EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ANNE STRAUSS

April 10, 2008
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Interviewer
Janet Heininger

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TRANSCRIPT

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Heininger: This is an interview with Anne Strauss on April 10, 2008, in New York City. Why don't we start at the very beginning; when did you first meet Ted Kennedy?

Strauss: I went to work for Senator Kennedy in April of 1963. I had graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1961 and had lived in Germany for a year. I was bilingual in German by that point. I had come back to Washington and was working downtown as a bilingual secretary, but it wasn't a very successful company.

I had a college classmate who was working for Ted Kennedy. She had worked for Senator Ben Smith before that. Somebody left and she went to Joe McIntyre, who was the administrative assistant, and said she had a friend who might be good for the job. He said, "Oh, yes? What about her?" "She has a college degree from Mount Holyoke." "Oh, that's nice." "And she speaks French." "Oh, that's okay." "She speaks German." "Well, that's nice." "And she can type." "That's pretty good." "And she taught herself shorthand." "Get her up here right away!"

On April Fool's Day, I went up for an interview. I called my mother in a state of excitement and she thought my friend was pulling an April Fool's joke. She was sure I was going to be calling back the next day in tears.

Anyway, within three or four days I was working for him. That was April of 1963.

Heininger: What was your job at that point?

Strauss: Well, don't think we had job classifications, we didn't. We were all called clerks when I came in. I guess I spent the first week answering requests, then my friend got sick and someone else left, so all of a sudden I was sent back to the legislative area to work for Jerry Marsh and John Culver, but primarily for Jerry, who was the legislative assistant. From that point on, I was his secretary and handling everything that went on in connection with doing that, because there was no chance for any other kind of job.

Don't misunderstand me; I did not consider myself put upon. That was just the way it was and I was thrilled. Others I think might have felt the same way, we were thrilled to be there. It was exciting and was like being in a family. I hadn't been there for more than a week and Senator Kennedy called me into his office and said, "If you ever need anything, if there are ever any

problems or anything goes wrong, you just come in here and tell me about it." That's how small a unit it was—There maybe were ten or twelve people on the staff at that time.

Heininger: Tell me who was working there in those very early years.

Strauss: In those very early years, it was Joe McIntyre, who had worked for Ben Smith and David I. Walsh, who was the administrative assistant. There was a woman we considered old [*laughing*] and she probably wasn't old at old, Margaret Stalcup, who handled military casework. There were a couple of other women of a certain age who did secretarial work. My friend Barbara [Lahage] was the first college-graduate female ever hired by Kennedy, and I was the second, so there were only two of us, at that time in the office, with a college education, as far as we know. I've talked to her about it.

Then there was the "inner sanctum," which was also administrative. That was headed by Bill Evans. Joe McIntyre had died very young and then Evans became the administrative assistant. He had four women working for him: a scheduler who really worked for Kennedy as well as for Evans, and Kennedy's private secretary at that time, who was Mary Jane Duris. I don't know where she is now. Then two sort of secretarial people who helped out in there.

In the legislative section were Jerry and John Culver, and Terri Haddad, who did some press work and backed up on secretarial work, and myself.

Heininger: Who was your friend Barbara?

Strauss: That was Barbara Lahage. She was there from the *very* beginning.

Heininger: At that point, how was your job defined, in terms of what you did?

Strauss: The job consisted of writing letters, taking dictation from Jerry, typing, running the mimeograph machine, making the coffee. Job descriptions didn't exist. Everybody except for the administrative assistant and the legislative assistant, as I recall, was called either a clerk or a clerk typist. Jobs simply evolved based on what you were able to do. The idea that you would have training to develop skills didn't exist. There was never any training for anything, but the great virtue was that we were all in one big room, the various sections, so we were able to learn on–the-job. When I got into a quasi corporate world here in New York, I had never heard of the job of "manager." What issues are you working on? What are you responsible for? Well, you're *managing*.

I'm sure the more senior legislative assistants didn't like the fact that all of us were buzzing around, but it was the only way we could do our jobs, because we knew everything that was going on, absolutely everything. At most, somebody had maybe a little partition around their desk so that you couldn't actually see them, but you could hear everything. That's what made it possible for those of us who were called "clerks" to begin doing substantive work, we could put our brains to work.

When I got back into the legislative section, there were piles and piles of unanswered mail. It was overwhelming. He was new to the Senate; he didn't have a staff; he was the President's younger brother. There were file drawers stuffed with unanswered letters. In a way, though, that

gave me a slight break, because believe me, John Culver did not feel like sitting down and answering the mail. I can't say that I blame him, but to me, that was something that really gave me a chance to do something. I can still remember—on my own time, of course—going home and writing a form letter about Cuba. I wrote a form letter called "Why the Moon?" At the time it seemed normal: Yes, I'm a secretary, but I can also write a policy letter. I don't know that that kind of thing would have been possible at a later time when everybody was very much separated. It was very exciting—very exciting.

Heininger: Today in most Senate offices, the lowest entry level for legislative work tends to be the legislative correspondent, who in many offices is responsible for handling all the mail.

Strauss: That was the *highest* job a woman could aspire to in the Kennedy office. I was the first one to get that job, and it took me ten years. I don't know if we're getting ahead of ourselves, but that didn't happen until 1971 or '72. I had been there for ten years. I saw that as a job I wanted. When Dave Burke left as administrative assistant—The way these men moved jobs was that you always had to have the replacement who was going to fill in for you, because otherwise Kennedy didn't want you to leave: "You can't leave me."—Dave had arranged that Eddie Martin would come in, but as a part of that, Dave said to me, "If you agree to stay and work as a secretary for one more year, for Eddie, then you can have the legislative correspondent's job."

Heininger: When he cut this deal with you, how many years had you already been there?

Strauss: Almost ten years.

Heininger: Almost ten years. It took ten years before they were even willing to acknowledge that women could move into these positions?

Strauss: I have to say that's true. Now, we had women who were caseworkers, who handled veterans' issues, immigration issues, things of that sort, but we had no one working strictly professionally in anything having to do with the legislative area.

Heininger: Were the caseworkers viewed as being professionals, or were they viewed as handling state issues and state functions?

Strauss: They were viewed as processing requests that needed to be considered by various government agencies.

Heininger: Processing requests.

Strauss: It was much better than requests for documents—that was the lowest level—when people wanted bills or flags or whatever. It was a step up to be a caseworker, but the job didn't have much stature attached to it.

Not only did it take ten years, but when I got the job, I handled *all* the legislative mail—*all*. It wasn't how it is now; I understand that some handle social issues and some handle foreign issues. *All*. I don't mean to say that when the Secretary of State would inquire about something, that a legislative assistant wouldn't have drafted the response, but then I had to type it all and I had to file it all. But I was in heaven; it was a *great* job.

