EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Interview 7

October 14, 2005
Hyannis Port, MA

Interviewers
James Sterling Young, chair
Stephen F. Knott

In attendance:
Victoria Reggie Kennedy

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TRANSCRIPT

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Kennedy: We're talking this morning, Friday, October 14, up on Cape Cod. It's Jim Young's birthday, and it's a memorable time for this recording. It's bleak. It's been raining on Cape Cod for seven days. Jim came through sleet and snow and rain and floods to be here on his birthday, so we hope this is a good one.

We're talking this morning basically about the judgments and decisions that went into the consideration of running in '72, '76, and 1980 and 1984, with the greatest emphasis on the '80 campaign. After the '68 campaign, I ran for assistant majority leader in the Senate against Russell Long. Over Christmas, we were out West skiing, and I decided to make the run at that time. I came back early and won by several votes, and it was a new opportunity for leadership in the Senate.

So we were off to a pretty fast start as we went through the early part of 1969. And then in July of that year, we had the Chappaquiddick tragedy, which effectively stopped the national aspirations. I made the judgment then about running for the Senate in 1970 and indicated that was my only ambition, and that I would not run in 1972. We had to follow on the campaigns, which resulted in 1972 with George McGovern being successful.

In the early part of '69, we had taken steps to start to build some organization, some outreach, but, as I mentioned, all of that really stopped. I thought about running in 1972. I had been in the Senate for 10 years, national politics for 16 years, and had been inspired in terms of political judgments by my brothers, President [John F.] Kennedy and Bob [Robert Kennedy]. I had worked on all the national issues in the Senate, had met a good many of the leaders internationally, had developed a good staff who were very effective, and had developed more understanding and awareness about the workings of the institutions. And at least in the beginning part of the year, I thought that we were set to—

Young: Can I interrupt with a question? You referred to your election by the Democratic caucus as assistant leader or whip. Russell Long had left.

Kennedy: I beat Russell Long in 1969.

Young: You beat him?

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Okay. We can talk about this later. This is off the subject, but since you've brought it up, were you thinking at that time about Democratic Party leadership, and eventually majority leadership in the Senate? Were you thinking of a ladder up and a career in the Senate?

Kennedy: No. I think I saw an opening for advancement. Russell Long was vulnerable at this time. We had great numbers of Democrats in the Senate. I think we were up to—I would have to check. In '64 or '65, we had a big majority. [Michael] Mansfield was the majority leader, and I thought he'd be there. I had a lot of respect for Mansfield. He was very close to my brother. And so I never really thought very much about following along Mansfield.

But it did seem to be an opening and a good opportunity to move up in the party and in influence. It turned out that with the exception of the losing part, it was good to get out of the whip's job, because you get absorbed in the knick-knacks of the Senate process and procedure. It draws away from being more heavily involved in the issues, even in terms of the policy issues and questions you have. With my position in history, I had more ability to have an impact and influence in the Senate than from the position as whip. And since I was a target at that time of the Republicans, they had an opportunity to make life more difficult for me. If they knew that I had to go someplace, make a speech, they would delay the recessing of the Senate, and all those games were being played during that period.

Young: I'm glad to have that on the record, because that was the purpose of my question.

Kennedy: The high point of that was winning the election in 1969, and the second high point was losing the election in 1971. Although that's an interesting race. We may come back to that. I had [Warren] Magnuson and [Henry] "Scoop" Jackson, and I had Bill Fulbright with me. But the next time I ran, I lost both Magnuson and Jackson because I had been against the SST [supersonic transport], and [Robert] Byrd went very strongly for the SST, and in the appropriations "Maggie" (Magnuson) actually helped him to get some additional money for the SST. So I lost both of those.

Then during this period of time—probably '69-'70 —the Vietnamese sent me a communication that they would release the names of the prisoners to a representative of mine. I spoke to Bill Fulbright and told him what they had offered, but I immediately sent John Nolan, who had been the negotiator for my brother Bobby to get the prisoners out of Cuba after the Bay of Pigs. He had been in the Justice Department and was highly regarded and respected. He went over and got the names of the prisoners and immediately gave them to the American Embassy there so they could let families know, and they could try to find out whether those were accurate names. He came back immediately and gave them to the State Department.

I sat next to Fulbright on the following Tuesday—this was over a period of a weekend on the floor—and I said, "Bill, remember I called you last week about getting the names?" And he said, "Yes, that's right, and we're going to have a committee meeting this afternoon to decide what we're going to do." I said, "I've already sent someone over there, and we have the names." He said, "That's a matter for the Foreign Relations Committee." And I said, "Well, that's what happened."

He had an edge from that point on. He thought I'd interfered with his Committee's jurisdiction, so he voted against me when I was up. And then four new Senators were coming in (whose names I don't have now, but history will have them). They had said they were going to be for me, and when they came to counting the ballots, Byrd was not going to run against me if [Richard] Russell died. Russell was very sick, and he had given him a proxy. If Russell died, Byrd wasn't sure enough of the vote to challenge me.

But Talmadge was still alive. So Byrd ran and beat me by three or four votes—more than he thought. The four new Senators who were coming up were all pledged to me, but when they looked at the ballot, two Senators spelled "Byrd" B-i-r-d instead of B-y-r-d, so we knew that they were two of the new Senators, and we figured out who they were. [*laughter*] Anyway, it went on, and actually Byrd did a good job and became the majority leader.

In '69, when I was just back there, I had been very involved in the criticism of the Administration in January/February. I had a speech on Hamburger Hill. That's the incident where the Marines marched up and suffered heavy casualties. Then at nighttime, they marched back down again, and the Viet Cong went right back up. So in the morning, they were right back where they had been. This was a senseless and irresponsible operation—those were the words I used: "senseless and irresponsible." I was labeling the South Vietnamese government as corrupt, and I called for a significant reduction in American force levels in Vietnam.

I also had taken strong positions on reducing the space and defense programs, was very much involved in the tax reform that was still out there and a lively issue, and also on changing the draft to random selection. I offered a number of amendments on that, and eventually we got the [Burke] Marshall Commission set up. They made a recommendation that they have random selection, which I believe was about '71. And that and the Tet Offensive, I think, ended the war.

I also introduced legislation in the neighborhood health centers that year. So I had been very active and very much involved.

Young: This was '69 you're talking about?

Kennedy: Yes. This is in the winter of '69.

Young: The first health center was at Columbia Point?

Kennedy: There were two of them in the War on Poverty: one at Columbia Point, and one in Mound Bayou in Mississippi. They were initiated by fellows named Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, who were at Tufts Medical School. I had seen them here and talked with both of them at very substantial length, and took that concept and put it into broad legislation, and we passed it in the Senate—about $35 million for the first one.

We had a conference with Adam Clayton Powell [Jr.], and in the conference he said, "Teddy Kennedy, you want these neighborhood health centers?" "Yes." "How many are you going to have for $38 million?" I said, "Well, we're going to maybe get three or four." He said, "You write in there that one of them is going to be in my district, and you've got it in here." I said, "That's fine with me." One of them was going to be in his district, and that was the beginning of the neighborhood health centers.

In the spring of that year, Paul Kirk was drawing up lists by states, very low-key, and the "Draft Kennedy" programs were beginning. All of that ended with the tragedy at Chappaquiddick, which I was personally enormously both moved and saddened by, and accepted responsibility for. But even having done all that, it was a very heavy emotional burden for me and has been for my whole life. I know we're going to come back to that. That effectively ended all of the activities in terms of the national campaign, and I focused on the state, running in 1970 in Massachusetts.

So we had the development of the Presidential campaign. And the final part of it was that in '72, when McGovern got the nomination, he asked me if I was interested in the Vice Presidential nomination. I wasn't interested. At that time, I was still very much troubled and anxious about the tragedy, and also very concerned about the children and responsibilities to them. I didn't feel that I was ready in terms of the Vice Presidency.

Young: The Vice Presidency wouldn't have interested you very much under any circumstances, would it?

Kennedy: I think that's right. In '68, when Hubert [Humphrey] mentioned it and offered it to me, I was just really too close to all the events of 1968, and I wasn't prepared at that time even to try for the nomination. I never felt that that was something real. I know there was a lot of positioning by some political leaders on it, but the serious issue was the Vice Presidency, and I wasn't interested. I didn't feel that it was appropriate then. In '72, I always felt that there would be a time when I could run and would run, but I always felt that I had much more opportunity to affect public policy in the Senate. If you're going to really do the Vice Presidency, you're there for eight years, then you have a leg-up with regard to the nomination.

Although it was during that time, I think, that Ted Sorensen gave me a memorandum that said it was possible for me to be a Vice President and also be a Cabinet member. So that sort of opened up a little interest—that I could serve as a Cabinet member, rather than just being the Vice President. There's nothing prohibiting that, historically and constitutionally, but it still didn't have an appeal for me.

This is interesting: when I talked to McGovern in '72, I had recommended him. When Humphrey asked me who I preferred after 1968, Fred Harris or [Edmund] Muskie, I indicated Muskie. [redacted]

First of all, I liked Muskie. I like Fred Harris, too. He was a very impressive figure in the Senate. He was a Rhodes Scholar, could talk like the wind, and took on powerful interests—and lost because he did. So he had a lot going for him. I found him attractive and appealing. And I liked Muskie. I'd known him a long time. He had a relationship with my brother. But even though I edged toward Muskie, I always thought that if I was ever going to run in the future, I'd rather have someone from my region, because this is where I was going to be stronger in the mix than somebody from outside, where I wouldn't be as strong. And I just thought it probably made more sense with Muskie, as he was going to be strong.

