EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH THEODORE C. SORENSEN

May 19, 2005
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Interviewer
James Sterling Young

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TRANSCRIPT

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Sorensen: I'm not the leading expert in the country on Senator Kennedy, and much of what I am an expert on was a very long time ago. And I've had a stroke since then, and that has erased a lot of memories of some things I was involved in and may have damaged others. Who knows?

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: We'll find out.

Young: Yes. Well, he particularly wanted you included in these.

Sorensen: Well, that's nice. I'm sure you say that to all the interviewees, but—

Young: Well, of course, because—Right now, we're starting with the older people.

Sorensen: That's smart.

Young: Yes, because with six years to go. . . .

Sorensen: Mm. Well, I hope to be—

Young: I was talking to him at dinner one evening after he had decided to do the project, when he was planning about how to do this: how would you go about this and that? Would you do it chronologically, do it by issues? And I said, "Well, the planning is all well and fine, but there is something in oral history known as the actuarial imperative."

Sorensen: [*laughs*]

Young: And he said, "What that?" I said, "Well, you get the people who are older or who are infirm, and you do them first. You don't wait."

Sorensen: Interestingly enough, I told the Kennedy Library some years ago that that was the time for them with the people from the John F. Kennedy administration.

Young: Right. Right.

Sorensen: I mean, I'm still around, but I was almost the youngest. Bob McNamara is still around. In fact, he and I are on a program together next week, but I think they missed an opportunity to interview a lot of people who are now gone.

Young: Well, I just—earlier this morning, I was with Jean [Kennedy Smith], and she said to give you her best.

Sorensen: That's nice. Thank you.

Young: And—but only now was the Kennedy Library coming to do an oral history interview with her, later today.

Sorensen: On?

Young: On JFK.

Sorensen: Really?

Young: Yes, it's hard for me to believe.

Sorensen: I agree with you.

Young: I saw Eunice [Kennedy Shriver] day before yesterday.

Sorensen: How's her health?

Young: I can't tell, but she is driven. I mean she's just very busy. And very—

Sorensen: That's always been true.

Young: It's always been true, and there's no change there. But I asked if she had given an oral history interview. She said, "No, and I'm not prepared to give you one, either." [*laughter*]

Sorensen: Really?

Young: Eunice says she wants to talk just about Ted, but I would like to get her to talk more about the family. And I said, "Well, are you going to do one with the Kennedy Library?" She said, "I may get around to it someday, but not now. Not now. I don't have the time." That's a shame.

Sorensen: It is a shame. In some ways, she was closer than any of the other sisters.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: In age and otherwise.

Young: Yes. Well, I thought we might talk today a bit about—let me tell you where we are with the Senator. We've already started interviewing him, and he's got a very deep commitment to the

project, obviously. We're doing a series of interviews with him over the whole six-year period. So he's committed to about 65 or so interviews for the project over the six-year period.

He wanted to start very early in January. So we started having day-and-a-half interviews with him. He sets aside a day, usually a Friday, and then we go to the house or come back to his office on Saturday for half a day. We have another series with him in June. It's very busy in the Senate now, so he has to organize these around his Senate—

Sorensen: He'll always be very busy in the Senate.

Young: Yes, he is, but he really does make time for it.

Sorensen: Well, that says such a good thing about him, that he recognizes the value and importance of the history.

Young: I have never—I'm sort of a veteran in this field with politicians, and I've never encountered one who is so committed and so understanding of the idea of oral history and the importance of it, the spoken history, we call it.

Sorensen: Now Columbia also specializes in oral history.

Young: That's right. It started actually there—

Sorensen: Tell me why the Senator picked you over Columbia.

Young: I do not know, but I think they and the Kennedy Library were close runners-up in the competition. I know some of the people at Columbia, and I've visited with them. Do you know Lee Fentress?

Sorensen: I know that name. Yes, yes. He used to be on Ted's staff. He was an advance man for Bobby [Kennedy].

Young: He was an advance man for Bobby in his campaign up here.

Sorensen: I don't know—where he is now?

Young: Well, he is a businessman who's now retired. He had Octagon, the sports agents. He built that company; it's a big sports trade. He's chairman emeritus of it now, but he's a friend who volunteered or was asked by the Senator to do the canvass all over the country for an oral history.

Sorensen: Really.

Young: And this was almost two years ago.

Sorensen: That's interesting.

Young: He spent about a year. He talked to the [George H.W.] Bush people. The Senator himself talked to [William] Clinton and talked to Bruce Lindsey. He went all over. And he also talked with—

Sorensen: What's Clinton doing about his oral history?

Young: We're doing it.

Sorensen: Oh, good.

Young: We're doing it, but it's the whole administration. We're trying now to negotiate a series of interviews with him himself. So we'll probably be starting. We're at midpoint there. That also is a six-year project.

Sorensen: You'd better hurry with him.

Young: Yes. That's why we're negotiating for his time right now. With the Senator, we had started what we thought would be the best place to start, which was just get him to start talking about his early years, his growing up, his family, pre-Senate years, law school, Harvard, Army, family. And we have done that once. He keeps coming back to family every now and then. But we had carried up to the '62 campaign. We've had two interviews now with him on the '62 campaign and the events surrounding that, his campaign for the Senate and his decision to enter the race. He's also talked about his first year or portion thereof, before the assassination, in the Senate. And when he gets into it, he has just got lots of stories.

Sorensen: I'm sure.

Young: And they have a point. Every one of them has a point. It's not just idle anecdotes. We spent a lot of time on the '62 campaign. So I thought that might be—you were involved in that campaign. You were in the White House at the time.

Sorensen: I was remotely connected to the campaign.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: You should, of course, understand, first, I was very young myself at that time. I was not a power in the White House, much less in the family, and given the extent to which I was at all times over-scheduled, overworked, over-committed, there was no way that I could keep track of everything going on in the White House. So lots of JFK's discussions, decisions went on without my being present or knowing about them. Nevertheless, as I have recorded in my book *Kennedy*, I do know that the President was in a ticklish position for more than one reason.

Number one, it was ticklish because he was already accused of nepotism for having appointed his other brother, surviving brother, as Attorney General. And if he then looked as though he were absolutely bent on getting still one more brother into high office in Washington, the nepotism charge would become possibly a serious criticism, to say nothing of a subject for late night comedians. Number two, he was in a ticklish position because John McCormack had—well, he was the majority leader—had he become the Speaker yet?

Young: He was Speaker then.

Sorensen: [Samuel] Rayburn had died?

Young: In '62? I think so. Maybe I'm wrong about that, but I think John was Speaker.