Heininger: Were there ways of, in essence, developing template letters for issues that you could then duplicate?

Strauss: Yes. That's what we did, and we had a very good robotype operator named Mary Grimmel who did all of that work. She and I, together, did *all* the legislative mail that came into that office, for two years.

Heininger: When you came in, in '63, what would you estimate was the annual volume of his mail coming in, the legislative mail requiring policy? Was it relatively low?

Strauss: No, it was *not* relatively low, because he was the President's brother. Anybody who wanted to get his or her position known, whether to *Ted* Kennedy or to *President* [John F.] Kennedy—We got letters from around the country. I would say hundreds of letters a day.

We had to classify them—those that came from around the country and those that came from Massachusetts—but because his brother was the President, we didn't want to ignore the mail that came from around the country, because that would have reflected badly on his brother. It was hundreds and it was close to overwhelming. It's not surprising that without a structure at the very beginning, the only recourse was to stuff those letters into a file cabinet and pretend they didn't exist.

Heininger: Were there any situations like the mass-mailing campaigns that became classic later on, in those early days, where an advocacy organization would solicit stuff and you would get postcards?

Strauss: Yes, we would get those, but those fell on Mary Grimmel and the automatic typewriters more so than on us upstairs, because once you had the system down, then someone just had to code them all and make sure—which didn't always work. Sometimes the person who wrote about Cuba got a letter about what we were doing in Massachusetts or something. We had some funny letters about that.

Heininger: At the point at which you became a legislative correspondent, who was reviewing the mail? If you drafted a letter, say on a policy issue that came up, to whom did it go?

Strauss: The legislative assistant working in that area. If it was a new issue of some sort, it was a judgment call on my part, whether it was something that ought to be looked at before it went out or whether I could just write it myself.

Heininger: Did any of this go all the way to the AA [administrative assistant], or did any of it go to Kennedy?

Strauss: Well, our AAs at that time were not terribly substantive, certainly not in the early days. They were more political than substantive. Of course, the major letters that we would draft, that I would draft, even in the early days, before we had a legislative correspondent, would be reviewed by the legislative assistant, but nobody policed or patrolled that. In fact, I think there are many of us who, still to this day, have a horror that someone is going to come up with some letter that we sent out that has in it some statement that is going to cause a furor, but it's never happened. People didn't proofread; nobody rechecked anything. My friend had a cousin who was

in the Army, in Vietnam. He received a letter and thought Senator Kennedy must have typed the letter himself, because there were so many typos in it, so it had its plusses and minuses.

Heininger: How much of the mail did Kennedy see?

Strauss: A fair amount. We used to do tallies, so that he would certainly know the drift of how things were going. It was also very easy to pick out letters that were unusually poignant in stating whatever the point of view was, and those would have been given to him right away.

Heininger: Why, in this period, were there no women in professional positions? Was Kennedy's office unique? Was this Senate-wide?

Strauss: It was Senate-wide as far as I know. We had one friend who worked for Hastings Keith on the House side, and she was a real legislative assistant. She had also been a classmate of ours at Mount Holyoke. Since we were reasonably well-educated women, I don't think other people would have been progressing any more rapidly than we were.

We had another classmate, who worked for Leverett Saltonstall, and her duties were more or less the same kind of duties that we had: occasionally being given an issue of substance, but on top of that expected to do the mimeographing, answer the phones, take dictation, type the letters, and work on Saturdays, which only the women had to do. The thinking was that perhaps the men would have to come in for some reason of policy and urgency, but insofar as keeping the office open, only the women did that. It was normal up to a point, and then there did come a point where we began to realize that we might be able to change this system a little bit.

Heininger: When did it begin to grate?

Strauss: I assume you've interviewed Barbara Souliotis or if you haven't, someone else has. It didn't begin to grate until the '70s, because at that point the women's movement was just getting going. It was a little slow to come to the Hill, needless to say.

I just went over some of my old records. We were paid in cash, in brown envelopes, at the disbursing office, until 1970. I still have one of the little brown pay envelopes written out by hand, how much money I earned, how much had been deducted. We would tear open our little envelopes to get our pay. We have told this story to some of the young women who work on the Hill now, and they are almost more fascinated by that story than by other aspects of our experiences. They get completely fixated on it. We would take our cash—and the men, I assume, were paid the same way—and walk across that park, where every robber must have known people were walking with pockets full of money, over to the bank to deposit our admittedly measly pay.

I forget now what you asked me. I got carried away. [*laughing*]

Heininger: I don't know. I was diverted by this question myself. [*laughing*] When did it begin to grate on you?

Strauss: Yes. There had been minor grating things, like when a friend of mine asked for a raise and was told, "You don't have a mortgage, so you don't need the money as much as—" then the administrative assistant would name one of the men. "He needs the money more than you."

By the time we got to the '70s, there was still no program for raises, there was no orderly progression of any kind insofar as somebody might look at what you had accomplished. I still have a slip of paper from the 1060s giving me a raise; it's written on the equivalent of a Post-it note: "Anne, your salary is going up from so-and-so to so-and-so, Bill." That's how it was done.

Heininger: No contracts, eh?

Strauss: Oh, good heavens no! That's when it happened. Barbara Souliotis and I were talking about this a few months ago. There came a time when the Congress had awarded a cost-of-living increase. Because I worked for the administrative assistant, I caught wind of the fact that we weren't going to get it, that they were going to use the money maybe to hire some—for some other purpose. That's when we really got upset.

Barbara Souliotis is very slow to want to do anything to cause a to-do. But we weren't going to get the cost-of-living; we were doing all the Saturday work—Even young fellows who were working in the mailroom didn't have to work on Saturdays—and there might have been one other issue that was involved. Barbara and I decided we had to talk to Senator Kennedy about it, because it wasn't fair. We knew we couldn't tell Dave Burke or Angelique [Voutselas Lee], who was his secretary, because they would forewarn him. There was a great need, we felt, to just be there, straightforward.

We accomplished all that and got our meeting. As Barbara recalls, Kennedy was practically shaking in his boots. It had never been that two women had come in to confront him on some serious matters having to do with salary and payroll and office stuff. Barbara recalls that all he could say was "Okay, yes. That's fine. Yes, everybody should do Saturday work. Yes, of course you should get the cost-of-living increase. Yes, all that should be fine." He was so taken aback and glad that we weren't coming in to—I don't know what we could have asked for; we could have gotten anything. I think that was in the very late '60s or very early '70s.

Heininger: That's very interesting. Why do you think he would have reacted that way, because it had never even been pointed out to him, the inequities that had been involved?