I always thought that if I ever got back in there I'd probably rather be against somebody in my area and region, [redacted]

[redacted]

So now we go through the campaign. There were a lot of intervening steps. They had the [Thomas] Eagleton situation and eventually Sarge [Sargent Shriver] on the ticket. I campaigned a good deal for George. I'd say I spent half of the last 10 days with him. I went to Philadelphia; I went to all the major big cities with him. And it was incredible, because he got crowds that just were mind-boggling, so much bigger than [Richard M.] Nixon.

Young: You're talking about McGovern?

Kennedy: McGovern, yes. He got just incredible crowds, even two or three times what [John] Kerry got this time. Down in Philadelphia, there were 250,000 people. Kerry had 70,000 down there. Just unbelievable! And it began to feel a little bit—although the people in the back of the bus had the polls that showed that he wasn't going to win—if you were out there campaigning with him, you got a real sense that all of this was possible. But then, of course, he got beaten and he got beaten badly.

Young: Could you talk a bit about how Sargent Shriver emerged as the choice?

Kennedy: Well, the best information I have, really, is Pierre Salinger. He was in the running early on. After Eagleton got out, when they had the first meeting the next morning after George McGovern got in at 8 o'clock, they had probably—

Young: This needn't be on the tape, but we have a picture of the last time treats were on the table. And the first picture has the muffin there, right in front of Steve [Knott]. He's eating.

Knott: Right. There's a whole sequence.

Young: And in the second picture, it's gone. And the dog—

Mrs. Kennedy: The dog! It was Sunny, clearly!

Knott: The paper is still there.

Martin: They take this stack of pictures and kind of do this, and you actually see it happening in motion.

Kennedy: This is the Pierre Salinger article about this. I think he was involved in most of this. They looked at Father [the Rev. Theodore] Hesburgh. He called, evidently, Gaylord Nelson first, and Nelson said no. Then he talked to [Abraham] Ribicoff, and Ribicoff turned them down. They had [Leonard] Woodcock of the UAW [United Auto Workers], and [Walter] Cronkite was on the list. Hesburgh was on the list, White was on the list, Wilbur Mills was on the list, Sissy [Frances] Farenthold from Texas was on the list, Pat [Joseph Patrick] Lucey was on the list. But Pat Lucey got off the list when they found out that his wife had locked him out of his room in a hotel. That was the story, and they pulled that.

They showed the polling of the various candidates, and then they decided on Shriver. They called Shriver, and he was in Moscow, or, according to Pierre, he would have gotten it. So when they couldn't get Shriver, they went to Eagleton. That's their sequence. And then when Eagleton got off, they came back to Shriver.

There's all the historic speculation about whether I was for Sarge or whether I was against Sarge or whatever. There was a general sense among the Kennedy people that Sarge hadn't come back from France in 1968 to help Bobby. So there was a good deal of anxiety about that. I personally hadn't gotten into it, but you find these things in terms of the people who are the operatives. Many of the people in the Robert Kennedy campaign were really the ones who had some resentment over the fact that he hadn't come back in Bobby's campaign. But it didn't bother me. I was delighted to have him. I think the world of Sarge. So he came back.

But that was the backwater stuff on it, and some of it's written in Sarge's book. I always had a very good relationship with him, and did then. I didn't have a lot to do at that time campaigning. No one thought it made a lot of sense for me to go out and campaign with Sarge. It was always with McGovern, and that's what we did. But I thought Sarge did very well.

I'm going to leave this with you. You want to take a look at it. Quite frankly, I think it's more about Pierre and his being offered the national chairmanship and not getting it, and also going to Paris and talking to the North Vietnamese—and then McGovern denying that—and his tension with McGovern, but it's interesting.

Now we start off in '73, and we have a similar kind of effort. I had asked Paul Kirk and Dave Burke if they could make soundings among political leaders about the future. And we had drawn up a list of candidates who we had helped with fundraising and personal appearances in '72, a list that covered 39 states. [Frank] Mankiewicz, the campaign manager for McGovern, sent a private memo on the lessons drawn from the experience along with the names of the best operatives and fundraisers. And we increased foreign travel during that time. That year, '73, in July, I even went down to Alabama and spoke with George Wallace in the Spirit of America.

Young: How did that go?

Kennedy: He invited me. Just like Jerry Falwell invited me down to the—

Young: I thought that was a mistake. Did he intend to invite you?

Kennedy: Well, it was an odd— I think it might have been a kind of forum. It was always somewhat up in the air, I guess.

Then toward the end of the year, in November, Teddy was diagnosed with cancer. His leg had cancer. And that changed the mix to a very substantial degree. He ended up having his leg amputated in Washington within a couple of days after it was diagnosed. It was a very dangerous type of cancer, and there was a real question about his survival.

He went up to Boston to do a treatment that had been approved by the NIH [National Institutes of Health]. Just a handful of children had gone through it. They had had some success, but still, only a handful had gone through it. That treatment was to last two years, every three weeks for three days. Teddy would go up after school on a Friday and begin to get the treatment on Friday night, which made him just incredibly, incredibly ill and sick to his stomach all night long. Then on Saturday, he was weak—still sick, just absolutely wiped out. By Saturday night he would feel a little bit better, and then Sunday noontime he would leave and come on back. It wiped him out for school and everything else.

Every three weeks, and that's when we saw these families in the waiting room who had mortgaged their house or sold their house, and said, "Look, we can have our treatments for a year." It had been taken off the NIH list of research because it had been approved to be satisfactory. So each treatment was $3,000. Our insurance covered it—the United States Congress/Senate covered it. But others didn't, and so the families were wondering, after they could have nine months or 10 months, what the chances were of those children surviving. Again, this was a very powerful message for me in terms of national health insurance coverage.

I made up my mind that I was going to be at all of those, which I was. The only one that they had to shift around was the one when I went down to Georgia.

Young: You went down to Georgia?

Kennedy: Some time in the next year or two. I can't remember.

Young: Seventy-four or '75, then?

Kennedy: Yes. But that took a lot of emotion and attention and absorption of energy and focus. After '74, in July, there was a fifth anniversary article by Robert Sherrill about the tragedy at Chappaquiddick. It raised all the issues and questions again, and by the fall, I had really made up my mind that I wouldn't be running for the President/Vice President in '76, and I announced it during that period of time.

Young: That was a very unequivocal statement, as I recall.

Kennedy: That's right. There were numbers of factors: the wellbeing of the children—mine and also the other children. If something happened to me, what was going to happen to the family? The family considerations. I had also the consideration of the impact on Joan [Bennett Kennedy], who was having a difficult, challenging time. If I was going to get into this in a serious way, what was going to happen to her on this? And in '76, I was supposed to run for the Senate, so I'd be giving up a Senate seat.

So for all those reasons, I was out of the '76 race. And then, as this went along, it became clear—this was just after Watergate, too, and the mood changed with the [Jimmy] Carter campaign—about morality, and playing against Washington and against the politics of the Congress and Senate, an outside sort of view. You could feel that this had a powerful appeal among the electorate. It was a time when the outsider had a real opportunity. It just was the wrong time.

Young: The hats in the ring, if I remember correctly, were Scoop Jackson, Fred Harris, Birch Bayh, and from the House, Mo [Morris] Udall—and then the Governor of Pennsylvania [Milton Shapp]. And Carter was the only one who was totally outside the system.

Kennedy: That's right.

Knott: And Sarge Shriver.

Young: Sarge Shriver, yes.

Kennedy: It was interesting that Scoop Jackson carried Massachusetts. It was the one primary state that he carried.

Young: How do you explain that?

Kennedy: It's an interesting state. George Wallace did very well here. This is a state that elected Eddie King over Mike Dukakis. And then Mike Dukakis four years later came back and beat Eddie King, but very narrowly. Eddie King was very conservative, a very conservative Democrat. There's a conservative tradition in this state, particularly in the western and other parts, as well as a progressive tradition in Newton and Brookline, and Middlesex County and Cambridge. [Thomas] Tip O'Neill represented the liberals, and [John Joseph] Joe Moakley the conservative, and I was the progressive, and we got along so well. The liberals voted for O'Neill, and the conservatives voted for me, because we had a terrific pact. People saw us get along.

Knott: Busing was a hot issue in '76, too.

Kennedy: That's right. Anyway, I made my statement on Labor Day of '74. There's this story about Tip O'Neill, and we were joking about "Keep me alive, Tip." He'd go around and say good things about me, and I was still showing up decently in all the polls. But there was never serious thought on my part, any reconsideration of any of that.

Of course, one of the issues during this was health insurance, and all the candidates took a strong position in favor of it—sort of the single-payer system—except Carter, who wanted to maintain his independence on that issue, which was one of the areas of strong difference I had with him. I

never had a relationship with him, nor did he reach out at all, even at the convention. As a matter of fact, it's sort of the contrary. We weren't really included in the '76 convention at all.

