



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW WITH MELODY MILLER**

October 7, 2008  
Arlington, Virginia

**Interviewer**

Janet Heininger

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To cite an interview, please use the following general format: [name of interviewee] Interview, [date of interview], Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.

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TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH MELODY MILLER

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**Heininger:** This is a follow-up interview with Melody Miller, on October 7, 2008. Why don't we start with the big subject that we left uncovered last time, which is Chappaquiddick?

**Miller:** Did you have a lead question with regard to it?

**Heininger:** No.

**Miller:** What I would want history to know is that this was a tragic accident. It was not nefarious in any way. To set the scene, you have people coming back for a reunion, women who had been in what was called the boiler room. They were selected because they were topnotch gals who could handle the important job of keeping track of delegates in a certain area of the nation, making the phone calls to those delegates, making sure the count was accurately projected to the upper echelon of the campaign and the candidate, and were willing to work real hard and long hours. The fellas there were people who had been longtime friends of the Senator [Edward M. Kennedy] or had been involved in the campaign in some fashion. There were friends from Boston, a whole mishmash of people who happened to be at the Cape and were the Boston-oriented folks, who these women knew because a number of them were from Boston.

It was as if they were in an army platoon that had all gone to war together. They weren't people who had been dating each other. Some were married, some were not, some were aged. It was just a whole mishmash of folks getting together to have a reunion, even a mourning of Robert Kennedy, and to tell war stories. It was also something that Joey Gargan wanted to host for these gals, to keep them as a cohesive unit to some degree, to remind them they were appreciated, just in case Edward Kennedy was going to run in the coming Presidential campaign, so that they would be willing to come back and help again. That's who these folks were, and I knew almost every one of them.

I also know that Edward Kennedy really didn't want to go to this picnic gathering. He had sailed in the race from Hyannis. His back was aching from the effort of sailing. It had been a long day; and he would have just as soon gone back to his hotel room and taken a hot tub, which he always liked to do whenever his back was aching, and gotten a good night's sleep for the second leg of the race, but he is loyal to the people who are loyal to him. It's a two-way street of loyalty.

I think Joey and some of the others asked him if he could please, please stop by, so he made that effort because he always does his duty. He makes the efforts that he does because—whether it's

a reception in downtown D.C. on the way home, or whatever it is—When it means a lot to people, and he knows it does, even if he’s dragging at the end of a day, he will make the effort to stop by, and he did so in this case. It was something that meant a great deal to the people who were there, to be able to chat with him and reminisce in many ways.

At the end of the evening, when he wanted to leave—When he wants to go, he wants to go; he doesn’t like to drag his feet when he makes up his mind he’s ready to go. I had been told that Mary Jo [Kopechne] had gotten a very bad sunburn and her eyes were starting to swell shut. I think that’s in the transcripts of testimony, but it was never *really* focused on. She was hurting, according to Cricket [Rosemary Keough] and to some of the others I’ve talked with, so that she was not comfortable at all. With her eyes starting to swell shut, she just wanted to get back to her hotel room, too, and get the Solarcaine and take care of her sunburn.

The Senator, as he *always* does, asked if anybody needed a ride. Many a time he has stood at the door of the Senate office, if he was going someplace or we were at a softball game or whatever and he was heading in the direction, “Does anybody need a ride?” I have gone many times in the car with him, the same with Robert Kennedy. They always gave rides to their staff, so there was absolutely nothing new about that. Both Cricket and Mary Jo asked if they could go with him. Cricket could not find her purse. She was running around looking for it. Somebody else found it, knew that she was going with him, and had tossed it in the car, but she didn’t know that, so she was going around looking. He was impatient to get going because his back was hurting, and Mary Jo was in the car, so they just left, because Cricket hadn’t shown. I have a friend who—

**Heininger:** Just for the tape, clarify who Cricket was.

**Miller:** Cricket Keough was one of the people at the cookout and was at one time on the Robert Kennedy staff, and then was one of the women in the boiler room. She married Paul Redmond, who was an attorney.

Burton Hersh, who wrote *The Education of Edward Kennedy*, told me that he rented a car and drove to the cookout’s cabin there, and at the same time in the evening in the same month, he took the same drive the Senator had made. I would point out that the Senator had never been there before, and he had not driven himself over. He had *been* driven, so he had not paid attention at all to directions or how he got there, and probably just had a general idea from somebody, “Well, you just go down this way and you turn left and there’s the way to the ferry.”

Burton told me that he drove down the street and that it was a hard left to go to the ferry. It was not a right—it was just continuing to go straight—and he wound up going over the Chappaquiddick Bridge, which is misunderstood by a lot of people. He said he missed the turn himself. He did not see the street that would have taken you left to the ferry, and that it was very easy to have gone straight. Then, of course, there were no lights on these roads. This is not a place that has streetlights. There were also no barriers on the bridge, and the bridge was at an angle to the road.

His car went straight and the bridge was angled to the left, and he just went straight off the bridge and into the water—I guess it was 12 feet of water. It was pitch black. He has told me he does not know how he ever got out of the car. I think the only way he got out of the car is

because he happened to have that window down, on the driver's side, and he was able to get out. Then he went down and dove again for Mary Jo a number of times. There was apparently quite a tidal current that was very difficult to navigate, plus it was 12 feet down, the car was upside down, and it was pitch black. He was feeling around to do what he was doing and trying to hold his breath for as long as he could, but then it was very difficult to do. When he came up, I guess the third or fourth time, totally exhausted and not able to get help, he then walked back to the cottage.

There's a lot of talk about why he didn't go to the nearest house, one with a porch light on. I think it was because of who he was. It would be awfully hard to arrive at somebody's house when you're Ted Kennedy, and a total stranger. You're used to going for your friends, where you know who they are, and you never knew who or what you were walking into, especially when your life had been threatened so many times. People forget that aspect of his thinking.