Strauss: No. It was the idea of women coming in and saying, "We want these things." Good heavens, he must have argued with his legislative and administrative senior aides countless times, over far bigger things than if somebody's going to get a 2 percent cost-of-living raise. It was just the *procedure* that was unheard of, that *women* would actually come in and start asking for things. He didn't know what we were going to ask. He probably thought we were going to walk out. I don't know what he thought, but Barbara remembers very clearly how he couldn't say yes fast enough.

Heininger: Did that get the women out of having to do sole Saturdays?

Strauss: Things became a little bit better after that, and we maybe only had to work every other Saturday and maybe only two people had to work. The office needed to be open on Saturday, because constituents were coming.

Heininger: You think this was probably the late ’60s?

Strauss: I think it was the late ’60s, because I know Dave Burke was still there, and he left after the ’70 campaign. We’re pretty sure he was the administrative assistant at the time, and I’m fairly certain Angelique was the secretary, so I’m pretty sure that’s when it was.

Heininger: Given that you all were in this same room and you knew everything that was going on, how were the men being treated in this office? Were you aware that they were getting regular raises?

Strauss: It was rarely about the money; it wasn’t about that. We saw them as on a different level from what we were on, and that that was just the way it was, that we were *not* their equals, and in a sense we weren’t. We weren’t writing all of those policy things, arguing cases at the Supreme Court, working out the things that they had to do. We weren’t writing his major speeches; we weren’t drafting them. We weren’t going out to do the briefings at that time. We saw, though, that they did a lot more than we did.

Heininger: But then again, you weren’t given the opportunity to do those, either.

Strauss: No, but believe me, in the late ’60s that was the norm, at least in the perception. We felt we had exciting, fun, important jobs, but we didn’t want to be treated *entirely* unfairly.

Heininger: It began to grate, so you and Barbara Souliotis confronted Kennedy, and things began to change?

Strauss: Slowly.

Heininger: Slowly, all right. When did you see things change more?

Strauss: The first change was a year after Eddie arrived. Believe me, on day 366, based on my agreement with Dave Burke, I said to Eddie, “Okay, it’s time for me to start being the legislative correspondent.” Eddie did not object; Eddie understood the situation. Of course, I had to find my replacement to be his secretary, but that’s what everybody had to do. You could never move up until you had the person who was going to replace you.

Mind you, before this, working for the administrative assistant, things could be very difficult in the ’60s. We were writing the condolence letters to the mothers and wives who had had people killed in Vietnam. Many letters had to be written week after week as casualties mounted. I was also responsible for looking at all the threat mail that came in, particularly not only after ’63, but then after ’68, going through that. They would send the Secret Service up once a week, or every other week, to go through all of these letters, but you just did it. It didn’t seem like, *Oh my God, I can’t stand doing this one more day.* You felt it was something that needed to be done.

Heininger: Kennedy's office now uses lots and lots of interns and many fellows. Were there interns at the office then?

Strauss: Yes, there were, a few, and Congressional fellows. It mainly must have started in the late '60s. We had volunteers; I don't know that they were really called interns. Mount Holyoke had one of the earliest formal programs for internships for its students, but I had never taken a single political science course. I was completely uninterested in politics, so I didn't come to the office in that way. But Barbara Lahage had had an internship at the AFL-CIO, and you could get a Senate internship through the political science department at Mt. Holyoke. I don't remember a lot of them around until in the '70s, when there would be a number of very organized programs to bring in interns.

Heininger: There weren't people, therefore, that you could use to do some of the typing, some of the filing?

Strauss: I had volunteers who would come in and at least do the filing. They had to work on the floor, literally on the floor, because there was no room. I think various people managed to find volunteers, but nothing that would involve typing, because we didn't have any extra equipment for them to use. Filing was mostly what the volunteers did.

Heininger: There was no way to offload a lot of the—and no Xerox machines.

Strauss: No.

Heininger: No fax machines.

Strauss: We had to run the mimeograph machine; we had to type the stencils; we had to correct the stencils; we had to distribute the statements. But we did it. We did it.

Heininger: Those were very labor-intensive things to do too.

Strauss: Yes, it was all very labor intensive. The men worked very hard too. When someone would complain that they didn't want to be typing this speech for tomorrow at midnight and wanted someone to tell so-and-so he's got to have it done by . . . the response was—understandably, you can't expect that inspiration is going to strike the speechwriter from 9:00 to 5:00—you just had to be ready to do the job when the job needed to be done. There's nothing wrong with that, but it *felt* as though you were being used. But somebody had to do it. It's true; if you're not ready to draft the major civil rights speech at 9:00 in the morning, and you're not ready until 7:00 at night, what's more important? A good speech.

Heininger: When did Carey Parker come in?

Strauss: Did he come before David Burke or after? No, in '67 was when Dun Gifford arrived, I think. I think Carey came in '69.

Heininger: That strikes me as about right. How did he fit into what the structure was?

Strauss: By that time, I was working in the administrative side of things. Once Dave Burke went from legislative assistant to administrative assistant, I moved into the administrative area, so I wasn't that involved in the day-to-day legislative activities. Dave had not been a lawyer, so he was kind of in over his head at first, but he did beautifully regardless. His first issue was the Poll Tax Amendment, and he was asked to go up to Harvard and speak to the most eminent law professors in the country, and felt a bit intimidated, understandably.

I assume Carey came in and must have worked on all the major legislation that had to do with judicial matters. Carey, bless his heart, was accustomed to a law office, where you had your own private area and you had a skilled secretary. There were some rough times with Carey getting used to the situation. I'm not sure who got used to what, but it was rough back there in legislative. I was glad that I was in the administrative area by that time.

Heininger: So how did you educate Dave Burke about the Senate? You had been there longer than he had when he came in.

Strauss: Well, it was very funny. After Jerry Marsh left—He was really the first legislative assistant, with Culver, but he was doing most of the work because Culver was already looking to his own future. After Jerry left, the next legislative assistant was Win [E. Winslow] Turner while Kennedy was flat on his back in the hospital after having been in the plane crash. After Jerry left, we went through his papers, Sarah Hamet Milam and I, and we found a wonderful little book that Jerry had started, about important people to know, talking about how to find your way around the Senate. There were only two names in the book. We don't remember, or at least I don't, the first name, but by the time he wrote down the second name, which was Bobby Baker, he never had to write down another name, because he had found the way to get things done in the Senate.

When Dave Burke arrived, there had been this interregnum period where, as I was thinking, getting ready for this interview, it was almost like the women in wartime in World War II. While Kennedy was flat on his back, when the whole staff's focus was on trying to keep things together, Sarah and I got to do a lot of things we wouldn't have ordinarily: we were writing education speeches; we were preparing materials for the Senate floor. We were doing a lot of things that we didn't get to do before that.

