my debut. Governor Long allowed Camille and me to select the delegates since there was no election of delegates then. So we knew the delegates, some for and some against Long in the campaign, but we knew them to be traditional, true-blue Democrats in national politics. We sat at the kitchen table—in those days you could do it—they didn't have the [George] McGovern primaries or anything like that—so we wrote the names of the delegation out. We knew them to be good Democrats. Not all had supported Earl Long. Some despised Long.

So we got the delegation going, and when we left Louisiana, we knew that Earl Long was for Estes Kefauver for Vice President. He told us that there were relatives of Kefauver in Baton Rouge, and they had asked him for his support, and he had pledged that support. They were his supporters. I accepted that. Do you understand? I was 29 years old and there he was; he was like Abraham Lincoln and George Washington to me, all wrapped up in one. We had won the Governorship in the first election against six opponents, and it was a very heady time. I accepted his word about the pledge of Kefauver's.

But he had become slightly estranged from Camille and me, and he was trying to dump us, to be perfectly frank with you. Like a lot of politicians, they didn't want anybody who was with them, to whom they feel obligated, to stay with them. It's better to break off at the beginning, and then you're not obligated any more. I think that was his attitude. He operated on a political philosophy, Earl Long did, that Earl Long was first, second, third, fourth, and then the others fit in. So he had himself always in a position of the king maximus, always. And he was alienating towards us—giving us the early dump after our help in getting him elected. But at the convention we sat with Camille Gravel, who was a national committeeman, on the aisle, Governor Long, Mrs. [Blanche] Long, and myself. Four of us seated together in the same row.

So our neighbor delegates from Massachusetts tell us all about John Kennedy. And to be honest with you, the fact that John Kennedy was a Catholic meant a lot to both Camille and me. Camille was a Knight of St. Gregory, which is the highest honor that a layperson can receive from the Holy Father. He received that at a very young age; his Bishop had him knighted. And of course, I

was an old parochial school boy myself. We grew up in the shadow of the church. Frankly, that was a great attraction for me, that he was a Catholic.

We called a meeting of our delegation quietly—all of them except Mr. and Mrs. Long—she was the national committeewoman—and we sounded them out if they would go along with this young man named John Kennedy. They said, “Well, we’d like to hear him.” We said, “We think can arrange that.” We had not met him yet, you understand. But we were hopeful.

So we went to JFK’s hotel, Camille and I did, and there was a former United States Senator who had served only by an appointment to an unexpired term. He was a big Democrat. His name was William Feazel. He had been a contributor to the state Democratic party. So we called Mr. Feazel, a rich oilman, and asked him to meet us at John Kennedy’s hotel. We went up to the hotel, but Feazel was not with us when we got there. He came later.

We knocked on the door, and here was this young guy. I looked at him and he said, “How are you?” It sounded to me like he was saying “Hawaii.” So he said, “Come on in.” We said, “Well, we’re from Louisiana,” and he said, “I’m Bobby Kennedy.” We see this young guy and he’s got no Vitalis in his hair, and he’s got no Brilliantine in his hair. Just a dry shock of hair. He’s my age; maybe I’m within a year of him. And I think to myself, *this guy wants to make his brother the Vice President of the United States—the whole United States?*

So we say, “We think we can get the Louisiana delegation for your brother.” He said, “Louisiana?” We said, “Yes.” He said, “Well, come on in and stand here.” So we stood in a little sitting room they had (it was just a two-room suite). Bobby came out of the bedroom and asked us in. We walked into the bedroom where he led us. There was one chair, and Governor Abe Ribicoff was sitting in that chair. Kennedy had Camille and me sit on the bed with him. So you might say we got in bed with him very quickly. We talked a little bit, and we told him we thought we could get him the delegation, which floored him. He just couldn’t believe that he could pick up the Louisiana delegation.

Knott: Because you were a Southern delegation?

E. Reggie: That’s right. We were the deepest of the Deep South states. So he just couldn’t believe it. We said, “Well, look. Do what we’re asking you to do. Earl Long goes to the track”—he was a horse racing betting addict. We said, “He’ll go the track around 10:30. So he and Miss Long will leave the hotel. Why don’t you meet us at eleven o’clock? He’ll be gone to the races. We can talk to the delegates.” So he said, “Well, fine.” We were about to keep Kefauver from getting our Louisiana delegation.

So Kennedy drives up to our hotel next day after our meeting him at 11:00. He’s got a driver and he’s sitting in the passenger seat. He gets out and we greet him. We only knew each other, you know, from yesterday. We don’t know each other at all. So we go in. Camille and I had gotten a few croissants and a few rolls, a coffee urn for the delegation. I had the great pleasure of introducing him. I didn’t know a damn thing about him. So I had to find out, what was I going to say about him? And, of course, the war hero thing was big. We told the delegates that we had brought him for the purpose of getting Louisiana’s delegation. So he spoke and we didn’t have to

do anything. They loved him immediately. They voted unanimously. We were under the unit rule at that time, which meant the majority of the delegates decided how the whole delegation would vote its total vote. And he got the entire delegation's vote and support.

Well, I don't have to tell you what happened when Earl Long got back from the races and found out. Remember what I told you—Camille, Governor Long, Miss Long, and myself all in the row together—they never spoke to us before the end of the convention. They were furious. How dare we! They sat next to us; they wouldn't speak to us. They were our friends when we went up there, and they never spoke to us on the way home. I found out much later—I was so young and naïve—that there were no relatives in Baton Rouge. He had not promised any relatives; he had promised Kefauver, "Don't come to Louisiana with those hearings on gambling. Put them in Biloxi, and I'll give you the Louisiana delegation." And we came in there and screwed it up, because they had already had the hearings in Biloxi. Kefauver had saved all of Long's gambling buddies in Louisiana from testifying in public hearings held by Kefauver in his political crusade against organized crime. So Long was furious. We had made a liar out of Long and the Governor never forgave Camille and me.

So we got the delegation, and the rest you know. I think he came within twelve-and-a-half—I think, officially, they say it was 30 votes or something like that—

Knott: Of getting it, yes.

E. Reggie: I always think, in my own mind—Of course, Sam Rayburn, you'll recall, was the chairman of the convention. Sam Rayburn, being a Lyndon Johnson man, did not want to see John Kennedy get anything. So he did not recognize the delegations that he knew would change votes for Kennedy or the definitive roll call of votes. Sam took the Kefauver delegates, whom he recognized. And, naturally, Gore's went to Kefauver from the same state. So we lost, but it was a victory in loss.

Knott: Absolutely.

E. Reggie: It really was. So the convention is closing, and Harry Truman's up there with Adlai Stevenson—and we were all for Stevenson, I might say—and Kefauver and Averill Harriman—and no Jack Kennedy up there holding hands held high. Jack was sitting across the aisle from me. Now, he and I are old friends; we've been friends for two days. So I grab him by the arm and say, "Come on, let's go up." He was a very reticent mover. He was unpolitical in a Louisiana sense. In Louisiana, it's all brash and all of that kind of stuff. He yielded because there was no way out. We had just given him the Louisiana delegation.

Knott: Sure. He was reserved?

E. Reggie: He was very shy-like. He felt a little embarrassed by my taking him up there. But I did. It was kind of a force. I took him as far as I could go, up to the steps to the platform, because the guards wouldn't let me on. But they would let him on. They let him on and, of course, he got there for the hand-holding high, together with the pros who didn't want him, which I think was the cherry on the whipped cream for that night, as far as I was concerned. When he got on the

stage the crowd yelled and screamed for him. He was a star just born. He made his case and he told me some weeks later, “You know, every time I see that film, I think I’m going to win.” [laughs] Great sense of humor. His natural self-deprecation fit him well to endear people to him.

So we left the convention, and, as I told you, Doris was pregnant with Gregory, our third son. As we walked out, just casually—we didn’t plan to walk out together—I said, “Where are you going?” He said, “I’m going to rest some place. My dad’s got a place.” I didn’t know who his dad was. I later found out in the press that it was in the south of France. He was going to see his father. I was talking to a man whose father had a place in the south of France, and here I was from Crowley, Louisiana, you understand? So he said, “Let’s stay in touch,” and I said, “Okay, let’s stay in touch.”

Then we went on and visited relatives and met Doris’ sister, who was coming in from Europe. We went home and all we could hear about—we went to visit relatives in Massachusetts—that was the only conversation. In Vermont, that was the only conversation. In New York, Jack Kennedy was everything. He was as hot as a candidate could possibly be.

We went home to Louisiana. We brought him to Louisiana for a fundraiser, and we coupled it with a visit to an agricultural fair we call the Yambilee—it’s a sweet potato festival. He went there and made such a good impression that the president of the sweet potato festival gave him the winning bushel of sweet potatoes. You know, they graded him. Later he told me, “I carried those sweet potatoes all over the country,” because he didn’t come back home. He was on the *Caroline*, the family plane. He said, “I carried those sweet potatoes with me everywhere.” He left such a good taste with everyone—certainly with me!

So he said, “Stay in touch,” and we were going to stay in touch. I had seen him at the fundraiser and saw him at that agricultural fair. I’d drop in to see him in his office in the Senate building—well, no heavy lifting, just friends. One day he invited us to his home—we had gone up for a fundraising dinner in Washington—and Camille was nearby and we went to his home on N Street in Georgetown. I think that’s right, N Street.

Knott: Sounds right.