It also has to be made clear that he was very injured in this crash himself. He had a hematoma, a blood clot, on the brain. He had, still, a very bad back that was fresh from his airplane accident and being in the hospital six months. He had, from time to time, still been wearing a back brace. He'd gone down and nearly drowned under this 12 feet of water. You could easily see that he had damaged his back and his neck again. He was probably in a state of physical—and I would also say emotional and psychological—shock, when nobody thinks straight. I think he did the best he could under the circumstances, because when you've almost drowned, you're feeling your mortality and you're really shaken.

Where people made a mistake on his behalf later was when he spoke to the state. They didn't say, "You know, I was not thinking straight under these circumstances." People were of the opinion, and I think misguidedly so, that he couldn't say that because that would mean that people would think he couldn't think straight in a crisis in the Oval Office if he ever ran for President. Well, a President is not usually drowned and held underwater in the middle of an accident, and has had his head banged and his back all clobbered before he has to make a decision in the Oval Office. It was apples and oranges, and I think they were equating the two in an inaccurate way. We do not physically abuse our Presidents before they have to make a decision, and from what I've observed over the last 38 years, when Edward Kennedy has the facts, he usually makes the right decision.

He went to get help from the friends he knew he had there. They came and everybody dove for Mary Jo. Then he wanted to leave and go back and, unfortunately, there was no one of a stature there at the cookout who could take him by the shoulders and say, "You are in no condition to make any decisions, I'm taking over." All of them were people who took orders. They were people who drove his car for him; they were people who helped out, but they were not people who could have stood up to him. If David Burke had been there, Dave would have taken over. If a couple of other folks had been there—I might have even have been able to do it now, but probably not then had I been there, but it's the kind of thing where there were people who didn't, in their life, ever challenge, or were in a position to give orders to *him*.

**Heininger:** That includes Joey Gargan?

**Miller:** And that included Joey Gargan, because Joey was in a very unusual position within the family. He was a cousin, but he always felt like he wasn't totally a member of the family because he wasn't a full-blooded brother. He felt in some ways a charity case who had been brought in because of his mother's death, who was Rose Kennedy's sister, and Rose brought him in under her wing. But Joey was not one of the people they put in charge of a lot of stuff. Joey was a lawyer and help with the campaign. He was a good guy to have if you had a party and you needed somebody to organize the barbecue, and somebody who was a warm hail-fellow-well-met, that type of guy. He wasn't somebody who was in the circles of the Kennedy brothers, who was consulted, like Steve Smith.

Steve Smith, if he had been there, would have taken over and everybody would have deferred to Steve. There would have been absolutely no question. Steve was a leader. Joey was not a leader; Joey was a follower. I like Joey—we've had some wonderful talks and discussions over the years—and he's a sweet man, but Joey is not a leader within the family. He was not in the inner circles of the family when major decisions were made; Joey was always informed. So Joey was not the appropriate person to have taken over at that time. Joey wouldn't have felt it was his place to do so; he wouldn't have done so; and he didn't. but he helped all he could and dove in the water to try to save Mary Jo.

Then the Senator swam back across. I have now gone up and seen that myself, so I know that it was a swim he could very easily have made and did, but it was tough because there was a current that was running out. He nearly drowned again because of the current being so bad. So when he pulled himself up to the other side, he was exhausted as well as head throbbing and back throbbing and whole body aching even more so as a result of the crash.

**Heininger:** This is when he went from the crash back to the land.

**Miller:** Since the ferry had stopped running, he had to swim across the channel to get back to where his hotel was. I think the folks thought he was going to go across there and find a phone booth and call the police or call somebody who could call the police. I think when he came back across and nearly drowned again and was so exhausted, he got himself to the hotel and just fell on his bed, in two states of mind. First of all, he was very injured and not thinking straight and in a lot of pain. Number two, I think the psychological shock was such that he did not believe this had happened. His mind took over to protect itself, the way it happens. It's a denial syndrome when you're psychologically so overwhelmed that this cannot be true. He had lost one brother to assassination, another brother to assassination, he'd had a plane crash, and now a car crash. How can this *all* be happening? This is not possible. I'm going to fall asleep and wake up and it will all have been a bad dream.

**Heininger:** Now the cottage where the party was—

**Miller:** Was on Chappaquiddick Island.

**Heininger:** And there were no phones there?

**Miller:** I don't think so. I don't know for a fact, but it was certainly before the cell phone era. I don't know whether Joey and those guys went back to the cottage and made any phone calls. I don't know. I do know that the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] did a documentary.

They got a top forensic team in, frogmen and the whole works, and restaged the entire accident. They timed and they went to the house that had the porch light on, and they figured if a call had been made and ambulances had come and frogmen had come to dive and everything else, that, sadly, Mary Jo still would not have survived. She would not have lived. She was upside down in that car, and by the time they kept trying to—I think probably by the time the Senator finished diving for her, she had probably drowned. She couldn't get out. She may have gone up to a bit of air in the back window, but then with that open window, that water would have come in and eventually filled the car completely.

All of these top forensic people in the BBC documentary showed that it's a miracle he got out, and that really nothing could have been done to save her, unless you'd had a frogman right there at the side, and somebody who could have smashed in windows and gotten in the other side of the car, in pitch black, under 12 feet of water, which would be very difficult to do, even if you'd had emergency people right there, on the bank of the water. It's just a horrendous accident—just a horrendous, tragic accident—but it could have happened to any one of us. Any one of us could have been in that car with him to go back to the hotel, and it's just so sad it was Mary Jo. She was a lovely person. She had a great sense of humor. She was Joe Dolan's excellent secretary.