When Win left, who was really in a bit over his head—He had come from [Estes] Kefauver's office, I think—Dave arrived. He had been working for Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg. We did resent it a bit. Dave doesn't like me to tell this story, but apparently when he arrived, his first assignment, within days, was to go up to Harvard and start working on this poll tax issue. Of course he wanted to know where the files were, and apparently we just gave him, "Well, why don't you go look in that file cabinet over there?" We probably didn't have any files, would be the truth of it, but we did not—me especially, apparently—make a very good impression on him.

I don't know who schooled him on where to go and what to do. He probably had to do it himself, the way everybody there learned how to do their jobs. Dave told me later that he found himself saying prayers that he was going to be able to survive. You can imagine being thrown into that. Apparently, he thought he might not be able to handle it. When Dave left, he left *me* in charge of Eddie, but as it turned out, it probably wasn't such a bad idea. Then after Dave came Alan Novak and maybe someone else.

Heininger: What kind of relationship did you eventually develop with him?

Strauss: Oh, extremely close. It was a wonderful working relationship, absolutely wonderful. There was nothing wrong with it at all. I didn't view it as being held back. I viewed it as being in the middle of everything and I somehow got on with the things that were of interest to me in terms of the other things going on around him in the office that I could handle.

Heininger: Did he delegate things to you?

Strauss: Oh, yes, he did. That's why he felt that, insofar as running the office was concerned, Eddie didn't have to worry because, though I didn't recognize it at the time, apparently the perception was, among the whole staff, that *I* was running the office, but I never felt as though I was running the office. We had Eddie to do the political things and that sort of work.

Heininger: If this was the perception by other people in the office, that you were really running the office, but you didn't feel that, why?

Strauss: Because I was at someone else's beck and call. I didn't have any authority on my own. My authority derived from the person I worked for. That's why it's very good that Dave and I had such a good relationship, because nobody ever questioned—If I said something needed to be done, there was never any question. "Well I'm going to ask Dave to see what he says." It didn't work that way.

Heininger: So it was derived authority, but that's true for all Senate staffers, because all Senate staffers' authority is derived from the Senator, him- or herself. But it's interesting in the context of within an office, where there usually are people who know how everything operates and they are running things. It sounds like you were doing a lot of that and that Dave did actually devolve a lot of that onto you.

Strauss: Yes, but there was no question that I was then going to be cut loose, to answer only legislative mail. It didn't matter. That wasn't the priority at the time. The mail was somehow getting done, God knows how, because I suppose all the secretaries were also trying to answer the mail. It wasn't a priority. As far as he was concerned "there must be other people who can do that."

Heininger: He actually thought, at that point, that he needed you doing other things that were more important than answering the mail.

Strauss: That's right, yes. Well, I was answering mail, but I was answering mail as part of doing everything else. The mail was getting answered, but I think people also didn't realize, looking back, that only those of us who had first-rate educations would have been able to do as many things as we were doing under the rubric of "clerk."

Heininger: Did *you* see a distinction between those of you women who had college educations and those who didn't?

Strauss: No. We were all in the same boat.

Heininger: Banded by gender.

Strauss: You'd maybe have to look at it from someone else's perspective, but no, we were all in the same boat.

Heininger: You then spent a year working for Eddie Martin. What was your relationship with him?

Strauss: Also very good. I had a grasp of where all the bodies were buried, the payroll, and that kind of thing. The policy things I don't think were a big issue of concern or interest of his. By that time, we had a very solid legislative staff. I think Jim Flug had arrived by then, and Carey Parker. I don't know who else might have been involved. I think his political future was not in question at all at that time. The politics had to be taken care of. The feeling was that someone had to be there to keep the ship running, keep things afloat, and that was Dave's way to be able, by that time, to move on. I don't know whether he went to Dreyfus or to Governor [Hugh] Carey.

Heininger: I think he went to Dreyfus from there. So on day 366, you said, "Okay, now I get the legislative correspondent job."

Strauss: Yes.

Heininger: What did you do in that job?

Strauss: I had my own little responsibilities; they were up to me. I wasn't at anybody's beck and call. This was ten years into my being on the staff. But I hadn't been miserable, don't misunderstand me.

Heininger: I understand that. Part of what is useful about this is exploring the early years of his Senate career and how things were organized in the office, and that it was very different for men and women, which became much less of an issue many years further down the line. In that sense, you were the first one to break out of the mold of women being able to serve only in these secretarial functions.

Strauss: Yes.

Heininger: How long did you do the legislative correspondent job?

Strauss: At the time I thought—and it is still possible—I could have stayed in that job for the rest of my life. I really liked that job. I liked to write; I was interested in the issues; I knew how to do research; I knew how to cover issues, get approvals, do all the things you needed to do. I was very happy, in spite of the fact that I did all my own typing, all my own filing, all my own research, with the help of Mary Grimmel downstairs on the automatic typewriter. I was thrilled with that job.

One day, about 1973—or was it '75?—Senator Kennedy asked me to come into his office. I thought, *Oh, gee, what's happened? Someone's gotten the wrong answer; the "Why the Moon?" letter went out to a Cuba person.* He said to me, "Would you like to be the staff director for the

National Science Foundation Subcommittee?" I literally stood there with my mouth open, because in the end he had to say to me, "That's all right, you can think it over." [*laughing*] It came out of the complete blue, but not the complete blue insofar as why it happened.

Ellis Mottur, whom you may have interviewed in the course of this, was leaving to go to the Office of Technology Assessment or someplace, and the same proviso was always in place: he had to find somebody to take his job. That subcommittee consisted of him and a secretary. It was not a big subcommittee.

For some reason, somebody had noticed that maybe I could do that job. I have to hand it to Kennedy. It must have come as a bit of a shock to him. I don't think it was his idea, not that he wasn't pleased with the idea, but I don't think it came—I'm sure it was thanks to Ellis. I guess I finally pulled myself together and was able to speak and said, "I didn't take any science courses." He said, "Well, if we need science guidance, we do have [Jerome] Jerry Wiesner at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and the whole Harvard and MIT faculty, Anne. It's not necessary for *you* to know all the science."

The issue at that time was trying to make these scientific research programs politically feasible, because there was great fun made: "Oh, they're studying how many times a rat will run around in a circle before it eats a piece of cheese," or "They're studying the fruit fly." There was a lot of fun made of basic research, to which Kennedy and his Massachusetts academic constituency were very committed. That was very important to the Massachusetts community, that basic research continue to be *well* funded.

I thought, *Well, okay, I guess that's going to work.* That subcommittee didn't have an office, so I just moved to another desk, and the secretary who had worked for Ellis started working for me. It was the first time I ever had a secretary.