Sorensen: I think he was. And, of course, the Speaker is next in line after the Vice President. He's a power in his own right. John McCormack was a veteran of the House, highly regarded, highly respected, highly influential, including with some of the older Democrats who were pretty skeptical of the young, inexperienced-in-their-view President, so he didn't want to offend John. And Eddie McCormack, Ted's principal opponent in the primary, was the apple of Uncle John's eye, and how to proceed and not offend John and start a family feud, that caused the President concern as to whether Ted should even run, much less expect or receive help from the White House.

Young: Right.

Sorensen: And third—but this I have no first-hand information about—is I assume that Ted's decision to run was influenced by their father, and their father had plenty of disagreements with John F. on matters of policy as well as personality—

Young: Certainly.

Sorensen: —and almost everything else. And so very likely, as was the case with the appointment of Bobby as Attorney General, if the father said, "Ted is going to be the new Senator. That's it," Jack was not—he had enough disagreements with his father on policy not to pick any new arguments on family matters. So for all those reasons, he was in a spot and said publicly, made quite clear publicly, that he was neutral. He was keeping hands off, and that the White House would not be involved.

Despite all of that, I can recall only two interventions on my part. And when I say "interventions," neither one of them, you can be sure, was at my initiative; both of them were at the direction of the President. One was that Bobby and I flew unannounced, I think to Cape Cod, and had a long session with Ted to talk about the campaign and particularly about the debate, the first debate. I gather from the materials your staff prepared that there was more than one.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: But Bobby and I took part in that, a little bit like the way I would prepare the President for a press conference, that is, I would have had a list of possible questions and issues. I would fire them at Ted, see if he was prepared to respond to them or how accurate and complete his response was, possibly make suggestions where it needed to be filled out, rounded out, improved, or whatever. And then I went to that debate and sat in the audience without any announcement or disclosure of any kind.

And the other intervention, if you want to call it that, came in very late October when Ted was scheduled to go on *Meet the Press.* The President had two reasons for sending me up. One was, in general, just to help Ted prepare, advise on that appearance. But the second was that we had

just completed what your profession calls the most dangerous 13 days in the history of the world, and the President was wise enough to know that whatever Ted said on the subject of the Cuban Missile Crisis would be interpreted around the world as the policy and words and views of the President.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: He wanted to make sure that, therefore, Ted was well briefed on what he could and should not say. I should add that in between, on October 22nd, which is the midpoint in the crisis, after we had formulated a response, on the evening of October 22nd the President was going to go on nationwide television and declare that the missiles had been spotted, which at that time was not public information, and that the United States was determined upon their removal, and what our policy was going to be. It was an impossibly busy time for me, and I accepted only two or three phone calls all day, one of which was from Ted. His question was: Should I give my usual speech on Cuba? And the answer was no, wait until you hear the President's speech.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Aside from that, I don't know that I can help you much on the campaign.

Young: Well, I believe you and Robert—I'd like you to talk a little bit, if you remember this, about the briefing or the rehearsing for the McCormack debate. I think you were up at Hyannis.

Sorensen: Yes, that's what I said. Pretty sure it was Hyannisport.

Young: What was your impression of how—I think Edward was somewhat of an unknown quantity.

Sorensen: In more ways than one.

Young: Yes. And I guess that could make the President and maybe some of the family somewhat nervous—

Sorensen: That is very true.

Young: —because if he should be defeated—

Sorensen: As you also know, just from the calendar, Ted was really a different part of the family than Jack and Bob. Jack and Bob were close, both had a lot of experience, and Ted was distant in every sense of the word—

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: —in age and in habits and practices and what they did and so on. I first met Ted, if that's of any relevance here—

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: —in the fall, it might have been ’53, my first year with John F. Kennedy, or ’54. I say it might have been ’54 because the Senator had me living in Boston for several weeks in the fall during election time of ’54. But I met Ted—in ’53, my first visit to the Cape in I think the fall of ’53, but it’s a long time ago, and those dates have blurred. Whichever it was, Ted drove me to Boston the next day, and we got acquainted a little bit. He was very young, and he was playing football for Harvard and said he could give me a couple of tickets to the game, which wasn’t all that interesting to me, sorry to say. The only thing I remember that I learned from Ted Kennedy is one of the important things of life, at least in Massachusetts, which is that when you’re speeding along, whenever it was I went to the Cape, and between the Cape and Boston, and the car coming the other way blinks its lights at you, that means there’s a policeman back there, so you’d be wise to slow down. It’s just a friendly—I hadn’t known that before. That’s all I remember from that ride.

Anyway, this is all a diversion. You’ve got to be careful because I do divert a lot.

Young: That’s fine.

Sorensen: I really have no specific recollection of subject matter or even impressions from the briefing that Bobby and I gave Ted. I think we were sitting at the dining room table in the big house. Ted didn’t have his own home yet at that point in Hyannisport. My impression in the debate was that he did pretty well. I was there when the famous statement about, “If your name were Edward Moore,” was made. But I thought he handled it well.

Young: That shook him quite a bit, I think.

Sorensen: I don’t doubt it.

Young: I don’t think he expected that. He was briefed to talk about positions—

Sorensen: My impression, though, was that sometime later—one of my duties that I remember most about was writing jokes for the President. There was a dinner for Ted up in Boston. Do you know about this joke?

Young: No, I don’t think so.

Sorensen: The President said, “Well, Teddy came to me and he said people were saying that he was getting his job just on his name. And he wanted to change his name. I said to him, ‘Fine, Teddy. What do you want to change it to?’ He said, ‘I don’t want to be Teddy Kennedy anymore. People are saying I’m trading on a famous name. I want to change it to Teddy Roosevelt.’” Just totally fiction, you understand. Anyway, it showed the great Kennedy trait, the ability to poke fun at themselves.

Young: Yes. Ted was ribbed a lot by his brothers, but he was also supported a lot by them. Do you have any observations on that kind of relationship? I mean his older brother Joseph [Kennedy]—

Sorensen: Whom I never knew.

Young:—and then John—

Sorensen: And Joseph was older than John, so he was certainly much older than Ted.

Young: Much. Right. But they were pretty tough on the youngest one, I think, but very supportive, too.

Sorensen: Yes, it sounds like them.

Young: You know, Ted is still telling about, from the time—he couldn't sit at the big table with the family—

Sorensen: Really?

Young: —he had to sit at the small table.

Sorensen: Well, it's a big family. I can understand that.

Young: And how the first time that his name was even mentioned at the big table, he and Jean were sitting over there on the side. And he tells a lot of jokes about how his brother Jack would give him the dirty jobs to do. He now laughs about it, but you know, during that campaign—

Sorensen: We all had our older brothers.

Young: Yes. During the campaign—

Sorensen: The '62?