In Robert Kennedy's office, we had a little staff party at the end of the summer. A lot of our interns were leaving, and we presented Robert Kennedy with a globe of the world for his office. It was in a maple setting and lit up inside, with a light. I remember him lifting it, holding it up and saying, "Gee, just what I wanted," and Mary Jo cracking, in her dry wit, "Yes, the world." We all laughed, because of course it was being mentioned, his running for the Presidency, and he was so beloved around the world.

She was a lovely person. She was not very social; she had not dated much at all. With the women in the office, her nickname was the office virgin. She was not somebody who would have been Edward Kennedy's type. She, I think, had the first stirrings of a boyfriend. People were kind of worried about him, because she had gotten a little green sports car, and they were worried that he was more enamored of the sports car than he was of Mary Jo.

The photograph that is out there from her yearbook is exceptionally lovely, and I'm sure a treasure for her parents. I wouldn't want to say anything denigrating about that, but it gave off an inaccurate impression of what she really looked like. She did not have straight teeth; she did not have very good skin; she had straight, sometimes stringy, blonde hair. She was not a glamour queen as that picture may have suggested, but she was a wonderfully competent, nice gal whom we all really liked, but she was not somebody who men hit on at all. When people made the suggestion that the Senator and she were going off to the beach, and that's why he turned right, for a tryst, the Robert Kennedy staff women all looked at each other and laughed. We laughed because we knew that was absurd. First of all, that wasn't Mary Jo's cup of tea; and number two, Edward Kennedy, at the end of long day and with an aching back wouldn't be interested in that, plus Mary Jo was not his cup of tea, either. Both of them were inaccurately characterized as a result.

Then I think he woke up the next morning and realized that it had not been a nightmare that was all going to go away, that it had happened.

**Heininger:** When he left the scene of the accident, did people—Did he say that he was going to swim back from the island? Nobody tried to dissuade him?

**Miller:** He just said, “I’m going back to the hotel,” and I think he, from everything I read and everything I remember, was just determined to swim back. They knew he was a good swimmer because when his back was so injured he swam lap after lap after lap for therapy. His shoulders had really developed, because, initially, he was simply dragging his legs. He had to learn to walk again, so he really built up his shoulders and his swimming capability, and had been a real athlete before that. He played football for Harvard; he was in good physical shape initially, so it was not something that they didn’t think he could do, except for the fact that they knew he was injured and that he was not in good shape, so they were worried about that.

He was simply determined to get back to the other side. You don’t know what was going through his mind, other than probably sheer horror, and these were not people who could stop him. These were not people who gave him orders. These were not people that he respected on that level. If Steve Smith had grabbed him by the arm and said, “Come with me,” Edward Kennedy would have followed Steve Smith; Dave Burke the same, his chief of staff. But in this case there was nobody who could say, “You are not in any condition to be taking charge here or giving orders here. I’m going to do what’s best for you. You really shouldn’t try to make this swim; it could be dangerous. Let’s go back to the cabin and figure out what to do or call the police or do something.” But these folks were not at that level, and they didn’t dare to reach for that level at that time. I think they were all in a state of bewilderment and shock themselves, not sure what to do.

**Heininger:** As far as you know, was there any discussion about the necessity to contact the police?

**Miller:** I don’t know exactly what was said, but I think there was a realization that somebody was going to be contacting the police. I think everybody thought it was everybody else. I think they thought the Senator was going to call the police after he swam across, and he maybe thought they were going to call the police, to have them come for the car. I think it was just a—a confusion. Then the next day, when he woke up and realized this really did happen, this wasn’t a bad dream, he then did make a call, and the police were called.

From that point on, I think they all tried to do the right thing, of explaining what had happened and getting the car out. He called her parents; I think he told them. He talked to his family; he talked to David Burke, our chief of staff. What I think people don’t know, though, is that when he went back to the compound, he was in very bad shape, physically and emotionally, weeping, really out of it, with loss of memory. From all the things that people who are medical professionals can gather from everybody’s testimony from that time, and what I’ve heard, is that he probably had retrograde amnesia for several weeks, because his symptoms were an absolute match for retrograde amnesia. He couldn’t remember a lot of stuff from that night, and try as he might, he only had the basics down. It was never put out at that time—which it should have been, in retrospect—how badly he’d been hit on the head. Burton Hersch has seen the X-rays, and saw the blood clot on the brain. When you have a hematoma on the brain, that really can affect you in many, many ways. Edward Kennedy is human and it affected him as well.

A lot of people came to the compound and were giving all kinds of advice. It was a situation where he almost couldn't participate in his own defense of what had happened. He was really out of it in terms of the amnesia, the anguish—incredible anguish—of shock, of this one horror after another since 1963, that was coming down on him. I think some bad decisions were made: by him at the site, because I think he was incapable of making the correct decisions with the injuries that he received and the state of shock he was in; and bad decisions by some very top-level advisors, who were worried about saying how bad off he was, because they didn't want to jeopardize *his* future if he ever decided to run for the Presidency, and maybe their *own* futures, because they hoped to work in his administration. I just wish somebody had said, "Hey, you have to say that he was terribly injured, in a state of shock, and he was incapable of thinking clearly." Nobody wanted to say he wasn't capable of thinking clearly, but he was *clearly* incapable of thinking clearly in this situation, and he didn't. But he didn't for some very good reasons, which I wish had been brought out.

**Heininger:** Where was Joan [Bennett Kennedy] at this point?

**Miller:** She was at the house, I think at the Cape. She was shocked and so upset on behalf of the Senator and Mary Jo's family and the loss of life there. *Everybody* was upset, like you would be for any terrible accident that had happened in your family. Joan, as much as we love her and as nice a person as she is, is not a strong person, so she was not able to be a great Rock of Gibraltar, and Robert Kennedy was no longer there, and he was everybody's Rock of Gibraltar. Then it evolved that Edward Kennedy became everybody's Rock of Gibraltar, after he surmounted this latest tragedy.

