EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY

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Interviewer
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TRANSCRIPT

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April 8, 2010

Young: This is April 8, 2010, an interview with Victoria Reggie Kennedy in Washington. We've talked a bit about what we could cover in this interview and where we might start. Being very historically minded, Vicki has left it up to me and I said I'd like to start sort of at the beginning of her understanding and connection with Ted [Kennedy]. A specific question I had was about her becoming a politically involved partner, so to speak, deeply involved in that. We can see that by the time we reached the healthcare, it is evident to everybody. It was evident to close lookers even before that, but maybe it was not like that at the beginning. It was a dimension to their relationship that developed. So, it's all yours.

Kennedy: First of all, it's a little emotional to be sitting here and talking to you, because it's the first time I'm doing this on tape without him here. So this is surprising me, to get real emotional, because I thought I had my little armor on, and that I wasn't going to feel this way. It's probably worthwhile to go back way to the beginning, before Teddy and Vicki were Teddy and Vicki, I think, and how I knew him and how we came to know each other.

I grew up in a very political family, and my family were big Kennedy Democrats, starting off with John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, but big Ted Kennedy Democrats, and I knew him casually because he would visit my family. I didn't really know him—I interned in his office. I met him for the photograph at the end of my internship, and I was passionate about politics, but didn't have any particular sense of him. I always teased him that it wasn't love at first sight for him, and I think he totally agrees with that, although he was too polite to actually say that, and if you saw the photo, you would understand why; it's the '70s, very funny.

I remember in the '80s, at the time of the Robert Bork nomination, being on Nantucket, and my circumstances were totally, totally different. He was single, I was married, totally not thinking of each other romantically, it was like the last thing in the world. But I remember being on Nantucket—he was visiting my parents, he had a date, and he was talking about the Bork nomination, and it was the first time that I was intellectually interested. We were in this real intellectual sort of thing and he was talking about the judicial nomination process, and about how the Senate wasn't intended to rubber stamp every person the President nominated, and he talked about his philosophy of judicial nomination.

As a lawyer, I was so intrigued by it, and I was just in rapt attention and I thought *Wow, this is a side of Ted Kennedy that I didn't know at all.* I listened to him and I asked him questions, and he said, "I'll send you the Bork information." And he did. He made a little note, he put it in his pocket, and sent me the information on Robert Bork and the nomination, to my office in Washington, at the end of that weekend. It was a picnic. We were on a beach with a bunch of people, but he sent me the information.

Young: Were you practicing law?

Kennedy: I was practicing law in Washington at the time. I was so amazed at his passion and knowledge. It was really captivating, and I think from that time on, I had a different impression of him. I don't really even know what that means. I don't mean romantically, I don't mean anything like that. I just mean substantively. I was always enamored of his politics and I'm a progressive Democrat, but it was in a real intellectual way, and just his thought process and his level of preparation, I looked at in a different way. I had an insight into how knowledgeable he was, that he wasn't just a person who believed a certain way, but he was a person who prepared and thought and was intellectual, and I found that very intriguing and compelling.

I saw him a lot over the next years; he continued to visit my parents on Nantucket. They had a home on Nantucket and he would sail from Hyannis Port to Nantucket with his friends and I saw him a lot over the years. My situation in life changed and he knew that. I mean, Washington's a small town, we'd run into each other and one thing led to the other, and anyway, we ended up getting married. That's sort of fast-forward, but it was a little bit different from that. As we were dating—it was very old-fashioned, and we would sit and we would talk, but we really talked about family. We didn't talk about policy, we didn't talk about politics. We talked about family and we talked about our lives and about what we—really, where we came from, I guess you would say, and we got to know each other as people very well.

My children were very young and I wasn't interested in going out on dates and leaving them at home, so he would come to my house for dinner and we would just sit and talk, and then he'd go home and come back the next night and we'd have dinner again. That was our routine, and we got to know each other really well that way.

Young: How did he come to—he must have been very serious, by the time he got to talking about himself, because Kennedys don't talk about themselves.

Kennedy: He must have been. I don't think I realized that at the time, but that's right. I realize that now, but it was not something I was aware of at the time.

Young: So it wasn't asking about where *you* came from, it was also—that may have been included, but it was—

Kennedy: I was talking to him about where *he* came from.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And I think we had a similarity in background, in the sense—although, obviously a lot of differences—but we were both from big Catholic families, we were both Democrats. Even though his brother had been President, my family had supported his brother for President, and so we had, in that sense, something that was in common. We had a little bit of shared history through our families, and I think that was a comforting thing. He knew that my father knew his brothers. There was that link that I think was almost familial, which was a comfort and something very good.

My grandparents had come to this country in 1920. His grandparents, great grandparents, had come to this country in the mid-1800s. So my immigrant connection was much closer, and he was very—intrigued might not be the right word, but he liked that, the American dream story aspect of it and how my father had gone back to Lebanon with his mother. My father was a special envoy to the Middle East for his brother, for President Kennedy, and my father went back with his immigrant mother to their hometown, to Beirut, and the whole home town [Zgharta, Lebanon] came out and met them, and he met his grandmother for the first time. Here he goes, he comes back with his immigrant mother, who left as a young woman of 20, and she brings back her baby boy, the representative of the President of the United States.

Teddy just loved that story because it was the American dream, and that's what he was working for, that everybody could live the American dream. You know, we'd talk about things like that and he'd tell me about his grandfather, he'd tell me about Honey Fitz [John F. Fitzgerald]. He'd tell me about his mother and tell me about the history trips, and tell me about his school experiences and the difficulties he had as a young boy in school growing up, and the things he ultimately wrote about in *True Compass*. He had some very difficult times then. He would read to me from *John Brown's Body*.

Young: Really?

Kennedy: Yes, yes. He loved *John Brown's Body*, just the rhythm of the words, "Wingate Hall...." I can just hear him in my head right now. He loved the rhythm and he said his brother Jack loved it. I don't know which one of them turned the other on to that, but he loved that and he would just read it. We got so close and connected during that time and politics wasn't what we talked about. He was going through such a difficult time. It was the Palm Beach time, he was preparing to go to testify at that trial. We didn't talk about it. It wasn't as if we were avoiding talking about it. It was certainly something that was there. I don't know, we were *other*. That just was not part of what was happening between us.

Young: So he was—it could not be said, then, that he was sort of unburdening himself from his troubles to you.

Kennedy: No.

Young: That was not part of the growth of this relationship.

Kennedy: No, no.

Young: That's quite important, because it's occurring at these other times of trouble.

Kennedy: So, I've read how I helped him with his Harvard speech; not true. I've read how I helped him with his testimony for Palm Beach; not true. Those things were not a part of our life, not a part of our life at all. He would be preparing for his testimony in Palm Beach and we would meet for lunch afterwards, but we'd never discuss his preparation. He'd say, "OK, we'll meet at Galileo at 1:30 for lunch," but we'd never discuss what he had done that morning. I'd talk about what I'd done at work that day, we'd talk about, "Do you want to go to the Redskins game?" because we were in Washington, or "Should we go do this, do you want to see this movie?" We'd talk about my kids, we'd talk about other things, but we just—it was just a different life. We were in more of a cocoon. Our relationship was happening as a separate track. We were getting to know each other, we were learning about each other, we were falling in love with each other, in a totally separate space. It was fantastic, it was fantastic.

I teased him. I remember one night at dinner, and I think this has been reported or written about, but one night at dinner he was really looking like his little grim face, but joking grim face, and he said, "My poll numbers are terrible, I have 48 percent approval." I said, "Boy, are you lucky. I've never gone out with anybody whose poll numbers are less than 47. So we can still go out." And we laughed and that was the end of that. That was as much as we discussed it and we'd just kind of move on. It was as if our relationship was just something else. It was developing separately.

Young: It's not a political story.

Kennedy: Not at all, not at all.

Young: I think this insight is very important for what comes later and in and of itself.

Kennedy: Teddy and I were definitely in love and it just wow, boom, happened, and I couldn't believe it. I was determined that he was the most—I thought he was great to go out with because he was fun and he was interesting, but we were—gosh, I didn't want to get married. I had my children. Certainly, obviously, mister bachelor couldn't have wanted to get married. And then I thought, *Oh, my God, I'm so in love with this man, what am I going to do?* I fell in love with him in spite of myself and really, I think if he hadn't asked me to marry him, I would have just absolutely died.