Young: Yes, the '62 campaign, there was the question of—let me dial back. You said in '53 or '54 he drove you to Boston

Sorensen: Right.

Young: That was before he got suspended from Harvard? It was.

Sorensen: I'm pretty sure he was playing on the Harvard football team at the time.

Young: OK. So he was there one year, and then he went in the Army when he was suspended.

Sorensen: I do not remember that chronology.

Young: Yes, within two weeks. And after that he went into the Army.

Sorensen: He was suspended because somebody took a test for him.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Who was the somebody? I think it's somebody whom I met. That's why I'm asking.

Young: I'm having a block on it. It wasn't John Culver. Culver was there on the team with him. [Bill] Frate? Frate.

Sorensen: Frate. No. I guess I don't know him.

Young: Yes, and Frate left school also. I think he was the one who—it was a Spanish exam.

Sorensen: Mm. Too bad.

Young: But this was not public knowledge that he had been suspended. And he was on probation, you know, when he came back. They allowed him to come back, but one year on probation.

Sorensen: Mm hmm.

Young: But during the Senate campaign of '62, Bob Healy or perhaps some other reporters learned about this, his being kicked out of Harvard for cheating. And this was much discussed in the family. I wondered whether you were part of those discussions as to whether to, what to do, because the story was going to come out. And the end result, as I understand it, was that President Kennedy spoke to Bob Healy, who was the guy on the *Boston Globe*, or to the publisher. I don't know. And there was a meeting between the two. The upshot of that was that I think they gave the full facts to Healy, or to the *Globe*, but they could not get the story killed. The publisher wouldn't agree to that, because it would come out anyway. Do you have any recollection of that decision?

Sorensen: Let me—

Young: I may not have it all right, but that's the impression.

Sorensen: I don't know. I have a vague feeling that I was involved in a strategy discussion, but now I'm going to do Ted disservice. And the reason I say I think I was involved is because there was a second such discussion, and I had a sense of *déjà vu* when I was called in to the second. But it was not about Harvard.

Young: No, I know.

Sorensen: Oh, you do know?

Young: Well, about '69, you mean?

Sorensen: No, no, no.

Young: You're not talking about Chappaquiddick.

Sorensen: No. I'm talking about White House days.

Young: No, I did not know that.

Sorensen: Well, that's why I don't like to add to Ted's history.

Young: Well, you can take it out of the record later if you want.

Sorensen: Another black mark. Well, let's just say that Ted had gotten into some trouble, a fight. Maybe he had had some drinks. And once again, the question was what could and should be done about trying to confine the public relations side of the story. It had nothing to do with lawsuits or anything. And so I was called in for that one. The President and Bobby were there. I guess Ted must have been there. It was in the Oval Office. And I have a feeling that one went away. I don't think there was a major story, or you would know about it. But as I say, I think, I have a sense when I was called into that one that there was almost a wry sense of *déjà vu*, here we go again, which is why I think I was involved in discussions on the cheating story.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: But I have no recollection.

Young: Well, was the fight or the incident while he was at Harvard, or earlier? Or was it during the campaign?

Sorensen: As I say, I don't want to go into details. My recollection is it was on a ski trip. Obviously it wasn't the winter of '63. So it might have been the winter of '62 after he was already a Senator.

Young: This wasn't an Alaska trip, was it?

Sorensen: No, no, no. Ted didn't go on that Alaska trip, did he?

Young: Well, he went—I don't know when.

Sorensen: Bobby did. Bobby did in the late sixties.

Young: I don't know when it was, but he was drinking a lot on that trip. That's a matter—

Sorensen: Oh, on the trip back.

Young: Yes, the trip back.

Sorensen: You're thinking about that.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: But that—I think that was after the President's death.

Young: Yes, it was.

Sorensen: No, I'm certain that what I'm talking about was while the President was in the White House. So whether it was late '61 or late '62, I have no way of knowing.

Young: What does this indicate about Ted Kennedy as a young man?

Sorensen: As a young man, he was under tremendous pressure. He lived in such a glass bowl in which his every move was scrutinized and in which he had to live up to the highest standard. For a red-blooded young American, to say nothing of Irish, who enjoyed drinking and who enjoyed girls, and who was pretty much a free spirit, that was a lot of pressure. Also, it's a little bit like—not that I have any experience of this, but I've read how famous boxers, heavyweight champions and so on, are almost inevitably picked on in bars. And I have no doubt that if you were a Kennedy in those days, that you were a target for drunks and so on. So I don't think he brought all the trouble on himself.

Young: When he was in the Army, there were a couple of fights.

Sorensen: Oh, really?

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: I didn't know that.

Young: Yes, but they were in the barracks. And it wasn't in connection with drinking. It was challenging him.

Sorensen: This could very well have been that, this pattern.

Young: One was a black guy where he and Ted were put on a detail together to go do something, and the black guy wouldn't do it. Ted said, "But you've got to do it." And that—they soon were—Ted said, "I thought I was going to get killed by this...." But he held his own. He had wrestled. And the other was a taunting by another soldier who was from South Boston, Southie. They ended up close friends. They challenged each other to go outside and run and jump and dive and climb trees, and they ended up respecting each other.

Sorensen: Really.

Young: So he was sort of being picked on or singled out in the barracks as a person of privilege and a Kennedy and not with a Southie accent.

Sorensen: Anyway, just to move ahead, I didn't see a lot of Ted when he was a Senator. I just was too damned busy. I was day and night in my own office in the White House, and as I say, always over-committed, over-scheduled, and overtired. I—it may well be that my first visit to his Senate office came after the President's death. I just happen to sort of see it in my eye, and I don't remember exactly what year it would have been. I do remember that, from the very beginning, he had a reputation for selecting very able staff members.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: In the Senate, that makes a tremendous difference. I was originally a Senate staffer for John F. Kennedy, who had a reputation for doing his homework and getting well briefed before he spoke on the Senate floor, and there were some very able Senators who did not have that reputation and who were known for picking relations or political connections for staff, and whose work suffered from that.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: And the Kennedy brothers prided themselves on the quality of staff. I think Ted certainly deserved that reputation.

Young: Yes, the Kennedy staffs are famous, to this day.

Sorensen: I am unable to break the habit of referring to him as Teddy. Now he's of an age and seniority that I should not, and maybe we should agree that in the transcript those references will be changed to either Ted or the Senator.

Young: All right. We can do that. You will see the transcript. We'll send it to you—

Sorensen: OK, but I don't see very well, so editing a transcript is—

Young: Well, we will copyedit it.

Sorensen: OK.

Young: We try to preserve the authenticity of the spoken word while making it easily readable. But you will see it. We'll send it to you in 20 point.

Sorensen: Oh, yes. That helps. Thank you.