**Heininger:** Who did he rely on for advice at this point?

**Miller:** Well, we had David Burke; and Ted Sorensen went there; Jack [Herbert J.] Miller was the lawyer. I'm trying to remember whether Milt Gwirtzman was there or not, maybe Dick Goodwin. Many people just arrived. A lot of old friends just arrived; whether they were called or not, they just came. Sometimes that happens. I'd have to go back and look in the books to see who all was at the compound.

**Heininger:** Did Steve Smith come?

**Miller:** I think probably Steve did. Sure, Steve would come, of course. There were a whole bunch of those guys, some of them lawyers and a lot of them were thinking in the *legal* way of how things had to be presented, rather than about the *human* way things needed to be presented, and nobody was going to ever admit that he was as injured as he was. I think that was a major error.

So he had to overcome Chappaquiddick through all the years to this very day. It's just so sad, because other people have tragic accidents in their families. People know when their mother calls them and she's been in a fender bender, the sons come running because mom can't be expected to think straight, to take care of everything. Yet they don't give the Senator the same empathy that they give in their own families, when other members have been in terrible accidents and haven't been able to think straight or act as you would wish at that moment because of physical injuries and emotional injuries, and psychological injuries in his case as well.



**Heininger:** Do you think the criticism that he has received through the years over Chappaquiddick was over Mary Jo Kopechne's death, or was it for how he handled it, by not making more of an effort to call the police?

**Miller:** A combination of both.

**Heininger:** For swimming back across and then going to sleep and not calling the police.

**Miller:** Right. But part of that was because he wasn't thinking straight and was injured.

**Heininger:** You look at somebody like Laura Bush, who also was responsible for a traffic accident that killed someone, when she was in high school—

**Miller:** You know, I only learned about that recently, about how she ran through a stop sign and killed someone.

**Heininger:** Clearly not the same impact on her life.

**Miller:** No. She hasn't been harangued for the rest of her life for that.

**Heininger:** What explains what happened?

**Miller:** Part of the reason is that when you're in politics and in the Presidential circle of possibilities, if the other side wants to tear you down, they do a very good job of it. There's a lot of jealousy and envy about the Kennedy family. There are also a lot of haters out there on the other side—Those haters killed two of them—so they threw out an awful lot of venom.

I doubt that Laura Bush is being called a murderer, but we got all kinds of hate mail and nasty comments on the phone and all that kind of stuff about Ted Kennedy being a murderer, and then all kinds of cracks about him being a womanizer and taking her out. All of it was untrue. It was just a terrible, terrible, tragic accident, and apparently, the statute of limitations seems never to have run out on him. They just keep throwing it in his face forever.

He's carried it with him every day of his life. I think he regrets it more than anybody else in the world other than the Kopechne family and her parents. He has done everything he could to try to make amends. He went and spoke with them. His insurance covered a major insurance payoff to them that was of an appropriate level because of the loss of her life. He has written to them; he has met with them; he has apologized to them. Regardless of what they say, I know he has done that. He's gone and done whatever he could.

He tried to do the right thing afterward, for sure, as his health got a little better. More than that. In this case he may not have been able to save this one life, but by God he has spent the rest of his life working to save other lives. He has saved probably a multitude of lives, maybe thousands of lives, as a result of his work on behalf of refugees, the legislation that he's gotten through. He's saved American lives and he's saved lives internationally, because he's focused attention on needs and has made sure that supplies and things have gotten into refugee camps. It's just amazing what he's done. And in the medical field, think of all of the efforts he has made to get better healthcare for Americans. In many cases, legislation that he created and got through and

signed into law has saved lives. He's done everything he could, I think, to make amends for Chappaquiddick. It's too bad that people haven't realized that this was a tragic accident and that he was damaged himself. Somewhere along the line there should be some forgiveness of that.

**Heininger:** Even those who *have* understood that it was a tragic accident still don't cut him any slack for it, so the question is, what made this so different? You've alluded to a couple of things: being a Kennedy was going to raise the profile no matter what.

**Miller:** Right.

**Heininger:** Being in the potential Presidential candidate circle was going to raise the profile. What about the Kennedy reputation for womanizing? How critical a factor was that?

**Miller:** It was certainly a factor, yes. The people who didn't like him anyway—the hatemongers—threw out everything. They threw everything at him there could possibly be, every scenario they could think up. And then there were all these amazing conspiracy scenarios that he really wasn't driving. My God, if he hadn't been driving, he sure would have loved to have that story be true. They made up millions of conspiracy theories: that other people did it, that she was driving instead of him, that somebody else we don't even know about was in the car and got out. It was just fantasyland.

**Heininger:** But there was also a long history of Kennedy conspiracy, with the President's [John F. Kennedy] assassination.

**Miller:** That goes back to the President's assassination and Robert Kennedy's assassination. Anything that involves them can't be simple, can't be straightforward, because they are too big-time, so therefore something small like one warped individual cannot bring them down in an assassination situation, and one straightforward accident can't possibly be all there is to it because of who they are. It has to be some big conspiracy to take him out. There were conspiracy theories that somebody had worked on the brakes or something and messed with the car, so that the car wouldn't drive right.

I have ridden with him many times, when we have been even in Hyannis, where he stopped and didn't know which way to turn, was not sure of where we were going because he's so preoccupied in his mind. Even in areas where he knows the neighborhood, he will get turned around or he'll get lost, because he's thinking about ten million things on his plate and everything he has to do, and he's also trying to interact with whoever is in the car and discuss whatever it is you were staffing as you were riding with him.

Pretty much now, in Washington, he is always driven, because he works out of his briefcase across his knees and makes phone calls. It's maximum utilization of time, so he is not driving anymore in D.C., except maybe on the weekends with Vicki [Reggie Kennedy], to go to the kids' soccer games or go up to the school and go to the PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] meetings or to a concert where Caroline [Raclin Kennedy] is playing the piano, something like that.