The beginning of December was the Kennedy Center Honors, and he said to me, "I'm not going to ask you go." I asked why and he said, "Because I don't want you to be gossip fodder, you're too important in my life." And it was around the time—the Palm Beach trial was going to be the next week. He said he had parties with friends before, some people coming in. I was at his home and I was there for his parties, but he said, "I just don't want anybody to write stories about you, I don't want you to be introduced to people that way." And so he didn't take me. He didn't go with anybody, but I mean he just, he didn't do that. I didn't really get it at the time. I thought, *What's this about?* But he was absolutely right, it was the absolute right thing. We were out at lunch, we were out and about in town. It's not as if I was hidden, I mean we weren't—we were public.

Young: Were rumors going around at the time?

Kennedy: No, no. He was calling my office every day, everybody knew, I mean people knew, but it was funny. People—there were no rumors.

Young: This was almost a semi-official function.

Kennedy: But this was a big thing.

Young: Yes, this is like—

Kennedy: You've got the red carpet, people walk in. This was a different story.

Young: So the other occasions, when you'd meet for lunch at Galileo or wherever, were not sort of show occasions.

Kennedy: Exactly.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: But we were having dinner at his sister Eunice's [Kennedy Shriver] house all the time. We were seeing people, we were seeing his friends, we were seeing my friends. He'd go out to dinner with my friends, I'd go out to dinner with his friends, that was happening all the time. I mean we weren't just the two of us by any stretch of the imagination.

Young: Yes, sure.

Kennedy: That he thought no, he didn't want to put me in the—he didn't want to do that. We went to a Harvard game. We definitely were out there, but people just didn't—it didn't click, it didn't click.

Young: That's amazing, that people didn't press or somebody wasn't saying, gotcha!

Kennedy: No, it didn't. I don't know why but it didn't, nobody did. He proposed to me in January, that next January. We had our first date in June of '91, he proposed to me in January of '92, which seems fast but wasn't. I mean, we were grownups and we knew, we knew. I wouldn't have trusted my children with him if I weren't absolutely positive of his commitment, and I obviously was right.

Young: Was the family involved? Were they speculating that were you in love?

Kennedy: It's so interesting. His sister Eunice, whom we'd spent the most time with, Euni and Sarge [Shriver], and they were so sweet to me, and his sister Rosemary [Kennedy]. Rosemary was in town a lot and we were with—I mean Rosie wasn't speculating but Euni and Sarge were—Eunice was trying to still fix me up with her son Bobby [Shriver]. Bobby and I laugh

about it. She didn't figure out that Teddy and I were an item. I don't know how not, I was at her house all the time.

Jean [Kennedy Smith], I met Jean, and I don't know, Jean started wondering, and then I didn't meet Pat [Kennedy Lawford] until the night Teddy proposed, and Pat got it instantly. Pat said hello, she kind of didn't pay attention to me, and then figured *Oh, another girlfriend of Teddy's*. And then somehow, in about 30 minutes, she zeroed in and thought, *I'd better get to know this woman* and said, "Let's go to the ladies room and let's chat and tell me about yourself." She just focused on me like a laser beam, she got it instantly. Pat was phenomenal, she was so perceptive. And then I gather the sisters started talking, the day after I met Pat.

Young: I see.

Kennedy: And, "Do you think Teddy's getting married?" "This is serious, have you—?" you know, and then Eunice said, "Oh, do you think so, I mean she's only been here for dinner ten times or something." And they go, "She *has*?" It was very funny, but Pat got it right away.

Young: Of course, we couldn't interview Pat for the project.

Kennedy: Yes, that was sad.

Young: But it sounds like she had a very acute—she was tuned in.

Kennedy: Very tuned in.

Young: Could read Teddy quite clearly.

Kennedy: Obviously very well.

Young: And she could see something was there.

Kennedy: Pat was a very intuitive person and she understood her brothers I think very well. She did very much, she was a very special woman. I think Teddy—his kids understood and he was telling them that this was serious, so they were getting that.

Young: Did they understand, do you think, why he was getting married, what the nature of the relationship was?

Kennedy: I don't know. I don't know. I know he told them that we were serious. I think change is always hard, but they were certainly kind to me. Kara [Kennedy] was always inclusive and great, and Teddy [Kennedy] Jr. was too. Patrick [Kennedy] I think had a harder time—you know, the youngest, the baby—but came along well. And I think any time you have a blended family, it's always a challenge.

Young: Sure.

Kennedy: I think the same with my kids, who came to really adore him. I think Teddy was a phenomenal stepfather in that he let them grow at their own pace, to love him and accept him, and that's a real lesson in how to do it. He didn't assert himself as an authority figure. He let them come to him instead of imposing himself on them, and I think that was a really great quality, a really great quality.

So, going back to the beginning of this question, we didn't—there was no politics involved. We never discussed politics. It's really interesting, Teddy said to me at the beginning, because people started saying, "Are you marrying her for politics?" We had never discussed whether I even liked politics. As much as my life had been—my political family, as much as I was passionate about politics, as much as I followed it like crazy, I mean some of my earliest memories are writing down political—writing down the numbers and listening to the radio when I was six years old, and writing down the returns. So and so has 665 votes, and I can remember writing that down.

Young: Well, you ran for office yourself.

Kennedy: I ran for office when I was in high school.

Young: What was your mantra?

Kennedy: Click with Vick.

Young: Click with Vick, yes.

Kennedy: It is—we never talked about it. I can remember Teddy saying to me, "No one will ever believe that we never talked about this." I said, "I know." But it wasn't what we talked about. It was kind of crazy that we didn't.

Young: Well, why not?

Kennedy: I don't know, it just wasn't. We had too many other things to talk about.

Young: It wasn't a question of compartmenting yourselves?

Kennedy: No. It just, we were talking about other things.

Young: This woman is—you know, politics is not—

Kennedy: No.

Young: It wasn't that. It was just that there were other things.

Kennedy: There were other things.

Young: Other things going on. You mentioned a little while back, while this was really about politics, it seems to me, but maybe I'm wrong. Back when he was out at Nantucket.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And talking about the Bork nomination.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Where you said it was intellectual, to see his thinking and so forth, very much on his mind. So I put that in the politics box.

Kennedy: So maybe it's that I already knew he had that. I mean maybe that was the part of him I already knew and so it wasn't part of the—maybe it was like that. I don't know, it just wasn't—I knew he was in politics, I knew he was a Senator. My relationship with him was not with Senator Kennedy. My relationship with him was with Teddy. I think that's what was so different about us and I think that's why we fell so deeply in love. It was about Vicki and Teddy. It wasn't about Ted Kennedy, it wasn't about Senator Kennedy, it wasn't about Vicki Reggie, it was just about Vicki and Teddy. It was just really, just two people. I loved him, I got to know *him*. I understood *him* and he understood *me* and he loved me. It was so—it was really powerful, it was really something else. It was something else.

I described it to my friends as jumping off a cliff and knowing that he'd be at the bottom to catch me. And he did. I just was that free and that trusting, and I had never felt that way with any human being in my life. And he caught me, that's what it was. So the politics was just there but it wasn't what we were about. But when he asked me to marry him, he did say—he said, "I want you to be a part of my life in every way." Basically it's like, I'm asking you not to—he said, "I know you're going to be with the children and you love the children." I think he loved the fact that I loved my children and that I was a mother, as much as anything. I mean he just loved family so much. "But," he said, "I don't want to travel and have you not be with me. I'm asking you to be with me all the time. I want you to be a part of my life, I don't want your life to be separate from my life." I said yes, I mean that's what I signed on for, that's what I accepted, to be a part of his life in every way. He said he didn't want to come home and report to me about the trip he'd just taken. He wanted me to be on the trip with him, and that's what he said at the beginning. He just didn't want a separate life. He wanted a partnership.

Young: Well, for the first time in his life.

Kennedy: I think for the first time in his life. I think he had enough of that loneliness, enough of that separateness. He wanted togetherness, that's what he asked of me. We spent the first, I think five years, we didn't spend a night apart, or close to that, several years. I mean the first night we spent apart, we decided it didn't count as a night apart. We laughed about it, and it was the night that [Yitzhak] Rabin—after Rabin was assassinated, and he flew to Israel. He said, "It doesn't count that we're apart, because I didn't sleep." [*laughs*] He said, "I was on the airplane and it doesn't count." I said, "That works for me."

I think in the whole 17 years that we were married, we may have spent a grand total of a month apart, and that's because I had a sick parent that I was down with in Louisiana, or my daughter was on her junior semester abroad and I went to visit her. It was me, it was my obligations or things that I wanted to go do, over 17 years. So we were together all the time. He was home for dinner 98 percent of the evenings. We were together all the time.