Young: Did he consider you an adversary or a rival at that time even though you weren't running?

Kennedy: I think he just felt that he was going to do it his way. I wasn't part of that. I was part of the institutional process, and he didn't have to deal with that. He was an outsider, and he was going to do it much more from an outsider's point of view and didn't think that we could add much to it. So he never made any overtures.

Young: Was that generally true of his dealings with the Senate in the Carter years?

Kennedy: Yes. It *was* true. This is one of the principal reasons that he didn't get along. I asked Dale Bumpers at one time why Carter and Byrd didn't get along, because they both came from small towns in the South. And he said, "You have to understand southern politics. They both came from small towns in the South, but they came from different sides of the tracks. As much as Byrd is suspicious of liberals, they're much more hostile to the people who came from the other side of the tracks." And that was the inherent conflict between Byrd and Carter. It was just real personal, and subsequently played out.

Although we had had a lot of tension with Byrd, I spent time with him and used to keep him informed. Now we're jumping ahead to 1980, but he never, even in the midst of all these races, made a statement that I ought to withdraw or get out of the race as a result of the primaries. And neither did O'Neill, although he had a somewhat different kind of position. But Byrd was enormously important. If he had said it and O'Neill said it and the party people said it, it would have been much more difficult to stay in.

I don't know if there's anything else in that '75-'76 period.

I think there was always the question of whether I should have endorsed somebody else. Would that have made a difference to them? Whether if I'd endorsed [Walter] Mondale or someone else I had gotten along with, he might have been able to get it. I didn't do it, and I don't think I really thought that much about it at the time.

There were several people we had had a good relationship with and had worked on it: [John H.] Glenn [Jr.], who had worked hard for Bobby in the '68 campaign. And we had a lot of people in these areas who had been— Udall had been a terrific supporter of my brother Jack. So I think that more than anything else—more than my beginning suspicions about Carter—outweighed the consideration to endorse anyone.

Young: This was the first Presidential nomination process under the new rules of the parties after—

Kennedy: That's right.

Young: And Carter really studied up on those rules.

Kennedy: Those were in the wake of the reforms under McGovern, and the '64 convention, where they kept Mississippi out, Aaron Henry and— They established a process for changing the rules to make sure that people were going to be included in it, and Mondale was very involved in that. We were helpful, too, but he was really the architect of a lot of the changes in the rules subsequently. Carter certainly understood them. But in order to get the party together, we all committed to trying to do something on that.

So now we are in 1977. We have Carter in the White House. On the issue of healthcare, he said that first he had to do energy. He told us that the first issue that he was going to do was health, but he said he had to do energy. That took a long time, and it was not very well done. It was basically deregulation. We had a lot of tension, [Howard] Metzenbaum and I, and I think [James] Abourezk, who had the filibuster. We had a lot of difficulty with the Carter programs. Eventually, an energy bill went on through.

Then we came to health, and he said that rather than doing the comprehensive health, he wanted to do it step by step, and the first thing we were going to do was cost control. The House had a lot of difficulty with it. I can't remember now whether they actually passed it. We had it in the Senate, and we eventually passed it, but it was very controversial, took a long time.

But we now had in place the elements to move ahead on the comprehensive program, and we had a lot of negotiations with Joe Califano. What he wanted to do was pass legislation that would be sequenced. We'd pass one part in terms of coverage, and then when that was passed, that would trigger a second one. But we'd have to come back to the Congress each time to get it, and then we'd pass another one. I thought that was completely unworkable. You're only going to have to pass one time, and the idea that we were going to come back and have another one just wasn't going to work. We had a big division on that over the period of his time.

Young: Was Califano making an effort, from your point of view?

Kennedy: He tried, yes. He tried to, but we were just not getting there. There was an opportunity at the end of Nixon to pass the "pay or play" program, which we eventually came back to. But labor said, "We're not going to do that, because we have a veto-proof majority in the Senate, and we're much better off trying to get it right next year instead of trying to take that this year" — which in retrospect was probably a mistake, given where we are. That's very interesting.

Young: Could you talk a little bit more about before 1980 how Carter was in office, and your views, or your work, or the degree of cooperation or opposition to other things beside health, energy—the Panama Canal treaties, things of that kind, the opening to China and so forth? Were there areas in which you and the other Democrats were in agreement with him, or was there constant tension on these matters?

Kennedy: In the early period, '77, our relationship was really correct enough. I was with him on 75% of all the votes in the first year, and 18 out of the 21 or something in '78. We had started then on airline deregulation, tax reform. I was a strong supporter of tax reform, arms control, human rights, energy independence, the Panama Canal Treaty. I was supportive in all those areas.

The overarching issue was health insurance, and that's where it really broke down. We had to work hard, because when they were not going to go to the single-payer but to another plan, we had to get labor. So we were out working and spending a great deal of time on this. People within with the Administration believed that they shouldn't go ahead with this.

Young: So you were having to push this almost on your own, without help from the Executive.

Kennedy: And then, as I mentioned, he wanted to do a series of small bills, and how much it would cost and the economic situation. We went down in July of '78 and had a conversation with him about the importance of a single piece of legislation, particularly if we were going to be able to get anything done at the grassroots level and bring people aboard, make it a political issue and have it effective as a political issue in the future. But that didn't work.

And then we went to the midterm convention in Memphis, and laid out that health insurance. We got a terrific response from all the Democrats on that. And it took on his position versus what had been the historic Democratic position.

At this time, I hadn't really considered running against him. I think we actually had indicated to Carter at some time in the early part of the year, in '79 or whatever, that I thought I would be supporting him.

Knott: Senator, you mentioned yesterday the Archibald Cox nomination. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Kennedy: Yes. We had a vacancy on the Second Circuit, and I nominated Archibald Cox. Griffin Bell called me and said, "The President isn't going to do it." Griffin Bell was the Attorney General. I said, "Well, I want to talk to the President about it." He said, "It won't do you any good." I said I still wanted to talk to him.

I went down and I talked to the President. We have to get the exact date. I remember it very clearly. I think I took notes on it. I spent close to an hour with Carter. I thought it was going to be a 15-minute conversation. He wanted to talk about other things, but it was primarily the Cox nomination. He told me that Cox had supported Muskie in New Hampshire, and he could never, never support Archibald Cox for the Second Circuit because of that.

I said, "Well, that was a long time ago; we were all together," and so on. And he said he knew he was close to our family and to John Kennedy, and that made some difference, but not enough. And he wasn't going to do it.

And then I told him the politics of it: He's the most respected person in the country. It would be a "10" for him—it would be a "9" for me recommending him, but it would be a "10" for him. He said, "Even that isn't going to override my strong, strong feelings against Archibald Cox for supporting Muskie." It had a ring to it. I always remember that conversation very clearly, about him almost having a sense of pleasure telling me that he wasn't—

Young: Was this really about Cox, or about something else?

Kennedy: Well, it was stated about Cox, but I didn't know if he was just doing it to jam me, or just whatever pleasure he was getting out of it. We talked about some other matters—some health issues, some questions. I always felt that he didn't rush. He wanted credit for talking to me for an hour, rather than just 15 or 20 minutes. He delayed the conversation so he could get some credit for spending a lot of time with me. That's what I felt afterwards. That's what I felt more than anything else: he wasn't really interested very much in what my views were.

President Carter made efforts to bring people down in the summer to the White House. You'd get a couple of invitations. You'd get down there 6:00-6:30. You know, he canceled all liquor in the White House. There was never liquor served when President Carter came. It was interesting. And he sold the boat, the *Sequoia*. He didn't want any kind of luxuries or anything.

So you'd get down there, and you'd mill around; you'd go through the line and eat quickly. And then for three hours, he'd conduct a seminar, like on Africa. He'd let you know that he knew every country in Africa, the name of every President of Africa, and he'd have the Secretaries of State and Defense talk about what was happening globally in these regions. And they'd do it generally on the Middle East. They were personal *tours de force*, and he had about a third of the Senate every time, and about 30 members of the House.

It was well worth going down there. It was informational. But it was so broad-gauged, you know? Every one of my colleagues thought it was a *tour de force*, but to impress you that he knew so much about the minutiae. In contrast, you read history about Franklin Roosevelt. He was the master of the situation he had to know about. And it wasn't that he knew every place, but he knew everything, and he knew all the people and knew what moved them and why they were doing this. That's the sense you always have with the great leaders: [Woodrow] Wilson, Roosevelt.

Young: I will probably take this off the tape, but I'll tell you a story.

Kennedy: Oh, listen to him! "I'm taking this off the tape!" Mark that, Mr. Historian!

Young: Well, the interviewer's not supposed to tell stories. *You* are supposed to tell them.

It's about these meetings that Carter would have on the Middle East or Africa or whatever. There was some issue about which he brought some of the Congressional leaders to the White House, and the point was to try to bring them aboard. But he didn't succeed in doing that. He lectured them about the subject. I don't know what it was about—energy or something. He was telling what he knew and how he understood it; he had done his homework, and he knew—

When it was all over, one of his senior advisors said, "Do you know what you just did to those people? You're supposed to be persuading them. You're supposed to bring them aboard. What you did was let every person in that room know that you knew more than he did! That you knew more than any of them did about the subject! These are senior people in Congress!"

Kennedy: That's exactly it.