Just around the Cape, I remember being with him when he got lost. I know that Rita Dallas, who was the nurse for his father and sat in the backseat when he would take his father out for drives before he died, said he got lost all the time. She was always having to direct him on how to find

his way back to the compound, including right in the areas that you would think he'd be very familiar with, but so much is on his mind.

People say, "Well, everybody has stuff on their minds," but I can assure you it's not as much as Edward Kennedy has had on his mind, in terms of *all* the demands, by all of the people, on him, whether it be his constituents, his family, his staff, fellow Senators, or all the different meetings, all the people he wants to remember to call, things he's dealing with in terms of legislation— Suddenly he's thinking, Gee, I have to remember to call Frank Church; I have to remember to tell Dave Burke that I want to do such and such; and I have to get back to Jackie [Bouvier Kennedy] about the library thing; I have to help Ethel [Skakel Kennedy] on that; I have to remember to call Joe [Kennedy] and Kathleen [Townsend Kennedy] for their birthdays and wish them well; and I have to tell Kerry [Kennedy] that yes, I will come and speak at her graduation because her own father is dead and there's nobody else who can take his place who will come to her graduation.

He was simultaneously carrying a load that would normally take four people to handle, and he had to juggle it all himself. He was *always* preoccupied, and that explains an awful lot about this accident and about his life in general, about how he was not only always preoccupied but was also always trying to do his duty, to do what was expected of him by all of these different people's demands on him.

As I've probably said earlier, the burden that was on this man to be all things to all people would have crushed anybody else. On top of that, he had death threats against his own life—all the time—that he was coping with. You tell me how you are supposed to be the surrogate father and the Senator from Massachusetts and the United States and the world, where everybody is demanding your leadership on all these key issues, and have to be there for everybody, and you never know, when you set foot out the door, if somebody's going to take a potshot at you. You know when you come home and you find a Fairfax County police car sitting in your driveway that there's been another threat that seems to be serious, so they are guarding your house at night while you sleep. You have plainclothesmen meeting you at the car when you arrive at work and staying with you all day long in the Senate until they catch the guy. There were times people did break into his home. One person was found hiding under a bed.

I've talked to Secret Service fellows—including one just the other night at dinner who is high up in the Secret Service and knows the score, which they never talk about—I knew about the 1980 campaign and how many people they caught on the edges of crowds, and how they found the folks in Philadelphia in an apartment that had all of the motorcades up on the walls and all the clippings of his schedules and all of the things that they were going to do to him. [REDACTED]

The Secret Service, in 1980, really did save Edward Kennedy's life a *number* of times. Nobody knows it, and they don't talk about it because you don't—as this gentleman I was talking to just the other night at dinner said, "We never put anything like that out because you never want a copycat." You don't want to let people know it's happening, so they get the idea to do it themselves if somebody else didn't succeed. I know it because I dealt with an awful lot of very ill people. I probably said earlier, I kept somebody on the phone for 45 minutes who was going

to kill him, until the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] could trace the call and catch the guy. You don't forget things like that.

If *you* were trying to function and your life was threatened, how comfortable would you be going out into the public and continuing your job and not letting it affect you, not letting that sway you from doing everything that everybody demanded of you? A lot of people would just find the most secure house they could and hire some private people and get out of public service, and protect their lives as the last living brother. They'd say, "I have a responsibility to my family and I'm not going to do anything for anybody else anymore because I'm not going to risk my life." That would have been the easy way out, but he didn't take it.

He recognized that it would be a betrayal of the legacy of his brothers if he had just pulled himself into a cocoon. It would have been a betrayal of his own best instincts. He once told me, "I am not living my life looking over my shoulder. I cannot live that way. You can't function in that kind of state. Whatever is going to happen is going to happen, but I have to go forward." I have the *utmost* respect for that, because I can't even imagine the fear that he coped with, on top of the responsibilities and demands he had to cope with.

That's why I am really saddened by people who keep throwing Chappaquiddick in his face. They obviously have no empathy whatsoever for what this man has endured. It has been torture, a torturous life in so many ways. He puts up an incredibly brave front: warm, laughing, Irish good humor, back slapping, joke telling, storytelling, question asking of others, reaching out to *them*, going to *their* bedsides, going to their funerals, speaking at everything, going to their weddings, going to the bedsides of his colleagues who were dying, being the one person they wanted to see.

Part of that is because when Edward Kennedy calls someone who's just suffered some family tragedy or illness or a child who's died or a diagnosis of cancer or whatever—They can have a lot of people call and be supportive and everything else, but when Edward Kennedy calls, it's totally different. The reason it's different is because they know how much *he* has suffered. When he says, "I know what you're going through," they believe it. They know he *does* know. When he says, "You'll get through this. Every day it's going to get a little bit easier. Eventually you'll be able to breathe again, and eventually you're going to be able to smile again, and eventually you're going to be able to think past the horror to the happy times and remember all of the wonderful moments you had together," they believe it. He's the one who gets them through, because they know he's telling them the truth from what he's experienced. They know that what he's experienced is far worse than what they're going through, as bad as that is.

He has been the Rock of Gibraltar for people. He's felt an obligation to do that, because he understands that it does make a difference in people's lives when they hear from him, get the letters he's sent out afterward and the courage letters that we sent to all the people who had children with cancer like Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy, Jr.] and had amputations and all that type of stuff. We heard back so many times that it was Senator Kennedy or Teddy or their letters that got them through, that got them over the hump. He feels that when he has this opportunity, he always wants to make sure he calls. Oftentimes he's the first one to do so, as many, many people will tell you. But at the same time, I'm always astounded that this Rock of Gibraltar has much rock left, because everybody takes a piece of him, a little piece of him every time that happens.