Young: A very few of the many other people who have talked for the oral history have observed that they thought he was a very lonely man, people who knew him earlier. It looked to me that way from the outside, but I think this story of your relationship is just very poignant and is very important and very telling about the man and about both of you. It explained so much.

Kennedy: It was very special. He loved home, he loved home. He wasn't a person who wanted to be on the cocktail party circuit. He wasn't looking to be at all the big parties in town or going to events. He'd stop by political things that he needed to do on the way home from the Senate. He'd do his little five or ten minute or fifteen minute stop-by, do his little things and then head for home. He'd go and he'd be home for dinner. He just loved home, he really, really loved home.

Young: His home in the sense?

Kennedy: I don't mean house.

Young: You don't mean McLean.

Kennedy: No, I don't mean McLean, I don't mean Washington. I mean home.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And I think that's why he loved the Cape so much, because that was home. The Cape for him—oh, it's the beautiful view, it's the sea, but it's home because it's the place he associated with his parents and his siblings. It's the place he associated with his family being whole in his childhood, it's the last place they were all together, when everybody was alive. It's the place he had the happiest memories, it was the place of joy in the summer, when he had that nomadic school lifestyle. It was the place he would find joy, it's the place he learned to sail, it's the place he was with his older brothers and his sisters. It's home. And then later, the place with his kids. He just loved home, and he I think longed for a stable home.

Young: He said, in one of our interviews up on the Cape, that this is a sacred place to him.

Kennedy: Mm hmm.

Young: And that can mean a variety of things, because it wasn't all joy.

Kennedy: No.

Young: I think there were very difficult times for him there. He was alone a lot, but it was with family. You think all the brothers and sisters are gone, and most of them are gone and he's the last one left there, and then he has some time with his father, which he remembers very well. But I mean these were—he grew up there, almost grew up there. He didn't finish it.

Kennedy: But I think something very positive happened there. I think there's something extraordinary about the family, his parents and the children, the bond that they all developed. It's something that I continue to just be amazed by. The extraordinary accomplishment of all of his siblings, his parents, the bond they had with each other, the incredible love they had for each other, it's really extraordinary. Something happened in that family that his parents instilled in them, and the love their parents encouraged them to have for each other, the bond their parents encouraged them to have for each other. I feel like a lot of it happened at the Cape. I just feel that something happened there.

Young: It's kind of mysterious, isn't it?

Kennedy: It *is* mysterious. It's almost like magical properties, whether it's the water or the sailing, or whether it was the joy of just being there. Teddy was a little boy. The last time they were all together was 1941, and that's a long time ago. He was nine. He was nine.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: But it still was special to him, and then even when they weren't all together, because they lost Joe [Kennedy Jr.] and then Rosemary was away, and then they lost Kick [Kathleen Kennedy Cavendish]. Still, the remaining siblings were there and would come together. They were so much older than he was, we forget that. Teddy was so much younger than the rest of them and then at some point, the age difference doesn't make a difference any longer. It still was—the Cape was that unifying place. It was the place they came together.

Young: But there were tensions there too. You referred to his nomadic existence.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: Always the new boy, hither and yon, which is in itself tough, in addition to some of the very bad experiences he had very young, in school. So the going home from school was by contrast, just the contrast between the two. I mean, people do go away to school, but usually they become part of a group there or whatever.

Kennedy: Right.

Young: And I think he maybe made a few relationships that were lasting there, but he was an itinerant until the very last.

Kennedy: He was an itinerant.

Young: So that I think there was that element in it. Do you agree that it was, for a young boy, it was a place that you knew?

Kennedy: Absolutely.

Young: And he said what it was that his father had was no fear.

Kennedy: Home holds no fear for me.

Young: Home holds no fear. It might have held some anxiety of course, but no fear. So there was that.

Kennedy: When he had whooping cough and pneumonia and got so sick, which actually, as it says in his book, ends up being kind of a lifesaver really, from that awful school. But his mother brought him to the Cape, and so he had that special time with his mother, in a wonderful way. So he had a good feeling of that being a sanctuary.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I think that impacted him. He healed there and he had one-on-one attention from his mother. He was a young boy. I think that's something that stayed with him. He had those great memories of being with his father and going off and going riding, or just being. His dad reading the comics to him or just a special time he had, learning to sail there, being with his older brothers there. I think all those things, those early memory things of what were most important to him, those stayed with him. Joe Gargan, who was his pal growing up, his cousin, Joe was that constant, and I think that was an anchor for him.

Young: He was an age mate.

Kennedy: An age mate, and I think his mother was so wise, because he was that itinerant, and Joe was his every-summer pal, who was the constant. He was his sailing buddy. He was a couple of years older, but Teddy was the helmsman on the boat, and Joe was his crew, and they were just pals. So they had—it just was a place that was home. Bronxville, they sold, Florida in the winter, but that was sort of like a disruption to school.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: You know, you're going to Florida in the winter and then you're going back to school. Wait, I'm going to another school in the winter? You know, because he was switching, just to explain. He'd be in school, then his mother wanted him to be with her at another school in the winter, and then he'd go back to the other school. So he'd be at two schools during the school year, and then the next year, he might be at another school. So it was just a—although the intentions were certainly good, the outcome was not. So then you go back, what was the constant? The Cape, the Cape. He was there when he found out that his brother Joe had been killed, and so you've got that sadness, and obviously his father died there, and you go through all of the rituals of sadness. His mother later, much later in his adulthood, died there. You go on and

on, but it still was the place that he found solace, always. I mean *he* died there. This is where he spent his last month. There is no place he would have rather been than there.

Young: So it was the—I think for most of the children, it was their social experience too, I mean the family was their social circle, so to speak.

Kennedy: That's true.

Young: They'd go to dances, the girls would dance with each other.

Kennedy: Oh, and the boys, you know the brothers were so wonderful and they would take their sisters. They certainly always took Rosemary. It was beautiful love for each other, and how they looked after each other.

Young: Right. So, what did they need the outside society for?

Kennedy: But they had friends. On the Cape, they had terrific friends. Even though they had—Teddy says he always had this dream that none of them would ever marry, they would always just have each other. [*laughter*] But he did marry, they did marry, they all did. They did have great friends. They had Nancy Coleman, who was Nancy Tenney, lived kitty-corner to the big house at the Cape, and she still does. She was Kick's closest friend and she actually still has that house, and she's close to 90 years old, I guess. She is fabulous, she's just a fabulous person, and she practically lived at their house. She tells wonderful stories about what they were like growing up. She's obviously gotten older and a little bit slower now, but she tells stories about Joe and Jack, and their protection of Rosemary, and if other kids would tease her, how they would always be there and be protective of her. And about the discrimination against the Kennedys, because they were Catholic, that kind of thing. So that's the other part that I really—you know we forget now, how they were still, even in Hyannis Port. I think they went there, in a way, because it was less discriminatory, but being Irish Catholic was still a difficult thing.

Young: There was a close connection, though it was also with family, to the outside world that wasn't school, which was a separate thing for him as a kid, and that was his introduction to the world of grandpa.

Kennedy: Oh, yes.

Young: And I just see this family and it was very close, that that was where they learned a lot about social rules, about competition, fairness, bonds, church, religion, faith, all of the country, all those things; going to school at the dinner table, so to speak. It's interesting, for a biography and for a history of his deep connection with politics and public service as a career, to watch him and the other children, when they left the nest, so to speak, where they went, where they connected. It seems to me that the place where he went outside the family, discounting school, was that world of Grandpa Fitzgerald. Maybe too much is made of this, I don't know, but that was something that was really outside of Hyannis Port.

Kennedy: I don't know. I think grandpa was quite a character, and I think Teddy always knew he was a character, even when he was young. But grandpa was this huge figure in his life, huge figure in his life. When he was in school, I guess when he was at Fessenden, he would take the train into Boston and spend time with grandpa. I think he learned a lot from his grandfather, and I think his political philosophy, his progressive, liberal ideology, I think in a lot of ways was formed from his conversations with grandpa. Grandpa would take him and say, "You always say hello to the people who work in the kitchen, the people who are making your food and serving your food, and you always be kind to these people." Grandpa just really influenced him a lot in those ways, but I mean grandpa was a quirky—as Teddy tells the story, I mean he was a quirky kind of guy.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: But Teddy just enjoyed him and learned a lot from him. What people tell me, and I think Teddy actually probably could see it himself—physically, he wasn't like grandpa, because Teddy is a big, tall guy. Personality-wise, he's outgoing and gregarious and such a people person, which was grandpa's personality. So he had those political skills, those people skills that grandpa had.