During the course of that, I drafted the legislation—I got to know and met with all the people at the Science Foundation, who I'm sure thought I was a joke, because if there's anybody who is acutely aware of academic status, it's people in the research community. They want to know how many docs [doctoral degrees] and postdocs you've done. But they gradually got the idea that well, she may not know a lot about science, but she certainly is able to get the bills through and get done what needs to be done.

That was a very exciting time too. I managed the bills with Senator Kennedy on the Senate floor, including jumping up and down a little bit too much; he'd have to tell me to sit down because I'd get a little excited. It was a time when Robert Dole would stand up and say, "Senator, what is this fruit fly thing?" or whatever, and then Kennedy would say something like, "Well, Senator Dole, I could maybe ask you about some of these agriculture subsidies you people get out there in Kansas." It was still very collegial.

There was conflict, but it was in a collegial sense. We ran the subcommittee in a very collegial manner, to the point that when we would hold our little markup sessions, which were very small, we'd get everybody together. I'll never forget the time when Senator Kennedy said, "Well, now we'll have some questions, and then we'll have the vote," and Senator [Walter] Mondale said,

"Ted, could we vote first and have the questions later?" It was done seriously, but in a very collegial atmosphere. This would have been '73 to '75, probably, something like that.

That was when we began to develop this Science for Citizens program and the Women in Science [Women in Science Equal Opportunity Act]. Science for Citizens was designed to help the average person get a better grasp what it means when someone says the water is polluted, with what is it polluted? Is it serious? When someone wants to site a nuclear plant, what are the real dangers? Because I was not a science person—and neither is Kennedy, basically, a science person—it was very important to try to figure out a way to make these scientific things understandable at a community level. That was a very rewarding thing to work on.

With regard to Women in Science, at that time the data was awful. One percent of engineers were women; I just looked it up to confirm my memory. Mount Holyoke is very prominent in the sciences, even though I had not only never taken a political science course, I never took a *real* science course once I got my regular requirements out of the way. The Women in Science bill included all sorts of grant programs and study programs through the NSF. I just read that now it's up to 9 percent and there are even more in the pipeline. I consider that that's something I was able to offer Kennedy. That we were able to enact this program had a lot to do with the fact that I was not a scientist and he was not a scientist.

Heininger: Was this your idea?

Strauss: Yes. The Women in Science bill was my idea; that was *entirely* my idea.

Heininger: That's a big deal.

Strauss: It wasn't such a big a deal at the time, believe me. Nobody else—Carey Parker and the other legislative assistants were totally uninterested in Women in Science. It wasn't as if I was on anybody's turf, but it wasn't a big deal. I think Ellis Mottur, my immediate predecessor, came up with the kernel of Science for Citizens, though I can't remember exactly. I don't have any written materials from that time anymore, so I don't know.

Heininger: But you see, if something is not on everybody else's radar screen, that's the best opportunity people have for getting things accomplished.

Strauss: Exactly, exactly, so it just slid right through. Actually it slid right through because we made it slide through. Kennedy knew what to do and I knew what to do, and it gave rise to this exchange. One of the fellows on another committee that we were working with once said, "You know what, Anne? You are a goldfish swimming in a sea of piranhas," because by that time the legislative operation Kennedy had was really tough. There was already starting to be the difficulty in getting compromises, but with the science issues, we were almost always able to get cooperation.

There was the isolated back-and-forth with [William] Proxmire and his Golden Fleece Award, and sometimes another Senator would stand up and make fun of something. Almost everything went through on unanimous consent. I don't know if that can even be done anymore, with the hostilities that exist between members. Of course, I was always afraid someone was going to stand up at the last minute and say, "I'm not giving unanimous consent," but it didn't happen that

way. By the way, the Science Foundation itself was not terribly interested in either Science for Citizens—"No, that's not for citizens; that's for us to do"—or women—"If women had the ability, they would rise to the top." It was a very different era.

Heininger: See Larry Summers at Harvard in recent years.

Strauss: Yes. If you look now—First of all, when I was doing the Science Foundation programs with Kennedy, we were barely able to get the budget up to $1 billion. I looked it up the other day; it's now $5 billion. It was small by today's standards, but large at the time.

Heininger: How did other Senators react to you, because, given that you were the staff director for this subcommittee, you must have been dealing with the other Senators on the subcommittee?

Strauss: As evidenced with Mondale, they didn't have any qualms that something was going to be stuck in there that they had never heard of, or something was going to happen to embarrass them. We would help them out occasionally. They would get constituent letters along the lines of "What are we wasting our money on this for?" and we would try to help them out, on getting them good responses, taking care of these constituent concerns that were causing them problems insofar as "I'm not going to vote for something that's going to cause me all this aggravation." When Proxmire was at his height, concerns were pretty constant; it was very constant.

Heininger: But you didn't get negative reactions to you being a woman in this position?

Strauss: Once. I was trying to get an agreement with the House on the conference report and [Olin E.] Tiger Teague from Texas was the head of the corresponding House committee. It got to the point where I wasn't able to iron something out—I forget what it was—so Kennedy and Teague had to have a conversation.

I was in Kennedy's private office while he was speaking to Teague on the phone, and I could tell the conversation was getting very heated. I don't even remember what the issue was. I was thinking to myself, *Oh, my God, I should have given in. I shouldn't have made him make this call.* He got off the phone and before he could say anything I said, "I'm really sorry." He said, "What are you sorry about? This is what you were supposed to do." But I thought, because voices had been raised, *Oh, my gosh, I must not have done the right thing.* Fortunately, those occasions came up very rarely. Normally everything went quite smoothly.

Heininger: How did Kennedy respond to you, because obviously you were the first woman that he had had in any professional position? Did you see any change in how he reacted, how he dealt with you?

Strauss: No, because in my other jobs, I had dealt with him mainly on paperwork things, and I was out at his house a lot. He had a French-speaking cook, a very outstanding cook, but there would be various issues with her Social Security or her life going back and forth to France, so I was in and out of his house a lot, and he was very comfortable with me. I was also doing a lot of translating, because at that time, the foreign press was writing many articles about either President Kennedy or Bobby Kennedy, so I was doing a lot of translating work, preparing materials for him. I didn't feel that it seemed strange. I would go out to his house in the mornings

before a committee hearing and do the briefing and take care of all the paperwork, and ride in with him to make sure everything was taken care of.

Now, after our subcommittee was subsumed into the Health Subcommittee, so it became the Health and Science Subcommittee, Larry [Horowitz] began to have more of a filtering effect. That would have been in ’74 or ’75. I forget exactly when that happened.