Larry Horowitz, who was our chief of staff, got a lot of that follow-up because he was a physician. When Cabinet members had cancer or when Cassie [Catherine Patricia] Mackin of ABC [American Broadcasting Company] was dying of cancer—She was on our '80 campaign plane and covered him for ABC. It turned out that he was the *only* person Cassie would let come to her bedside, other than her family, in the last couple of weeks. She didn't want anybody else to see her, but Ted Kennedy's strength—She had an empathy from him she couldn't get from anybody else.

**Heininger:** Did she let Larry come too?

**Miller:** Larry oftentimes was the one who was going to bedsides, but more than that he was working with the families after the Senator would try to help buck them up. The Senator was going to Frank Church's bedside and Phil Hart's bedside, and not just once. He went regularly, every week. Other Senators would stop by and make their one-time visit, maybe two times, but Edward Kennedy was there regularly, every week. The families will tell you; he's the one who showed up, always, and they'll never forget it. You talk to any of Frank Church's kids.

**Heininger:** And Larry became the resource person.

**Miller:** Larry became the person who then would talk to that family's doctors, and would help with the logistics of making sure that they got the best advice and that they had the different options explained to them. He was talking to many of the families and doing an awful lot of the private follow-up that had to do with the medical conditions.

I remember Larry telling me that, psychologically, it really was very wearing, and that it just wore him out. He was running the Senate office, but then he also had this other "contract" that was emotionally draining, to the point that when he left, he told me quietly that that was the one thing that he was very glad that he wasn't going to have to do quite as much of anymore. But of course that followed Larry, because he did it so well. The Senator would oftentimes ask Larry to talk to this person or that person, and of course Larry did, but it wasn't quite the daily, weekly, monthly effort that he had when he was actually in the chief of staff chair. Larry said to me, "I don't know how the Senator does it, because it just revisits all of his own pain."

That's another thing that people don't understand about him. When you and I lose a loved one, we have the funeral—or the wake and the memorial service—and we go to the gravesite and leave the flowers after the burial, and handle all the things that have to be handled after that. Then we go out to the gravesite on various visits and we begin to heal. We begin to form scar tissue. Edward Kennedy has not been able to form scar tissue that lasts very long, because he is required—doing his duty and following the demands of people—to speak on the anniversaries of all of these losses: on the anniversary of John Kennedy's loss, on the anniversary of Robert Kennedy's loss, on the anniversary of the Peace Corps, on the anniversary of all of the different things that are set up in their memories, at the openings of the John F. Kennedy Library or the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial or the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

At all of these different things, he has to get up and speak about his brothers, and every time he does that, the scar tissue breaks again, because it's very emotional. As the scar tissue heals, it heals thinner and thinner. Whereas you and I have scar tissue that gets stronger and stronger, and

the pain gets less and less as the years go by and we are able to cope more easily with the loss, it's been the reverse for him. As he got older and older, his scar tissue got thinner and thinner, and he was less able to contain his emotions.

I remember riding with him to the dedication of the John F. Kennedy Statue in front of the State House in Boston. We were sitting in this van and he was going over the speech and looking at it, and he got half—He started looking at it and he turned to me and said, “I don’t think I’m going to be able to get through this.” I said that I knew how tough it was, but everybody there understood that. “Don’t just rush through it because you’re afraid you’re going to choke up. If you do start to choke up, just stop until you can get control again, and then continue. Everybody’s going to be pulling for you and nobody’s going to mind at all. You say what you want to say and get it said, but don’t race through it because you’re *afraid* you’re going to choke up. If it happens it happens, and nobody minds. They understand how difficult this is for you.” That’s what happened and that’s what he did. He spoke; he didn’t rush through it; and he did get choked up. He stopped for a pause or two and collected himself and then continued and got through it. Later he told me thanks for the advice. He said he realized that that was the right thing to do, not rush.

That has happened when he was speaking to Peace Corps volunteers; it’s happened more and more when he’s talked about his brothers in documentary films, when people were doing specials on them. It has happened when he’d speak to people writing books on them in the early days, and then it got to the point where he would say, “I just don’t think I can bear to talk about them anymore in depth, the way these people ask these questions. And besides, I have to save something for my own book.”

When he was being interviewed about his mother and some other Kennedy family stuff for some documentary, his mother came up. It had been six months since she had died, and was a death that had been expected for a long time, because she died at 104. There was a long illness and lots of preparation time to be ready for her loss, but here it was six months afterward. He started talking and all of a sudden he teared up and choked up and we had to stop the cameras. That was because all his scar tissue is so frayed that any of these losses just—It was like compound interest. They just kept building and building on him, and weighing on him, in a way that it wouldn’t happen to other people who didn’t have the whole world commemorating a loss every year, or an event every year that required the memories to all come flooding back.

That added to his burden and made him much more emotional as he got older and older, because his initial reaction is to be stoic, always stoic. He was very stoic about his own back. I doubt that any of the rest of us would have been able to go to the Senate every day and manage bills and stand up and sit down and stand up and sit down, and then be on our feet a very long time, and endure the pain that he endured. You could see how bad it was, because under his eyes it would just go white, and the stress would be on his face, and he’d get a little bit more irritable.

In the early days, he would never want to sit during a press conference, or lean against anything, because he thought it would look weak, and he never wanted to project any kind of weakness. Now, he will get a chair, turn it around to the back, and will lean on the back of the chair. He’s not afraid, now, to sit down or lean against a door or lean against a wall, because he has to; there’s just too much pain.

Amazingly, people don't really realize that his back was broken in 23 places. He has different levels of discomfort; I don't think there's a day where he has *no* pain. One of the things he discovered when he was in Russia, where they don't have quite the strict laws that we have—When he was in pain, the Russians gave him some salve to put on his back, which was like a double-strength Bengay heat thing. It turns out that it was what they use for race horses. [laughing] They put it on the backs of horses, a veterinary thing—and boy did that help! He used to get this ointment sent to him through the diplomatic pouches, so that there would be no problem of him getting it, because it was the one thing that got him through an awful lot of situations where his back was aching.