Young: That's right. And as a kid, he saw and participated in the interaction with people from outside the family, in the real world, and he just seemed to love it.

Kennedy: Yes, he loved it.

Young: As an observer, then as a doer. Did he ever talk to you a lot about that in the early days?

Kennedy: About grandpa?

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: Oh, absolutely.

Young: You probably got sick of it.

Kennedy: Oh no, I never got sick of it, because he would imitate him. He would do his accent and talk about grandpa's dentures flopping and not sticking in his mouth, you know, [*imitating*] "John Fitzgerald." He'd do his little thing and he talked about grandpa all the time and about how much fish is per the pound at the pier, and what kind of vegetables are the most nutritious. And he talked about how grandpa was always worried about nutrition and what fish had the most bang for the buck. No, absolutely, he talked about grandpa all the time. So it was clear to me that grandpa had this huge influence on him, because he would quote him and imitate him, and it definitely had a big impact on him.

His father did too, in a totally different way, because his father was a totally different personality. He would talk about his father as being a stern, a much more—a tougher disciplinarian obviously, and person who really expected you to toe the line. But his father was at

every game that he ever played, his father would take his friends to the games and would watch Teddy or watch Teddy in his sailboat races. His dad was a very devoted father. He was competitive, he wanted him to win, he wanted him to do well, but he went. I mean, he was a busy businessman, but he was still there for his children.

When Teddy messed up at Harvard, his father was so angry, so angry, understandably, as he should have been, but in the final analysis, he was there for him, you know? And then when some kids messed up at whatever the military academy was he said, "I'm going to help them go to another school and pay for their tuitions to go to Notre Dame." His dad was—he believed the world was hard and you had to be tough to get along in the tough world, and so he needed to make his sons in particular, very tough. Teddy came to understand that, I think. His father had unqualified love for his kids, and that's kind of a remarkable thing in that day and age. He always worried about disappointing him. But he would quote his father, and I don't think until I read the completed book, and we talked about it a whole lot, the impact of Teddy's father on his own life really hit me in full.

But Teddy always quoted his father, "Well, as my dad always says...." "My dad always said…." His dad would tell him, "Don't pay attention to gossip, don't listen to other people's phone calls, you'll be a lot happier." And of course that's true. Teddy never read gossip about himself and about others, he didn't like that sort of thing. Just various things. "My dad always said, if you have a second choice, then you don't really have a first choice." He had these little sayings and he just took them to heart, things that his father had told him.

Young: How do you think his father's times apart from the family affected them? And I mean not only being in a place in France, but the other things, where his father had relationships outside of the family.

Kennedy: I don't know. I don't know. My sense is that it was sort of someplace else. I just don't think that's part of the consciousness. Really, it's just not a place they'd go, I don't think it's part of the consciousness. Their family was something different.

Young: OK.

Kennedy: No, I genuinely think that. It's just a different kind of—

Young: It's inherently credible, when you hear what he talks about, that's nowhere there, and there's a reason why it's not there, and I think you put your finger on it when you said it was just—

Kennedy: It was just their family.

Young: It was the family, the center and the base. There are some writers who speculated that he was driven by proving himself to his father.

Kennedy: No.

Young: Do you think they get that right or half right?

Kennedy: No. I think he was driven. I think he was driven. That's an interesting thing, to prove himself. I don't know if it was to a person, but I do think he always felt the need to prove himself or to do well. He didn't—he never felt that he was entitled to anything. He always felt he had to earn what he got. He always felt he had to work hard. He always wanted to work hard, and I think maybe it comes from being elected at a young age too, where he didn't—Teddy was not a person who felt entitled.

His brother may have been President, and I used to tease him about that, "Oh, your brother was Attorney General, your brother was President and you became a Senator." And he'd go, "Aww," you know. I'd say, "That must have been nice," just teasing him about it, but he felt that—he understood the gifts and privileges that he had in his life, but he always felt that he had to earn his—work hard and not feel, be, act, appear entitled. He worked so hard. He was considered, every poll you get, the hardest working Senator and I think there's a reason. I mean, he didn't know how to do it without working hard. He was really dedicated and devoted. He'd say, "I need to work hard." Well, sure, we all need to work hard.

Young: Working hard but also, I mean for people, he was an elected person.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: He had obligations or a sense of obligations.

Kennedy: Yes. It wasn't about him.

Young: It wasn't like being Attorney General, or somebody who did not have a position that was dependent on the approval of others and on doing things for them.

Kennedy: I don't know about the Attorney General part, but I think that he certainly always respected that he was elected and that he was entrusted by the people with this great honor, but with this trust, if you will, that he was doing their work, doing the business of the people, and that he had to work hard. And it was always about them. He didn't believe that you governed by a poll. I don't think he felt that, by any stretch of the imagination—it's not like a referendum or anything. He had to do his work. I'm just trying to get a handle on was he feeling he had to prove himself? I just think he always felt like he had to do that. He always wanted to do well. It's hard to—he was compelled, and this is real. He was compelled to do good works. He felt strongly about that, making a difference, he really did. It was in his heart and soul, making a difference for people. I don't know, it's complicated.

Young: It's complicated—it's probably not very fruitful to try to trace this to any one—

Kennedy: I don't know, it's just who he was really. It was who he was. It's not like he was doing it because of—it's just who he was.

Young: It was in his blood.

Kennedy: Yes, I think so. I so reject all of this psychobabble about, "Oh, he was trying to prove he was as good as or he...." That's all baloney.

Young: As good as his brothers.

Kennedy: Yes, as good as his brothers, as good as this, or he felt that he was not.... I got so angry at this one book, and I just have to get this out, which said that his father had said that Teddy wasn't as smart as his brothers. And I said, "When did his father say that?" and they said, "Oh, he said that when he was Ambassador." I said, "Teddy was six when his father was the Ambassador." So, they went, "Oh, well." Why would he say that his father—I mean it's just baloney.

But you know, it becomes this whole mythology about this, as though somehow Teddy was just not smart, he was this, and it just makes me so crazy. It feeds into this storyline that somebody wants to create, that I think is just ridiculous. I do think he felt the need to carry on his brothers' work. I do believe that's true. When his brothers were lost, I do think he felt that he should help to carry on their unfinished work. I do think that's true. So, he made his maiden speech on civil rights, and he talked about that unfinished work of President Kennedy, and he wanted to continue to do some of Bobby's work, and I do think that's absolutely true. But he had work that was uniquely his own.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I mean you know, that was so—

Young: Would it have been greatly different?

Kennedy: No, I don't think so, no.

Young: If that had not happened?

Kennedy: No, I don't think so at all. I think that absolutely, he had his own things. You know, when he and Bobby were in the Senate together, Teddy had his own part carved out and he was doing his own thing. So no, I don't think it would have been different at all. I obviously have my Teddy opinions.

Young: Well yes, but your insights are not worthless because of that. In fact, they might be more valuable because of that.

Kennedy: I was thinking and kind of musing about some perceptions and ideas that people have of Teddy, and just my take on it. I think that some of the clichéd and easy perceptions about him, as just being fun, good time Teddy and not serious and all that. He certainly did have a kind of fun—we'll call it fun—side of his life, and he had enough tabloid fodder in there, but you can't look at his life and not see these incredibly serious and focused moments as well. You look at his time at the University of Virginia and the moot court competition, and the discipline and dedication to go through those three years of moot court competitions, and for him and John

Tunney to come out on top and to be victorious in the law school on that—that's a huge accomplishment, I mean it's huge. I think it sort of said, in a subordinate clause somewhere, "Oh, yes, and then he won the moot court competition," but to really look at what that took, and the amount of preparation and skill that it took to get to that level, is something. I think to compare that to whether he had a speeding ticket at the same time, is just—you know, when you're in law school, they're not even remotely equivalent, and I think it does his legacy, quite frankly, an enormous disservice, to not weigh those two things appropriately.

Also, I hope that at some future date, that people looking at his whole history look at his role in the 1960 campaign, and his going out to the western states for his brother during the primary. I think a couple of things of what he did really showed—and he was a kid. I mean, he was really a young kid, but if you look at the states that Teddy went to, his personal skills—I'm talking about getting the nomination.