Young: I'll take it off.

Kennedy: No, no. It's just a reaffirmation of this. That's what he wanted to get across.

Young: Well, some people have thought that maybe his own experience in the Georgia legislature gave him not very much respect for the legislative and institutional processes.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Also, he was a Navy officer by profession.

Kennedy: Yes. They feel that they have to do it, but he missed it.

Going into '79 now, I think we had polls that were going along and showed us being in a strong position. And I think the time when I was the most struck about really thinking about running in '80 was when I listened to the speech he gave in July of that year on the "national malaise." I thought that this was contrary and in conflict with all the things I believed in terms of the Democratic Party, in terms of what I thought the country was about. I thought this was a direction of the country that needed change. And with that kind of attitude and mood, I couldn't see how we were really going to address the central problems we were facing, both in the economy and foreign policy.

And so after that, later that summer, we began to get the people together down here to talk about the pros and cons of running. I met September 7 at the White House and indicated to Carter that I was giving consideration to running against him, and that the family had given their blessing.

Now, I had decided that I was going to make up my mind in the summertime, and I did, just before Labor Day, down here, that I was going to run. But I was also conscious that Carter was coming up to the Kennedy Library and speaking. So I thought I would have to wait to announce until after that. This was one of the real challenges I was facing. I had it in my mind. I didn't talk to people about it, and I wasn't going to talk because I didn't want to have it leak out at the time. And so I waited until November 7. He spoke on October 20, and we had the hostage crisis on November 4. And then I announced on November 7.

I mentioned just yesterday one of the searing events was this Roger Mudd interview. The background on that was that Roger Mudd and Dan Rather were in a contest to see who was going to be the anchor on CBS. Roger Mudd had been a social friend, particularly to the Robert Kennedys. I knew him, but he was not a personal friend of mine. I'd see him out at the Robert Kennedys'.

At the time—we think it was in June of that year—when the President of Mexico [José López Portillo y Pacheco] was in New York, I had the chance to meet him about ten at night at the Waldorf-Astoria. After I met him and walked out, Roger Mudd was there. He said, "I'm in this contest with Dan Rather, and I'd love to get an interview with your mother." I said, "Well, my mother doesn't do interviews. She's older; she just doesn't do interviews. But let me think about it, and I'll get back to you." He said, "It would make a big, big difference if I could ever do that interview down at Cape Cod. Everybody's always wanted that interview with your mother."

So I talked to my mother and my sisters about it, and decided that he could do the interview with Mother walking, but I'd have to be with her. He could talk with her a bit, she could chat and talk

a bit, but we just didn't want to have a sit-down or only Mother. He said that was fine. I said, "Our children are going to be there, so that's going to be the setting." He said, "That's fine."

Now, just before the time, in September, my mother got sick and went to Boston. (We were going to try to get the dates on this. We have to make a note to get the dates and where she went.) Then my daughter [Kara Kennedy] got an invitation to the Hopi Indian tribe in Arizona. That is the only matriarchal tribe in the country, and they wanted the oldest daughter to come there and be a part of their big, big ceremony. Kara wanted to go, so she was out. For some reason, Teddy couldn't go. So it's only Patrick [Kennedy] and me.

So I said to Roger, "This interview isn't going to work, because my mother's not here, the others aren't here." "Oh, no," he said. "That'll be all right. I'll come on down. We'll do you and the sea and Cape Cod, and what the sea has meant." I could talk about that, and my brother learning to swim, and then fighting in the water and coming back, and using the sea as a place of repose and thought and rest, and what this place all meant to him and the family.

So down he comes and sets up at Squaw Island, and the only two people there are Patrick and me. I have no staff, no nothing, because we're just going to talk about the sea. We talk about the sea, and we look at the time. I say, "That's about it." And he says, "Yes, just about." And I say, "Patrick, why don't you go down and get the boat and pick me up, and I'll just get these people out of the house."

So then he said, "Can we do one more film?" I said, "Well, I'd really like to go. I think we've done it." "No," he said. I had to do one more. And then we got into whether you're going to run for President, and what's your view about all this. I had made up my mind. I sensed that Patrick's down there by himself. He's 12 years old; he's bringing the boat in, saying, "What in the world is this all about?" knowing that I'm not prepared.

It was a disaster. I remember getting on the boat afterwards with Patrick and telling him it was a disaster, and calling Mudd and saying, "Look, if we're going to do this thing, I ought to get another crack at that thing."

No. No way, José. And they ran that part on the November—you know, whatever.

Young: There was considerably more to that interview, wasn't there, than was actually broadcast?

Kennedy: Oh, there was a lot. Yes, I had talked to him for 40 minutes just about the sea, and about how we learned to swim here, and the sailing here, and it was because of that he was able to save people's lives, and he came back here, and how the sea is sort of a metaphor of life, and my life— You know, all of these things I had thought through, and knew what my brother said. But it was this last part that he was in for.

That was on September 29, the interview. Not aired until November 4, which was the hostage crisis, and then I declared on the 7th. At that time, they knew I was going to declare, and he has all these answers from five weeks before.

Young: Why was the timing of the release—?

Kennedy: It suited their interests. I was a hot item at that time, and he was going to have the jump. They knew by that time I was going to announce for President. "Here's Kennedy. He wants to be President. This is what he had to say." But I didn't have much to say.

Young: Were there any understandings about when this would air?

Kennedy: Well, no, I never understood that that was going to be a part of it in any event. It was all going to be about the Kennedys and Cape Cod.

Young: It was kind of a dirty trick.

Kennedy: Well, we've just swallowed over the years, and you have to be smart enough if you're going to do an interview. I certainly am now. You have things all worked out with your professional staff, and you have a very clear idea. They can ask whatever questions, but what is the purpose of the interview, and what is it going to be about? Then you can go on. We go with Tim Russert and do all the Sunday programs, and they can ask whatever the hell they want and we're ready for it, but you know at least the framework and where these things are going.

But now, this is the situation. We get off to a start, and as I'm the first one to recognize, having been a candidate any number of times, I find getting started in the course of a campaign always takes time. There are good campaigners who can leave the Senate this afternoon and be red-hot on the campaign tonight. It takes me a couple of days, two or three days, to get warmed up and into the mood. Less time than it used to, but it takes me a day or two. You could see even when we were down here last week, I talked twice in the noontime and the evening, but by the evening time, this part is much more sharpened up. It has always been like that. And it took longer in 1980 for me to get going.

So I thought the statement for running was strong, but we were right out. We left Faneuil Hall and went up to New Hampshire, and we had this strong national press following by then. But the presentation was not crisp and tight, with a strong message as a candidate. I think eventually it got there. It was a lot stronger after January, and it got stronger during the course of the campaign. Our organization—rather than building up and their all knowing that we're going to get in—had to jump-start. We had very good people, just superb people, but they hadn't had a long lead-time getting in. And they had to get moved up and started in a very jump-start way. And I think they did. They're remarkable people who have worked in subsequent campaigns and have been recognized generally among the very best. Even today, there are a number of them who have done all that and are still doing it.

So that was a deficiency. My brother-in-law, Steve Smith, who is like a brother to me, was very influential. In '60, Bobby was the campaign manager and Steve was right underneath him, and then he did Bobby's campaign in '64, and Bobby's campaign in '68. Steve had really gone through it and he wanted to work on it, but he had a lot of angst about my safety and security and all the rest of those things.

So this was getting started. And you had the hostage situation. It changed the whole atmosphere, where the President obviously became stronger and stronger as a national leader, and we had the foot-faults in the beginning. It took time to get our feet underneath us.

Young: Can we go into a little bit more on that general subject? You had made up your mind sometime during the summer. Did you have a concept at that time of what your theme or your platform would be? The reason I'm asking this is that when the hostage crisis came, that changed the circumstances. Was it healthcare, or was it leadership, or was it the direction of the Democratic Party, or all of those things? Did you have a concept about what you would attempt to accomplish, and the message you'd try to get across, when you decided in the summer?

Kennedy: My core sense is the economy is the makeweight. President Kennedy said the greatest social program is a good job. And the strong economy, which is going to be an expanding, growing economy, is going to be a key. We had now gone though these extraordinary interest rates, high unemployment—and there just seemed to me a complete unwillingness to deal with those issues. And then the health insurance was—

Young: Double-digit inflation at that time.

Kennedy: Inflation, and a real abdication or unwillingness to deal with this issue. And the health issues. He had four years of getting through it, and effectively had either misrepresented or misstated what his own commitment on that would be, and I felt strongly about that issue.

And I thought just the general leadership issue—what the Democratic Party historically stood for, what I had *seen* it stand for. We had seen this party that had ended the war, the party that had fought for civil rights, the march towards progress. All of that was on the move, and all of that was at risk. And President Carter had said that he believed that the spirit of America was the spirit of malaise, which is so in conflict with the inherent view that I have about what this country is about, what I think the party is about, and what I'm about. I think that's about where it is. We had those platform issues, and other kinds of issues—jobs, programs, and other kinds of things—but that was the inherent sense we had.