Despite this kind of pain, I only remember, in all of those 36 years, him missing work four times. One of them was when he got pneumonia after Thanksgiving, in Palm Beach, and he had to stay down there for about a week or so, maybe two weeks, because he was really sick with pneumonia. He grew a beard and it came in red. He kept the beard until he got back to Washington, and then we all went out to the house. This was when it was just a small staff and we did a lot more things at his house; he'd have Christmas parties and events at his home. Everybody knew each other very well then, before the staff grew so large that we were working in different buildings and not everybody knew everybody as well as we should. He had this little Christmas gathering, and kept his beard so that we could all see him, and then we all knew where Patrick [Kennedy] got his red hair; there was this red beard.

The other three times included one time when he was up at the Cape, and feeling pretty good, so he went water skiing. That rope pulling him up on the skis—with the stress on his back—he paid for it the next three days; he couldn't get out of bed. It was just terrible. We said, "How did this happen?" He said, "Well, I managed to think everything was fine and went water skiing with the kids." He never did that again; we said, "What were you thinking?" [laughing]

I remember one time he came back from travel in the Soviet Union and meeting with [Mikhail] Gorbachev, and his back was really in bad shape. He came back the day before the White House Correspondents [Association] dinner. He had to go to that because he'd been invited by the *Boston Globe*. I think I was invited by the *Boston Herald*, so I immediately was assigned the staffing. Even now that I'm retired, if they find that I'm going to a book party for somebody like Jules Witcover, and a younger staff member doesn't know any of these old, former top political writers and reporters, they'll call me up and say, "Would you mind staffing this since you're going?" So then I meet him on the curb and say, "Surprise! So much for retirement!" And we both have a good laugh.

He was in a lot of pain, but he couldn't *not* go for the *Globe*, and he never, ever, wanted to admit how much pain he was in. At the end of the dinner, we walked to the base of these long stairs that went up from the Hilton's ballroom floor to get out to where the car was. At the bottom, he said, "I want you to go straight up these stairs and don't stop for anything. I'm going to hang on to your elbow and the banister, but don't stop. No matter what, don't stop. We have to get to the top, and then we'll go straight out." We went straight up those stairs, with him in agony all the way. We got to the top and were getting ready to go, but Liz Drew happened to be up there and said, "Oh, Ted, how are you?" He had to stop and make nice and make some small talk with her, which he did, but I knew he was absolutely in agony.

We got him out to the car, and he could barely bend down to sit in the car, but then God forbid he shouldn't work. He didn't make it *in* to work the next day, but he had the people from the committee all come *out* and sit around his bed to plan the field hearings. Any time he couldn't come in to work, he would have staff come out to work on everything that we'd talk about, in terms of witnesses and staff meetings and planning sessions.

The fourth time I remember, he had also been on a trip and had to come in when he came back because there was a trustees meeting over in the Capitol office. He came in for it because these people had flown down and he wasn't going to disappoint them, so he went over there. There was some crisis in Panama, and the press gallery had asked him to come by. He felt he had to do that, so I went ahead to the press gallery and told them—

**Heininger:** This would have been [Manuel] Noriega?

**Miller:** It probably was. I went ahead to the press gallery and said that he was going to come, would give his position, would take three questions, that would be it, and then he would be heading out.

One of the things his staff learned was to never help him, make it look like he was needing your support, or take an elbow to help, whatever, except for rare times like at the White House Correspondents dinner, when he needed to hang on to me. You would stay close, so that if he lost his balance in any way, coming down the three stairs from the little platform in the press gallery, where there was no handrail to hold on to, he could put his hand on your shoulder if he suddenly needed to balance himself because of his back.

He came in, went up the three stairs, hung on to the lectern—I could see his knuckles were white—said his piece, answered the three questions, and then somebody wanted another. I said, “We really have to go.” He said, “One more,” and took it and then I said, “That’s it. Thank you very much.” He came down and I was watching him to my left, as to whether he was going to need to put his hand on my shoulder, because he was exhaling in pain with each step he came down. We walked out of the press gallery and I said, “Why are you here? You have to go home.” He sighed, “I don’t know, but you’re right. We’d better bring around the van.” We had to get a van to take him home, because he could not bend down to get into the front seat of the car. We had to get him into a vehicle where he didn’t have to bend to get into it.

His work ethic was such that he came in no matter what kind of pain he was in, then we would have to order him to go home, “You cannot keep working like this; this is insane.” Then, of course, the staff would go out to the house or he’d be on the phone.

We see that work ethic in evidence now, with his brain cancer. He is on the phone every afternoon to the staff, in the Senate office now. I hear from them; I know what’s going on. Then he’s videoconferencing with his fellow Senators on the various committees that he chairs, and he’s getting Senators to introduce legislation that he’s cosponsored. He’s getting people to drop things in the hopper. He is talking to various folks about strategic planning for health insurance should [Barack] Obama win, so that we’ll have all of the groundwork laid, between the House and the Senate staff people who will handle the legislative path of this. He will be ready to go, to



hit the ground running when Obama comes in, so that he will not have to start from scratch and do six weeks' worth of work. It will have been done and will be ready.

That's his natural leadership on things. It's why when the word came out about his brain tumor it was like an atomic bomb had gone off in the Senate. Fellow Senators were in a state of shock, it hit so hard on both sides of the aisle. You had people like Pat Leahy, who's not real, real close to him—a colleague and Senator and friend but not one of his closest colleagues—saying that it was the worst day of his life in the Senate. You had Republicans crying.