First of all, they were pretty tough states. There weren't that many primary states to begin with at that period of time, and you're dealing with states that looked like they were going to be for [Lyndon] Johnson, looked like they were going to be for [Hubert, Jr.] Humphrey. They were not places that were pro-Kennedy country, and here this young man goes out to these states and is making the case for his brother. Look at how many delegates he peeled off in those states, and because of his personal relationships, was able to get Wyoming in the final analysis, to agree that they would throw all their delegates to his brother if they would be the one that would tip it over. That alone, the difference that his personal relationships and all that hard campaigning did in making a first ballot victory for JFK—again it's so often just said like, "Oh, yes, well, he went out there and how did he do?" There's that—I'm sorry for the *Globe*, I'm sorry they're not going to be happy with me, but that *Globe* book, which really made it seem like he went out there and he wasn't successful.

Young: This is what, *The Last Lion*?

Kennedy: *The Last Lion*. "He went out there and he wasn't successful." It's phenomenal. Look at what he did in all the states he went to, not just the western states. President Kennedy, then Senator Kennedy, had him come out to West Virginia because he was so successful. He was in Wisconsin. He knew that Teddy was a campaigner, he could make a speech. Now, remember the time in West Virginia when President Kennedy lost his voice and he said, "Get Teddy," so Teddy could make the speeches for his brother. Well, Teddy was doing so well. He said, "Teddy, you can't run for President until you're 35." Kind of kicked him out and said—

Young: So he found his voice.

Kennedy: He said, "I can speak now, go back and go do something else."

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: He showed such—I mean he was so focused and so disciplined in getting his brother elected. He gave it everything he had, in states that were really difficult, and he got enough delegates to be able to add to the pile enough to get his brother the nomination on the first ballot.

Young: And he was this stranger from back East.

Kennedy: Exactly, stranger from back East who had no connection. No connection, and he flew his own airplane and rode bucking broncos and did ski jumps.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And he said the only thing he refused to do was to have the cigarette shot out of his mouth. He thought about that one and said, "No, I think I'm just going to pass on that one." But he would do these things to get attention for his brother. He had a natural way with people and a natural political ability, but a discipline, and during that time he was taking notes. I have the handwritten notes. In those days he wasn't dictating. I have his notes in longhand, that he wrote, from that 1960 campaign. It's incredible, the discipline that he was showing. This isn't some wacky kid who is just barely getting by. You know, that storyline about some ne'er-do-well, it just doesn't mesh. You know? He was a complicated guy, I mean he was very complex, very—that's what made him so interesting, I think, but hard work and discipline were very much a part of who he was. And this innate political ability.

Young: He had a gift.

Kennedy: A gift.

Young: He had a real gift.

Kennedy: A real gift. You know, even in his last—

Young: For people.

Kennedy: A gift for people but a political gut. Even in the last year of his life as he got sicker, he didn't lose his political gut. It was quite wonderful. He just intuitively had that political instinct about just—we would talk about healthcare or there would be some strategy. He kept that sense, it was wonderful.

Young: Well, we can talk more about that a little bit later. The moot court, very hard work, making a case, an evidence-based case, that was part of the discipline that he was learning.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And while he's still in law school.

Kennedy: But interesting, not just making an evidence-based case but doing trial moot courts against other—not in the regular competition, but against other teams that they wouldn't be competing against in the actual competition. So they were doing mock moot courts against other teams, to practice.

Young: That's right.

Kennedy: Now that's really something. So I thought about that and I thought, *Well, that's what he did when he was practicing sailboat racing*. I think so much of this goes back to sailboat racing. You know, he said sailing was a metaphor for life. He said that so many times. I think it's true. He always prepared. He'd go practice in the evenings, he'd do match racing against people when it wasn't a regular race. He did that with me when he was teaching me how to race or how to sail. I mean, I still don't know anything, but he got a little boat against my little boat, and we would just race. He'd say, "Now, just see if you can keep up with me, and this is where the windward mark is and this is going to be the leeward mark," and I'd start to learn his techniques and learn to go with the shifting winds and tides. Always just practicing, practicing, so by the time you come to a real race, you've learned a little something else. He was always a practicer, a preparer, and he did that from the time he was a little boy and sailing. And he took those same disciplines into other fields. He certainly took it into the moot court, he certainly took it into the Senate.

Young: Yes. And took it into the campaign.

Kennedy: Took it into the campaign.

Young: In 1960, he was—I guess that was an important learning experience for him too.

Kennedy: I think absolutely, absolutely. He took it into a big speech, as recently as the last big speeches he made. He would do a teleprompter practice for any big speech; if he was going to use a teleprompter, he'd practice it on the teleprompter. You know, a convention speech. He was going over and over to practice. He was always a prepared person. He made it seem that he was just doing it casually, because he was so prepared.

Young: So, no sense of entitlement.

Kennedy: None.

Young: Preparation, very hard work, thought preparation and mastery of the subject, and wedding that to a talent for the political work. This can be taken off the tape, because it's a bit self-serving, but I remember our first meeting out at the Miller Center. You and Lee [Fentress] were visiting and Russell Riley was with me, in my office there. You put a question to me that I had great difficulty answering, and I don't remember what it was.

Kennedy: I don't remember.

Young: You were trying to get a sense of where I was coming from in terms of Kennedy. I remember saying, "I know very little about him. I never worked in any of his campaigns, I've been so buried in history. So I'm going to tell you what I think, just from the outside, and that is, this is a self-made man. This is the way he strikes me. You know, he's a Kennedy, yes, but he's a self-made person." And I thought I saw a look of approval in your eyes. [*laughter*]

Kennedy: That's good, you'll do.

Young: But what you're saying is a version of this, making something more than he was, of himself.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: And maybe that's part driven, I don't know. I can't figure that out, but it's such a consistent theme that you are commenting on. Did he ever talk in these ways to you, about motivation?

Kennedy: No, no, but I talked these ways to him.

Young: And so you came to understand more about what made him tick, so to speak.

Kennedy: Exactly, exactly. He listened quietly, he nodded. But he didn't disagree. You know, he did a lot of, "Hmm, hmm." It's true. I mean, just what I'm saying is just absolutely true. He was just so—he knew he was a hard worker, he knew he was disciplined. He understood that. Sure, it's got to have been hard to hear all of these people saying these things—they could say all they wanted, but he'd never listen to it.

Young: Almost shy in this respect.

Kennedy: Very. Very shy about talking about himself, very shy about tooting his own horn, very shy about that. You know, when you think about it, with all the schools that he went to, and he really did start off with a lot of failure in school, because you can't go into the 7th grade when you're supposed to be in the 4th or 5th grade or whatever, and do well. You're doing very poorly, and you have to have a loss of self-esteem and a lack of confidence. I think you do become kind of a jokester, maybe you misbehave or do things that maybe you get attention in other ways.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: And maybe you don't think you're a great student, but when he was able to be in one place for a longer period of time.

Young: And be on his own.

Kennedy: That's a whole different story.

Young: So, he was on his own, sort of the first time, when he went into the Army.

Kennedy: I think really on his own for the first time in the Army. I think the Army was a challenge, the Army was a huge challenge.

Young: Why did he go into the Army?

Kennedy: And not the Navy?

Young: Or do something else.

Kennedy: Well, I think he was going to do service, he was going to go into service. He was going to be in the military. I mean, his brothers had been and he was going to be at some point, and obviously he couldn't go back to Harvard at that point. I think it's a time honored tradition that if young men get in trouble, a good way to go get yourself straightened out is to go in the military, right? I mean, I think it was the—and he was going to do service.

Young: That was the case with me, by the way.

Kennedy: Was it?

Young: Yes, yes. I have sympathy for this.

Kennedy: You understand that. I think it's been true for a lot of young men in history. And he was, I think inclined toward the Navy, but that was a longer hitch, and he wanted to get back to school, so he went into the Army. I think it was a good experience for him. It was an interesting experience for him.

Young: Yes. He talked about that a fair amount.

Kennedy: He certainly broke out of his....

Young: So, are we back to—I almost have to digest more of this. I'm telling you, it is so rich in terms of insights and emotions and all of that, and it's really wonderful stuff. Getting back a little bit to, dialing back one more time. Getting back to your relationship with him and how it grew, and recalling that you said it didn't start out as a politically-connected, inspired, or even relevant, politically-relevant relationship, but it came to be that.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: So, was the 1994 election campaign the turning point or the starting point of that?

Kennedy: The starting point, maybe I'd say.

Young: Starting point.

Kennedy: I guess maybe you'd say starting point, probably the starting point. I traveled around with him. As I said, he asked me to do that, and so he was—even in '92, we were going around the state, campaigning for other candidates. He was doing a little campaigning for President [William J.] Clinton, around the country, really not so much, but some, and really doing a lot in the state. He knew '94 was going to be a competitive election for him, I mean he suspected it probably would be, in Massachusetts, and was laying a lot of groundwork early. We were doing a lot of work in the state in '92, and I was just basically tagging along. As the race in '94 was evolving and developing, it became more and more necessary. Clinton was President and there was so much of the agenda that was under Teddy's committee.