E. Reggie: It was at his home in Georgetown, wherever it was. I asked him at that meeting— We didn’t stay very long. He had other guests: he had Marshall Field and his wife, and Governor [James] Edmondson from Oklahoma, and some real heavy hitters—not like me from Crowley. So I asked him, “We’re going to have an agricultural fair of our own this year, 1959. How about you coming to the Rice Festival in my hometown?” He said, “Sure, I’ll come.” No hesitation. Trusting. It was there, that Sunday afternoon, that I met Steve Smith for the first time. We became friends, until he passed away. I couldn’t believe that Jack really accepted that quickly, because he didn’t know what he was going to get into, I thought. Well, I went home and we started preparing.

Now, he had not yet announced for the Presidency. Our festival was in October. He didn’t announce until early January. So he wasn’t a fully announced candidate. I owned a radio station in Crowley at that time—I don’t anymore—and I used to be an announcer there. I worked during

the summers and holidays when everybody wanted to get off. It paid 50 cents an hour, and I could never have gotten a job anywhere like that anywhere. TV was just coming on; it was exciting and the stations needed support of the people. I made a deal with TV stations that we would advertise their programs on my radio station in a swap. I gave them a slide of John Kennedy with a little stalk of rice, the way it comes out of the ground when it's cut. So I also swapped with radio stations about their fair. But TV was the thing. I mean, it was just dynamic. People were invited to the Rice Festival, and we did everything we possibly could to get them there. We planned a very good event. Am I going into too much detail?

Knott: No, this is great.

E. Reggie: I visited up there with him, and he put me with Larry O'Brien for the first time. He told me, "We have a new man coming on. Your event sounds like it's going to be very good. His name is Pierre Salinger." Now Pierre and I became friends later. Jack said, "He'll be in touch with you." To show you how the campaign was different, Pierre didn't make the trip to Crowley and our Rice Festival. We didn't have a PR person, or a press person, a media person yet. He really, to a surprising extent, JFK put himself in our hands, not really knowing about us—because he didn't know us that well—and he just trusted us to do it.

Knott: Interesting.

E. Reggie: But he felt that something good was coming on because, of course, I was talking to him all the time about the trip. He said, "Jackie [Kennedy] will join me." Well, boy, that was the grand slam. I could not believe that we were going to be so lucky. But he was up in Nebraska someplace. He was going to fly on the *Caroline*, and she was going to come commercial to New Orleans. We'd meet there, we'd have a fundraiser at the Roosevelt Hotel for Louisiana Democratic Party, and the next day we'd go to Crowley for the Rice Festival. Jackie met him coming by air from Washington. Well, things came along well. That night, after the fundraising dinner, he and Jackie spent the evening enjoying Bourbon Street and good jazz. They went alone. We had the fundraiser, and the next morning Camille and I went with him—and I believe Steve was with us—I'm not sure, but I think Steve was with us—we went to a Knights of Peter Claver—Do you know the Knights of Peter Claver?

Knott: I don't.

E. Reggie: It's what you might call a black Knights of Columbus. He wanted to get an idea how African Americans felt about him. We went to their hall, and he gave a little talk about Franklin Roosevelt, and of course, that thrilled me because he was my hero from childhood. My father was an immigrant from Lebanon, and it was tough times in the Depression. Whenever FDR spoke, we all sat—we had one of those little Atwater-Kent radios that was about two feet tall and rounded on the top, and when Roosevelt spoke, my father felt he was his best friend, reassuring him. All my family loved FDR, following my father's lead.

Knott: Sure.

E. Reggie: So I grew up with a strong FDR connection. At college I was a speech major and especially studied FDR's speeches. When he spoke about FDR, it just made me feel that much warmer and closer to him. But there was a little guy there, a young fellow, holding a dozen red roses that they had planned to present to Jackie, but she didn't want to go to the function. She went straight to the plane at the airport from the hotel. So I accepted the roses for her. The fellow who presented them was just a young fellow of small stature. He later became a great mayor of New Orleans, whose son later became the mayor of New Orleans. He was [Ernest] Dutch Morial. And the master of ceremonies at that little function was A.P. Tureau. A.P. Tureau was a lawyer and he was the father of all of the litigation in Louisiana to integrate the state. So we had some good people there. But he didn't have a black rally or anything like that. That was too touchy; you couldn't plan it. But this was in the hall, a Catholic organization's hall of leading African Americans in New Orleans.

Knott: Sure.

E. Reggie: We drove out to the airport, and, as planned, I had gotten [deLesseps] Chep Morrison—whom I did not support for Governor, whom we had just defeated with Earl Long, who was the mayor of New Orleans—and Jimmy Noe—who had been an acting Governor of Louisiana and was then Earl Long's candidate for Governor—and a couple other candidates I just can't—oh, Jimmie Davis. I can't remember the other gubernatorial candidates right now, but I know all came except the Louisiana Superintendent of Education who was running for Governor as the area segregationist from the Klan area of Louisiana. I had chartered a DC-3 and got all of those candidates, who had just entered the race against each other, to fly in the same plane. And I got the State Supreme Court Chief Justice, and I got some others. Remember, Jack was unannounced. I thought it was quite a feat to get all those gubernatorial candidates on the same plane. We flew to Lafayette, which took us maybe 40 minutes, in a DC-3. When we got there, Doris' father was going to entertain him at a luncheon at the best country club in town.

When the plane landed—Doris, Jackie, and Jack and I rode the *Caroline* and the DC-3 followed us—and when we got off the *Caroline*, Jackie immediately looked up and saw we had an airplane with a long trailer, which said, "Welcome, Jack Kennedy." They put out a red carpet, which was—things like a long red carpet were not things done in those days; now everybody gets a red carpet. Then we had arranged for school children to come out to greet Jack and Jackie. Some from Mount Carmel, you could see their uniforms, and some from the public school came to see Jack Kennedy and his beautiful wife. And two little girls came with camellias. I don't know whether you're familiar with the camellia or not, but it's a very gorgeous southern flower that is perfect in petals and symmetry. Lafayette is a particularly beautiful flower city, and camellias particularly grow well in Lafayette. They brought Jackie these two perfect camellias and presented them to her, which deeply moved her. Now, you must understand, the Kennedys weren't used to that. They had never been feted like this, or the days to come. And the two were so impressed and happy with the special attention. Larry O'Brien and Jack's brother-in-law Stephen Smith were accompanying the Kennedys to Louisiana.

Knott: They don't do that in Massachusetts.

E. Reggie: Those days were to come, but they were not there yet in mid-October of 1959. Jack had not yet announced, please remember. So they were just stunned with all of this. The mayor was there, gave them the keys to the city. Then we went to the cars. I had arranged for 12 matched 1959 sedan white Cadillacs to transport the group of candidates and Kennedy group. And, lo-and-behold, the Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives was also a big Kennedy man. We had gotten him all stirred up for JFK by that time—the politicians then were following the people who were palpably for JFK, if you know what I mean. He had a black Cadillac, and he wanted to put it in the middle of the white Cadillac motorcade. Well, that would have ruined everything; it was the ugly duckling. So we prevailed on him to take the tail position and he went along. He didn't bust up our 12 matched white Cadillacs.

We went to the luncheon at Oak Bourne Country Club given by Doris's parents, Frem and Beatrice Boustany, and it was very nice. Congressman Edwin Willis was the Congressman from the 3rd Congressional District, and in protocol, we had him introduce Jack. Here's this crowd of 400 people for lunch. They're all screaming for Jack, and they love Jack, and everybody in town was excited by the handsome Senator and his gorgeous wife. That's all they're talking about. So this was the Congressman's moment. He was going to speak forever. Everyone in the audience was a constituent of his. So I asked him, "Please stop." I wrote him a note first. He wouldn't stop; he just kept on and on. We had to move on because the crowning of the queen was going to happen at the Rice Festival, 22 miles away, and Jack Kennedy had to crown the queen; that was our deal. Finally, I said to my friend Ed Willis, "Stop." I just went up to him and said, "Ed, I love you, but please stop," and he stopped. So Jack made a little talk, and it was very humorous, but also he was being loved. Many people, surprising to me, came up to him to get their copies of *Profiles in Courage* autographed. To my great surprise, many of them discussed the substance of those. He was excited so many had his book.

Knott: Oh really?

E. Reggie: Yes. I remember one fellow came up, a bank president there, and he said, "Why did you include Bob Taft?" And he explained why he did. I thought that was pretty good perception by a non-political person, for a bank president to be supporting Jack Kennedy and knowing details in the book. And, of course, Doris' father is very influential in Lafayette, and we had all the bankers there, I can tell you, the people who today would shun a Democratic rally. The crème of Lafayette business and social and political structure were all there and delighted to be there.

Knott: Right.

E. Reggie: We had a wonderful time. The dining room was all decorated with "Jack Kennedy," and we had a huge 4' x 6' photograph of him in the entrance as he entered the club.

We then piled into those cars after lunch, and we had a police escort, state police. As we were driving in the city of Lafayette to go to Crowley—my hometown—and the police sounded a siren. I knew that Jack usually shunned sirens and I attempted to stop the siren. I might say here, I purposely put JFK and Jackie in a police car to avoid a Cadillac that might make him to appear 'a "rich fellow" who was not a "man of the people." Jack corrected me about the siren and he

told our driver to “let ’er rip,” and our car’s siren and all those of the motorcycle corps that rode ahead of us sounded their sirens too.