We had always operated, the whole office had operated, in a spokes-of-the-wheel kind of organization, which wasn’t terribly efficient. I’m sure Senator Kennedy was bothered by a lot of things that should never have come to his attention, but when Larry began to become involved—and I’m sure Kennedy appreciated it—we began to have a more structured operation. At that point, Larry would usually be there while I was doing the briefings, because I don’t think Larry particularly wanted to get into the details of what was going on in science education or Women in Science. He wanted it to be *done*, don’t misunderstand me, but *he* didn’t want to have to get involved.

Heininger: What was your relationship with Larry?

Strauss: It was okay for a while, and then we had some very rough spots. I came across the letter of resignation that I had written. Larry was a difficult person. I don’t know if you’ve talked to him or talked to people who have worked for him. I’m really skipping around here, but anyway, I found this letter that I wrote in 1979.

It came about because he had ordered me to fire someone because this person hadn’t given him a telephone message in the middle of the entire Health Subcommittee offices being painted. Even though I knew he probably wouldn’t have really insisted, at that point I went home and said to myself, *No more. I’m not doing this anymore. This is too much*, so I wrote a handwritten letter about how this had been a wonderful place to work, but it was time for me to move on to other things. I took this letter and I think Rick Burke might have been the administrative assistant by that time, or maybe he was still only the secretary, but he was clearly the person to go to with this situation.

I came in early one morning, when I knew Rick would be in the office, and said, “I’ve written this letter to Senator Kennedy and I just can’t work for Larry any more. I’m really sorry; I don’t mean to bail out,” and Rick said to me, “Anne, we are three months from announcing a Presidential campaign.” Nobody knew that at this time; people were talking about it, but I had no idea. “I don’t think you want to leave right now, because if you stay, I’ll be sure you’re one of the first people who gets to go on the campaign.” For all Rick’s other problems, he did me a *huge* favor, because I really wanted to do that ’80 campaign. I would have felt very bad if I had missed out on it.

Heininger: What happened when the ’80 campaign came around?

Strauss: When the ’80 campaign came around, I think I was the first staff person to join—I worked for Paul Kirk, when Paul Kirk was still working out of his law firm. Then, when the campaign actually got started, I worked for Carl Wagner and was also out in the field. I was involved with the New Hampshire primary, organizing the field office up there. I was in southern Illinois, also doing field organizing. I had been in the ’68 campaign for Robert Kennedy, and had

been in Oregon and in California, in San Francisco, at the time Robert Kennedy was shot. For the Ted Kennedy campaign, I was in New Hampshire and in Illinois, and then we were all called back because the campaign appeared to be going nowhere fast. I still kept on working for Carl. I stayed with the campaign, including coming up here to the convention, which was another tremendously exciting time, working the floor and doing all these very exciting and fun things, exhausting but fun.

After the '80 campaign was when I said, *Now it really is time to go, because I've done all the things that I really would like to do, and I'm a native Washingtonian.* I had been away to college, but I always lived in Washington, and I really felt it was time to move on and make a change, or I would never have made a change. That's when I came to New York.

Heininger: Then what did you do?

Strauss: I went to work for the New York Power Authority, doing citizen outreach in connection with siting of high voltage transmission lines, which is what I had become interested in doing the Science for Citizens work.

Heininger: How much contact did you maintain with the whole Kennedy operation?

Strauss: None.

Heininger: Really?

Strauss: I didn't want to lobby. No, I hardly went back for about five or six years. I really wanted to transplant myself. I stayed in touch with my friends and all of that, but none of this "out of the back pocket" stuff, you know, doing this, that, involving Washington contacts. No.

Heininger: So you spent about 17 years or so with him, and you were the first woman to make the transition into a professional position.

Strauss: I think you'd have to say that. I don't know who else would say they did.

Heininger: There isn't anybody else who has. In fact, Patti Saris may have been one of the few women who came in next, and I don't think that was until about '79.

Strauss: We didn't overlap at all.

Heininger: Yes, and she came in.

Strauss: Well, Nance Lyons did some professional work and so did Mary Murtaugh, who unfortunately died of a brain hemorrhage in 1979. Mary was really making substantive breakthroughs, far more than mine. She was working on fisheries issues. She was the one who built on the work of Nance Lyons and finally got Senator Kennedy to become interested in the Equal Rights Amendment, which was not a priority at all, because his legislative people told him, perhaps quite rightly, that it's already taken care of in the Constitution. But Mary kept going with that; that was one of her issues. She had started out working at night, in the mailroom, coming in from the Social Security office in Baltimore, and reading and sorting the mail until

midnight. That's how she got her foot in the door. I don't know how long she did that, and Jan Verrey did the same thing, until someone finally noticed them.

Heininger: What did Mary Murtaugh do then, after she did this as a second job, sorting the mail? How did she make the transition?

Strauss: I think she was hired to do casework. It might have been at the time that Eddie was there or maybe it was even in Dave's time. I don't know, maybe someone left. I'm pretty sure she came in doing casework, and she then put herself through law school at night while she was doing all this, and got her law degree. She was really just hitting her full stride when she had a brain hemorrhage and was gone, from one day to the next. The day before we had been at a touch football game and she had said, "Anne, I've never been happier in my whole life," so it was something personal. And the next day she was dead.

Heininger: She must have been very young too.

Strauss: She was 35. Terri Haddad did some interacting with the press, but I wouldn't put it quite in that category. She was there also, from the very beginning, because she had come from Massachusetts.

Heininger: Did you also do some work on Indian health issues too?

Strauss: I was going to get back to that, yes. Once the Science Subcommittee merged with the Health Subcommittee, an important segment became Indian health centers. Kennedy did a hearing out in the Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico in 1977. I did look that up. It was another of the very first times I was really out on my own, because for a long time, for obvious reasons, women weren't allowed to go out in the field. There was concern that someone was going to get involved with somebody, in things that could result in bad publicity, but I assume Larry said that I could—wanted me to do that, so I went out to New Mexico.

I stayed with a friend of mine who lived in Albuquerque, and I set up this hearing at the Isleta Pueblo. She remembers to this day me getting up at 5:30 in the morning, in her kitchen, whistling and humming and so thrilled to be doing this. At that time I don't know whether we actually had health centers established focusing on Indian health or not, but the situation, the Indians and health care, was absolutely horrible, just horrible. It was such a moving experience to be out there. I went out probably a week or so ahead of time, organizing the people who were going to be speaking and all the logistics, and then Larry came out, just to make sure everything was all right.

We went together to meet Kennedy, who was flying in on some kind of a little puddle jumper. Angelique had called me ahead of time to say, "Now remember, there is a christening present for Kathleen's [Kennedy Townsend] daughter," in the lower right corner of a certain bag. "Be sure that when Kennedy gets off the plane—" because he was going to go to see Kathleen first—"he has this gift with him." We got to the airport, and of course Larry was all involved in I don't know what, but being in charge, undoubtedly, and was about to hustle Kennedy away to a car that was waiting. I said, "Larry, wait a minute." I said, "Senator, there's a present for Kathleen in your suitcase that you're about to leave behind." He turned to Larry and said, "Larry, *that's* what you call good staff work." [*laughing*] A small victory, but still.