Young: Oh, yes.

Kennedy: He was the chairman and it was exciting, and he was working, they were marking up healthcare. It was—he was so busy at work, but his race was heating up and he needed me to be in Massachusetts, doing things for him. And then we had strategy—

Young: Would this have been during the summer?

Kennedy: It was probably in the summer of ’94.

Young: Because the Senate was staying in session.

Kennedy: The Senate stayed in the session through August.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I mean, there was no August break. I think that was sort of the plan. It was strange. I don’t know what that was about, but it was really incredible. I’m trying to think, was Teddy the chairman yet? Did they have control of the Senate? I can’t remember.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: They did have control in ’94. I thought so. They lost it in ’94.

Young: They lost it.

Kennedy: They lost it in ’94. So there was lots going on in that summer. But we were having strategy meetings in the spring and I was involved in that. I really didn’t know anything about campaigning. As much as I loved politics, I had never been involved in a campaign or I’d never been on the campaign trail. But he started needing me to go do events, and I would go to Massachusetts and do events, and so that started in ’94. Then I eventually had my own schedule and I was out there, and he and I would connect in the evenings. When he was finally on the ground, we would connect every evening and do our evening events together. We would have a different daytime schedule. I guess that really is—that was sort of the beginning. I was involved in a lot of strategic things during that time, and I think that was beginning with my getting involved kind of strategically.

Young: But it was not going well at the beginning.

Kennedy: No.

Young: Adam Clymer has extensive interviews with you, on this campaign, so I won’t ask you to repeat the details. There was Jerry Tinker’s death and funeral, and a lot of things going on. But during the course of that, it seems to me, you started out helping, but you became much more central. Is that the right word?

Kennedy: I think probably that's true.

Young: As it went on, and the strategy that you are credited with bringing about, his awareness of the Ampad situation.

Kennedy: Well you know, and I didn't really know about Ampad, nobody knew about Ampad, but actually, somebody actually called us from Indiana to tell us about Ampad.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: But what I said at a meeting, and it was just from the kind of law I practice. It was just, when they were saying, "Oh, well, he had a business record and he just took over companies and there's really nothing there." And I said, "Well, wait, of course there is. There are different ways to take over a company, and you've got to look." Basically, I was just saying that you can either take care of the employees or not, I mean these are choices that you make. And I was just encouraging them to look at the ways that it was done. I felt pretty strongly that Teddy's record was fair game. None of us were talking about going after anybody personally, that was never—Teddy wouldn't have done that and that was never what he did do. But his opponent was running on his business record, and that a business record was like a voting record, and that it was fair game.

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: I just felt that he had to look at the business record.

Young: That message seemed to have a little bit of trouble getting through to some of the campaign folks. [*laughs*]

Kennedy: We finally got everything—everything kind of happened, everything got on track. It was even-steven, as Teddy said, at Labor Day, which was a big shocker, that was a shocker. But it was amazing to watch Teddy during that time, amazing. He was so clear-eyed, he was so sure of who he was.

Young: That developed too. That was not the—he seems to have, when he came up to Massachusetts, he seemed to be off his game that day.

Kennedy: When he went—the primary?

Young: Yes.

Kennedy: So off his game. I think he broke his foot, walking into the campaign party that evening, and he was just off. He was late, the plane had been canceled. They had him in a dark, awful—the campaign had put him in a terrible room, he didn't know the people there, he wasn't looking at his usual crowd. He hadn't been campaigning. He always needed time to warm up and to get his stump speech going and to get with the program, always. I mean, who doesn't? But he *really* did, and he hadn't had a primary. He didn't campaign in the month of August and he

hadn't campaigned in September because the Senate had been in session. And so here [Mitt] Romney wins at this primary and he's like this big rocket, and Teddy's been working on healthcare and a crime bill and everything else that he's been doing.

Young: Education.

Kennedy: Education. He comes in to this dark bar, I think is what it was, it was a bizarre room, breaks his foot going in. He didn't know he'd broken his foot, like a bone in his foot. He was just tired, he'd had a tough day, he had no opponent, so it's not like he's had this gigantic victory, he's not feeling exhilarated, and he looks at a room where he didn't know anybody in the room. It wasn't his usual suspects and it just was a flat—it was just flat. I think his back hurt, his foot hurt, it was just you know, just yuck. It was just a bad night and was a total contrast with Romney's.

Young: Who was running the campaign at that point? Was it Michael [Kennedy]?

Kennedy: I think it was probably Michael, but I actually don't—

Young: But it wasn't the old hands came in.

Kennedy: No, I think they came in shortly after that. But I don't blame Michael for that. Michael was—Teddy had always had a family member run a campaign.

Young: Sure.

Kennedy: That had been something he'd always done, but there had always been old hands who had been there, doing the actual organizing. Michael was terrific. He could run a business, he was brilliant, but here Michael gets handed the most unbelievable race of a lifetime. So you have this great family member who comes in, and Teddy has the opponent from central casting, in this tsunami, Republican tsunami, in the year of the "Contract with America," where Newt Gingrich is talking about the welfare state and the Clinton midterms were all going down like a ton.

Teddy's old and out of step, so they said. It was the first time in history he couldn't lose weight for an election. He said, "I just can't, I don't know why, I can't." It's the first time he didn't, it's the heaviest he was in his life, ever. For some reason Teddy's weight was always a topic, and it was the barometer to the world. "Oh, he's heavy, he must not be doing well." He was 60, he was 60 or 62. I mean it was like, "Oh, he's old." When you think back on it, it's laughable, to think that they were thinking he was old. It's just unbelievable.

Young: Well, this is the contrast with Romney.

Kennedy: With Romney. And Romney was just saying, "Let's give him a gold watch and send him back to Cape Cod." But Teddy found his voice, Teddy found his voice. I didn't go to debate prep or anything. I mean I would never not go now, later, you know, now. There's no—oh, how I wish there were a now. But I would never later have not gone, but then I wouldn't have dreamed

of going. I mean that's how it evolved. He did debate prep every night and did that separately from my going.

Young: Did you travel around with him?

Kennedy: During the day we had—because we had so much territory to cover, I did different things, and then during the evenings we would connect. Because we did all day, I mean it was morning until night. Once he got out of the Senate, we worked very long days.

Young: And Dave Burke joined.

Kennedy: Dave Burke joined and Ranny Cooper.

Young: Who else?

Kennedy: Oh, gosh, a whole group of people.

Young: They came out.

Kennedy: Yes, they all came out.

Young: They came back.

Kennedy: Everybody came back.

Young: Were they drafted or did they volunteer?

Kennedy: No. There were a lot of volunteers and there were also some drafts. I think no, everybody was willing. Dave Burke wrote Teddy a letter and said, "Look, what can I do?" And Teddy said, "You don't know Dave Burke." I said, "No, I don't know him," and he said, "Oh, he was fantastic, and I'm going to ask Dave to ride in the car with me." He said Dave was the head of this company and that company and he was just great. Teddy just wanted a peer to be in the car with him, to give him that security blanket. I was off doing my thing during the day and he thought Dave could handle the press. So Teddy asked Dave, and Dave I think was a little shocked—that wasn't quite what he had in mind. But Dave gave up his life for a month or whatever, six weeks, and came, moved to Boston and traveled with Teddy, and boy, what a difference it made. What a difference it made.

Then Ranny. I remember the night Ranny came in. She took a leave of absence from her job. She understood what Teddy needed. She had been his chief of staff for so many years, and she understood how to advance him, she understood how to have press people on the ground. He needed to have his campaign run like he had his office run, and it needed to be run like a Presidential campaign basically, where you had people on the ground, where he had the assets in place at events, like he's used to having.

Young: Sure.

Kennedy: Part of the problem was this had become an international event, and it was not being run in that way. Teddy would walk into an event and be accosted by—you've got press from all over the world, but there weren't people on the ground. So he didn't know what he was walking into, I mean it just wasn't a campaign in the way that he could or should be managed. We just needed to have a more major kind of operation.

I remember the first night that Ranny was on board, the night of the first day that Ranny came onboard, and Teddy said to me, "I'm going to sleep tonight, because Ranny's going to be worrying about it and I don't have to any more." It was really, really very wonderful. I'm sure it wasn't for Ranny, but it really was for Teddy, it really, really was for Teddy. And then you could just—people just wanted to see him out there, they just wanted to see him out there. And I asked him if he thought he could lose. He said, "Well, I could, but I won't." I could but I won't, because I know what I have to do and I'm going to do it.

