EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH THEODORE SORENSEN

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Interviewer
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TRANSCRIPT

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December 7, 2006

Young: This is a follow-up interview with Ted Sorensen on the 7th of December. I just asked a question about events after the accident at Chappaquiddick, which happened in July 1969, and the time that—

Sorensen: July 19th?

Young: July 19th.

Sorensen: And the speech was one week later.

Young: July 26. And the funeral was the 22nd, and the hearing—

Sorensen: Wait a minute. Whose funeral?

Young: Mary Jo Kopechne.

Sorensen: It was four days before the speech?

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Oh, I didn't know that, either.

Young: And the speech was given the day after. There was the hearing, or the arraignment.

Sorensen: Inquest, yes.

Young: And he then entered a plea of guilty to leaving the scene of an accident. Adam Clymer, and many others, in pieces and bits, talk about the people who were there at the house or in Hyannis Port, gathering, and about the construction of his address to the people of Massachusetts on the 26th, and talking about events at the house. At some point you were there.

Sorensen: Yes.

Young: And you were involved in the discussions about the speech.

Sorensen: Yes.

Young: I don't know who else was there.

Sorensen: I can remember Steve Smith, Milton Gwirtzman. I seem, for some reason, to think Bob McNamara might have been there.

Young: He was there.

Sorensen: I believe that [John] Varick—is that his name?—Tunney was there.

Young: I didn't know.

Sorensen: Well, his friend. He was very good friends with him.

Young: I know.

Sorensen: I have a feeling he was there. Of course Burke Marshall was there.

Young: Burke Marshall was there. Dick Goodwin.

Sorensen: That I don't know.

Young: Yes. He came early, I think.

Sorensen: That's funny. I didn't remember that.

Young: I think he was there on the 19th, or came on the 19th. Burke Marshall.

Sorensen: Did he stay, Dick?

Young: I don't know.

Sorensen: Because I came late. As I was starting to say, Steve Smith called me, and I'm quite sure the group had been gathered there, in Hyannis Port, in I think the family house, "the big house," as they called it, and Steve asked if I would come up. I'm quite sure everybody had been there for quite a while by the time I got there.

Young: When it happened, Steve Smith was in Spain.

Sorensen: Oh, really?

Young: And so at some time he was called back. I don't know when he actually arrived. I don't know when anybody arrived, but of course his mother was there in the house.

Sorensen: I have no doubt of that, but I have no recollection of it either.

Young: And his father was basically dying, I think then. His father died a few months later, in November.

Sorensen: Oh, is that so? No, that can't be.

Young: Yes, he died.

Sorensen: Well it's '69, it could be. I had seen the father in '68 with Bobby [Kennedy], but you're right.

Young: He died in November of '69. That was a few months after Chappaquiddick.

Sorensen: Tough year.

Young: So whatever you can—

Sorensen: Joey Gargan might have been there.

Young: Joey was there. Joey had been there for the races, actually. He had been there with the races and had been with him off and on, with the reunion of Bobby's boiler room. Joe Gargan had been there. I think Charlie Tretter had been there.

Sorensen: I remember that name, but I don't remember him at all.

Young: I think he just happened to be up there for the races. Ted went to the races first, the Edgartown Sail, and then went over to Chappaquiddick for the get-together.

Sorensen: A friend of his, a character from Tennessee, who later ran for Governor, was he there?

Young: I don't know the name.

Sorensen: Oh, yes you do. John [Jay Hooker]—he ran for Governor of Tennessee, a very southern type. He was one of the inner circle of chums. I don't know whether [John] Culver was there or not.

Young: I don't believe he was.

Sorensen: Anyway, that's all I remember about people present.

Young: OK. What about deciding what to say or deciding—

Sorensen: Again, it's a very blurred memory. Part of the time, Teddy was in bed. It was rather awkward talking to him about what had happened and what should be said. Milton Gwirtzman and I had a lot to do with that speech. I can't remember Dick Goodwin, but he might have.

Young: Dave Burke was there too.

Sorensen: Ah, of course he would have been there. In fact, he might be the best witness you could get.

Young: I am going to talk to him.

Sorensen: His memory is sharp, and he's young and he cares. Burke Marshall probably had some input on that speech. The speech had both legal and political implications and consequences, and so it had to be approached with the greatest of care. At one point I called my senior partner, Arthur Lyman, one of the best lawyers in my law firm here. I don't remember what specific question that I put to him, a little bit about what the consequences would be of a speech before the formal hearing.