Young: We will do that so that if you see things you would prefer to add or change or redact, you'll be able to do that.

Sorensen: I probably will not have any, but I appreciate your sending it to me.

Young: Well, that's your right, and everybody has the same right.

Sorensen: OK.

Young: Fifty years out, everything comes out, but only after fifty years. If you want to permanently redact something, you can keep it even from coming out in fifty years. But the cleared versions of the transcripts would be released publicly at the end of the project; that's six, seven years. But those transcripts are subject to any stipulations that individual people would make.

Sorensen: Well, we haven't come to anything yet, but we might.

Young: During his first year in the Senate, Ted Kennedy said he was going to be seen but not heard. And it's very interesting for the historical record to get a picture. I know you were not by his side at this. You were busy and over-scheduled. But maybe you have some impressions from the White House about his behavior and his way of coming in to Washington. He says that his brother gave him some very useful advice about what he does as a newcomer in the Senate, the youngest member of the Senate, a brother of the President, and a Kennedy. He's moving into an institution that is still dominated by the seniors. And it's very interesting to see how the newbie, so to speak, in the Senate, who has these family connections with the White House, and who's

been preceded in the Senate, at least as a Senator, by his brother, and on the staff, Robert, to see how he plays it, to use a—

Sorensen: He wasn't preceded by Robert.

Young: Well, Robert had been a Senate staffer during [Joseph] McCarthy.

Sorensen: That's true.

Young: So the Kennedy name was more than just in the newspaper. They had been participants or actual Senators in the Senate. Was his brother concerned or was there any concern in the White House about Edward's presence in the Senate?

Sorensen: Again, I'm sorry. I just don't remember. And it's logical that there might have been, but it did not arise to a level that I remember. I think, had it been a major issue, I would have remembered it.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Had I ever been sent to warn him or brief him, I would have remembered it. I'm quite sure I was never dispensed on any such mission. I do tell in my book the story about the dinner, Jackie [Kennedy Onassis] joking with Ted at a White House dinner. Do you remember that?

Young: Yes, yes.

Sorensen: And JFK speaking to her afterwards: "Don't tease Teddy about that. It makes him uncomfortable, and the Senate seat is very important to him, and don't worry about what I'll do after the White House, and the future will take care of itself." That story was told to me by Jackie.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: So I don't know if Ted was even aware that such a follow-up conversation between the two of them, husband and wife, took place after that dinner.

Young: I think there were a number of times when, after business hours, in the evenings, Ted would go down—

[*Banging sounds*]

Sorensen: Sorry about the noise.

Young: Are you getting it?

Kuhn: Yes, I'm getting it, but maybe if you just speak a little louder.

Sorensen: Hope you feel sorry for me. I try to work here.

Young: How long has it been going on?

Sorensen: Across the street, it's been going on for about a month. Upstairs, just about two weeks.

Young: So the best is yet to come.

Sorensen: The worst is.

Young: Well, you let us know whether you're getting so much interference. And now I've forgotten what my question was going to be. It was about informal times, that is, not having to do with business.

Sorensen: Yes.

Young: And there were the three brothers now in, for this brief moment in history, all in politics—one in the White House, one in the Department of Justice, and one in the Senate. And any observations. And then bad things began to happen. After that, the assassination. The brother gets assassinated. Edward gets his troubles. This is moving through time. Here was a very political family, a family where they in a sense, the boys achieved their highest aspirations.

Sorensen: Well, for what? Roughly thirteen months?

Young: Yes, 13 months. Very short.

Sorensen: Thirteen months, it was a wonderful time. And obviously, they enjoyed it. You could tell that just by looking at them. And they had every right to enjoy it. It was a great moment.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Although the father, who in many ways was the architect, or considered himself to be the architect of the plan—take my word for it, he was not quite the leader they said he was—

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: When was his stroke? In early '62?

Young: It was I think September of—

Kuhn: Just a minute.

[*break in audio*]

Sorensen: So the father's stroke was September of '62. So that means he had less than a year of enjoying it.

Young: That's right. It's all of these things—things began to happen fast, but there was that brief moment. The '62 stroke happened the evening of the day of Ted's victory celebration for the primary in Massachusetts.

Sorensen: Oh, the primary? He didn't even live to see Ted elected?

Young: No, no. He had a stroke.

Sorensen: Oh, he did not remain, his health did not—he never—I mean, I saw the father up close, so I know to what extent he was functioning and to what extent he was not. So he never enjoyed the full benefits of having all three in high office at the same time.

Young: That's correct. So they were having the victory celebration there at the G&G Deli after winning the primary.

Sorensen: What's the G&G Deli?

Young: Well, it was a place in Boston where the Democrats would go to celebrate their victories.

Sorensen: I didn't know that.

Young: The G&G Deli was a one-story deli, and the crowds would be down in the street, and the winners and their people would be up on the roof with microphones or something talking to the crowd down below.

Sorensen: I didn't know that, or at least I didn't remember that.

Young: Well, according to one story at least, Robert slipped out and came up there for that, so did the President, and so did Edward. So the three of them were up there on the roof, and they were not giving a speech. They were going to sing. [*laughter*] So they were singing, you know, *Wedding Bells*. And all of that.

Sorensen: *Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey*?

Young: And in fact, we have some of those songs on tape with the Senator singing them.

Sorensen: Really.

Young: Yes. But that day also he got word that his father had had the stroke.

Sorensen: Where?

Young: In Palm Beach. Same day.

Sorensen: Oh. In Palm Beach? Are you sure?

Young: Yes. He was on the golf course. The father was on the golf course.

Sorensen: I guess he then was taken north.

Young: Yes, he was.

Sorensen: Because the President flew him back to Palm Beach in Air Force One, and I was on that trip.

Young: He went back to Palm Beach?

Sorensen: Yup.

Young: Well, I thought it was in Palm Beach, but he was on the golf course when it happened, when he had the stroke. Of course he had more than one stroke, but—

Sorensen: Really?

Young: Yes, before the final fatal heart attack. He had some other—he had some additional strokes later on.

Sorensen: I did not know that. I do know—oh, well, wait a minute. Is it possible? I hadn't even thought about it. It's possible that the President was flying down to see his father in Palm Beach and that the father wasn't on the plane. That may have been it.

Young: That may have been it, because I think he flew down there right away, and Ted flew down and brought a doctor, some kind of specialist, who came with him on the plane. But he didn't go on Air Force One. I think he came on his own.

Sorensen: I'm pretty sure he was not on that trip. But in 1968, at the very beginning of Bobby's campaign for President, he wanted me to go with him. We were going to end up at Atlantic City at the UAW [United Auto Workers] convention. And he flew, he had the plane fly first to the Cape, and we had lunch with his father and mother. So that was my only opportunity to see what deplorable condition the father was.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: So I did not remember that there had been more than one stroke. But I know enough about stroke now to know that that's often the pattern, that there are a series of little strokes.