We had the state police motorcycle corps, and in that motorcycle corps they had the state champion motorcyclist. Well, that was an experience that I’ll never forget. His name was—I don’t know his first name—his last name was Veillon, pronounced in French, “Vee-yon.” Veillon was something else. We were on a two-lane highway, we didn’t have the four-lane interstate then. Cars facing us in the other lane going east, and we were going west. Veillon would go into the left lane and going directly into coming traffic he would wave them off. It was harrowing. We were driving very fast—maybe 90 or 95 miles per hour to get to Crowley to crown the Rice Queen.

And he would do tricks. Jackie was sitting in the back with me and Congressman [Theo Ashton] Thompson in whose district Crowley was situated. Jack was sitting in the front, where he always wanted to sit. It was—she couldn’t look. I mean, she covered her eyes. It was just too much to see the motorcycle men do their stunts at that speed. He would lie down on the back fender over the back wheel, the back wheel—and we were then going like 110 miles an hour at some points. It was crazy!

This was big time. We had a police car with a police radio that could radio ahead and tell them, “We’re still running a little late. Bring out the contestants one more time.” So they’d bring all the contestants out, the princesses out, to pick the queen. “We want to take another look at them. Bring them up,” we radioed the stage from our police car. We were killing time before we could get there—Ed Willis making that long speech delayed us badly—and it was hard getting away from the function with so many wanting a picture with him or Jack’s autograph.

So we finally drive up to the festival stage. Crowley is built very much on the style of L’Enfant’s plan in the capital. It’s got the streets one way and the avenues in one way, and they’re pretty straight, 300 feet. The courthouse is in the middle of the original city plan. And Crowley’s 14,000 people. We drove up in those Cadillacs and those state police motorcades ahead of us. I had planned with the Crowley High School band to be right there near the stage where we would get out of our car, not out someplace at the festival, but where we would get out of the car. They were to play *Dixie*. They played and I said to somebody, “I told them to play loud. What’s the matter with them? It sounds like they’re hardly playing.” Then I said, “Jesus, we can’t hear ourselves. They *are* playing.” The crowd was so large, and I guess I was so excited, it enveloped me. It didn’t sound to me like the band was loud. It was a mass of people. The final police count was 135,000 people—

Knott: Wow.

E. Reggie: In our city of 14,000. The maximum we had had in the past was about 25-30,000 for our fair. We always said it was higher. The master of ceremonies there was a future Congressman and the future Governor of Louisiana, four-time Governor, Edwin Edwards, who then lived in Crowley, but now he is in the federal prison. But he was the master of the ceremonies.

Knott: Sure.

E. Reggie: T.A. Thompson, I might tell you, had too many drinks at the luncheon in Lafayette, and he would lean on Jackie, who sat between him and me, and she'd try to move away from him. But there wasn't enough room, and she was trying to be nice and trying to make conversation. He just was drunk, that's all. But he had to introduce Jack because that was in his Congressional District; Crowley was in the 7th District; Lafayette was in the 3rd. So protocol meant that he had to do the introduction. There was no way we could have ever gotten Russell Long or Allen Ellender to come to introduce him because they didn't care about Jack Kennedy. In fact, they disliked him and did everything they could (not Ellender, but Russell) everything they could, and we can talk about that later, to get him knocked off the ticket after the 1956 convention nomination.

So we had that big rally, and he leaves and it's all glorious. After the crowning of the queen, we—Jack and Jackie and Doris and me—rode in open car up one side of our esplanade to its end and then back on the other side. People ran across police lines just to touch Jack or speak French to Jackie, who spoke French to the crowd over a string of speakers and drove the crowd wild when she opened with, “Bonjour, Mesdames et Messieurs.” No one present ever saw anything like that, ever.

After the rally where Jackie spoke in French and he crowned the Rice Queen, we went to our home in Crowley where we had a reception. We invited about 1,000 guests. Then we have the announcement for President about ten weeks after the Crowley event. Then I meet Jack Kennedy in Texarkana, Arkansas when he had a rally. So, surprise, he didn't expect me. He talked to me about his planning to come to Louisiana and how would we do it? I managed the campaign by then without a doubt. I didn't start out doing that, but Bobby named me Louisiana manager after the convention. I said, “Well, don't tell anybody, but”—jokingly because everybody wanted Jack to come back to their state—“you don't need to come.” He just couldn't believe it. He was incredulous. Like I said, everybody wanted him for two or three more trips to their state. But he had made such an impression at Crowley in the preceding October, I told him that it was not necessary. And, if you'll check, we did some pretty good political stuff with his visit and the campaign, if I say so myself. But he carried Louisiana against [Richard] Nixon, and with the largest percentage of any state in the union, in Louisiana.

Knott: Right, wow.

E. Reggie: I think Rhode Island was next. We beat them by a hair. But that's pretty good for a Deep South state and a Yankee candidate—who was Catholic!

Knott: Sure, yes.

E. Reggie: I never heard of Ted Kennedy during the '60 campaign. The only thing I heard about Ted Kennedy was he was in charge of the Western states. But that was hearsay.

Knott: Right.

E. Reggie: He was a young kid; he wasn't that much younger than I was. Six years. But the biggest thing I think he did in that campaign, he tried to ski off something. I don't know—

Knott: A ski jump, right?

E. Reggie: Yes, a ski jump or something. Somebody dared him. I don't know how it came about. Then, of course, after Jack's passing, then Bobby asked me to handle his own 1968 campaign, which I did until his death.

Knott: Right.

E. Reggie: When Martin Luther King was killed, Bobby was due at our house the next day for a huge reception.

Knott: Is that right?

E. Reggie: Yes, and Doris had 2,500 people invited for the reception. Once the news got out on television that he wasn't coming, not a single person showed up at the planned hour. There was a pall over everything. I really didn't have anything to do with Teddy then. I might have met him casually or something like that. It wasn't until after Bobby died—Bobby was my close friend—that I met Teddy. We had friends, good Democrats in Louisiana, who felt that Teddy was going to be the heir-apparent, and was the heir-apparent, and they wanted him to come to Louisiana. I began working on that. So, in 1972, the president of AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] had a big state convention—[Victor] Bussie was very well respected, big supporter of the Democratic Party, and he asked me if I could get Ted Kennedy to attend his convention in Baton Rouge. Well, I hardly knew Ted Kennedy; I just knew him very slightly. I knew Ethel [Skakel Kennedy]; I knew Bobby; but I didn't know Ted, because he was younger and in another area. So I said, "Yes, I'll try."

So I flew to Washington to ask him to come to the 1971 labor convention. And that was my introduction to Paul Kirk. Paul Kirk was—

Knott: Judge, what year are we—?

E. Reggie: The '71 labor convention. So I went to Washington and had lunch with Paul. He took me to lunch in the Capitol, in the Senate dining room, to tell me, in effect, don't put any more pressure on Ted to go to Louisiana. Obviously, Ted must have told him to get me off his back with my many attempts to get him to come to the AFL convention. "He's got enough problems. He doesn't want to go to Louisiana. He doesn't want to run; he doesn't want to be a candidate, so please, lay off of him," Kirk told me. I just wasn't satisfied. I went to Teddy himself, and I asked him and he said, "Okay, I'll do it." When he said that, it wasn't a favor because he felt he owed me one because of my friendship with his brothers. He knew that I was with his brothers, and it was just out of respect for that relationship, I am sure, that he came.

They had to open up the hall at the Capitol Hotel in Baton Rouge to its limits because he was coming. The next day Hubert Humphrey came. They had to close off half the hall because of

lack of interest in him. I would guess they retained about maybe 50 percent of the hall and closed off the other part of the room. But that's how red hot Ted was in Louisiana. It was that old Kennedy thing that Kennedy people wanted him to run.

Knott: Sure.

E. Reggie: I chartered a private jet to get him. So we flew him in and flew him out. He had something else to do; I'm sure it was a fundraiser in St. Louis. But we flew him back to St. Louis. Then, I think, from there I flew him to Washington or Baltimore. Then we started staying in touch, and he became my friend. We'd be invited to functions by him and we'd go. We met him and his wife at those functions. Then, from the functions, he would have us on a kind of a special list and we would go out to Virginia to his home.

Knott: To McLean?

E. Reggie: Yes. At the home, with a sort of select group. So we got a little closer and a little closer. Then he ran for President in 1980, and I was in close touch. I was happy and thrilled and ready to do anything with Steve Smith who was managing Ted's effort. We knew each other from the Rice Festival. I had talked to him about the race and then back to Kirk again—you know, the old usual suspects. Teddy did not ask me to manage his campaign in Louisiana. I just did it; it just happened. In Teddy's campaign, it was like Jack's campaign: there was no money going to Louisiana; there was money coming out of Louisiana. I rented offices in the First National Bank Building in Crowley, and I hired a secretary, a woman who took care of the office and would give us some kind of cohesion in his Presidential campaign. We were going along pretty well.

I must not say it was red hot. It wasn't as hot as it was with Jack or Bobby. Bobby's was a little less than Jack's but still red hot.

Knott: How would you explain that, Judge, to somebody reading this 50 years from now? Why was there a kind of drop off?

E. Reggie: The cooling towards Kennedy was because of the racial debate, absolutely, no question about it. It was the racial thing. I remember in Jack Kennedy's campaign they were going to bring in Governor Ross Barnett from Mississippi to speak against Jack. I knew that if he came, he would hurt us because all the Ku Klux Klan, particularly in North Louisiana and all of those crazies, they would listen to that; he would inflame them. So we had no other way to fight them, and so I just said to the press, "Well, we'll invite him. When he's here, we want to ask him, and I'll be there to ask him, 'Why is Mississippi last in employment and last in growth and last in education?'" It got much coverage in Louisiana and in Mississippi. "I dare him to come to Louisiana," I said. So he just backed down. We scared him off. But the racism continues even as we speak now, make no mistake about it. That, solely, that was the reason for cooling towards the Kennedys in Louisiana. JFK integrated Old Miss and University of Alabama. They hated it and hated Kennedy.