The hearing went fine and it was a lot of fun. I had done some backup work on hearings in California before that, but I had never done one in the field, completely by myself before. That would have been in '77.

Heininger: When the NSF [National Science Foundation] Subcommittee was subsumed into the Health Subcommittee, what were your main areas of responsibility then?

Strauss: I had all the science work.

Heininger: You still had all the science work.

Strauss: All the science work. I had the Indian health work, too. I think [Christine] Chris Capito Burch did all the community health centers. By that time, the NSF budget was big enough that it was becoming a full-time job, and the slings and arrows that were coming in from all sides were getting a little bit intense. It was still more or less my full-time job.

Heininger: When you went on to the NSF Subcommittee at that point, did you have any contact with the committee staff director?

Strauss: I must have, yes.

Heininger: I'm trying to think who it was at that point.

Strauss: Harrison ["Pete"] Williams [Jr.].

Heininger: He left in, what, '74?

Strauss: If I really worked at it, I might be able to recall. I know I interacted with many of [Jacob] Javits' people. Javits was the ranking minority.

Heininger: He was ranking on the NSF Committee.

Strauss: I think on the full committee.

Heininger: The full committee, yes.

Strauss: I don't know who Pete Williams' person was, but the Democrats went along. Again, it was very collegial, certainly among the Democrats.

Heininger: It was a committee that was ideologically sympathetic with where Kennedy was?

Strauss: Yes. Occasionally, there would be some issue with the Republicans. We'd have some of these people talking about secular humanism and "Is the Science Foundation promoting this?" There would be these flaps of various kinds, and usually the Republicans would be more upset about it and more vocal. The Democrats would just, I think, have the attitude, *Can you please make this go away somehow? We really don't want to get into this.*

Heininger: Tell us about Kennedy during this time. You had 17 years working for him. Tell us about him.

Strauss: Well, he is and was a wonderful, warm human being. You really had the feeling that you were part of something that was important, that wasn't based on how far ahead could you get or who could you step over to get to the next level. He ran a very collegial office, and that was certainly true over the first ten years. He had a wonderful sense of humor. There were lots of events. There would be sports, parties, and all of that. You really felt—It was paternalistic, I suppose, in a *very* nice way.

Heininger: In the '70s, as the staff was getting larger and he developed this whole Health Subcommittee staff, I assume the rest of the staff was also beginning to increase. Foreign policy people were coming in, and more judiciary people.

Strauss: Exactly.

Heininger: Did you see changes taking place in how the staff operated and how they dealt with him?

Strauss: Yes. It had to become more organized. By that time, when the NSF operation joined the Health operation, the Health offices were in another building. I wasn't in the main office anymore, so I was less aware of how that aspect was evolving, because once we were part of the Health Subcommittee, Larry handled all of the interaction with Kennedy. I'm sure Kennedy wanted it that way and it's certainly the way that Larry wanted it.

Heininger: So your contact with Kennedy diminished at that point?

Strauss: It diminished, yes. It was still there, but it was usually either with Larry also present or filtered through Larry. He didn't interfere much with the NSF on the substance and the policy and working through everything, but he wanted to be assured, understandably, that Kennedy wasn't going to go to the Senate floor and get sandbagged by something I hadn't thought of or something that he knew about, that he had better tell me about before it came to a head.

I also recall that there began to be more physical barriers between the legislative assistants, the foreign policy, and the secretaries. I went over to the office for something and all of a sudden there were all these walls up, where we had had just big open spaces. I can certainly understand it. I'm sure it was a nightmare for some of these people to try to do thinking work, because after all, we "girls" were organizing our social lives, talking to our friends, smoking cigarettes. Everybody smoked. Now, having been in a professional position for so many years after leaving there, I can see how distracting it must have been. Dave would be dictating something into the typewriter; I'd be typing, smoking a cigarette, and talking to a friend on the phone. Because I was able to type, I didn't see that all this other stuff could be quite distracting.

Heininger: Early multitasking.

Strauss: It was. Of course, I shouldn't have been doing that.

Heininger: Obviously; you were getting the work done though.

Strauss: I know, but I can see why. But in a way, I think it's why the office—with as few people as we had in the early days—worked as well as it did, because everybody knew what was going on.

Heininger: I'm assuming that the larger an office becomes, the more difficult that becomes to maintain.

Strauss: Absolutely.

Heininger: The workload increased; the distance between people increased as the workload increased; and there couldn't be the same kind of knowledge of everything that was going on, because there was too much going on.

Strauss: That's right.

Heininger: Did you see how the way Kennedy interacted with his staff changed through the years?

Strauss: He always had good relationships with his staff people, and when things would go wrong, he would be the first one to make a joke out of it. Something happened on a Health Subcommittee vote. It wasn't something I was involved in, but I heard about it. Supposedly, the whole process had been worked out. They were going to go to the Senate floor and it was going to pass overwhelmingly, but something went wrong. Whatever it was, the bill was defeated. Of course, the staff person was just *destroyed*. Kennedy said he bet that was the first time so-and-so ever failed at anything in his life. He was very good-natured about these things, and things did happen.

Barbara Lahage remembers a situation in the Senate office when we were out campaigning in Oregon, in the 1968 campaign. That was another case where the people left in the office could rise to the top, because everybody else was gone. In those days, you didn't have to even go off of payroll to work on a campaign. Everybody who had found any way to get out and get on the campaign was on the campaign, so there were people doing the legislative work who weren't all that experienced, but I think Jim Flug was still in the Senate office. Jim said that Kennedy *absolutely* had to get back for a certain vote. The vote was going to be so close and Kennedy's support was essential. It was on some big issue, so they interrupted the whole campaign schedule—campaigning for RFK [Robert F. Kennedy]—and flew him back across country. Well, it went through with almost no opposition.

Heininger: Things change.

Strauss: Apparently. You know, it was awful, but it was funny, and that was really a wonderful saving grace about him. He really could laugh about these things that would happen. He really could laugh about it and not get upset. I'm sure he was upset, but he got over it in a big hurry and then, of course, enjoyed telling the story hundreds and hundreds more times.

Heininger: How did you see his standing among other Senators?

Strauss: In 1963 he was considered just a pretty face. Nobody cared. They cared because he had access to the President, but respect was not a factor. The way he managed to bring himself along and come into the Senate club was masterful. His personality allowed him to go very slowly and gradually, and get to know these people. He got along with [James] Eastland; he could get along with [John] Stennis; he could even get along with Russell Long. He's a wonderful human being in how he can relate to people, so for those years, '63 and into '64, until his back was broken, he didn't have any committees, any subcommittees, or anything. There were just the 12 or 15 of us working in the office.