Young: Yes. Edward was involved in 1960 campaign at the margins, if I'm not mistaken.

Sorensen: Yes. I'm not sure I'd say on the margins because he was our Western States coordinator.

Young: He got Wyoming. He got one vote—yes.

Sorensen: Well, but I'm talking about between the convention and the election.

Young: OK.

Sorensen: That's very important. I'd say his role was important there. When was the time he made his famous ski jump?

Young: That was in—was it Wisconsin? No. Minnesota?

Sorensen: Well, it was in one or the other, but he may have done the same thing out west once, too.

Young: I don't know. I haven't heard any stories about ski jumps out west. I've heard a lot of other stories.

Sorensen: Well, maybe it was, maybe it was Wisconsin.

Young: Yes, I think it was Wisconsin, because when he was out there for the recent, for [John] Kerry, he referred to that ski jump, and I think that was Wisconsin. He also said one other thing. He said, "I could never work as hard as Jack did in those years, constantly working, working, working." And I thought that was some kind of statement, because Ted himself is a very hard worker. He works at everything he does, I think, but he said, "I could never—I don't know where he got the energy to do it." This was building up to the convention.

Sorensen: There's no doubt about the fact that the JFK campaign for the Presidency was extremely hard work. Exhausting. In a sense, it went on for three-and-a-half years.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Every single state. And, of course, he was in the Senate at the same time, and trying to keep up some Senate voting record, attendance record. But we went to every state, and every part of every state. And it was hard work; there's no doubt about that. So I don't think Ted was just being nice and generous when he said that.

Young: No.

Sorensen: I don't doubt that he's capable of hard work himself. He's a prodigious worker. But at that time, I'm sure he was amazed at the hours and the effort and the energy that JFK put in, which had to be tremendous. Anybody—you have to be a little bit of a fanatic to run for President in this country, and you have to really believe in what you're trying to do for the country, and you just have to drive yourself to do it. I'm not sure Ted was as much of a fanatic as JFK was. I'm not sure JFK was any more than Bobby was eight years later. But whatever it is—

Young: Was it a source of enjoyment also?

Sorensen: To whom?

Young: To John.

Sorensen: Of course. We'll get later on in your list of questions to comparable campaign styles. But I think that it was probably a source of enjoyment to Ted more than to John, that is, Ted running himself in his own name. I think he enjoys the platform, he enjoys the crowds, he enjoys

the politicking, the backslapping, the embracing and so on more than John did. John was a little more shy than Ted. And obviously both of them liked winning, but the way by which you get there was I think more pleasurable to Ted than to John.

Young: When he was in the first Massachusetts campaign—he was reflecting on that in another interview with somebody else—he said he really liked the street politics. He liked the politics of the street. He liked going to the factory gates. He liked going around the state. He still likes that. And he said, "But you know, on the issues, that wasn't so much fun." This was at the very beginning, and I thought that was kind of interesting given—

Sorensen: Probably the opposite from John.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: John, of course, was always interested in policy and issues and the analysis and presentation of issues, the give-and-take of a Q&A. So that was more enjoyable for him than going around in the street.

Young: Edward did, on his western assignment; I've seen the diary, his daily diary of his work in the Western States, and also some of the diaries of his foreign trips, even as a young man. And I don't know, maybe it was the mother who taught them to—there were diaries going back to when he was five years old: "Dictated in London, today," an account. The governess wrote it all down, but that was a daily chore. But what I was seeing in those diaries was, first of all, he was seeing a world he had never known before. This was the West, a very different part of the country, very different people.

He first encountered the Catholic issue there personally in his rounding up delegates or talking to crowds. And he has long passages in his diary about how to deal with this issue. It cropped up in the audience, you know, the Catholics that are against his brother because they're Catholic, and the different shades of opinion, and figuring out in his own mind: What is the way you answer? What is the position you take on this?

Sorensen: That's interesting.

Young: I think that before it was perhaps a position, before the Dallas—

Sorensen: Houston, you mean? Not Dallas.

Young: Houston, I'm sorry. Yes.

Sorensen: But, believe me, JFK encountered the issue right from the start.

Young: Yes, many times.

Sorensen: And before Ted got into the race in a serious way, it was the key question in the West Virginia primary in May.

Young: Yes. I'm sure John had encountered it. But it looked to me like Edward was encountering it for the first time.

Sorensen: Could well be.

Young: You know, he'd fly himself on the plane sometimes going from place to place in the West, have somebody fly with him. But it was, you know, up at 4:00 a.m. or to bed at 3:00 a.m. and then—

Sorensen: You say he would fly the plane? Pilot the plane?

Young: On occasion.

Sorensen: I didn't know that.

Young: Yes, he had a license for a single engine plane.

Sorensen: I did not know that.

Young: For some places. Some places, he flew himself.

Sorensen: The plane that crashed, he wasn't piloting, was he?

Young: No, no. No. The pilot was killed. That was actually going to accept the—

Sorensen: State—

Young: —the nomination for his regular term, '64.

Sorensen: Yes, I visited him in the hospital after that.

Young: When he was in the Boston area, in the hospital or...? He was moved. The plane crashed in Northampton.

Sorensen: Yes, I know. It was certainly in eastern Massachusetts, so whether it was the Boston area or somewhere down closer to the Cape, I don't remember. But I remember by that time they had him on what they called the frame—

Young: The frame, yes.

Sorensen: —where they would turn him over. Terrible.

Young: There's a story in some of the writings, this is not from Edward, but some of the books that have been written, maybe it was in Doris's [Kearns Goodwin] book. I don't know.

Sorensen: Doris's book about the family?

Young: Yes. I'm not sure where I saw it, but the father is quoted as saying to Edward at some earlier time in his life, "Now, you can be a playboy if you want, or you can make something of

yourself. It's up to you. If you're a playboy, I'll still love you, but I won't have as much time for you," which all suggests that—how did Edward come about? Would he have chosen a political career, do you think, if it hadn't been for his father saying, "Now is your time"?

Sorensen: Who knows? Obviously the success of his two brothers must have had an effect on his thinking, on his interest in public life and his seeing that it had an upside as well as a downside.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: So I don't know the answer to that. I do know that JFK wearied of reading over and over again that it was his father who pushed him into public life and so on. And I wearied of reading about how his father was doing this in the campaign and pulling that string in the campaign and so on and so on, which I knew perfectly well he wasn't doing. So be careful about some of those—

Young: I would. I think you said in one of the books—one of the reasons I'm trying to—I think it's very important to get a sense of the Kennedy family and the world of the Kennedys growing up. It is interesting to me as an outsider that here is a very large, very wealthy Irish Catholic family, and there is no priest, which would have been usual, and nobody became a nun. With some exceptions, they were all oriented to some kind of public life or public service. And I'm wondering whether that wasn't sometimes mistaken for the father Joe's pushing each one into it. I think they may have been highly motivated for going in that direction the whole time.