Then, of course, Ted got out of the race— [gap in audio] —and broken-heartedly we continued on. We bought this Nantucket house in 1982. It was almost like this. We've added on some stuff. Shortly after we bought it, I told him we were here. He said, "Well, why didn't you buy in Hyannis Port? I have a dentist who lives behind me, and he won't sell it to anybody but somebody I approve." I knew that Teddy, in those days, it would be one party from Memorial Day till Labor Day, and I just physically couldn't stand it. So I said, "No, thanks. I'm going to pass. I'm going to stay." At least we had 29 miles between us, I teased him.

But he was a very good friend. Shortly after we got here, he brought his present boat, the *Mya*. He brought it here to be christened and wanted Doris to hit the champagne on the bow of the boat, and she did. We had a wonderful time. Since then, our friendships have deepened a great deal. I just love him.

D. Reggie: I remember the christening. It was the first journey he made in *Mya*. As he was leaving the boat dealer, he said, "Okay, man overboard. Let's go through this to make sure we have all the safety features, in case someone falls off and has to get back in the boat." It really impressed me, because he was such a good sailor and such a cautious one. Sure enough, I think somebody did fall over, and they had to use the safety measures outlined by the boat dealer.

Knott: Oh really?

D. Reggie: But it was not rowdy; it was just, accidents will happen. But it was fun that he did come and I did christen the boat.

Knott: Sure.

E. Reggie: I thought he came with three or four mates. You can take that the way you want to, but he had three beautiful girls that he sailed in here with. *[laughs]*

D. Reggie: It was a female crew.

E. Reggie: That's what I mean. His crew was all—

Knott: Sounds great.

D. Reggie: But they were good sailors.

E. Reggie: But that was his first trip out from the boat dealer, and after he had it—

D. Reggie: I was reminding him of that this week. We went sailing with him.

Knott: Doris, you were the only member of the Louisiana delegation in 1980 to stick with Ted Kennedy, right, against Jimmy Carter?

D. Reggie: Right.

E. Reggie: Not start. She was the only one at the convention—

Knott: The only one at the convention, okay.

E. Reggie: —who held out. They said, “Let’s make it unanimous.” All the delegations did except Louisiana.

Knott: Could you explain that to us?

D. Reggie: Well, I was a Kennedy delegate. We had been working for a long time, in the state, trying to get Kennedy elected, and we just felt he was a leader. We thought he would be good for our country. I was a member of the Louisiana State Democratic Committee and really kind of campaigned to get some other delegates at my end. Then I became a Democratic national committeewoman, and I was named to the platform committee. On the platform committee, I worked with a lot of Teddy’s campaign staff. I was so impressed with the issues and what he stood for and what his plan was that I was so enthusiastic. I was so excited. When he released all of us, because he knew it wasn’t going to happen), I just couldn’t do it. The Lieutenant Governor was heading our delegation, and he was incensed. He said, “I need to say this in French.”

E. Reggie: It would be distinctive from Louisiana.

D. Reggie: Yes, it was going to be, you know, 53 for Carter. I said, “No, no, no. I’ll tell you how to say it in French. ‘Une pour Kennedy.’” I wouldn’t change. So they had to announce that it was not unanimous and Kennedy had one vote. Truthfully, when I did it, I didn’t think Teddy would even know it or realize it. That didn’t enter my mind. He’s since then made such an issue of it.

Knott: He has?

E. Reggie: He’s never forgotten it.

D. Reggie: Right.

E. Reggie: She was the holdout in the convention. There was no way Doris was going to change.

D. Reggie: Honestly, I just couldn’t change. Lee Fentress was working with our group, for Louisiana, and he was so thrilled and so pleased. He’s a good friend of Teddy’s.

E. Reggie: Right, and of ours now.

D. Reggie: And of ours now.

Knott: He’s a good friend of this project, actually.

E. Reggie: Oh yes, he is.

D. Reggie: He loved the fact that I didn't get cowed by the Lieutenant Governor. I said, "No! Of course not. I'm not going to lie. I'm not going to desert Kennedy." No, Teddy was more important. And that was it.

Knott: That's great.

E. Reggie: As an aside about Lee, you should know—

Knott: Please.

E. Reggie: When I told you that Martin Luther King died and the next day Bobby was coming, Lee advanced Bobby. That's how I met him. We took a steam at our apartment. That's how I met Lee.

D. Reggie: Teddy did make one previous trip to Louisiana, in '68.

E. Reggie: Oh yes. Well, we would always bring Teddy in for a fundraiser—

D. Reggie: Right. But this was when he was representing; he was standing in for Bobby. It was during the campaign, and they had invited Bobby to speak. Something came up; there was a conflict. So Teddy came. That was the first time I met Teddy. We were on, I guess you call it the host committee. We had to walk in with the speaker. Teddy was there and he was young and charming. Great sense of humor. That was my only impression. I didn't see him again, probably, until '72.

Knott: Could I ask you both to compare and contrast Edward Kennedy with Robert Kennedy, who, Judge, you said you knew very well? You knew John F. Kennedy quite well too.

E. Reggie: Now, which Teddy Kennedy? Which Teddy Kennedy do you want to compare it to?

Knott: As many as you can give us.

E. Reggie: I've given that question so much thought. I think Jack Kennedy was an extremely brilliant, cerebral fellow. I don't think he was a good Senator. I mean, he was a good Senator. He showed up. But I remember, when he ran, we struggled to find out something, I remember, that we could brag about that. We said, "Why, he was Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa." Then they disclosed that his committee had never met. You know? So we were struggling. His accomplishments in the Senate were very negligible. But he was a cerebral kind of guy.

The thread that runs through all three brothers is loyalty. They don't forget. If it's down or up, or it's a miserable time, they never forget. It's a constant thread. So there, I think, is one of the great similarities.

Bobby didn't have enough time to perform, but Bobby had the guts. Teddy, I think, after Bobby's death, became a very poor Senator. He became a playboy, and you know the rest of that. But all three served in the Senate. In my estimation, with all due respect to the other two,

whom I loved dearly, he is by far the most competent Senator—competent in achievement, competent in vision, competent in imagination, competent in skill. He’s just the best, I think, that I’ve ever seen. I think too—not I think, I *know*—that his life is guided to a great extent by, “What would Jack do? What would Bobby do?” He has that and you can see it on him.

His father has a great influence on him, and of course, his mother—tremendous. Yesterday morning, Doris had scrambled eggs and chicken livers for breakfast. He said, “Chicken livers? I haven’t had chicken livers in 20 years. My father used to love chicken livers.” He told me that three times at breakfast. “My father used to—” Now, I loved my father, but I don’t think I’d refer to it three times. But that’s how much— You see how dear he regards that family link. Of course, now his protective feeling for the sisters, that’s his—

Knott: Some people have surmised that he had to sort of get the presidential thing out of the way before he really began to focus on the Senate. Do you think there’s anything to that?

E. Reggie: Absolutely. Oh, absolutely. I think there was an ambivalence in him. He didn’t want to disappoint the Kennedy supporters. If Jack did it, and Bobby was about to do it, and we’re all telling him he’s got to do it, I think we got him into something that I’m not quite sure he had all of that fire in the belly they talk about.

Knott: Sure, yes.

E. Reggie: I’m not quite sure he had all of that ambition for the Presidency. I think when his personal ship got straightened out—and I like to tell him, when he married my daughter—he became the best United States Senator in history. I just don’t know of anybody— I mean, they talk about Daniel Webster; they made me go look up Daniel Webster. He was a great man outside the Senate. But I don’t know, for Massachusetts, I don’t know what he did that was— And I’m not denigrating one to build the other, but you often hear, “Well, Daniel Webster is the number one Senator from Massachusetts.” His term was short; he didn’t accomplish much. I’m sure he’s a good man, and he did a lot outside of the Senate, but nobody has ever done what Teddy has done in the Senate.

To get back to your question, I think he’s constantly mindful of his brothers, constantly. In a loving way, I might add, not in a way that he’s trying to exceed them, but in a very loving way. See, I saw the reverse of that in Earl Long, who hated the memory of his brother, Huey [Long], and kept trying to outdo him, and ultimately went insane over the subject. That was the extreme. But Teddy reveres them so much that he’s not in competition with them. He reveres them and respects their work, and therefore, it’s caused him to respect his own venue.

Knott: Right. The standard account of JFK was that he was, as you said, quite cerebral, and Bobby was very passionate.

E. Reggie: That’s right.

Knott: Where do you put Senator Edward Kennedy in that spectrum?

E. Reggie: I think he's got the fighting guts. Bobby had fighting guts, very strong, but Bobby was dealing in a sort of vision concept, where Teddy has refined that vision, which he has, but he's refined it to a practical, pragmatic kind of thing where he will step across the aisle and get the most Republican support. Now he's got something big going with [John] McCain, and they join him. They're diametrically opposed, but he has that skill. The other brothers, if they had it, didn't use it. Bobby was the kind of a fellow that, you got in his way, he ran over you—all in the name of the Holy Spirit, but he still ran over you. But Teddy doesn't do that.

Knott: Let me ask both of you a question. As you've said, you're from the Deep South. That is not, at least nowadays certainly, considered Kennedy country. Even back—maybe I'm stretching it here—in the late '50s, early '60s, it might have been a little dicey. I would not think that a Massachusetts, Roman Catholic, slightly left-of-center politician would appeal to voters in Louisiana.