I was a very reluctant participant, I'll tell you that. I didn't want to be there, but I thought, as a lawyer, when somebody is in need and asks for some advice that is at least quasi-legal advice, I felt I had some duty to offer that advice. At the time, July '69, I was thinking about the possibility of running for office myself. I obviously felt very sorry for Ted and wanted to help, but that was not a great place to be for anybody who had a future.

Young: He had been diagnosed with a mild concussion after the accident.

Sorensen: Yes, and he was wearing—if I may say so—quite ostentatiously, a huge bandage around his head, possibly because he needed it and his doctors insisted on it, but possibly to gain some sympathy and remind people that he had been a victim in that crash also. I don't know. I shouldn't say, and I don't say it maliciously. Go ahead. Maybe a specific question will bring on my memories.

Young: You said he was in bed some of the time.

Sorensen: Yes. I have a distinct recollection of standing in his bedroom, talking with him, and asking him a couple questions.

Young: I think one thing I'd like to know is what part was he taking, as far as you could tell, in the actual content and idea of the speech? Was it his idea? Was it Steve's idea or everybody's idea, a consensus that he had to make a public statement, and he had to make one soon?

Sorensen: I think that was a consensus view, and I think he agreed with that. Obviously, he participated some in what had to be said.

Young: Very little has been written about this.

Sorensen: One of the best things I ever saw, which gave me some information about the aftermath, was written by the old guy who ran the Martha's Vineyard *Gazette*, Henry Beetle Hough.

Young: I don't know about that.

Sorensen: Well, you know the name?

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: Years later, someone made a speech or wrote an editorial or something, in the *Times*, charging Teddy with this and that, and Henry Beetle Hough wrote either a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece, saying, "No, that wasn't it at all." It was, I thought, quite a good exposition, in the fact that whatever errors he may have made, that Teddy did go to the authorities, he did plead guilty, he did acknowledge responsibility. He was certainly remorseful, and so on and so on. I just remember being struck at the time, that it was a good—he put perspective to the whole thing.

Young: He did and does acknowledge full responsibility.

Sorensen: And in the speech he did. I had something to do with that being in the speech.

Young: Adam Clymer says of this gathering and the preparation of the speech that Kennedy was in and out of it, not really doing much about it or really fully participating in it. I don't know whether that means he was in something of a state of shock or—

Sorensen: I think he was, frankly, in something of a state of shock, or if not shock, post-shock trauma.

Young: Who told his parents?

Sorensen: I have no idea. I don't know whether his father was in the condition to understand what he was being told in those days.

Young: I've heard that he could understand it, but he couldn't articulate anything.

Sorensen: Oh he certainly couldn't participate. As I say, I had lunch with him and Bobby the summer before, when Bobby's campaign for President was underway, and the Ambassador couldn't speak at all.

Young: That's right. He couldn't articulate anything. I have no way of knowing. Clymer also mentioned that there was something in the speech about his saying—not in the speech but in the speechwriting, the idea that he would state he would not ever run for President again. Clymer writes this.

Sorensen: He said that it was in the draft?

Young: Somewhere in the discussions or in the drafts. He's not specific about it. And he further says that Eunice [Kennedy Shriver] said you can't say that, that was a no.

Sorensen: Oh, Eunice was there?

Young: Well, all I have to go on are these fragmentary secondhand accounts, and I'm trying to understand what was going on while he was in this state, during that one week.

Sorensen: I'm sorry. I can't shed any light on that. It sounds like the kind of thing I might have said to him, "Do you think we should put this in the speech?" Just to reduce some of the list of people out to turn to the knife with this. But I don't know whether I did, so I have no recollection of that.

Young: Do you suppose Steve Smith summoned all those people there?

Sorensen: He certainly was the one who summoned me.

Young: You. But McNamara?

Sorensen: That seems unlikely. I think McNamara, just as a loyal friend of the family. He had been very close to Bobby, and Bobby was gone, and Jack, and they were both gone, and maybe McNamara felt somehow he could help and went on his own. I don't know. But I'm right, he was there, right?

Young: Yes, he was. I don't know whether he had thoughts about the speech or didn't. I really don't know what was going on at that house during this week.

Sorensen: I don't recall any session in which Milton or I tried out the speech on everybody there. I don't think there was any such session. We would have naturally shown it to Burke Marshall, and probably to Steve, and obviously to the Senator, and very probably to Dave Burke. I just don't know whether any of the others there saw it before it was given.