Now before going into '80, I had spent a lot of time (I don't know how you want to get into this—probably with Larry [Horowitz]) about my wife to find out whether she would medically be able to sustain this. It was very extensive. We spent a lot of time on this. I had to get the green light—which we got that summer, in the early summer—that this was going to be all right, because the last thing I wanted to get into was to tip things over. Larry can get you great, great detail. I wasn't going to get into it unless this was going to be something that people who reviewed all of the medical conditions were satisfied could work. Not just that it was dicey, but that they thought there was a much better chance than not that she would make it through and be satisfactory.

Now, another one of the important themes in all of this besides our own origination of the course of the campaign is that power of the Presidency. I'd seen the power of the Presidency, but until you see it really work on you, you get very little sense of what it's about.

Example: Jesse Jackson asked me to go out and speak for him on a Sunday at the operation in Chicago. So I went out there with Steve. His service out there is incredible. While the service is going on, which lasts about three hours, you're out there for a while, and then you come back in and have coffee in his office—the service is still going on—and you talk shop.

He had indicated that he wanted to support me, but he was going to need his own campaign. It was going to have to be independently funded and do its own thing because we didn't have any money at the time. I said, "Well, that's great. Steve will handle that. He'll make sure that you're going to have this thing funded and supported." We all embraced and shook hands, and we all went back out there, and he's saying, "God Bless America" 10 more times. I left, and I said, "Well, we're going to get Jesse on this."

The next Sunday, Fritz Mondale was out there, and I got the report that they went back in that room, and all the rest of it. Then, about the next Wednesday, Jesse got about $10 million in training grants, and we never got a return call from him. We could see this with mayors, with Governors.

I didn't mention here some of those who had urged me to run. I was up at the Special Olympics in New York State, and [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan made a big point of pulling me over and saying I had to run. He said he'd do anything for me, that I had to run. In a New York meeting, Hugh Carey said I had to run. He'd do anything for me. But once this campaign got started, I never heard from either of them again. We had a number of people who had—

Knott: You mentioned Dan Rostenkowski yesterday.

Kennedy: Oh, yes. The Rostenkowski story.

When I was in Washington just after I announced, Rostenkowski came over and said, "We're going to do the same for you in Chicago that we did for John Kennedy. You can relax. You can depend on me to do it." About 10 days later, there's a gathering of Congressional leaders down at the White House, and I see Rostenkowski down there. I called him up the next day, but I couldn't get him. And four days later, he announced for Carter. They had pushed in a whole new kind of transit up there in Chicago. I mean, he just picked off these—

We had Joe Brennan up in Maine and John Durkin in New Hampshire, but we didn't see much of John. Barbara Mikulski was a big, big supporter. She introduced me at the convention, and she was there the whole time, was just very enormously strong as were Paul Simon, who is a very thoughtful person, and Dick Durbin. And there are several others we could mention here, but it was a thin group.

Young: Did it surprise you—or were you not thinking of this in advance, that Carter would use that power? Had that figured—

Kennedy: No. I don't think so. There had been a Florida straw poll, and we did very well down there. They did it with the people who were voting, people who had been involved in work programs, and we found out in the latter part of it the Carter people told these people in the work programs that if they wanted to stay in, they had to go in and vote for Carter, since Carter was funding these programs. It was a whole segment who all came in and voted 99% for Carter. I remember hearing that that kind of activity was going on.

But what they were able to do with mayors and local leaders in these different towns and cities that looked important was very significant and very powerful—and very important and very effective. They just called in all of their political people—in each one of these agencies, they

have a political shop—and said, "What does so-and-so need? What's he asking for?" That just made a big, big difference.

Young: And your financial resources were not good.

Kennedy: No. No. It was effectively ended at the end of Iowa.

This President of Mexico was José Portillo, and on June 18, he received an award in New York City, and he was there.

Young: That was when Mudd approached you?

Kennedy: Yes. But no, we didn't have resources. The one thing that kept our campaign going was the artists. We had strong support from artists.

Martin: [Andy] Warhol?

Kennedy: Yes, Andy Warhol.

Mrs. Kennedy: [James] Rosenquist.

Kennedy: And Rosenquist. Andy Warhol would take a picture of me, and sprinkle some dust or things. He did two very—

Mrs. Kennedy: Wyeth.

Kennedy: Yes, Jamie Wyeth. But Warhol sprinkled some dust on this thing, and we'd sell those for a big chunk of change—$1,000, I think. They got a whole string of other painters, and even though we couldn't sell them, we could mortgage them, and we got money for that. We got probably a couple of million dollars, which was enough to keep the pace going along, which was very good. And then at the end of it, they sold a lot of the things. I still ended up two or three million dollars in debt that I had to pay off, but it got us through.

We didn't have any real money, but at least people were able to travel around. We had very creative—Ron Brown was very creative in taking a one-spot, for example, and having a news conference in California, and they'd show the spot, and show it in the news. "Ron Brown was in Fresno today, announcing the Kennedy spot," and then they'd run the spot a little bit, and then Ron Brown would go to Sacramento and have the press conference. And we carried California.

Knott: Senator, you mentioned yesterday you thought you were going to carry Iowa. Could you tell us a little about that?

Kennedy: Yes. When I went to Iowa the one person who sensed that Iowa was going to be a bigger-than-life state was actually my nephew Joe [Joseph Kennedy Jr.], who at that time I don't think was even in Congress yet. He said, "This isn't a caucus; this is a primary state. There's so much activity and involvement."

No one really paid any attention to him. We did it the old way, which is getting the number of Democrats that were going to be with you and locate and organize. And on election eve, we had more Dems than had shown up in all of the caucuses in either of the previous two Presidential races. More. In Ames, we would have 4,000 Dems, and the people who showed up in Ames previously would be 3,500 representing all the candidates. We had 4,000 Dems! I said, "I'm going to win this thing. I'm going to win it."

But Carter had 40,000 Dems. He got that thing going, and we lost. It was an interesting thing in Iowa: the more I went to these towns— I can always remember Ottumwa, Iowa. The more I went to Ottumwa, the more I fell behind. It was absolutely incredible. The more I went to these smaller towns, the more I lost. And Harold Hughes, who was a supporter and enormously highly regarded, was unable to really get as involved as he was for—he was the head of a national drug rehabilitation program and he couldn't get involved. But he said, "I'll tell you: the reason is, you arrive...."

I would have 20 Secret Service. I'd arrive, and there'd be 100 people in this little town, at the church or whatever. I'd arrive, and there'd be 25 Secret Service people in there, pushing people around and telling them to sit over here. And then there'd be 30 cameras, because the cameras were always around in case something would happen to me. They had to follow me the whole time. So there'd be more cameras and more Secret Services. Harold Hughes said when he'd drive up into Ames, he'd drive up in a car or truck, and he'd get out himself, and he'd go into that place himself, shake everybody's hand and introduce himself. Then he'd write the names down and things, and get back in his car, and at nighttime, he'd go over the things with an aide and write the people notes. He said, "That's what you have to do in Iowa."

So we did it with me speaking; I did it with me sitting; I did it with me at a panel. I tried to change the format in every possible way. You couldn't do it. The only place you could do it was in the big cities where they didn't care quite as much. But that state is so much small towns, and we just couldn't get—

The other thing was, we had all the UAW people in the beginning, and I started to lose them. And they called it Chappaquiddick, but it was really the gun issue. They did a terrific job on me on guns. You know: Kennedy and gun control. The gun issue was a very powerful—and is powerful. Actually, I have a very strong position that I'm very strongly committed to, but that was a very powerful factor. By the end of that campaign, in terms of the UAW—I had it 90/10 when I went there, and it was probably 55/45 by the time the election was held. Very interesting.

After that, after I went home and listened to the results in McLean, that night I had to call my mother. I was the first Kennedy who had lost an election. So I called my mother to tell her that I'd lost. And she said, "Oh, that's all right, Teddy dear. I'm sure you'll work hard and it'll get better," and was very upbeat and hopeful.

And then, she was so sweet. She said, "Teddy, you know that nice blue sweater I gave you at Christmastime? Do you remember that?" And I did. I remembered it, yes. She said, "Have you worn it?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure that I've worn it." She said, "Is there something special about it? Because I just got the bill for it, and it was $220." It had a turtleneck, and it had a little pocket in the front. It was a sweater that had been made in France that she'd got on Worth

Avenue down there. It was wonderful material; it just felt so good. So she said, "Well, Teddy, will you check it out? And if you haven't worn it, will you send it back, because I've got another blue one here that I think is just as nice and is not nearly as expensive." [*laughter*] It was kind of a reality check after all this.

But I can remember that night very clearly, and Steve Smith had told me, "Look, no money now. We're in debt. If you get out now, no one really— You took a crack, but don't worry. Your career is still intact. You go back to the Senate, and it's not a real knock. But if you stay in, I have the poll here in Massachusetts, and you're getting beaten by 25 points in Massachusetts. And if he beats you in Massachusetts, your career is gone. Finished. That's what you're looking at. And that's in another seven weeks. You have no money, and I don't know what's going to turn this thing around."

That was a very tough conversation. I remember walking around the field for a while. I said, "I think I'll think about it."

Young: Was this is Iowa, or here?

Kennedy: No, no. This is McLean, Virginia. We came back there.

So I went up and walked around a little bit. And I said, "I think I'll just wait a couple of days. I'll just make my mind up. I think I'll just go around a little bit, a couple of days, and see what—" And then I went around a couple days, and I said, "I'm staying in it." Fine. The people were worked up about these issues and did care about them. I certainly was worked up about it.