E. Reggie: It didn't appeal—you mean to the state?

Knott: Yes.

E. Reggie: It didn't appeal to the whole state because Louisiana has that “boot” kind of thing. If you take where the boot goes off and you draw a line, Jack didn't carry a single parish or county above that. That's all the Protestant, Ku Klux Klan, right wing, Citizens' Council, States' Rights, all that was born up there. We have the Catholics here, and they're always more liberal—you know, the *bon temps rouler*—have a good time. That's the old Cajun concept.

We did something that I need to mention to you. Jack Kennedy appeared before the Baptist ministers in Houston, and he made that statement about religious intolerance, great statement. We got a film of it. It has, till today, the all time record in reruns in Louisiana. Every time we started to sag a little in the Presidential race, I ran it. It made the Catholics so damned mad, they came back out, and they were going to elect him, they didn't care what. When it got very bad with the Klan up there, I'd run it up there. It's a little 15-minute film. Those days you could buy TV time all around the dinner hour. So I would run it up there, and those Kluxers would feel embarrassed. To make the fight, it would put a little water in their wine. It calmed them off. So against [George] Wallace, against Nixon, against the States' Rights, we had, in South Louisiana, the Catholic parishes. We had majorities like 75, 85 percent for Jack, against all the whole crowd. So, literally, we played to it.

Knott: I see.

D. Reggie: Also, as you said, maybe it's not appealing to some of the people in our home state, because we have had dinner parties, and maybe some of the people at the dinner might start criticizing Teddy—until we get them straight. Yet those same people, when Vicki and Teddy come to visit us and they're at the airport, they run to meet Teddy. Teddy, a celebrity, if you will. And a great attraction. They all come up and say, “Oh, Senator, we really want to meet you,” and if you know what I'm saying, he wins them over. I remember when he came for Christmas one year with Vicki. Our little hometown had a radio contest that the first person to see and shake his

hand would win a VCR or something. They had to find Ted. So maybe it's not political views so much as the person. I'm not really sure.

Knott: I see.

E. Reggie: Now, I want to complete my thought, that question you asked, because I think that's one of the most important questions. And it's the one that pops into people's minds a great deal. How do you compare the three? He, with that experience that he's gained in all those years, he has by far surpassed their abilities as a United States Senator. He's so much more productive. He's productive because he's picked up all this experience that they didn't have time to pick up.

Knott: I see. That makes sense. By 1980, though, even down in the lower part of the state that was pretty good for the Kennedys, by '80, even there they had taken some hits because of the race issue.

E. Reggie: We would have had a hard race, but I think we would have carried Louisiana.

Knott: Really?

E. Reggie: Yes. But it wouldn't have been a Jack Kennedy race. It wouldn't even have been a Bobby Kennedy race. It would have been a very tough race, but we would have won it. We would have won it by playing that, I think, the same game, North and South.

Knott: I see.

E. Reggie: We had one advantage by that time too: blacks had registered.

Knott: Sure, okay. What percentage of the state is black? Do you have any sense of that?

E. Reggie: Yes. Now it's a little under 20 in the total vote. You get them out, that's a big advantage. In an election now, in the present thing, if you leave New Orleans with a 100,000 lead, you have a pretty good shot at carrying the state. I think Teddy could do that.

Knott: Did you get the sense in 1980 that he was hurt at all by his position on gun control?

E. Reggie: No.

Knott: That's not an issue in Louisiana?

E. Reggie: Not at all. And, you know, they carry the shotguns in the pickup truck and all of that stuff. But that's not an issue. Those who are against Ted Kennedy in Louisiana don't admit it to themselves, but there is a strong streak of racism. His position against that—that's, I think, the number one thing. The doctors have never understood yet that Ted Kennedy is their best friend. I campaign—not campaign, but I go around with him a little bit here. The doctors in Boston have fundraisers for him.

Knott: Yes, I know.

E. Reggie: Because they see what he's doing for the medical profession, for medicine, for the life sciences. At home, that message hasn't gotten through. So they are strong propagandists against Ted Kennedy. And you have the Kluxers and the hard-asses who wouldn't vote for a Catholic President. Sure, some of that still exists.

Knott: Has it become a Republican state, as we speak, in 2005?

E. Reggie: Well, I hear that all the time, "Oh, it's such a red state." We carried it both times for [William] Clinton. Clinton, one of his campaigns he ended right there in Lafayette, Louisiana. So I think John Kerry could have carried it. When the campaign just started, before there was any heat, [George W.] Bush was six points ahead of John Kerry, only. But we couldn't get the Kerry campaign moving.

We had the Lieutenant Governor of the state, who is Senator Mary Landrieu's brother, he had just come out of the race as Lieutenant Governor. He's got a following in every precinct in the state. He wanted to run the campaign. John Kerry, at his house, picked up the phone and told Mary Beth [Cahill], "Put him on." Called [Steven] Elmendorf and said, "Put the campaign in his hands." They just wouldn't do it. It was a terrible neglect. And once the rupture got so big, you couldn't close it. But with six points, with an incumbent President, we could have won that. There was no effort to get out a Democratic vote.

We suffer from something there too. John Breaux is from my hometown. I know him; he's my friend. I supported him financially and politically all through his career. His mother was in school with my brother. I know his family very well, and his grandfather was one of my best friends. But John Breaux is a half-Democrat, a half-Republican. It's not just because of philosophy. He can't make up his mind. If you said anything to him, he wants to cut the baby in half. I don't care what the proposition is, he wants to cut it. So what that did, it suppressed the Democratic Party in Louisiana. That's why it's suppressed now. Out of deference, he could name the executive director of the Democratic Party, with an understanding that that fellow would not do anything to stir up support for the Democrats, because the Republicans would put opposition on John, and he had to deal with them.

Knott: I see.

D. Reggie: We definitely have a lot more Republican officeholders than we did in '80, '90.

Knott: Yes, sure.

E. Reggie: See, the rupture that happened, that we were talking about in the John Kerry campaign, cost us the first Republican Senator since the Reconstruction.

Knott: That's right.

E. Reggie: That's a big issue.

Knott: Of course, sure. I thought if I could get you to change gears here a little bit, and if you'd be willing to talk about your daughter, who has become such an important part of Senator Kennedy's life. If you could tell us a little bit about Vicki—

E. Reggie: Vicki is, of course, our oldest daughter, and she has a brother who is above her, not too far. He was born in '52 and she was born in early '54. She quickly distinguished herself at school—I mean, in kindergarten—as somebody who was very smart, had something extra. We tried to foster that, and she grew tremendously.

Just in the first grade, she was selected out of the school to crown the Blessed Mother on May Day. Well, that's just a small thing, but it does say that, from a very early age, she sort of bubbled up to the top of everything. She made a B once in school, and we hate that teacher until today. It was in P.E. I went to a restaurant in Lafayette before I left here, and we met the chef. He was a fine young man, and he said, "You must know my mother." And that was the teacher! All of a sudden, the meal wasn't good. After all these years, you understand.

D. Reggie: That was the only B she made in all of her schooling.

E. Reggie: In all of her—I'm talking about pre-school, career—a B in P.E.

Knott: Well, if you're going to get a B, get it in physical education.

E. Reggie: Yes, I guess you're right.

D. Reggie: She was the valedictorian. It didn't ruin that.

E. Reggie: So she did very well in college. She graduated magna [cum laude], and law school, summa [cum laude]. I remember she wanted me to go with her to the law school, where I knew the people, to help her get in. I didn't even have to speak. They looked at the transcript and said, "You're in. Don't worry about anything else." She was president of her sorority and was Phi Beta Kappa.

Knott: Is this Tulane?

E. Reggie: Yes. She was in the women's college of Tulane for the first four years, in the liberal arts, in Newcomb College, and then the Tulane Law School. It's all part of Tulane.

D. Reggie: Order of the Coif.

E. Reggie: Order of the Coif, one of the editors of the Law Review. Every academic honor that she could get, she got. She has always been a voracious reader.

At our house, we didn't have a lot of entertainment around town, so we always tried to have entertainment in the backyard for our children. One of the things is, we built a motion picture theater, with full-length regular movies, the same ones you see in a downtown theater. We would

get them before they were released, so we got the earliest movies. But it was a great entertainment in our backyard, and it kept the children there. We built a pool to keep them there, and they had a foosball thing to keep them there, and we had the jukebox to keep them there—everything to keep them at home. We would be watching a movie, the whole family, in the theater, and she would quietly get out, go do her homework. But the others, there was no way. Her brothers, by God, if there was *no* movie, they wouldn't even think about that.

D. Reggie: They'd say they had no homework.

E. Reggie: Yes, they would say they had none. I'm not trying to say that she's Mother Teresa. There were times that she wanted to kill her brothers, like when they tapped the phone. They set up a rigging of the phone in the girls' room, so if they talked to a boy, her brothers were listening in. That's enough to drive you crazy right there.

But she's done very well, and she was a very good lawyer, I think, a superb lawyer.

Knott: She interned for Senator Kennedy at one point when she was younger. Is that correct?

E. Reggie: Yes, around that '72 period, I would think, in the '70s. She had finished Newcomb. I remember I came up, and I said, "I have all these children"—those were my very words—"and I'd like to have an internship." "Oh," he said, "they're all spoken for. You mean one of your children?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, sure."