Young: Clymer also says in his book that there was a difference of opinion within the group—whoever was in the group—about the type of statement he ought to make and what he ought to say. Clymer represents that there were some people—I think he called them younger staff; I don't know who these are—who felt that he ought to make a simple statement of contrition and let it go at that, and not a full-blown talk to the nation, and others felt he should say that.

Sorensen: Which younger staff were there?

Young: I do not know. It's a mystery to me.

Sorensen: Were any of Bobby's old staff there? I don't think so. Adam Walinsky?

Young: I don't know of any.

Sorensen: Peter Edelman, those people?

Young: Peter was not there.

Sorensen: I didn't think so.

Young: It was Arthur Schlesinger, did he come up?

Sorensen: I'm pretty sure he was not there. I would have remembered if he were. But enough of these people have written their own books that it should be easy to find out.

Young: But it's not a subject many people talk about. I got interested in it, not from the standpoint—

Sorensen: I got a certain amount of flak for having been there, and maybe for my role in the speech, from some of the people who had been close to Bobby, the liberals, and the younger folks. I was a little surprised at that. I'm not quite sure why that was true. I don't know if any of them—Goodwin, Walinsky, Edelman, they all wrote books. Did any of them mention this in their book?

Young: No. You get fragments. Since this was a rather extraordinary kind of occurrence, I just think it's important historically to try to get as much recollection as you can on the record.

Sorensen: I think it would be a very valuable contribution to history if you could do that.

Young: Frankly, I did not ask him: What were you doing afterwards? Because he was, in my interviews with him, talking about other things, not about who was doing what, and that was the most important thing for him to talk about. I did ask if he took the lead in the talk, and he didn't seem to know what to say in response to that.

Sorensen: I don't know. What should I say? I don't really remember. It would not be consistent with my vague impressions that remain to say that he took the lead by himself. He may very well have joined with Steve in guiding the discussion, but that's not the same as taking the lead.

Young: No. I've even wondered in my mind as to whether he was even fully aware of what was going on at that time. I just don't know.

Sorensen: I agree with that, at least during the time he was bedridden. I don't have any recollection of how much of the time that was. I don't even recollect how long I was there. I wasn't there for a week, I'm sure of that.

Young: They went down to—the funeral that he went down to was on the 22nd.

Sorensen: I don't have any recollection of that. I think maybe I had come back before that.

Young: I think Bill vanden Heuvel had gone to see the family, had been asked to go down and be with the woman's family, Mary Jo's parents.

Sorensen: Oh, well then, you certainly should interview him.

Young: Yes, I have, but I don't think he was there at Hyannis Port.

Sorensen: Oh, he didn't go from Hyannis Port.

Young: I think afterwards he went there, but he wasn't there immediately after the event.

Sorensen: Are you interviewing Milton Gwirtzman?

Young: Yes, I will interview him.

Sorensen: He's helping cooperate on the project.

Young: He's helping get documents. He's doing the briefing for the Senator, and he and I worked together in gathering materials and posing questions.

Sorensen: I would interview him and Dave Burke, and you'll get a lot, a lot more than I can remember.

Young: Dave is on the advisory committee for the Kennedy project.

Sorensen: I didn't know there was an advisory committee. Thanks a lot for not appointing me.

Young: Well, I—

Sorensen: No, I'm serious. I'm not saying that sarcastically.

Young: In the formula for the advisory committee, the Senator was given—this is the arrangement that was agreed upon—two representatives on the committee, on the Advisory Board, which I appoint, but those were his appointees. I wanted to appoint mostly independent academicians or scholars, historians.

Sorensen: Did all this begin after Burke died?

Young: Who died?

Sorensen: Burke Marshall's dead.

Young: It was about two years ago, a year and a half. I'm trying to remember the exact date, but Lee Fentress and Dave Burke were the people he chose to be his representatives.

Sorensen: Lee Fentress and Dave Burke? That's interesting.

Young: You know Bob Dallek, of course. Bob Dallek is on the board. They serve a two- or three-year term, and then we can rotate it. Bob Caro.

Sorensen: He's a very thorough historian.

Young: He's on the board. We wanted independent, outside advisors, to make sure that this was not a Kennedy operation.

Sorensen: That's the way it should be.

Young: And he was very specific that it should not be that and not be seen as that.

Sorensen: He, Teddy.

Young: He, Teddy.

Sorensen: That's good. That's the way it should be.

Young: And Vicki [Reggie Kennedy] the same, obviously.