Then, after '64 and after the assassination, his stature began to rise. I think the refugees might have been the first thing he got. I don't think it was NSF. NSF might have been the second subcommittee.

Heininger: I think it was immigration, yes. It started as refugees and then became the Immigration Subcommittee.

Strauss: Then, after the accident, he also got a special office in the Capitol, because he really couldn't go back and forth; it was just too painful. The way he handled himself in the aftermath of that, his respect grew by leaps and bounds, and then he was elected whip in '68, after the RFK campaign.

Heininger: Yes, I think so.

Strauss: The apocryphal story was that he was out West skiing and they lost his ski boots; he didn't have anything else to do, so he decided he would put together a campaign to be elected Senate whip. Somebody else would have to verify that, but it sounds quite likely. I know they had lost all of his ski equipment, because that's the kind of thing we got involved in, "Where's my ski equipment?" When he went to Eastland or whomever it was, to say he was going to run, the story is that the response was "Well, boy, I didn't know that job was open." He did successfully take on Russell Long (whip at the time). Respect for Kennedy was very high at that point and he did win.

Then, after Chappaquiddick, there had to be a lot of rebuilding. A *lot* of rebuilding had to go on, but he did that too. He lost the whip job, and he went to work on health issues. He rebuilt his credibility. I've read that others have written that he is going to be seen as the greatest Senator since Daniel Webster, and maybe even greater.

Heininger: What are the things, if people are looking back in the future, that they should know about that aren't going to be necessarily immediately obvious?

Strauss: What a caring, decent human being he is and what a spectacular legislator. We had the hardest time getting newspapers to pay any attention to what he was doing substantively for those first ten years, because there was the [John F. Kennedy] assassination, then there was the RFK campaign, then there was *that* assassination, and then Martin Luther King, [Jr.]'s—well in reverse order—and then Mrs. [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] Onassis getting married. Everything that happened would detract from the fact that, meanwhile, he was developing this solid, solid legislative record. He was really good at it.

Heininger: Was he overshadowed by Bobby in the years that they were both in the Senate?

Strauss: Not really. I didn't think that he was, because my feeling was that from the minute Bobby entered the Senate, it was assumed he was only going to be there a short time.

Heininger: Temporarily.

Strauss: Yes, and by that time, Kennedy had established himself as someone who would make a career of the Senate, especially since Robert Kennedy was still alive. There was certainly no talk that Ted Kennedy was going to go on to be President, so I don't feel that he was overshadowed, certainly not insofar as the public record was concerned. Whether he felt that way—I'm not even sure he felt that way.

Heininger: Then, after Bobby was assassinated, was he viewed, within the Senate, as being of Presidential caliber? Did that then overshadow how he was viewed?

Strauss: Yes. There was the boomlet that he should go to Chicago and take the Presidential nomination in '68. There was a lot of interest, people wanting him to do that, so it was still extremely prominent. It was thought that he would pick up that mantle, and whether it was going to be immediate or later on, he was viewed as someone who was going to go on to higher office. Then Chappaquiddick, of course, changed all of that.

Heininger: What else should people in the future know about what you did for him?

Strauss: I wrote some notes, trying to remember everything that had gone on that I thought might be of interest.

Another thing people don't realize is that in the mid-'60s, the Vietnam War was not that unpopular. I looked it up. Sixty-one percent of the people were still in favor of the war in the mid-'60s. It really was in the Gulf of Tonkin vote, which I think is what helped determine Kennedy's position on the Iraq vote and his opposition. I haven't looked it up, but I daresay that [Daniel] Inouye, who I think also voted for Tonkin, voted against the Iraq War. I don't know how many other people overlap the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and Iraq, but it was a lesson nobody who was there at the time would forget.

Heininger: [Robert] Byrd is another one who voted for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and voted against Iraq. Not many other ones—

Strauss: They may be the only three who overlapped with '65; I'm not sure.

Heininger: You're probably right. Those three for sure, but I don't think that there's anybody else who was still there from '64.

Strauss: Another thing, back to 1963 for a minute. I came to work there in April. August was the March on Washington. People were petrified and the feeling was that the blacks were pushing too hard and there wasn't any question that—as far as we were given to believe in the office—"This is not a good thing. This shouldn't be happening now; this is not the right time." We were sent home early. "It's too dangerous for the girls to be out." It was a very different atmosphere.

One or two of my friends apparently did go to the edges of the March on Washington. It was a very frightening thing at the time, as calm and peaceful as that was, and given what went on later, but at the time it was very scary.

The next big thing, of course, in ’63 was the assassination. My most vivid memory is that we had to keep an open line from the Senate office to Western Union, because we were sending out the invitations to the funeral. I’d be on one phone talking to the Western Union operator and people would be handing me—“Send this one. Send that one”—and the Western Union operator was the one who told me that Jack Ruby had shot [Lee Harvey] Oswald, because we didn’t have televisions in the office; we didn’t have radios. It was amazing. It was a very primitive operation at that time; that’s an aside I thought might be worth mentioning.

I also remember when Judge [William] Rehnquist came in for his confirmation hearing.

Heininger: The first one or the second one?

Strauss: His first one, in ’72. He was making his courtesy calls. I went out to get him—somebody else must not have been available—and the man was shaking like a leaf. He was absolutely trembling. Did he have Parkinson’s or something at the end? I don’t know whether the trembling was an illness or not.

Heininger: No, it was cancer that he had, at the end.

Strauss: He was trembling.

Heininger: Really?

Strauss: I remember taking him into the Senator’s office. I don’t know how that fits into anything, but I think what that tells me is that I’ve probably covered about everything I meant to cover—oh, except the 1980 campaign. Are you covering the campaign issues as well?

Heininger: Oh, yes.

Strauss: We were in New Hampshire and in Illinois. We were restamping all the campaign literature with the increase in the interest and inflation rate, because every day we’d come in and the rates would have gone up. We had red stamps that we were applying to everything.

When I look back on it now, I compare how we felt about our chances in 1980 and how Hillary [Clinton] must feel about her chances now. Kennedy had half as many delegates as [Jimmy] Carter, only half, and we thought we had the right to go all the way to the convention. I think there’s some merit to the argument that because we did, it wrecked the party for a while. People didn’t come together afterward the way they should have. We had made a late surge, won New York, but we still had only half as many delegates as Carter, and if you had told us we should withdraw, we would have said, “Of course not. Of *course* not.” Times have changed.

Heininger: Times have changed. Well, this has been fascinating. Thank you very much.

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