So Vicki got the thing and came up here, and it was an election year— Well, we can go back to that, because she started in the mail room. She was there about two or three days and called us and said, "I've got to get out of here." You know, she's a Magna Cum Laude graduate from Newcomb, Phi Beta Kappa, and they had her in the mail room. So much for good organization. So they quickly took her out—they recognized she had talent—and they put her doing research on the campaign, things that he had done. It was a great experience, and she loved it. She has a picture of her with Teddy. He didn't even know who she was.

D. Reggie: She had a picture, also, with Bobby. When our children were small, we took the six of them to the World's Fair. It was 1962, I believe. We'd been by to see Bobby at the office. He was so kind—no, was it '62?

Knott: Sixty-four maybe? The '64 New York World's Fair?

D. Reggie: Yes, '64. It was after the President had died.

Knott: Right.

D. Reggie: So he welcomed us into his office. My youngest son, Ray, was two-and-a-half, and Bobby took him and tossed him upside down. Ray was in a little sailor suit, and we had a nice visit. Then Bobby took a picture with our children, and we might have been in it too. I'm not sure. When Janet Reno became Attorney General and she saw that picture, she sent it to Vicki and Teddy, saying, "You're going to recognize someone." I guess she recognized Vicki. Bobby

was so thoughtful. I remember he arranged that a driver would take us back to our hotel, because we had been touring and we were going to go back to the hotel. I don't know how, I'm sure Edmund was going to get a car but Bobby insisted.

Knott: Right.

D. Reggie: He gave little PT boat clips to all of our children and a bracelet to me. Those are lovely mementos.

Knott: Was politics always an interest of Vicki's? She had two political parents—

D. Reggie: Well, Vicki grew up in a political family, because Edmund was a sitting judge in an elected position. Oh, sure. She ran for office when she was at school, and then also "Click with Vick" was her campaign slogan. There was a big campaign. She was at Girls State.

E. Reggie: Oh, that was high school.

D. Reggie: Yes, she was involved in high school in various political activities. Also in college.

Knott: Yes, we've got it in our timeline here that she interned for the Senator in the summer of 1976, which was another year he was up for reelection.

E. Reggie: That's right.

Swerdlow: It doesn't sound like they really had too much contact at that point. It's not like he really got to know her.

D. Reggie: He didn't even know she was there.

E. Reggie: No, he didn't know anything about her. We picnicked together, but that was after we got here. He'd come over in his boat. In fact, I came up here not knowing what kind of boat—I had the wrong boat. I bought it in Crowley and had it trailered up here. He said, "Well, I know what kind of boat you need; you need one like mine." His is an open boat. I said, "No, I want a cutter, if I want to take a nap or we have to anchor." So he said, "Well, I'll buy the boat, and I'll tell you where to go get it." I've often wondered how much he made on that deal. *[laughs]* I've often wondered. You know, I've plied him with his favorite white wine, and I've never been able to get that.

D. Reggie: But on one visit here, in Nantucket, Vicki was here with her children. Curran [Raclin], her oldest son, was just a little boy. I'm not even sure if Caroline [Raclin] was born yet. Teddy had Curran on his lap, telling him a story. We have a picture of that, but never dreaming that one day, because Vicki was married to Grier, that he and Vicki would marry.

E. Reggie: Well, we picnicked together. Teddy, you know, like on Muskeget. Vicki was married. Her husband was with us. But there was never any thought of that then by anybody. Then I invited him to Vicki's maybe once or twice. Then on our 40th wedding anniversary, we

tried to spend time, within a 24-hour period, with all of our children. So we did a little flying. But I called him, and I didn't say it was a wedding anniversary or anything. I said, "We're going to be at Vicki's. Why don't you meet us there, and we'll have a little cookout." He said, "Well, that's fine." I said, "Bring a date." He said, "That's fine." He showed up with some fine wine, excellent wine—in fact, better than he usually serves us now that we're his in-laws, but—

D. Reggie: No date.

E. Reggie: No date. So that's when he and Vicki started, I guess, getting interested in— It just escaped me.

Knott: You didn't notice it that night.

E. Reggie: Oh no, not at all. John Culver was there. We asked him to come over. By that time his child was a little child, and his wife was busy on some project. We had a delightful evening. Nobody thought anything of it.

D. Reggie: But Culver had to leave because his son got very cross, and he was afraid he was getting sick. So he left. It ended up it was just the four of us, Vicki and Ted and us. After that, he started calling and—

E. Reggie: Well, that's her story.

D. Reggie: Yes, right. *[laughter]*

E. Reggie: Then one day, it was after the season here, he sailed. Before that, we used to come here for the last sail of the year, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. We would sail from Nantucket—he would have his boat here—or from the Vineyard, if you'll pardon the expression. It was always a delightful thing. We'd go and stay over up there overnight.

Oh, and an interesting note is, a number of times he came to visit us in New Orleans. We always had an apartment there. One day when we were here I saw him, and I said, "You know, the Greek Point Lighthouse washed out, and it fell into the ocean." They had a little jerry-rigged thing up there with the light flashing. I said, "That's a disgrace in a state like this. You've got to get money and build a lighthouse." "Oh no," he said, "that's not our project. That's for the Mass. Historical Society." I said, "That's your job." "No, it's not my job." So I forgot all about it.

So he comes down to Louisiana, and Doris and I are right where the plane opens. He steps out and—we were from here to here—he comes up to us and he says, "You're not going to believe it. I got the money for the lighthouse." I didn't know what he was talking about. I had forgotten about the lighthouse. He said, "Early this morning"—they were on those last-of-the-session things, you know, during the night—"I made a deal with Lawton Chiles, on noise abatement in Florida. Then he"—evidently, he must have had something to do with the budget—"he approved \$2 million dollars. You know, we didn't know how much it would cost to build a lighthouse, because none had been built in a whole century." So we congratulated him, and we enjoyed the weekend.

Later, he called Doris and said, “I want you to come up. You’re going to pick where the new lighthouse is going to be built.” Well, I think the Corps of Engineers has pretty good engineers, you know. But we came up and they had the commandant of the Coast Guard, a big boxcar helicopter, I’d never seen one like that. So we all got in it and they hovered, and Doris said, “Right here.” So they let the thing down and put a stick where Doris said. And that’s where the lighthouse is. That’s where it’s built.

Knott: That’s great.

E. Reggie: It was a great day. I don’t know whether you’ve gotten to that. They had a huge holiday here in town. He had box lunches for just about everybody in town, out at the school ground. Everybody then went to the lighthouse. He brought back—he’s so imaginative about things like this—he brought back the last family who lived in the lighthouse, in the old one. This lady, I don’t know, she must have been in her 90s, with her children, those who were still living. They were the honored guests at the picnic. He brought them to the lighthouse. It was just a marvelous event. He has that touch.

Knott: Do you recall when you heard the news that your daughter was engaged to Senator Kennedy? Did he ask you for your daughter’s hand?

E. Reggie: Oh, I started to tell you. It was the end of the season. He sailed over with a bunch, his usual suspects over there, all of whom we knew. So we had to get something to eat. The season was closed, and, in those days, when the season was over, everything closed in Nantucket. It’s not like it is now. And that’s just 13 years. So we knew there was a little place right outside of town called Fairgrounds—pizzas and hamburgers, that’s it. So we went there, and the next thing I knew, I saw taxis pull up. I said, “Where are they going?” He said, “Oh, don’t worry, they’re going.” I said, “No, we have room for them at the house. They can stay at the house.” “No, no,” he said, “they’re going.” I think he chartered two planes, and they went back to the Cape. So that left him with Vicki and Doris and me.

Now, we knew that they were dating and everything. So we came home and he stayed over, and that’s when he asked us in the old-fashioned way. He said, “I’m in love with Vicki, and I want to ask her to marry me. I want both of you to give me your blessing.” I mean, it was the old time way. He’s always shown great respect.

Swerdlow: And Vicki was present.

Knott: She was.

E. Reggie: Saying under her breath, “If you say no, I’m going to kill you, Dad.” *[laughs]* But that’s how it happened, on that trip.

Knott: Tell us about the wedding, if you don’t mind.

E. Reggie: The wedding was just a lovely affair. It took a lot of logistical planning on his part. They decided that they would marry in his home in Virginia. Doris and Doris' sister, who was her godmother, we drove up before the wedding. Her siblings and his siblings were there. It was very nice. It was a judge-presided affair at that point, no need to have a church thing because of the divorces. It was good for Vicki. Hers was finished; his was to come. I remember we had a big crisis—well, you tell him about Vicki's dress.

D. Reggie: I took Vicki to Atlanta to a special bridal designer to design her dress for the wedding, and have it made, and fit it, and—

E. Reggie: Not a wedding gown thing.

D. Reggie: No, it was a short lace white dress. You've seen pictures of it probably. Everything was fine. I mean, they shipped the dress to her, and we had everything arranged. I had contacted somebody about the cake, and everything was ready to go. So we were driving, my sister and Edmund and I, a car that we were bringing to the island, up to Washington, for the wedding. It took us three days maybe, because we stopped along the way and we'd sight-see. In those days cell phones were not really working, so I was really out of touch. My sister had her cell phone, but she could never get a dial tone.

Anyhow, when we finally reached Washington, I called Vicki. "Well, we're here." She said, "Mom, I just can't believe this! I've been trying to reach you for three days! I just can't—" I said, "What's wrong?" She said, "My dress didn't fit. I've lost weight." What was I going to do? It was not fitting her any more at all. So she called her brother Denis [Reggie], who called the bridal consultant, who flew up, fitted Vicki, took the dress to New York, had it redone to make it fit, and by the time I was there, the crisis had ended. She was traumatized. But it looked beautiful on her. Everything was fine. But it was a lesson to me. I said I guess I should, every 24 hours, for sure, make sure I'm in contact with her.