Sorensen: By the church?

Young: No, motivated to public service, rather than to a career in the priesthood or a career in the church or a career in business. In the '62 campaign—maybe—I'm just looking for your comment on this—

Sorensen: No, actually, I'm going to make a note about that myself because I think that's quite interesting. I never thought about that before.

Young: I think it was Milton Gwirtzman, who's working with us on the preparation—

Sorensen: He's terrific, Milton.

Young: Yes, he's a great help to us. Can I get something for you there?

Sorensen: I'm looking for a pad of paper, but I don't see one.

Young: I can give you a little hotel pad.

Sorensen: Would you do that?

Young: Yes. There you are.

Sorensen: I just want to make a note about that, because I think that's an interesting point you just made. [*Pause*] OK. Do you want your pad back?

Young: No, no. You can keep it.

Sorensen: OK, thanks.

Young: It was said during the '62, actually during the preparations for the debate in the '62 Senate campaign, in some account of the rehearsal or advising about the McCormack debate or—actually, that was a second debate—

Sorensen: There was?

Young: Yes, there was a minor television debate out in western Massachusetts the first time, but that's—nothing very much happened with that—

Sorensen: Well, this one, the one I attended was in an auditorium. I know that.

Young: Yes, yes. In the high school auditorium. And in the preparation for that debate, Robert was punching it to him and saying, "The question they're going to ask you is why you want to run for the Senate, and—"

Sorensen: Too bad Bobby wasn't there in 1970 to say, "They're going to ask you why you want to run for President."

Young: Too bad, yes. And he said, "Tell them why you're not going into business, because you'd rather do something for the people of Massachusetts than sit on your ass in some office." Do you know that his father sent him out to Chicago and Oklahoma in connection—after he got out of the Army?

Sorensen: Never heard about that. Why? Just to get him to know about the business?

Young: Well, to get him to look it over, or get him exposed to it. And you know—

Sorensen: No, I didn't know that.

Young: Yes. I don't know that it was really seriously intended—

Sorensen: It didn't take.

Young: It certainly didn't take. And the question arises when did Edward think seriously about a career choice for himself and being in some sort of public service or elective office.

Sorensen: Well, wasn't that another famous line in the debate or otherwise where Eddie or somebody said, "You've never worked a day in your life."

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: And Ted then in his speeches worked it in, and said he was going down an assembly line, and a guy said to him, "Well, if that's true, you ain't missed much."

Young: Yeah, this was somebody who stopped him or somebody on the factory line. The story changes depending on the city you're talking in.

Sorensen: All good stories change.

Young: Yes. It was the older brother Joe who was marked I think for the political career, not for a business career. His father had—letters from his father and statements by his father after his own political career ended, but even before—

Sorensen: Political in the sense of government service. I don't think the father ever ran for office.

Young: No, never ran for office. I think his father said, I believe his father has written this, that the big men of the future—this is in the late twenties or after the crash, and he pulled out, as you know, out of the market, saved a lot, saved his fortune—the big men of the future are going to be in the world of politics, no longer business.

Sorensen: Oh, really?

Young: This is—and he waited a long time before FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] offered him any kind of appointment, and then it was to the Securities and Exchange Commission and then the Maritime Commission, or maybe it was vice-versa.

Sorensen: Well, when was that? FDR's second term?

Young: I think it was late in the first term.

Sorensen: Late in the first term? Well, that's not too long a wait.

Young: Well, he gave a lot of money, a lot of support, and I think he expected to be—he was chafing very much in his letters about not being gotten in touch with.

Sorensen: Mm. Sounds like him.

Young: Yes. But then his own political career went nowhere in the end, and it just strikes me that that urge for being in politics and being great and a big man in the place where the major action is now, it's no longer in the world of business, it's in the world of public life, international affairs, and so forth, probably transferred itself into his thinking and support for his sons.

Sorensen: Sounds very likely.

Young: But I don't know. These are theories. You've met a lot of people in public life. What was most unusual, do you think, about the Kennedy brothers as people in public life?

Sorensen: Well, interestingly enough, I would say it ties in with some of the things that have already come up in this conversation, and that is the combination of being wealthy—that's not so

unusual anymore—but being wealthy and willing to work hard on issues of public policy. There I think the Kennedys are outstanding. I mean, clearly, Jack, who was not all that healthy could have taken his ease at the beach—

[*phone interruption*]

Sorensen: I'm trying to write an op-ed piece, and the *Times* is not interested, I just found out. Maybe I should try the *Globe.* I hadn't thought about that.

Young: What's it about?

Sorensen: It's about—JFK's birthday is coming up in less than two weeks, and it seems to me that he's got a lot of advice for today's leaders, and I wanted to apply some of the things that he had said in the past to some of what leaders are doing in the opposite direction today.

Young: The *New York Times* owns the *Globe* now.

Sorensen: I know that.

Young: Yes, but the *Globe* has a lot of coverage of—

Sorensen: Outside New England?

Young: —Ted Kennedy. I mean, I get a lot more newspaper coverage of Kennedy and things Kennedy than I do in the *New York Times*; and the *Post*, it's just out of it.

Sorensen: Oh, really?

Young: Yes. When this project was launched in the caucus room back in December, last December, we got a full story in the *Globe*. Nothing in the *Post*, even though Bill Frist was there, [Robert] Byrd and Harry Reid, and the Senator spoke.

Sorensen: That's interesting.

Young: Yes. Nothing of that. And *New York Times* had a small thing on it, but mainly it was covered by the Associated Press, who had the wire service story on it. But the *Globe* had an in-depth piece on us, so maybe you should try them.

Sorensen: Well, that's good.

[*break in audio*]

Sorensen: All right. Sorry to interrupt.

Young: Tom Oliphant gave a talk down at the center last year.

Sorensen: Oh, is that right?

Young: Yes, yes.

Sorensen: He's a very wise and witty man.

Young: Well, I was asking a very broad question about what was it that distinguished the Kennedys. And then I'm going to ask, when we get through with that, how the brothers differed in their political styles. So if you want to handle the bigger question first, that is, what was distinctive about them. You said the hard work. People of wealth, people who are willing to give—

Sorensen: There are others who work hard. There are others who have wealth. But the combination is I think more pronounced in the case of the Kennedy family, all three of them, than otherwise.