Sorensen: I don't think Joan [Bennett Kennedy] was there, now that I think about it.

Young: There's no record of her being there at all.

Sorensen: Or any of his children.

Young: No.

Sorensen: They were pretty young at the time.

Young: Well, that's as far as we can go with that, I suppose, unless you have some other thoughts just on Chappaquiddick. I shouldn't say Chappaquiddick. I'm thinking the decade of the '60s. How it began and how it ended.

Sorensen: Quite a decade.

Young: Oh it was. I don't know how anybody could live through that as he did and keep going.

Sorensen: I don't know what I can add that isn't well known. The '60s began with JFK's [John F. Kennedy] election, in which Ted played an important campaign role. It moved then to Ted's election to the Senate in '62. It moved then to Jack's death in '63. Bob's election to the Senate.

Young: A plane crash in '64.

Sorensen: A plane crash in '64 and Bob's election in '64.

Young: Then they were there in the Senate together for a brief time.

Sorensen: Yes, exactly, that brief period. And Bob running for President in ’68 and being killed in ’68.

Young: Chappaquiddick in ’69.

Sorensen: What a decade.

Young: The father died in ’69. That was quite extraordinary. Let me ask you about something else. I noticed in reading your transcript that you said at one point you were calling him Teddy, and then later it was going to become Ted or Senator.

Sorensen: You mean in the transcript.

Young: In the transcript you said that, which you didn’t do, I don’t think. You didn’t change it consistently, but that’s not my question.

Sorensen: For the years that I remember best and that mattered most, he was Teddy. Jack called him Teddy and Jackie [Jacqueline Kennedy] called him Teddy, and even Bobby called—who didn’t like being called Bobby all that much—

Young: Here it is.

Sorensen: Do you see it?

Young: Do you want it?

Sorensen: Yes, please.

[Break]

Sorensen: If he were sitting here today, of course I would call him Senator, but if I didn’t think he would be bothered by it, or if I were assured he would not be bothered by it, I would probably still call him Teddy.

Young: People do.

Sorensen: And Jean [Kennedy Smith] still calls him Teddy.

Young: My question was going to be, at what point you yourself began to—did he become a Senator to you, rather than just Teddy, or did he become Ted or a Senator?

Sorensen: That’s a very good question. I suppose that change did not take place with his election. I don’t remember how much I saw of him after JFK’s death. I don’t have any distinct

memories. I remember going to his office once, but I can't remember what about. I remember that he organized a book on the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, to which I contributed a chapter. Also, I may have served as the lawyer for that book in terms of publishing contract and so on. He may have talked to me about doing another book. Did he do another book around that time?

Young: I can't tell you if he did another book.

Sorensen: After Bobby?

Young: Besides that, but I don't know what it was.

Sorensen: Kind of a collection of verses and sayings that he liked.

Young: Words Jack loved.

Sorensen: Yes. I think he consulted me about that.

Young: He put together that.

Sorensen: What year was that?

Young: I do not know.

Sorensen: Then, of course, there was the possibility of his running for President in 1968. I remember at least one meeting on that, and staying at his home in Virginia on the way to the Chicago convention in '68. I was in touch with Steve about that. I've written a little bit about that. Then, in '70, I ran for the Senate here. Steve was very helpful. I don't know that Teddy was involved very much. He served a year or two as the Senate Whip. What years were those?

Young: That was—I'll get it in a moment.

Sorensen: It might even have been '69-'70.

Young: I think it was '69. When he came back to the Senate—Mike Mansfield was, of course, Majority Leader then—he kept it for one term and then lost it to Bob Byrd.

Sorensen: Yes, and made a funny speech at Gridiron or somewhere else, saying that he didn't understand how he could lose it, that his staff had assured him that he had the votes of Senator so and so, so and so, and Sorensen, which of course, I wasn't, because I wasn't elected.

Young: Byrd had a better vote count.

Sorensen: Yes, he did. Not surprising.

Young: Just as an observer, whether you had any—regardless of the contacts you had with him, just to the extent that you were a Kennedy watcher, or somebody who could observe, you were

active in politics yourself—did you see, was there a point at which you began to think of him differently from the way he was thought about as Teddy? You also refer to the great distance, not only in age but in the early years, the great distance between—Bobby and Jack were close, you said, and Teddy was a great distance from them.

Sorensen: Yes, in more ways than one. When you're small, age differences matter much more than they do later on.

Young: But thinking of a time, if you just look at his career, following what's he doing now, over the years, did you see a change in him?