So we tried to reconstruct it with that speech at Georgetown in January after Iowa to try and tighten it up, get the real focus and attention on what the things were that we wanted to emphasize and press. And that really stepped up the whole thing.

Young: Were you thinking you could turn this around within those two days?

Kennedy: No, I didn't think I could turn it around. I just had to run this thing through my own senses.

Young: But he told you to give up.

Kennedy: That's right. Are you going to give up? Go back to the Senate? That wasn't really the question.

Young: Did you really think you would give up the Senate?

Kennedy: I wasn't planning to give up the Senate. If I quit the Presidential, I'd be going back to the Senate. I wasn't going to give up, but if I continued, I had a pretty good shot at Carter beating me in Massachusetts in a primary, and that was not a good message for me in Massachusetts.

Young: As Steve was saying, that would be the end of your career.

Kennedy: That would be the end of my career.

Young: You might even be ineffective in the Senate.

Kennedy: Might be ineffective in the Senate, and any number of things could happen. I hadn't thought about all those things. The day before, I thought we had more people in Ames, Iowa than anybody else had and we were going to win it, and then—

Young: And Steve talked to you, and you saw the results in Iowa. And then you spent those two days, and you stuck with it.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Risk it all.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: You were willing to risk—

Kennedy: Yes. I thought it was worth the effort. We'd gotten started, gotten in it, and believed in it, and I thought there were enough other people out there who shared in that belief, and we could go on.

Young: Sort of do or die?

Kennedy: Well, you just do it. I didn't think about the other part.

Young: About the die part?

Kennedy: I thought we'd better just keep on doing it.

Young: The determination.

Kennedy: Yes. You're looking on down, your potential loss in terms of the Senate, and you're going to be spending the rest of your life paying off the debt. Are you going to run into big, big debt? How are you going to do that as a defeated candidate? There were a lot of downsides.

Knott: Senator, you talked a little bit yesterday about Illinois and the parade in Chicago, and the Daleys and Jane Byrne. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Kennedy: The principal power brokers in Illinois, the Daleys, were going to be with Carter and Rostenkowski; but there was a new mayor out there, Jane Byrne, who was going to be with me. But she didn't have the power levers. And there was a lot of resentment about her, and that then spilled over on me. The old party people were upset with me because Byrne was with me, and they thought I should have been with [Richard] Daley, and they didn't quite understand what all of this was about.

Young: Why were the old party leaders not with you?

Kennedy: Because Rostenkowski and Daley made their deal with Carter. And so we didn't have a lot going on, and not much time in Illinois. It came very rapidly. We had the big Irish parade

there where we got egged. It was a very tough, mean, nasty reception, and all of that was shown on national television, which was not useful and helpful. The corresponding primary came very soon after that, and we got hammered. Hammered.

There's one on the Carter saga here. A headline from May 15, '79 issue of the *New York Daily News*: "Ted Unveils Health Plan, Rips Carter." And a second headline reads: "Performs Eight-Hour Surgery on Self." On the photo, President Carter wrote in longhand, "I think this is going too far." Signed, "Jimmy Carter." It was one of the few little indicators of a sense of humor. We were trying to figure out whether I had sent it originally to him and he sent it back with that comment, or how that came about.

We've now gone through 'til the end of the convention.

Knott: You talked a little bit about turning it around in New York, particularly. You were down by 27 points with three days to go.

Kennedy: In the '80 campaign, the polls were sometimes moving 10 or 12 or 15 points a night, which was such a contrast to what it was in 1960, where President Kennedy was nip and tuck with Nixon and would go two or three months within a point or two. But it seems now that the poll is much more volatile, and they certainly were in '80. In New York we were 24 or 25 points down with three or four days to go. And I thought that if we got beaten that badly in New York, I would probably have to give very serious consideration to getting out of the race.

But we were able to be successful in New York and win it by 18 points, so there was a big shift, a 30-35-point shift. I think it was a combination of different elements. We also saw that take place in Connecticut. It was beginning to move in other places as well, California, or even—we lost Ohio, but only by five points, and we really didn't mount much of a campaign there at all. So I think the campaigns for some reason were moving in our favor. And in New York, there was a particular vote on the Middle East at the UN [United Nations] where the Carter Administration upset some of the Jewish voters. It's difficult to think that maybe a vote at the UN would have had that dramatic an impact, but it certainly was a factor.

As we were looking toward the end of the campaign, there was a vote in New Jersey, in Ohio, and I think South Dakota and California. And probably several of the last 10 days, we'd usually start with a New York appearance because the television would go over to New Jersey. Then we'd stop in Ohio, occasionally in South Dakota, not often. And then on to California and do probably one or two stops, leave there around 11 o'clock at night, and get back into Newark at six or so—stay on the plane. Then we'd go in to do the early morning shows. We did that probably six of the last 11 days or so of the campaign, and we had a good result.

I think going into the convention, the focus was on what they call "the faithful delegate." We had been doing better across the country, and the Democrats seemed to be increasingly interested in our candidacy. One of the things was that some of the delegates selected and pledged to Carter early appeared to have been willing to support my candidacy later in the process, but there had been a change in the rules put in by Carter that said that once a delegate was selected as pledged, they had to stay that way. They call it the "faithful delegate rule," which means that if they pledged, they couldn't change their mind. That caused resentment with the delegates, just

generally was not popular. So we made that our principal target: the platform on issues of the economy and health and other domestic and foreign policy issues, and to change the faithful delegate rule.

We had an outside chance of changing the faithful delegate rule, and it needed to have the combination of—I remember Cyril Wecht of Pennsylvania having 15 or 20 votes, and then there were some blacks in South Carolina who were prepared to go. Others were prepared to go—Louisiana and some of the others—but all of them wanted to be the ones who put us over. They didn't want to be the base group. We couldn't get some to be willing to be the base group to start the vote to change the rule. All of them wanted to be the ones to put them over. And so finally Paul Kirk just said, "We can't do it. We can't put those numbers together." Even though I'd gone around and spoken in a lot of these caucuses, even in the caucuses that had not had overwhelming Kennedy support, and we got a great reception in those caucuses.

I had a meeting with Carter before the convention. We had challenged him to a debate and indicated that if we had the debate, I might be willing to withdraw. He was giving that consideration, and then he said that we'd express our views through the platform committees.

Young: In other words, the debate that you had in mind would have been a regular debate?

Kennedy: A regular debate.

Young: National debate, in public?

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And he was saying put the debate before the platform committee if it's on the issues. Is that the way it was?

Kennedy: Yes. I think I've read subsequently that he gave thought to debating me at the platform committee.

Young: At that platform committee?

Kennedy: Well, yes, I guess, and then discarded that. We were looking for a freewheeling kind of debate on the issues. And we were giving consideration: if we got that, then we would withdraw, or if we got that and lost California, we would withdraw. It was something like that. But it wasn't really terribly clear in my mind exactly what I was going to do if he did debate me. Maybe I had a position then. I can't remember now what it was. But I think we thought that if we debated and I lost California, I'd get out.

Young: You weren't thinking of a public debate.

Kennedy: Public debate.

Young: I'm trying to get the idea of moving the debate into just the platform committee.

Kennedy: I had no idea until I read the history of it.

Young: Or were you looking for something that would be more open and public access?

Kennedy: No. What I had in mind was a regular debate, like they have a national presidential campaign debate. I've read subsequently that he was thinking about a debate where we would debate these issues, but a debate at the platform committee. I had no awareness and knowledge until I read the history of his campaign that that was under consideration. I don't think that would have been very satisfactory. I don't know what my reaction would have been at the time.

Young: Where was Moynihan when you were running in New York?

Kennedy: I never saw or heard from him. Never. Or Carey.

Young: He was the Governor at that time?

Kennedy: Governor, yes. No, I saw very few. Paul Simon worked hard, and Barbara Mikulski worked hard. Governor Joe Brennan of Maine. There are three or four other people who worked hard, but not many.

Knott: Did John Culver keep his distance in Iowa?

Kennedy: Yes. He was in a very tough race. We had a long conversation about it in the very beginning, and I understood the challenges he was facing. So we had an agreement that he would let me know who the good people were, and he'd let them know about his sentiments, but he wasn't going to take a public position on it.

Young: I don't know whether you remember Drummond Ayres.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: He was a writer for the *New York Times* at the time. This is in some of the briefing materials that maybe Milton [Gwirtzman] and maybe Brian [Hanafin] put together. He made a statement that kind of struck me. He was following you through the campaign, and he said you seemed almost more contented after Iowa and after Illinois. Indeed, he said, almost more purposeful, and more contented than earlier. I don't know what to make of that, but it's something that at some point I'd like to talk to you about.

You ended up with a kind of triumph, it seems to me, in your speech at the Democratic Convention, and that was the justifying moment for your campaign. You kept going. You kept going even when everybody was telling you to get out. And then you turned it around to give that wonderful speech at the convention, which in a sense, it seems to me, was a triumph in defeat. Was that what kept you going? Was your eye on that speech, and on that end? "How do we end this? How do I end this?"

Kennedy: I don't really think I was thinking about how it was going to end. I still had it in my mind that it was going better, and we were getting stronger, and it was going to be really an uphill battle, but—

Young: But you hit your stride.