Young: Clymer said he talked to other Senators who had told him that Teddy told them he thought he might lose. And you addressed that question, I thought very well, and we won't go over it, but it's a subtle difference. You might, but you're not going to. I might, but I'm not going to. You know what I'm saying?

Kennedy: Oh, yes. No, he never thought he'd lose.

Young: It's funny how—it's not funny, it's just a lesson on how things get subtly nuanced and changed, so it goes out that he's worrying he's going to lose. That feeds the image of the tired—

Kennedy: It does, but it's so at odds with where he really was. It's such a funny thing, because I just find that incredible, I mean literally incredible. I think that's how people want to portray it in their own mind, but no. And you could see it in the way he projected himself once he got there.

Young: Talk about that a bit. How does this manifest itself? Well, he can sleep tonight because, but what else?

Kennedy: He just had—

Young: Was there something called Topsfield?

Kennedy: Topsfield Fair.

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

Kennedy: Well, at Topsfield Fair—they've all written his political obituary, and you've got Japanese cameramen—I mean no, seriously, they were from everywhere in the world. The last Kennedy brother is about to go down in flames here, you know? We're walking in, and it's not a particularly happy Democratic sort of area. We walk in and there are these signs. We joked about it so much. The carpenters were magnificent, they were magnificent. They were on Teddy's side, they had these signs—these big, burly, fantastic, magnificent men, and they had these signs and as we walked into the Topsfield Fair they were going, "Ted! Ted! Ted! Ted! Ted [deep voice]!"

And as we later described it, the Romney people had little bow ties and they were going, "Mitt, Mitt, Mitt, Mitt [high pitched voice]." [*laughter*] I mean that was the telling, that's how he described it anyway. But that was certainly the way we felt about it.

So you walk in and you've got our guys, who are all these big, gigantic, strong men, and then you had these little guys. And so we felt big, gigantic and strong, and felt that Mitt was little and weak, and it was just the feeling of exhilaration, because of all these great supporters. There were little altercations between the Mitt men and the Ted men. This gigantic carpenter and this Mitt guy were against a chain-linked fence and the big carpenter goes, "Officer, officer, he hit me." [*laughs*] It was just silliness, it was silliness, just the whole thing was silly. So we walked through the Topsfield Fair and all these people are following us around, but you could just see in Teddy's step, he just was feeling *Okay, this is going to be good*. I think part of it was just having his supporters around and he's just starting to feel really good about it.

He gave a speech at Faneuil Hall that didn't get press at the time, but it really was great and well received, and then you later got the sense that it was—it was in October, but it really was the beginning of a real shift. I think it was about three weeks before the election, but things really shifted, were really beginning to shift at that time. And there was an interesting thing. Whenever people felt that Teddy was getting too far ahead, then the race would tighten up. So we never wanted them to know how far ahead he was, because they wanted to kick him and they wanted to teach him a lesson, but not that much. They really didn't want to lose him, but they just wanted him to know *Look, we're really mad, we're not happy*, but they just really didn't want to lose him.

Young: It was not a good economic time in Massachusetts.

Kennedy: It was a very bad economic time, we lost so many jobs. It was just really, really tough. It was a very difficult time, a very difficult time, coming out of a recession.

Young: Didn't that work against Romney?

Kennedy: No, because he was saying he's a businessman and he created 10,000 jobs, and he was the new person. Where was Kennedy? He didn't do anything, he let all these jobs leave. Teddy said, "Well, we had Republican Presidents during all this time." "Oh, but you were in the Congress," and you know, so it was that kind of thing, and it was just, "Kennedy is old and tired and blah blah blah." But you could just feel it start to happen, but there were some ugly moments, where people just would not shake your hand or they'd look the other way, and they were angry; a lot of anger out there. Then there was the first debate and that was a great moment. Again, there were labor guys, carpenters and ironworkers and those people, out there, lining the road at Faneuil Hall and just saying, "Ted! Ted! Ted! Ted!"

Young: And he had the right podium.

Kennedy: Oh, those podiums, well, that was hilarious. I didn't even know until Eddie Martin's death, that they had switched those podiums that day. He did have the big, bulky podium and poor little Mitt Romney was just dwarfed behind that podium and a half, it was like a double-

wide I guess, a double-wide podium. It seemed perfectly sized for Teddy and poor Mitt was just dwarfed behind it.

Young: People on the stage, a lot of actors and actresses, as you know, speak of the audience as a person often, at least some have, and every night is different. They feel that they can read the audience. I can understand that, but it seems to me that maybe you and he also have this capacity to read an audience. Do you?

Kennedy: Oh, yes.

Young: Do you know what I'm talking about?

Kennedy: I do, oh, yes.

Young: Some politicians don't seem to learn that too well, so they require a made-up audience to react to.

Kennedy: Absolutely.

Young: Picked. I mean, President [George H.W.] Bush always had a picked audience.

Kennedy: Yes. No, I think that's a very interesting point. He absolutely had the vibe of an audience. He knew if an audience was flat, he knew if they needed quiet, he knew if they could rally to a big, roaring speech, he knew if he could get them going. He knew if it needed to be short because they were just not with it that night. Yes, absolutely. There's a personality to an audience, there's a personality to a room, and there are some rooms that just aren't conducive to doing—like that room that he was in that night of the primary. There are just some rooms that just don't work, no matter—if you have a great audience, the room might work anyway, but there are just some rooms that, if you have an iffy audience, aren't going to help you get there. He had that sense absolutely, definitely.

You know, I just was thinking of something that I had forgotten. From the time we were engaged, not just married. From the time we were engaged, he used to push me on stage to speak at events. That would just surprise me. I don't know why, but he would do that. So, my first trade union convention, it was the garment workers, we were in Florida. We weren't married yet, we were engaged. It was around May, we were married in July. I remember walking in and they said, "Ted! Ted! Ted! Ted! Ted!" It was exhilarating and he got up and they introduced me and he said, "Go on up, Vicki, say a few words." I said, "Ted—" And I'm thinking he has totally lost his mind, I mean what am I going to say? So he said, "Oh, tell them the story of such and such," but he just, he looked at me and said, "Go on, they want to hear from you, they'd love to hear from you." And he used to do that to me all the time. Don't you think that's funny?

Young: Well, it can be very unnerving.

Kennedy: I know, but I just think it's really—it was unnerving, but I would be okay of course.

Young: You would rise to the occasion.

Kennedy: I'd do it because he would say, "Go do it," and you can't exactly say, "No, I'm not going to do it." But he would do that to me all the time. I don't know why he did that. Until this moment, I don't know why he would do that.

Young: Well?

Kennedy: I don't know. I don't know, I think it's kind of funny.

Young: He had a great deal of confidence in you.

Kennedy: Well clearly, I guess he did, but he did that to me all the time. And sometimes I'd have to say, "Look, whatever you do, do not call on me, don't call on me today." And then he'd get that little devil twinkle in his eye and he'd go call on me. Sometimes I'd look at him, "No, no, no, no." And then so he'd decide not to, but he loved to do that. I don't know, I don't know. I guess it was good practice, because it's pretty easy for me to get up now these days, but I don't know.

Young: Well, you're supposed to be part of his life.

Kennedy: Yes, so go up and speak. [*laughter*] Wind you up and go talk. But he did that, so I guess he really was serious about the partner, the whole thing. And then just over time, I started to be a part of meetings about strategy, and then I started to be a part of prepping for Sunday shows, and then I started to be a part of editing his speeches, and then I started to be—we would be talking at breakfast about something and he'd say, "That's really great, could you just do a one-pager on that while I take my shower?" [*laughs*] And I'd type a one-pager on that. Then they'd call from the office and say, "We've got a conference call on such and such—" They'd say, "Do you have time for a conference call with the Senator and his staff on such and such," and I'd be a part of conference calls on strategy on a judicial nominee or on some other issue. And then all of a sudden, it was just this seamless, total involvement in every issue he was working on.

Young: You said all of a sudden.

Kennedy: Well, I guess it wasn't all of a sudden but somehow—

Young: Quickly.

Kennedy: Yes, but I mean I guess it wasn't as quick. At some point, I was just involved in everything.

Young: Would this have been as soon as they lost the Senate?

Kennedy: No, it was longer than that.

Young: I mean when it began. I'm trying to place it in a context.