Sorensen: Then of course came his second try for the Presidency in 1980. I was again involved in those meetings, debating whether to run, what the strategy should be, and so on, and there were quite a few of those. Dave Burke and I collaborated on some strategy memos and advice.

Young: Did you think that was a good idea, for him to run?

Sorensen: No. I thought that it was not. I thought that Chappaquiddick still hung in the air, and that running against an incumbent Democrat, as I had learned with Bobby, is always a challenge. It's difficult. There might be better years to wait for. Steve and I, I believe agreed that '80 was not the best year, until we went down to his Virginia home for a meeting one night, and some of his other advisers were there already. I've forgotten who. He said, "Well, I've decided to run." Oh. That's what we thought we'd come down there to discuss, and we said, "All right. If that's your decision, great. We'll do what we can to help."

I tried to help him a little bit in New York and so on, but I wasn't asked really to help on message or strategy or anything of that sort, including his not very helpful interview by Roger Mudd. I helped sell some tickets for a big fundraising dinner he had here, and then he asked me to represent him on the platform committee, with the convention. The platform committee actually met the week or two before the convention, in Washington. I don't think there was anybody else in the race seriously, was there, besides him and [Jimmy] Carter?

Young: No.

Sorensen: So we had the more liberal banner, and I did my best, although I think Carter had control of the votes in the committee and in the convention. Then, I believe I attended the convention in—where was it, here? I think so—1980?

Young: I'm blanking. Yes, it was.

Sorensen: I attended that convention and at least on the occasion when he delivered his very wonderful speech about the dream that will never die—so obviously somewhere between 1970 and 1980 he became the Senator and not just Teddy.

Young: Why would he want to run in 1980 and having decided and started in with it, why would he want to persist, even after it was clear that Carter had the votes in the convention? Do you have any thoughts on that subject?

Sorensen: Well, when you say persist, he's a Kennedy. Kennedys are fighters in politics, they don't give up. And he was, after all, seeking personal vindication, having let down his supporters and his family and himself in the combination of Chappaquiddick and not being able to prevail in earlier Presidential nominations. So I understand him doing everything he could to wrest one last opportunity to show what he had.

The support for Carter was not that deep in 1980, and I think Ted may very well have thought that he could, if it were managed right in terms of ballots, still get that nomination in a fashion dramatic enough to take him all the way to the election, although nobody knew then how tough Ronald Reagan would be as an opponent.

Young: Was it kind of assumed, as you remember it, that Reagan was not a strong prospect for being elected? He seemed so far to the right, and his history had been so far to the right. Was the thinking in Democratic circles that the country won't elect somebody like this?

Sorensen: I think that is probably true. I'm told that Carter was astonished. I still remember—my wife and I were living right here, and our voting was across the street. We were walking out that morning on election day, going to vote, and in through the door came a very good friend of ours, married to a very good liberal, Democratic friend, activist Democratic friend, and I said to her, "Well, I know how you voted. And she shook her head and said, "No," meaning Carter versus Reagan. She shook her head and said, "No, I just thought—" This lady had never been involved, to the best of my mind, in business, but she said, "If I were on the Board of Directors, would I reappoint a President who had this record? I couldn't vote for him." And I said to myself, *Oh boy. If Carter doesn't have her vote, he's getting no votes at all.*

Young: He apparently didn't know it until the last—didn't recognize the handwriting on the wall. But then of course the hostage crisis.

Sorensen: The hostage crisis and inflation, and he couldn't do anything about either one of them, and they reinforced a sense in the country that he was ineffective.

Young: But when the hostage crisis came on—

Sorensen: I even wrote an op-ed piece in the *Times*, which I'm sure you can dig up, that fall. I think I wrote an op-ed piece—which ends with an injunction to Carter, "Pray, sir, lead—" All I remember from it is that last line. I know I gave an academic lecture that fall also in which I was quite critical of Carter. I think it was the fall after Teddy was well out of it, but it's possible that, now that I think about it, that speech came in the winter before, when Teddy was still thinking about running. In any event, I think Carter was a disappointment to many people. He's been a great ex-President. He fulfilled his campaign promise, not to be involved with Washington.

Young: You have to stop running against Washington.

Sorensen: After you're elected you do.

Young: Yes. But of course, when the hostage crisis came on, that made it very difficult for Ted, because suddenly the President was concentrating on a foreign crisis, and also that dominated the news. Isn't that right?

Sorensen: It surely did.

Young: And Ted's running against him was basically on domestic matters.