E. Reggie: Teddy had a jet to bring us back here. We left our car there. He had somebody drive the car the next day, and he had planes for somebody else—I don't know, maybe Jean [Kennedy Smith] and Pat [Kennedy Lawford]. I know there might have been two or three planes. Here I was in a private plane, somebody driving my car—he's never been that nice to me since that night! *[laughs]* I mean, that was the last good deed he did for his old father-in-law.

Knott: That's good. I'm glad you're speaking your mind.

E. Reggie: I must tell you the truth. I love him. He is my best friend.

D. Reggie: The wedding was wonderful.

E. Reggie: It was very nice. It was a beautiful wedding.

D. Reggie: He immediately embraced us. We had been close friends by this time. As the years evolved, we became closer and closer friends. But I guess, immediately, it was like, now we're family. And at every event we were treated with the greatest respect, as his own sister or brother

or mother, because he was so so devoted to his mother. The respect that he had for her that we saw and witnessed, and—

Knott: You did witness this.

D. Reggie: Oh, yes.

Knott: Could you tell us something about what you saw regarding his relationship with his mother?

D. Reggie: Oh, it was so—

E. Reggie: He would be here, and we'd have a weekend together, having drinking and fun and all of that, going out and dancing to rock and all of that stuff. Then, when it started approaching mid-afternoon, "Goodbye." He had to go to the Cape because he had that piano player for his mother. They and the staff sang Irish songs to her.

D. Reggie: It was a sing-along.

E. Reggie: Many times we went with him, many times. I am positive, many times she didn't understand what was going on. He would talk to her as though we're talking here, a little louder because her hearing was impaired by that time. But her favorite songs, they were mimeographed in a book. I don't know whether you saw the book or not.

Knott: No, I don't think so.

E. Reggie: All of her songs that she loved.

Knott: Were these Irish songs, or were these—

D. Reggie: Yes.

E. Reggie: Mainly Irish songs.

D. Reggie: [sings] *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*, you know, and all these. We would spend the weekend—

E. Reggie: That was every afternoon.

D. Reggie: Every Sunday.

E. Reggie: Every Sunday morning.

D. Reggie: Sunday morning. He'd have a priest say Mass at his mother's home. It would be the sing-along with the pianist on Sunday evening.

E. Reggie: He had a priest come every Sunday.

D. Reggie: Every Sunday morning. But we spent many weekends there when we were there for the Mass, the sing-along. But he brought his mother to table with us at times too. He put her right next to him, most beautifully coifed and in her wheelchair. He paid complete attention to her. I was so impressed.

E. Reggie: Complete, through the meal.

D. Reggie: “Mother, Doris and Edmund just got back from your favorite hotel in your favorite city. And what is that?” you know, the Ritz, or something like that.

E. Reggie: She would just talk it out.

D. Reggie: She would say it. And, “What do you want to eat?” Maybe it was eggs or whatever. She would mention what she felt like eating, and they would prepare it. But she was the guest of honor, and so happy. She adored him, he adored her, and it was really something to see. The devotion of the grandchildren when she passed away was unbelievable.

E. Reggie: It really was.

D. Reggie: We were at the house and each of them would come in—

Knott: You were at the house when—

D. Reggie: Oh, after she died.

Knott: After she passed away, when they waked her.

D. Reggie: When they waked her.

E. Reggie: We did not stay long.

D. Reggie: No no. We came for the funeral, and we were there for the wake, naturally, her children were grieving. To see the devotion of her grandchildren. They were weeping, and it was so touching.

E. Reggie: That family is something else. I thought we had a close family.

D. Reggie: They adored her. She was elderly, and she was always treated with such respect. She was always an integral part of the family, regardless if she was infirmed.

Swerdlow: Did the Senator speak at the funeral?

E. Reggie: Sarg [Shriver] did.

D. Reggie: I'm trying to think, because we went to the funeral.

E. Reggie: No, Sarg did a reading from St. Peter.

D. Reggie: I know the— I think the daughters, yes, but Teddy did—

E. Reggie: I just don't remember that.

D. Reggie: But Teddy did—oh, God.

E. Reggie: I just can't recall.

Knott: That's fine.

D. Reggie: Because it gets confused with the other family funerals too. You know, John's and Jackie's.

Swerdlow: I just can't imagine.

Knott: Senator Kennedy clearly is an incredibly strong person, and you think of all the difficulties that he's had to face in his life. Do you have any sense of where that comes from, the source of his ability to put up with so many tragedies and so many—?

E. Reggie: Well, his mother was good at that. She handled it from a religious standpoint. I remember seeing on film her telling [Richard] Cardinal Cushing— He said, "Rose, Rose, how can you stand it?" She said, "God never sends us more than we can handle," or words to that effect, which I thought was just fabulous. Here's my son's just murdered. He was the President of the United States, you know? I think he gets that.

I don't know exactly how to say this, but there is a rather unsung hero in that family, as far as I see it, and it's Papa. I don't know what it is. I don't know whether that started when Jack was dodging Dad, although Dad was the craftsman of the whole campaign, but didn't want to appear to be the little boy, didn't want to pick up Daddy's political enemies that he had built, or—I don't know what it is. Because what he did in a single generation is phenomenal, just absolutely phenomenal. I find that while Teddy would talk about the chicken livers, and if we got fresh tomatoes, he'll tell me about how his father used to go to a certain place and get the "tomahtoes." He would tell me about how his father would send him out to the water to dip in and get the salt water to steam the lobsters at night.

He relates those things about his father, but I never hear them say, "Dad did that deal; Dad did this deal." I think Dad put a wall between them, between himself, that I don't think he ever brought them into those business transactions. I think that's why he made them totally independent financially, that they should have time to do good and not worry about making a living. He was an unbelievable fellow. But I find that there's more talk about Mother than there is about Daddy.

Knott: Yes, I think that's right.

D. Reggie: I think Teddy assumed the family leadership position, naturally, when his brothers died. I think that role is a very important one to him, and he takes it very seriously. I think he is living up to what he knows his brothers would want, and he's giving them his all, with their children, with all of the family responsibility, with the strength. I mean, he is the example. He knows he has to be the one, and he is.

E. Reggie: I think that's a source of great strength to him.

D. Reggie: And he is so devoted to his brothers and misses them so much. I think it's tremendous. One day—maybe this is too personal, but we were in Washington, and Edmund and I were with him in the car, and he said, “Do you mind?” He went to Arlington, and we went there, and had tears, you know? Then that was it. Got back in the car. It really affected us.

E. Reggie: It's a no-show deal.

D. Reggie: Oh no, there was no camera. It was no special holiday—nobody was there. He just had this need to go. He says, “Do you mind?” You know? It was so touching. I remember when we were in New Orleans at a restaurant, and the waitress came after we finished eating, and she said, “I just want to tell you, Senator, that my son served and knew your brother when he was the hero, and my son died—” the son or the brother, whatever the family relationship was. Teddy got teary, and the woman just wanted to thank him for what his brother had done and what he does for the poor people, for his fellow man. We saw it over and over, how he welcomes people, how he's gracious to people. They want to take a picture with him. He's always very aware of the other person. He's not one of these standoff people.

E. Reggie: You know, he's told me on two different occasions—we were out sailing here in the Sound—he said, “You know, the first time I saw Nantucket, Jack sailed me here.” He just remembers that.

D. Reggie: He feels close to them with the sea.

E. Reggie: Yes.

D. Reggie: They're with him always.

Swerdlow: It's sad.

E. Reggie: It is. We'll, we've tried to get him out of it, but I don't mean that he comes around here and mopes. I don't want to give that impression at all.

D. Reggie: Oh, no! He's the life of a party. He makes sure— You know what really impressed me too? We'd be at dinner, and he and Edmund, you know, he loves to have these very important talks. He would say to Edmund, “The children are going to be here”—that was when they were younger. He said, “Let's try to talk about something they like and they're interested

in.” So then he would take the conversation to something that would appeal to them, maybe the sail that day, or maybe we’re going to go here, or, “How was the tennis?” He was always aware of what other people were feeling.

Knott: He had a very good relationship with Vicki’s children?

E. Reggie: Oh yes, the absolute best. What really touched me— Curran is now 22; he might have been 18. We were at the house, and Curran walked in, my grandson, and he kissed him. I thought that was the most moving thing. Of course, he does it routinely now, but I think maybe that was the first time I saw it, because if he sees me, he kisses me. Caroline adores him. You would think maybe they would be conflicted about something. He never permits that.

D. Reggie: He took Caroline to art lessons when he was taking them, and every game the children had, Little League or whatever, in school, he was there.

E. Reggie: You know, he doesn’t miss anything.

D. Reggie: He was there.

E. Reggie: He didn’t miss anything in the Senate. He never missed a game. Curran was a catcher on the school team. He never missed a baseball game. That’s pretty good. Or a basketball game of Curran’s, or a soccer game. That’s pretty good. He doesn’t miss anything in the Senate.

D. Reggie: To this day, one of our granddaughters (Denis’ daughter) graduated from Foxcroft, in Middleburg [Virginia], and he was there. And when one of our sons, we gave him a birthday party in Atlanta when he turned 40, Teddy came. It was a big effort because he had to leave after an important vote in the Senate.