Young: And all three sought elective office rather than other, although Robert only after Jack's assassination.

Sorensen: All three sought elective office, which itself is hard work and high risk.

Young: Right, and with sort of political liabilities, the father's reputation or conservatism, the wealth of the family, and the fact that they're Irish Catholic.

Sorensen: Yes, very much so. But all three had this—again, it's an interesting combination—on the one hand, there is a determination, a determination to succeed, to work as hard as one has to work to bring about that success, and at the same time a certain sense of confidence that they *will* succeed, that they're on the right course, that they're supporting the right ideals and objectives.

Young: You were actively involved in the West Virginia primary? You were in West Virginia?

Sorensen: Some.

Young: And do you have any comments about that? Edward also did some work on the West Virginia primary. And that was a very tough nut to crack.

Sorensen: Well, it was very tough. Opinion polls were just coming into use as a campaign tool, and after a few experiments with some local types, we worked out an arrangement with Louis Harris, and he polled—not on issues. We didn't pay much attention to polling on issues. We knew the answers to what the people thought about them. People are against higher taxes, they're in favor of higher spending, certainly on their state and on subjects that were important to them. That didn't tell us very much. But to find out where we were strong and where we were weak—and again, I apologize for the royal we here—where JFK was strong and where he was weak, which states, and which parts of which states.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: That's where pollsters could be very valuable. And we took, I assume it was a Harris poll, early in West Virginia, and it showed that he had an enormous lead. It was a very Democratic state, and they, you know, basically were on the liberal side of issues, and he was a young, appealing man. And then after the Wisconsin primary, which came first, where the press paid an enormous amount of attention to the religious issue, and that attention was paid nationally, we took another poll in West Virginia, and it had totally turned around. It now showed, instead of an 80/20 lead, a 60/40 deficit. Or maybe the other way, I don't remember exactly. And primarily because of the religious issue. So we set to work trying to (a) overcome that issue, and (b) emphasize how much more important issues faced West Virginia where Kennedy could be of help.

Young: Was [Hubert] Humphrey campaigning a lot there?

Sorensen: Very much so. Humphrey was our principal opponent.

Young: Yes, but he—

Sorensen: Bobby Byrd was not for us. He was a Congressman I think then, Byrd. I don't think he was yet a Senator. But he came from a conservative area. He had a background in the Klan. So West Virginia was uphill in many ways. And so I was there some, and I even made a couple of speeches there on the religious issue, which was a specialty with me. But JFK spent an enormous amount of time there, and I had forgotten that Ted did also, but I'm not surprised. And I assume Bobby did also. But what was your question?

Young: Well, I'm asking what it was that turned it around for you. You now had to confront the religious issue. Did the candidate himself address that?

Sorensen: Some. One of my efforts was to obtain, and I think it was in the form of either a statement or an open letter, signed by very prominent Protestant, nationally-known Protestant clergymen who were not of the extreme religious right, who would be willing to say religion should not be an issue in this country. And that became a theme, that really people should be voted up or down on their merits, not on their religion. It got to where some West Virginians were irritated with this, that if they opposed Kennedy, they'd be identified as bigots, and we tried to back away from saying that.

But there were not-so-subtle efforts by our opponents to keep bringing the issue up, including playing the song *Give Me That Old Time Religion*. I think Bobby Byrd may have played that on his fiddle from time to time. And JFK was on one or more television call-in shows—because he was always very good at Q&A—and one of them was devoted, at least in part, to the subject of religion, in which he said that he was totally for separation of church and state, he was for aid to public schools, not parochial schools, et cetera. We spent a lot of time thinking about that issue, and he was well briefed on it. And, frankly, the Kennedy campaign was just a lot better run campaign than the Humphrey campaign.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Interestingly enough, our state chairman in West Virginia, whom I helped to discover, was a Catholic. And he was originally for Kennedy before anybody else because he was a Catholic. We didn't stress that, but he had good ties in the Democratic Party. He knew the state very thoroughly, and he helped us run a very good campaign there.

Young: There's a story about an evangelical preacher who was also a politician.

Sorensen: That's not unusual.

Young: But who was explaining to a group of miners in the hall about why they should vote for Kennedy.

Sorensen: I don't know this story.

Young: Well, you'll read about it in the oral history transcripts, but it was a very interesting combination of the candidate. First, Kennedy was a hero, a war hero, who saved his own people in the war, and that's the man. And on top of the man—this was all done in symbolism—is a Bible, and on the teaching of the Bible is—it was a teaching of the Bible about good people and leaders. And then on top of that is a flag, an American flag, and it was all—

Sorensen: And is this a newspaper ad or a brochure? A leaflet?

Young: No, it was an event.

Sorensen: Oh, an event.

Young: An event with the preacher up there at the front and the miners, and giving them all the symbols: Here's a person, the greatest hero there ever was in World War II. He saved his own people. "He sa-a-aved his people." And then a story from the Bible, and then an American flag, all piled up on the table.

Sorensen: And he invited FDR, Jr. down.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: That was a great name in West Virginia.

Young: Anyway, it turned out to be pretty effective in the hall. We don't have too much more time, but getting back to the—what distinguished the—of course the fact that there were three brothers all in politics also is a very unusual thing, I think, three members of the family all—

Sorensen: Yes, there have been some pairs, but I think three is quite unique.

Young: Three is. What would you say are the main differences among them, with particular reference but not exclusively so, to what was different about Edward from Robert, was different from John—?

Sorensen: I think of the three John was more intellectual, more scholarly. I think of the three Robert was more emotional, wore his emotions more on his sleeve; he was perhaps a little more,

because of that emotion, a little more passionately committed on certain issues and on his views of people, whom he loved or hated. Whereas John was more likely to take people as they were, for better or worse.

And I think Edward has been the best Senator of all of them. He knows how to work with other Senators. He knows how to work the process. He knows—he's had a superb team at all times. And he has made the most of that. He has certainly been the leader of the liberal Democrats in the Senate and in the party.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: I think in many ways he's a more relaxed, genial campaigner than the others. Bobby's passion would sometimes characterize his campaign appearances, almost raising the level of intensity. And Jack was certainly an excellent campaigner—and superb on television—but probably not the same easy style on the platform as Edward. The most important quality to note about all three of them is the extent to which each of them evolved and developed over years of public life, dramatic change in all three cases.

Young: Can you say a few words about that dramatic change in John—

Sorensen: In John, he grew as his horizons widened. When he was a member of the House, he had not had that much experience, although he had traveled widely and knew a lot about foreign affairs. But he knew almost nothing about civil rights, he knew almost nothing about poverty and economic and social justice, inner cities and failing cities. But as he campaigned in all parts of the country and in all parts of every major city, he learned a lot more about the plight of the poor, about the discrimination against blacks. He began to see the similarities between the discrimination that Irish Catholics had once suffered and the discrimination faced by blacks.