Sorensen: A little quirk of history that is not important, because nothing happened, nothing came of it, but it's going to be mentioned in my book. One of these mysterious, self-appointed intermediaries, saying he could solve the crisis. Someone decided that Senator Kennedy was the one person to whom the Iranians would release at least some, if not all, of the hostages to. He called Teddy or Teddy's office about working something out, and Teddy sent him to see me.

He came to me in the dark of one night, and I have no idea whether his credentials were genuine. I thought, *Well, of course if Ted Kennedy could be taken by this gentleman over to Tehran and come back with the hostages, that might be a tremendous breakthrough for his Presidential campaign.* But if he came back with only a few of them, which was what this gentleman was offering, it had to look as though he was agreeing with the Ayatollah about this or that. I thought that was a highly dubious road for Ted to go down, and in any event, whether Ted ever saw him and talked with him again or not—I reported to Ted on the conversation and my doubts, so he may have just said, "Forget the whole thing."

I never saw the man again and I don't think anything ever came of it. That's one of those potential turning points in history that did not occur.

Young: Sometimes intermediaries appear and vanish.

Sorensen: Yes. There was a whole program about them at one point, and this man wasn't involved in it. But there were a couple of other intermediaries who had Hamilton Jordan, at the White House, convinced that he should fly over there, and it all vanished.

Young: He went over to Europe wearing a wig.

Sorensen: Yes. Pierre Salinger was involved somehow.

Young: Of course they never knew who was bona fide and who wasn't.

Sorensen: Exactly. After that, I'm trying to think if there were any special things that Teddy and I did together, aside from a few memorial services and funerals. Offhand, I can't remember any, although I still consider him my friend and I think he still considers me his friend, and once in a great while he'll ask me my advice on this or that.

Interestingly enough, one nice little anecdote—I should try to put this in my book. I'd forgotten all about this. He was going to hire a young man for the Judiciary Committee staff. At the time, Ted was either Chairman or the ranking member. And he said, "Could you interview him for me?" I was on the road all the time, in my international travels, and finally we agreed that this young man and I would share a taxi from the airport into Manhattan, and that would be the interview. Interestingly enough, that was Stephen Breyer.

Young: You're right, get it in the book, and the book has to come out before this. You don't want to scoop yourself on this. I hadn't known who interviewed Breyer. Now I know it was in a taxi. That must be another historical worth. Well, I've taken a lot of your time.

Sorensen: As always, I've enjoyed it, and you always do a thorough job.

Young: I do what I can. I really do enjoy being on the project, because it's like I'm learning history from those who made it. That's very special.

Sorensen: Not many historians do that.

Young: That's right. So, thank you.

Sorensen: You would have been interested at that conference at the Miller Center, on consuls to the President.

Young: Yes.

Sorensen: It didn't involve Teddy one way or the other.

Young: It didn't. I had a little bit to do with putting that thing together, actually.

Sorensen: You see, I find myself incapable of stopping calling him Teddy. That's just what automatically comes from my brain to my mouth.

Young: Well, I'll tell you, I don't call him that. I didn't know him way back, which is another virtue of this project. I'm outside, so I don't bring in any of—

Sorensen: Yes. Although it's unfortunate that so many histories of JFK have been written by people so far outside. They didn't know him well enough to understand him, and they write a lot of nonsense as a result.

Young: Right, right. Well, he didn't live long enough to have an oral history like this, where he can himself talk.

Sorensen: That is certainly true.

Young: His own voice.

Sorensen: He did have tapes.

Young: He did indeed. Well anyway, we'll close the interview.

Sorensen: Did I tell you? It's in my book—during the Cuban missile crisis—I think maybe we did this last time—I only accepted two or three phone calls, and one of them was from Teddy. October 22nd, when the President made his speech, and he said, "Can I give my standard speech on Cuba?" I said, "No, wait until you hear the speech."

Young: And he did what you said.

Sorensen: I assume so. Then, after it ended, he was about to go on *Meet the Press*, and the President sent me up to give him a little briefing so he didn't say the wrong thing on *Meet the Press,* because whatever the President's brother said would have been interpreted around the world as being the official position.

Young: Exactly. There must have been a bit of nervousness about setting him loose on the campaign trail. [laughter]

Sorensen: Yes, I think there was.

Young: Especially because he wasn't up there with Jack and Bobby, but he was a different kind of a person in some ways.

Sorensen: Well that's why the President sent Bobby and me up to give him a little briefing before his debate.

Young: OK. We'll end it.