Kennedy: —many things are going, anything can happen. And you don't let your mind go in those directions in the course of the campaign. You certainly have to have gone through the doldrums or worse after Iowa and Illinois, and you're peering down into the grave as far as your political career and the hall of judgment and everything else. And then it gradually begins to come back and come around to what you'd believed and what you'd hoped. And obviously, that is uplifting and strengthening.

I wanted to give a good talk, but I didn't have any sense that the speech itself was going to be more than a good speech. In retrospect, I could give that speech at another time, and it would be a good speech, not a great speech. What made it a great speech was the fact that I had gone through all of this and had lost. It's the drama of the moment as much as the words, the resonating words. The words have enormous impact because you've carried those words and they've had meaning during the course of campaign. So that's more than rhetoric in people's minds or the delegates' minds. When you talk about those, they had real meaning and real resonance because you've gone through it. And I think that's it, rather than if you just went on out there and made that speech in Hyannis this afternoon.

Young: So the context was important. You had lost, but you were not defeated.

Kennedy: Yes. I think that's true.

Young: And I think also it showed you that you could—this is something new; I'm just remembering it myself—that a Kennedy could be a loser and come through it. You could lose something and yet go on and be inspiring in that.

I remember that speech quite well. It was brought back to me because we were talking with Al Reynolds over in Maryland. Al saw that speech.

Kennedy: Oh, he was there, I think.

Young: He was there, and I think you probably sent him a copy.

Kennedy: Yes I did, I think.

Young: Yes. He asked for that. He said, "I'd like to have a copy of that speech if I could." So it got a lot of notice.

Kennedy: It's amazing, isn't it? That program bringing in foreign leaders, and he comes there in '80, and years later, he's elected Prime Minister, and I'm dealing with him over Gerry Adams' visa. I mean, when the thing does work, it does.

Things about the speech that were very important are that every night when I got back to the hotel at 10:30, my sisters were there. All of my sisters: Jean [Kennedy Smith], Pat [Kennedy Lawford], and Eunice [Kennedy Shriver] were there. And they would come in the room, and they would work for a couple of hours on the talk. The beginning part was authored and suggested, and other parts were done by [Robert] Shrum, but the part that bothers me and troubles me is the box that had all of these changes is gone. Someone stole it out of my office. So I don't have the record from the very earliest copies to the very end.

That speech was completely altered and completely changed. We laid it out on the floor, put all of it out on the floor, and I can always remember being upstairs, and all my sisters were reading different parts of it, saying, "Look, Teddy, you have this part here...." They have very good judgment and very good political sense and are really good editors. Pat reads it, and used to read everything, and is very good, and Jean as well, and Eunice has a lot of common sense. And they all were very sharp. They're still sharp, but they were particularly sharp then, and they had all been a part of the campaign. They had a very important impact. I remember that, and that's never gotten out, but every night from about ten to one—we weren't doing anything in the evenings, but every night we came back there and worked on it and made changes. They'd redraft that part in the second, and incorporate that thing, and it would be there again the next night.

Knott: We really should get on the record the handshake lore.

Kennedy: Well, after my speech, there was a wonderful reaction and a great reception for it. We stayed there for some time, and then went back to the hotel. I was there the next day. The next day, actually, at lunch, I went with my sisters to P.J. Clarke's. I remember having hamburgers and stuff like that coming back.

I can't remember. Was mine Tuesday night? And then we had the platform, I think this was Wednesday? And then he spoke Thursday night? Was that what it was? They were there Wednesday, and they were doing the platform. I couldn't believe that we were still battling and fighting over the platform. We were getting calls all afternoon and through the evening about, "We will take this; we won't take that...." And someone said, "Well, they have the votes to vote it, but we could have minority reports," so the people were going to be able to still speak about these things, which drove the Carter people crazy, too.

We had all of this tension going all the way through, and I had a very substantial group of supporters who said they would be very offended after all of this battle on the platform if I even went on the stage with Carter. There was a very substantial group. And then there was another group who said, "You should." But I think it was very disputed—very good people, too.

The Carter people weren't really sure whether I was going to stay, but they didn't make any effort. I was there all day Wednesday and all day Thursday, as I mentioned. He could have said, "Well, you come down; I'd love to see you, and bring your family down. Rosalynn [Carter] would love to thank you." They could have gotten all the pictures in the world at that place, and, "I'd like to ask you if you can come on up." I'd have to say yes, or done it on Thursday. Or come up to my place! That would have been gracious, to come up and say, "Can I come by and congratulate you?" That's what I thought probably he'd do. You think in your own mind that's probably what you'd do.

But they were continuing to fight on these things. We were still fighting with them on it. And then there was a question whether we would go, but I had told them that we felt that I would go, and that's when I told the Secret Service we'd leave at night afterwards. I had to go back, because that's when Secret Service leaves you. They leave you off at home that night, and boom, they're gone. And so, I said, "Well, where will we be?" And they said, "You can stay in a hotel, because your reception will run 25 minutes, and his will go 25-35." I said, "That's fine."

So, boom! His speech ended; down we went. We had an escort down there. For 15 minutes, 17 minutes, it was silent in that place. The whole thing was all over. And so, instead of going to the holding room, all I heard was, "Come on up! You've got to run up! Everybody's worrying, wondering, 'Where the hell have you been?'" They were bitching because I was late. It's unbelievable because when I said I'd stay there, it was fine with me. I didn't care. "No, no. You don't have to."

And then, as you saw, when I went on the platform, they had a whole series of other people who went on. I shook his hand, shook Rosalynn's hand. And right behind me was Tip O'Neill, and right behind him was the party—Bob Strauss, and a whole series of party leaders all crowding in there. You look at the picture of that podium, there are 30 people there, and not just me and him, and me over on the side. You could see all the other people who were going there. Mondale was on that. Joan Mondale was there. We had the one picture facing the crowd where Carter was on the one side, and I think it's Bob Strauss and Mondale, and then me, and then next to me is, I think, Mrs. Carter. I think she came over, pulled me on in.

I must have shaken hands with him two or three times. But I didn't elevate his hand; he made no effort to elevate mine! I thought it was proper enough. But, as the press pointed out, there wouldn't be any pictures of me raising his hand, which I had not expected to do, but if he had raised both of our hands, I would not have resisted it, certainly.

We had a conversation some time afterward. I'm amazed that we don't have the notes, because I always remember writing notes every time I've sat down with a President about what we were going to do, or what I was going to do in the campaign. I asked him for some help on a couple of dinners, and he said he would help, and he asked me to go to some of the places, and I said I would.

And then I also spoke to him about Steve Breyer, if he would give support to Steve Breyer to be on the circuit court. The way that works is there are a number of judicial nominees. The Senate generally doesn't confirm them after the date of the first national Convention, what they call "the [Strom] Thurmond Rule." Why are we approving anybody with a lame duck or any President after the first Convention? We never used to do it. And then they passed some out after the first Convention; the second, they passed out about 40 or 50, and then there's sort of an agreement that they'll do eight or ten. They'll sort of divide them up: the Republicans will get some they want; Democrats get a few they want. Breyer got in that mix. And he went on through for the circuit court. He was opposed for a while by a fellow named [Robert] Morgan from North Carolina because Morgan was upset that I was getting my judge and he wasn't getting his.

But eventually, Breyer got through. I went to Texas and around. They asked me to go. They seemed to want me to go someplace, but I don't really even recall campaigning with him. I think I did with him in Massachusetts in maybe one or two places, but I don't think they ever asked me to campaign with him at all, which I think, if it was going to be somewhat effective like it was with John Kerry, it's going into places and yukking it up and trying to joke it up. We did that with Kerry in Iowa this last time. People like that kind of thing, and they think it's on the level if they see you laughing with each other. They'll listen, because they think it's for real. If you're down in some other place and say he's a nice guy, they're not buying that.

Knott: Were you surprised by the extent to which he was defeated that fall by Ronald Reagan?

Kennedy: Yes, because Reagan was not all that strong. He was not all that strong at the start of that year. I had first seen Reagan debate my brother Bobby 10 years before, and was caught. I thought he was impressive. People had disparaged him out in California, but I always thought he was a guy who was on-message. He looks great. Whether he could take the give and take on it—but he did it well enough.

I thought Carter did pretty well in the first debate, but Reagan just had a couple of those cute little lines that seemed to get him off the hook. "There you go again," or whatever it was. I don't think Carter could dig his way out of the other kinds of problems he had.

Knott: Have you had any contact with him in the ensuing years?

Kennedy: Yes. Didn't we see him at the [William Jefferson] Clinton Library? He was there. I don't know whether I talked to him at lunchtime. Did I go by, or did I say hello to him? I talked to him on the phone about Northern Ireland. He was up in Boston at some event, and I went in just to say hello to him.

Mrs. Kennedy: He spoke at that Democratic retreat at some place up in maybe Pennsylvania or Maryland.

Kennedy: Anyway, I guess he was upset we were leaving.

Mrs. Kennedy: Yes.

Kennedy: I don't have any edge with regard to him. I know he has with regard to me, but I think he's done very well in the years since that time. And the start of it, you know—the Kennedy wing of the party, "I don't have to get into that, and I can do it." It was there almost right from the very beginning, and it was rather unnecessary.