E. Reggie: We don’t have a funeral in the family, in Louisiana—

D. Reggie: He’s always there. When Edmund had heart surgery—and that was in ’86. That was before he and Vicki married, but he was just a friend who cared. He would call the hospital every day and say, “This is Senator Kennedy. I’d like to talk to—” and the nurses would go, “Ah, Senator Kennedy, ohhh!” [*laughs*]

E. Reggie: I’m not trying to say that he’s Mother Teresa.

Knott: I understand.

E. Reggie: He’s a human man who puts his pants on one leg at a time, like all of us. But he has some added something that God’s given him.

Knott: Sure.

Swerdlow: It sounds like Vicki has really helped to bring out the best of the Senator, because we hear that time and time again.

Knott: We hear it all the time.

Swerdlow: That he really took a turn after he met her.

E. Reggie: Oh, absolutely. I tell you what, I think he's so devoted to Vicki and loves her so much, in a husband-loving way, that his fidelity is beyond any question. In addition to that, he doesn't do much that he doesn't discuss with her. He likes her input; he respects her intellect. They don't compete. He puts up with Vicki's nervous demands, and he teases about it, and imitates her a little bit to me, and we both laugh at her. You know, the biggest joke in the family is that we got back from hunting, and he said, "I thought I was marrying Doris," because Doris is a very placid kind of person. And Vicki answered, "And you married Edmund." *[laughs]*

D. Reggie: Vicki brought him family life. Ted was living alone and that can be lonely.

Swerdlow: He must have been very lonely.

D. Reggie: Because he's a man who loves family, and his life changed. Here he was. He had a wife; he had children; he had happiness; he had—

E. Reggie: I think the religion thing is very good for him. I think it's helped him over the hump in getting his life straight. I think the fact that he and Vicki are strong, interested, practicing Catholics makes a difference in his life.

Swerdlow: Did you have any concerns at all when you saw that they were dating?

E. Reggie: None. A very dear friend of mine, I told him, "I've got to tell you this: Teddy has asked to marry Vicki." He blurted out to me, "You're not going to let him, are you?" I said, "Of course I am." Teddy was coming out of that black period, but I think they have such a happy life now.

D. Reggie: But I had a concern that Vicki was going to be hurt, because I didn't know—I said, "Now, Vick, you're going out. I mean, you don't want to get hurt in this. You have to really be very protected. Don't fall—"

Knott: What were you concerned about, Doris?

D. Reggie: That she would fall in love with him, and a lasting relationship was not going to happen. "Oh Mom, I'm in control of it. Don't worry. We're just friends. We're just having fun." I said, "Well, okay, I just want to make sure, you know, that you keep aware, because, you know—" So then I'd hear, "Mom, he left a poem at the door and a flower," and I could tell her voice was changing from, "Oh Mom, we're just friends" to, "Yeah, Teddy called." I said, "I can hear it." I can hear it as if it's happening, that he was just winning her over.

E. Reggie: He is so thoughtful a person.

D. Reggie: Last week, she and Teddy came over because our youngest daughter was here, so they could be with her. Oh, they're very thoughtful, Vicki and he are. The events that they, the memories that they make for our family together, I mean, they make our birthdays just so extra-special with all of that added surprises, as only they can do.

E. Reggie: I'm not an authority about his legislative record, but I know that he's the best Senator that we've ever had in the Senate. I have a lot of respect for Senator Robert Byrd, who is really the great historian of the Senate. He can tell you anything you want to know about the Senate. He told me that Teddy was the greatest Senator.

Knott: Really?

E. Reggie: Yes. Are you going to interview him?

Knott: We are.

E. Reggie: I just love that old man. He's wonderful. You can see the sun setting, and it's a shame, because his career has just been unbelievable.

Knott: That's right.

E. Reggie: Here's a fellow that went from being a butcher and a plumber and a member of the Ku Klux Klan, who educated himself while he was in the Congress and became a lawyer while he was in the Congress. I mean, he's just a spectacular guy.

Knott: Yes, he is.

E. Reggie: He told me, "There's no better than Teddy."

Knott: Wow. Judge, you mentioned a few minutes ago both your daughter's religious faith and religious devotion and Senator Kennedy's devotion to Catholicism. I was wondering if you might elaborate a little more on that, because there are some very traditional Catholics out there today who might question that, because of the Senator's position on abortion and things like that.

E. Reggie: You know, Steve, I wouldn't want to return the question to you. I think it's a very good question, but he's not for abortion. He is very much against abortion. He is not for curbing a woman's right to choose, but that's her choice. He, incidentally, like the church itself, he can't determine when there is ensoulment. None of us knows that. The church has changed and become much more conservative since he was brought up and learned the Baltimore Catechism. But he does more, I think, to prevent abortion by his agenda. He's got it by the beatitudes—you remember, those great rules that Jesus himself gave us. That's what he does. He feeds the hungry; he takes care of the sick; he does those things and educates people. By doing that, I think, he makes it less necessary for a troubled woman to have to abort.

That's a part that right-wingers don't ever give him because they say, "He's for abortion," as though he's got a little shop in the back alley somewhere where he's performing them. He's very

much against it. It's a bum rap that they've put on all of us who believe that we ought to have a policy in our church, not a position. I think it's not enough to say, "I'm against abortion, and I want to repeal *Roe v. Wade*." I don't think it's enough to say that. You can say that, but then if we repeal it, who are we going to criminalize? The 17-year-old girl? The doctor? Her boyfriend who brought her? Her mother who said it's okay to go there? Her father who said, "I'll kill you if you have a baby?" I mean, who are we going to criminalize? The landlord of the doctor's office? That's where they don't carry the argument, and he does. I think that's a great difference.

D. Reggie: He also practices his religion faithfully; he's very devout. During Lent and many other times he's at daily Mass and communion. He doesn't make a production of it. We've been at the Cape at times when he gets up early in the morning and goes to church, and the rest of us are sleeping. Then other times maybe we would go with him. But he's very devout.

E. Reggie: His back, if it withstands, he's on his knees at night. People would never believe that.

Knott: Yes, well, it needs to be—

D. Reggie: He takes his sons on religious retreats. I can remember he took Patrick [Kennedy] on a religious retreat.

Knott: He took Patrick to a religious retreat?

D. Reggie: Yes. And some of the readings— I think he shared some of the readings with you, Edmund.

E. Reggie: Yes, [Anthony] de Mello, the Jesuit—

D. Reggie: He's a Catholic through and through.

E. Reggie: —spiritualist. He's big on him.

Knott: Let me take you back to election 1994, when Mitt Romney gave Senator Kennedy a bit of a scare. Could you tell us if both of you participated in that election? Now, Vicki's role was certainly very prominent.

E. Reggie: Vicki was big in that. I was peripheral. I attended some meetings at the apartment, made some small suggestions, but I wasn't a main player. He had a Massachusetts Mafia handling it, and they handled it very well, I might say. Now, in 2000 he asked me to sort of campaign for him, but he had a nothing candidate. But we devised certain strategies that kept him from having an opponent, by contesting him, Jack E. Robinson, his Republican opponent, by keeping him involved in the court, and it took him out of the race. He didn't have sense enough to know that. So he would up— He didn't have any problem.

Knott: I think we may be nearing the end. You served on a committee dealing with the Rose Kennedy Greenway?

E. Reggie: I did. Teddy, by legislative act in Massachusetts, they declared that the land over which was built the elevated highway, most of it, would be a park dedicated to the name of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, in her memory and honor. So they took that out and that land is there; it's a strip of land.

Naturally, Teddy wants to see it as one of the great urban parks of the world. Massachusetts, being just like Louisiana, and politicians being the same everywhere, he said, "Why don't you come over here and help me?" I said, "Well, I don't know what to do." He said, "I need an adult." "Oh," I said, "I qualify for that. At my age I am very much an adult." He said, "I need you to come in and bring all the parties together so we can get this thing done." So I worked about 18 months, something like that, and we got the laws signed.

At the last meeting, the Governor didn't want to sit at the same table because he might be photographed next to the head of the turnpike commission, whom he despises. So I met with his people and the turnpike people at different times, of course, and we compromised. We had the Governor on one end and the turnpike on the other, so a camera could just pick up that much, or pick up that much, and they would not be next to each other. It was the shape of the table all over again.

But it worked out fine, and it's going to be a marvelous park. It's going to be done right and in her memory, and it's going to snake right through the business district, the best part. You never get that opportunity twice. When it's done—and, of course, we don't know when it'll be done because they're going to keep adding and adding to it—I think it'll be the finest urban park in the world.

Knott: That's great. Did you both attend the Democratic Convention last year in Boston?

E. Reggie: Yes, we did.

Knott: That must have been an exciting time.

E. Reggie: It was.

D. Reggie: Especially when we thought we were winning.

Knott: Right. Things were looking good.

E. Reggie: We were and are very strong for John. We love him and love Teresa [Heinz Kerry] and—

D. Reggie: At the beginning, the exit polls were wonderful.

Knott: Do either of you have any concluding recollections that you'd like to get on the record, keeping in mind that somebody may be reading this 100 years from now, trying to get a real sense of who Ted Kennedy was and his legacy?

E. Reggie: Will we have a chance to come back to you, or shoot something to you, or—

Knott: Absolutely. When you get this transcript in a few months, you can add whatever you like. You can even write something into it.

E. Reggie: That's good then.

Knott: Okay, great.

E. Reggie: Well, I can't thank you enough for coming.

Knott: We can't thank you enough.

E. Reggie: Making this whole big trip for just us.

Knott: No. It's been a tremendous interview. We're very grateful.

D. Reggie: It's so nice to meet you.

Knott: Nice meeting both of you. Thank you.

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