Kennedy: I don't know, because I went back to a law firm after they lost the Senate. I had left to do the campaign. I went back to a law firm, I worked back in the law firm until '97, and then it was not possible for me to do. Teddy was really very supportive of my staying in the firm, but it wasn't possible to be married to him and to have a private law practice. My clients were ending up in the newspaper, because I was married to him, and just wasn't possible.

So I think it was because I couldn't practice law any more, and I was doing other things, you know nonprofit boards and things like that, but he would start looping me into his issues. He would be doing his work after dinner and I'd be in the library, where he would be working, and I'd read or do something and he would start handing me memos: "What do you think about that?" or "What do you think about that?" It was a gradual thing. I can't even tell you when it really kicked in, but it did, and it started probably with speeches, almost first, where he'd say, "This speech needs some work, what do you think?" And I would redo a speech, that kind of thing, and then it eventually became more strategy sessions, and then I was eventually involved in—

Young: In almost everything.

Kennedy: In almost everything.

Young: How did his staff take this?

Kennedy: I thought I had a great relationship with them. I'm so respectful of them. I wasn't stepping on their toes, I mean they were the experts. I was always, up to this moment, totally deferential to their expertise. It just wasn't that kind of role.

Young: No.

Kennedy: So it wasn't—

Young: I just wanted to get this on the record.

Kennedy: It wasn't telling them what to do or stepping on their toes, and I sure hope that they felt the same way. It was just more brainstorming. Maybe from law firm experience, because we always felt that more heads were better than one, and it's just a collaborative approach, lots of ideas and thoughts. But they were the experts, they knew the policy issues and stuff, but it was just, as I say, just kind of brainstorming. And in terms of things about judgment and issues that related to him, I think I could weigh in on what might be right in terms of where do you think he should be on that—you know, positioning. Does that make political sense, that more political kind of judgment, and not in terms of substance and policy.

Young: Did you see him as stretched too thin at times?

Kennedy: Yes, and I definitely would weigh in on that, I definitely did, to the chief of staff.

Young: What to focus on?

Kennedy: No, not to that degree. I didn't get into, "Don't have him do this," but I worried about his wellbeing and I worried that he was doing too much and that he needed time off. He would accept every single—"Oh, yes, that would be a good thing to do, that would be a good thing to do." Then I worried if he was having too many 7:30 breakfasts and not getting home until 7:30, I mean too many 12-hour days, and then doing homework after dinner.

Young: Yes, yes.

Kennedy: Just seemed to me to not be healthy. I just didn't think it had to be like that. I thought they were wearing him out and I thought he was getting fatigued. So that would happen from time to time, when I would get worried about his health. I'd say, "Let's think about a better schedule." I did weigh in on that, absolutely, absolutely. I kind of think that's a wife's role or should be, and they'd say, "Oh, no, but he's the one." I'd say. "That's okay just tell him, you can tell him I said so."

I can remember telling him, "Oh, your doctor called." This is early on. "Your doctor called and set up this appointment for you." He said, "Oh, really? Isn't that interesting, that my doctor called." I said, "Isn't that amazing, that your doctor set up this appointment." He knew I was lying through my teeth. He said, "That's very interesting, that the doctor would just on his own, call up." I said, "Isn't it something, how he just set up this whole stress test and just thought it would be a good time to check your blood pressure." He said, "Really, isn't that something, how kind of him." You know? Yes, isn't that great. But he was—then he got really good at it. He didn't need me after a while to bug him about those things, because he really got very good about all that. But that was a little learning curve at the beginning, prevention. Didn't know how to prevent a brain tumor though, but he was otherwise pretty healthy.

Young: Did he ever talk about his Presidential aspirations to you?

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: It will be a never-ending subject of interpretation.

Kennedy: Yes.

Young: So I think you ought to weigh in on that.

Kennedy: I asked him if he really wanted to be President, because everybody assumes he really *didn't* want to be President. He said, "Oh, no, I wanted to be President." He really wanted to be President and I believe that, I believe that. I think he feels that the time was wrong. That's why it's interesting, he said that when Barack Obama mentioned to him that he was interested—and he wasn't supporting Obama at that point at all—that he was considering it, he said go for it. He said, "The brass ring doesn't come around that often and you'll end up taking votes that you wish you hadn't taken the longer you stay here, you'll just get yourself into other positions." And he said, "And the brass ring doesn't come around that often, go for it." And I think that was the case

with Teddy. There were times that it wouldn't have been him running, it would have been standing in for his brothers. There were times that it wouldn't have been safe or fair to his family. You know, there were other times.

I don't think anybody can really reflect and look back and say '80 was the right time. I think it was a decision that almost got made for him by circumstances. You know, he was upset about the "malaise" speech, he was upset about healthcare. He just didn't think it was his vision of—the vision of America and the optimism and challenge to our people, to think that [Jimmy] Carter met those tests. You know, he wasn't dreaming of challenging a sitting President, and I guess people can go rehash that forever.

But he did want to be President. I think that in truth, from where I sit, that it's much better that he wasn't, that what he achieved as a Senator is so far superior to what a President, even in two terms, could have done. I think he was just a consummate legislator, and the way he had of bringing people together and bringing people along was just incredible. And I don't know if those same skills would have allowed him to achieve as much in a term or two as President.

So many of the battles he fought as a legislator took so long. Healthcare took 40 years and he wasn't even here to see the end of that. So many others. Mental Health Parity, ten years. That wouldn't have been a term. How long they fought for Family and Medical Leave, some of the civil rights battles. I just think legislation, bringing people together, crafting the compromises, the personalities, the personal interactions, the chemistry of the Senate, the chemistry of the whole legislative process, was something that he understood so well and was so adept at making work. I think it was good that he was in the Senate. I think the Senate was a better place, was a good place. I think his colleagues feel that way. I think he was a great asset for Presidents, Republicans and Democrats, so I think his role was pretty important.

Young: Well, in my view, he stands very tall in history as a person of Presidential stature, and greater than Presidential accomplishment, with very few exceptions. If you look at his incumbency and what would be the maximum Presidential incumbency, he accomplished so much more, and part of this was that he would always look forward, ahead, there will come another time. That is rarely a part of a President's calculation, though I'm beginning to hear it in Obama, in some of his speeches. "This won't happen in—maybe not in my lifetime, but we've got to move now." That's not a political speech you often hear from a President.

Kennedy: Yes, it's true.

Young: Teddy had that. So what would he have done at the end of a Presidential term?

Kennedy: Yes, what would he have done?

Young: I can't imagine, because I just think he had a Senatorial temperament.

Kennedy: He absolutely was a man of the Senate. He had a Senatorial temperament. I am so thankful, in retrospect. You know, I had times of wondering, maybe he should retire and go off and live life and let's go sail and let's go—you know, I've wondered. I'm so thankful that he

lived the last days as a Senator, because that is so—it was more than his job. It really was who he was and it was really important, it was important. He loved it. He was honored to be the Senator from Massachusetts, really honored. He always said that it was the greatest honor of his life. He did it well and I'm glad he got to do it.

Young: Did he ever talk to you about the things he was proudest of, or that meant the most to him?

Kennedy: It always came down to his family, I mean, it was always about his children. Nothing else ever came close.

Young: Not any of the stuff in the Senate?

Kennedy: No. I mean if it's family or achievement, his children were the most important, the legacy of how they turned out, and the grandchildren, they were number one no matter what, no question about it, no question about it.

Young: So he still wouldn't talk about himself and his accomplishments in that way.

Kennedy: No. He never—

Young: I've seen this so often, the what are you proudest of. The children. He said that at the Miller Center, he says it any number of times, and is that just the modesty showing? I'm not talking about myself.

Kennedy: No. I think he thinks that the most lasting thing on earth are his children and his grandchildren, the world he leaves behind. I think then if you put another category, so now say which Senate accomplishment were you most proud of? You have to put it in another—you have to phrase it differently. So what Senate accomplishment was he most proud of? I think his work on civil rights, his work on civil rights. He thought it was the great unfinished business of this country.

Young: For him that was very broad.

Kennedy: It's broad. And for him that's a very broad category, a very broad category.

Young: I just see it as threading through.

Kennedy: Absolutely, absolutely.

Young: Education, healthcare.

Kennedy: Education, healthcare, immigration, voting rights, Americans with Disabilities, housing.

Young: That's the core thing that runs through.

Kennedy: You know, he talks about the march for progress. That's the guts of it.

Young: I think I've worn you out.

Kennedy: This is good, this is good.

Young: And so does—

Kennedy: And so does Splash.