Knott: He talked about how he was going to "whip your ass."

Kennedy: Yes, well, that was afterwards.

Young: I'd like to ask you another thing, though, about Carter. This came up in Ireland. Carter was the first President to make a commitment in terms of the Irish.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: How did you work that with him?

Kennedy: We basically wrote it in Massachusetts—

Young: And then how did you get him on board?

Kennedy: —and got it in the platform. I remember writing that, working on that. I think it was in the platform, or did he issue it as a topic? Did he publish it another time or make a speech about it?

Young: Well, he started out in the campaign being on the IRA [Irish Republican Army] side, sort of. He was adopting the standard position. According to the people over in Ireland, that was always bothersome to them, as you know. Carter came off of that position, supported the peace process, and made a commitment of economic aid if it worked out. That looms very large in the memories of people over there because it was the first statement by an American President. So my question is, how did you work it?

Kennedy: I'd have to check the timing on it. It was either on the platform or shortly after. Or is it towards the end of the campaign? I remember doing that; it was in Boston, in Massachusetts. And whatever contact we had with him, I forget who was inside; it wasn't directly him. I don't know whether it was that guy from Georgia who was his pal and then quit.

Young: The young guy?

Kennedy: No, not him, not Jody Powell.

Young: Charlie Kirbo?

Kennedy: No, no. It was the guy who was in the economic—the big heavyset guy who was head of OMB [Office of Management and Budget]?

Young: Bert Lance?

Kennedy: Bert Lance. I think it might have been Bert Lance, for some reason. I might be wrong, but I think somehow it was Bert Lance. He had a great relationship with him. So for one reason or another, we got to him, and I can't remember what those circumstances were.

Young: Okay. Maybe at some point down the pike, somebody on your staff could look into this.

Kennedy: Yes. I'll look at it. Ask Miltie [Milton Gwirtzman]. I think Carey would—

Young: Because everybody over there was mentioning this in connection with what you had done over the years here. And they remember also later—

Kennedy: Carey Parker would know that.

Young: —a call from you. Wasn't it Al Reynolds who said—I don't remember. No, it was Garret Fitzgerald.

Anyway, after the joint statement, economic assistance could start up. You spoke with him, and you said, "You see? We keep our word." But the memory of these things in that context is just extraordinary.

Kennedy: Yes. Well, as George Mitchell said, the difference between the United States and Ireland, the trouble with Ireland is they never forget history, and the trouble with the United States is we never remember it. [*laughter*] There's something to that. They never forget it. They never forget anything over there—particularly a grudge, I think.

Young: Well, I'm very glad we did these interviews over there. It's a very important part of your career that's underappreciated on this side of the Atlantic, and so is the peace process. We had a lot of conversations about that. We just started reflecting on Ted Kennedy and what you've done over the years, from John Hume and everybody—

Kennedy: Yes. John, of course, is something else, and meeting him, and.... [*dog altercation*]

I do think that because we were tough on [Gerry] Adams. On several occasions when Adams was over here as he was increasing his election strength both in the North and South and increasing his support over here—he still had his private army—I said, "You can't be a democratic political party and have a private army." He was using it very cleverly to do the negotiations with [Tony] Blair, which was raising his prestige and his standing.

So at some time, this thing had to end, and we tried to do it as nicely as could be, but he was keeping us at arm's length, he was rising in terms of the politics and that kind of thing, still had all of these parts that were going, and not making a judgment decision. But this thing wasn't going to work. Then when they had the coincidence of the breakdown just before Christmas, and then four days later the bank robbery, and then the killing down there, that was it. It was for me. But now, they've had those assurances on the weapons, and both governments and both the British and the Irish intelligence agencies say that thing's for real, and the IRA has stopped the surveillance and the other kinds of activities. So, although I think you still have to get justice in this case involving the—

Young: There are two more reports.

Kennedy: Two more, yes. In January, and then I think the Brits have to bring up the institutions and implement them. Then everybody has done their best.

Knott: Okay.

Kennedy: Okay?

Knott: Thank you.

Kennedy: Vicki, I don't know if there were other little things you had, or big things that you—

Mrs. Kennedy: The story about the convention. Did my mother tell that story? I don't know.

Kennedy: Oh, yes! This thing is important! Carter insisted they have a roll call. I'm not sure that's Wednesday. Or maybe it's Thursday. I'll have to check. Take the platform win, and then they had the roll call. It wasn't necessary to have the roll call because I had conceded, but they insisted, which many of my supporters thought was an unfriendly act, to rub it in.

They came to Louisiana—and a lot of the states had asked to be unanimous, even in the places where we'd—and we didn't object. They came to Louisiana, and what was it? 74-1, or—Vicki?

Mrs. Kennedy: Whatever the number of electoral votes was, to one.

Kennedy: To one. And who was the one? None other than Vicki's mom. She just said, "I couldn't vote against my Teddy."

Mrs. Kennedy: Long-range marital plan.

Young: And nobody knew about the future.

Kennedy: Florida, Puerto Rico, Wisconsin, Louisiana, yes. So that was not a happy....

Mrs. Kennedy: She took on the head of the delegation, who said, "No, we're going to be unanimous." I'm sure she told you that story. She said, "We're going to say it in French. We're going to say ours in French, so I'll tell you how to say it in French." It was one for Kennedy. She was not going to vote against him.

Kennedy: So that's kind of cute.

Mrs. Kennedy: Can you talk about not running in '84?

Kennedy: Yes.

Knott: We can deal with it now if you're—

Kennedy: So now, after the '80 campaign, and looking down the line for the '84, we geared up. I asked Larry Horowitz to gear up for the possibility of a candidacy, and Bill Carrick and Ranny Cooper. And our Fund for a Democratic Majority actually spent millions in '81-'82 to distribute to Democratic candidates, and also pay for our own political activity. We revised the party's nomination procedures to eliminate the rule that required delegates to vote for the candidate they were pledged to in the primary. We had a couple of sympathetic five-minute ads produced by Michael Kaye about Luella Hennessy, and told how I slept in a chair next to Teddy's bedside in the hospital, and Frank Manning, who was a senior citizen, admitted that I was no plaster saint, but I devoted my entire life to helping people less privileged. They had been effective in the '82 campaign, and we thought they might be—

I had spent time with my children in that summer of '82, and I actually have a very detailed memorandum of the conversations I had with my children on three or four different occasions about running or not running. They made it very clear that they'd much prefer that I not run. Teddy was the principal spokesman, but I spoke with them on several occasions together and also individually. And about the time when Patrick came into my bedroom at night and spoke to me about it, he was all sort of teary-eyed about that possibility.

Young: Was that decisive for you?

Kennedy: That was very decisive. Probably three or four meetings with them all together that lasted a couple of hours at a time, and then Patrick's time that summer. And then on election night, Thanksgiving weekend in '82, we talked again, and I indicated that I wouldn't run. I made an announcement shortly after that in Boston.

Young: There was considerable disappointment, wasn't there, among some of your friends and supporters?

Kennedy: Yes. We had been through the process, and we had a good organization, message. And I was a stronger and better candidate, and there was a lot going for us at that time. But the power of the children was overwhelming. They would all have supported it, but they were very strong in their views about it, that I could still play a very important role in the Senate, and I didn't have to run for President. They felt very strongly about it. And it seemed to me they probably spoke for a lot of the other children in the family, too.

Young: If you got to be President, would you go back to the Senate, or is that just the end? The Senate is a place where you can contribute as long as you want.

Kennedy: That's right. After the '80s, I probably in my mind felt that whatever time I had left in terms of public service, I ought to be involved in Senate activities. We had a very ambitious program then. It was the beginning of the '82 Voting Rights Act. I was the principal sponsor of that. I'd gone to South Africa for the anti-apartheid legislation. So I had a full agenda in terms of Senate activities.

Young: And you were very senior by then.

Kennedy: The Presidency is still *the* position where you can have the maximum kind of impact, but I think probably, after New York and after making that judgment/decision at the end of it, I said—in my mind at least—that I wasn't going to run. Although it pops up, you let your mind drift off on it. But it wasn't really a very hard decision in terms of '84.

Mrs. Kennedy: Yes.

Knott: Great.

Mrs. Kennedy: No, I just figured you might as well just get it out of the way rather than come back to it another time.

Kennedy: I think you're going to read this Jack Leslie political activity, Fund for a Democratic— During the '82 election cycle, the numbers at the end of '82, the Fund for a Democratic Majority had contacted three million voters with direct mail, contributed $2.3 million to campaigns across the country, supported 400 candidates, 70% of them successful. So you know, the Fund was still moving and going around. We kept that going for elections of Democrats, and to keep the political presence.

So we had a viable political organization, but it always seemed to me that after '80, you have all of that set up, always ready to go, and then you make the decision not to go. In 1980 you didn't say you decide to go and then organize. You have to have all of that and then make the decision. But you can't have all of that and then yield to it as a reason for going. I learned that lesson early, and it's an important one to learn, because it basically will control the outcome if you're not careful.

Young: Good.

Knott: Thank you.

Kennedy: All right. Let's take a few minutes. Do you want get a little breath of air?

Mrs. Kennedy: I'll see about getting some lunch.