And even in the White House, he continued with that growth. He continued to learn. John was—you know, I don't know Ted that well. I know John best of all. But I think John was more intellectually curious than any of the others and wanted to know more and understand more and find the answers to public policy questions because he was interested in answers, not simply for political campaign purposes.

I think there was a parallel with each of the others. Bobby started out very close to his father in every sense of the word, ideologically and in terms of personality as well. But he learned a lot from campaigning across the country in 1960, and then he learned as Attorney General, first from the civil rights problem, which was in his lap, and the people whom he met, and then from his world travels. And Jack's death very much changed Bobby, in a way humbled him, took some of the so-called ruthless arrogance that he was accused of out of him. He became a gentler, warmer personality. His exposure to some of the liberals on his staff and in the New York Democratic Party I'm sure changed his views as well, and certainly his presidential race did, taking him into parts of the country and into dealing with problems that he had not confronted before.

Ted had some of all of that. He started out very young, very inexperienced. But he gained years, he gained experience, he began to specialize in certain issues like healthcare, and mastered them. He had a terrific staff. Of course, he was changed by John's death, and even more by Bobby's

death. And he took on responsibility for the family, the family name, for the children, including the children of Bobby and Jack, and their widows, and he also traveled more extensively.

It seems to me that in just this last year or so—you would know better than I—that he's become more involved and interested in foreign policy than he was before, having previously focused on domestic policy—healthcare, civil rights, education. And I'm happy to see the broadening of that focus to include foreign affairs. He gave a great speech on Iraq at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. So that trait of continuous growth is very unusual in Washington. Most people who get there think that that proves how smart they are and they don't need any more wisdom or learning.

Young: The whole family was in a sense their society. Theirs was a very tightly knit family. It was a place of schooling for them also in the younger years.

Sorensen: Yes, very much so.

Young: And there was not apparently a lot of social life in the family, that is, outside people brought in and guests and constant parties—

Sorensen: I don't know about that because I was not part of JFK's social life, but it certainly seemed to me that each of the brothers had friends from the outside, from school—

Young: Yes, their school friends would gather there.

Sorensen: —or the service.

Young: That is true.

Sorensen: Either from school or military service.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: And some of them came from different parts of the country and somewhat different backgrounds. They tended—in Bob's case, those friends tended to be Catholics, Irish Catholics.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: I think a study would indicate that both Ted and John had a greater variety among their close friends, but I don't know.

Young: Well, that is true, and they traveled—they traveled with a purpose, mostly, when they were even young people.

Sorensen: Yes.

Young: You have to keep diaries, you have to study, you have to study the language and so forth.

Sorensen: Mm hmm.

Young: But it does seem to me that the world of politics, given their aspirations, opened them up to the experiences of others in a way that the family life did not in and of itself.

Sorensen: Yes, well, that's almost by definition by true. Family life was pretty cloistered. It's a big family; you don't need a lot of other people.

Young: That's right.

Sorensen: It's a rich family, so you—

Young: You don't need to go out.

Sorensen: I was always impressed when I was a young man by the fact that they had a movie theatre in their basement.

Young: Yes, yes, I've heard.

Sorensen: Why go out? Why go anywhere else for entertainment when you can see current movies in your own basement?

Young: But you can imagine a lot of people in a family of that kind, the younger generation would have no interest whatever—

Sorensen: Well—

Young: I think in Edward's case, yes. I mean politics in a sense is always a changing cast of characters. There are all these characters out there. It's a world of great diversity, and it's a world where you always learn something else. He's always learning something else, from a trip or somebody else.

Sorensen: Yes.

Young: And I think it's a larger universe than the world of business, and it's one to which they were all motivated to connect with—

Sorensen: Many times over the years Ted and I have chatted informally about the Senate and the party and, for that matter, Washington. And I've always found him to be a very keen observer of who was meritorious and who was not and what their prospects were and so on. Most politicians, I'm sorry to say, spend a large share of their time bad-mouthing other politicians, including their own party.

Young: Oh, yes.

Sorensen: But the Kennedys did much less of that, and I'd say Ted does less of it than anyone else.

Young: Probably most. He has a reputation in the Senate as a man who never bears anybody a grudge.

Sorensen: Mm hmm.

Young: I think there are probably a few exceptions to that. But he himself said when we were talking about this project originally, he said, "My alliances are very important to me, and I want you to include my opponents in my alliances—people on the other side of the aisle—in this project, because I've lived through some of the great legislative battles of my time, and I do work with alliances."

Sorensen: Well, I'm sure he could suggest to you a lot better than I can who those should be. I'm sure he'd put Orrin Hatch on the list.

Young: Yes, Orrin Hatch is clearly on the list. I'm not so—yes. And there are others, and now Senator Byrd.

Sorensen: Yes, they were enemies a long time—competitors a long time ago.

Young: Yes. But he's saying don't restrict yourself just to my friends.

Sorensen: Well, that's good.

Young: That's very good. He also made a particular point of saying, "I want you to talk to some of the public figures abroad, outside the United States—

Sorensen: Oh, really?

Young: "—That's very important to me."

Sorensen: Who?

Young: Well, there are a number. Ireland for one, of course. South Africa.

Sorensen: Well, I'm glad to hear that. I didn't know he was close to people in South Africa.

Young: Yes. Chile, some of the dissidents, the Russian dissidents from the former Soviet Union.

Sorensen: Well, I did know he was interested in that, yes.

Young: Yes. But I think the point is that, though he didn't choose foreign affairs as one of his specialties, but particularly after his brothers were gone—it started before that—

Sorensen: Oh, yes.

Young: —he carries the torch, so to speak, for them internationally, does a lot of that. But even before that, he was intensely interested in making contacts with and having a helpful hand, not in the policy sense, but he has a very international network of people in many countries he feels close to, he can call upon, and he wants us to talk to. Foreign affairs is not something that stands out on the horizons of his political career, as you've noticed, so I was kind of surprised.

Sorensen: Yes. I think it's good. I'm glad to hear that.

Young: OK. Well, we've used up your time to the minute.

Sorensen: Is that right?

Young: It's 1:00 o'clock.

Sorensen: Oh, you're right.

Young: And you have a big day ahead of you.

Sorensen: As a matter of fact, I've got a young—

Young: Are you going to go over to the 92nd Street Y tonight?

Sorensen: Of course. I'm on the program. I have to go.

Young: OK. OK.

Sorensen: And between now and then, I've got a young Saudi coming over to talk to me. I think he has, believe it or not, political plans in his country.

Young: Yes.