Part of what people can't quite understand is his presence in the Senate. It's overwhelming; he's a great legislative workhorse. He is the one who makes things happen. He is the one who reaches across the aisle and works with Republicans on all kinds of legislation, but he is also the one who can deliver the Democrats for anything that's going on. If we couldn't find him, if he wasn't where we thought he was supposed to be according to his daily schedule, we would call the majority leader's office, because the majority leader had probably called him off the floor to strategize in his office, or to run something by him or to ask his advice on which would be the best path to take. He's the guy who stands up in the Democratic Senate Caucus meetings, the Tuesday Democratic Caucus, and gives the pep talks and gives the discussions about what we really have to do as a party, as well as the majority leader.

He's also the one—I think I may have said this before—John Kerry said that he comes into a markup session of a committee where they'll have been futzing around for 45 minutes and, he said, "Ted sits down, looks at what's going on and says 'I can do this; I can do that; my staff will have a memo on your desks in the morning,' and pulls it all together in ten minutes and does what we couldn't do in 45." He sees how to put things together to get a deal.

He also is one who thinks broadly and thinks big, so he throws the long ball: Let's try this; let's do that; let's think in terms of what is the ultimate thing we could do. But he also has learned in his career—One thing I've heard him say is that the great lesson of the Senate was patience. You want to get everything done early, initially. You come in there to change the world and discover that you can't do that overnight. He had to learn patience and that you get things done incrementally. You may throw the long ball and think big, like with national health insurance, but since you can't get the entire package, you get bits and pieces of it and slowly but surely you put it together. He worked with Nancy Kassebaum, Republican from Kansas, and got portability and preexisting conditions taken care of. He worked with some others and got better nurse training.

Whether it was the great issues in healthcare—where he's Mister Healthcare—or civil rights—where he's Mister Civil Rights, and he's Mister Working Class Men and Women and Mister Refugee and Mister Outrage Against Injustice of any sort that he sees—he will jump in and try to make a difference, because he can, whereas all these other guys know that they could jump in, but they couldn't make the same amount of difference that Ted Kennedy can. They see him as a giant, and he really is a giant in this legislative world. I can say without any real concern that his portrait will be in one of those ovals in the Senate Reception Room in the future, without a doubt.

**Heininger:** Out of all the different staff you've seen him work with through the years, who are the ones you think he's been closest to?

**Miller:** Paul Kirk, number one. David Burke. Paul was the political director liaison with the labor people and political people when he was on staff. He went on to become the head of the Democratic National Committee and his personal lawyer. Never was there a more honorable man of integrity than Paul Kirk, absolutely terrific, a wonderful guy, great wisdom, good judgment. Everybody who knows Paul loves Paul. The same with David Burke. David was his chief of staff, and a tower of talent. He helped him write many of those great Vietnam speeches. He had a wonderful leadership ability, himself, with the rest of the staff. We all love Dave. Dave was fair; Dave was wise, funny, and was not a yes man to Edward Kennedy, but was almost an alter ego.

Eddie Martin—who was press secretary and reporter, and later his chief of staff—was the Boston Irish guy he could always josh with. Eddie knew the politics of Boston; he knew the characters. He was a great person for knowing the lay of the land and was a favorite of the Senator's in those old days. He, as chief of staff, was not as good a natural chief of staff as were Dave and Ranny Cooper, but he was a wonderful press advisor and a wonderful friend to him up in the Boston area, too.

He wrote a very funny letter to the Justice Department when I was subpoenaed by a mentally ill person who was upset that I had prevented them from meeting with the Senator because they were getting, it seems to me, messages through the fillings in their teeth that he had to receive. Somehow or other, some unaware person made out a subpoena for me, and it came to me with regard to this case. It turned out to be a hoot because Eddie wrote a letter to the Justice Department, asking them to please quash this subpoena and to do whatever they could to keep Melody out of the slammer. *[laughing]*

He called Jack Miller, a marvelous man and good friend of mine now too, who was of Miller and Cassidy, the top law firm. He was [Richard] Nixon's lawyer, but he was a Robert Kennedy Republican. He had been a Republican and had been Robert Kennedy's chief of the Criminal Division in Justice and adored him, and always wore the *PT[-109]* boat tie clasp. They called Jack Miller, also, so Jack got on the phone with me and we went over the whole thing and discussed it, and laughed for 20 minutes. I got all of this free legal advice from Jack Miller. He quashed the subpoena, called up Justice and whoever it was he needed to call, and said, "This is really ridiculous; I think you'd better take a look at this again."

We laughed about the fact that he was representing me in small claims court and Nixon before the Supreme Court simultaneously, and that it was probably the greatest stretch of any lawyer in town. But for a moment there, people were talking about having "Free Melody" buttons and all kinds of other fun defense fundraisers and that kind of stuff, and it was a real hoot. Eddie was very much in the middle of all that and it was great fun. Then he was, of course, very busy screaming and yelling at the guy who slugged me at the front desk, when I was socked in the jaw by that former old merchant seaman. I talked about that in the earlier session.

**Heininger:** Who else through the years has he been close to?

**Miller:** He has become very close to Bob Shrum, very close to Larry Horowitz, very close to Greg Craig, Ranny Cooper, Nick Littlefield. They are the ones he sees socially. Those are the people that he will have out to dinner at his house. He still stays in touch with Jim Flug; he's in touch with me; he's in touch with Mike Myers, and all of the folks who are still on staff, of course.

**Heininger:** You left off Carey.

**Miller:** Oh, I was thinking of people who'd already left. Carey Parker is—Carey is at the top of the mountain.

**Heininger:** Is he first of the first?

**Miller:** Well, Carey is in a unique position. Carey is somebody who has his own life and may well be a tad shy. Carey rarely leaves his desk for lunch. He is either at work or he's home with Betsy and doing things with his own children. He had to be dragged up to Hyannis Port to be able to meet the Prime Minister of Ireland, since Carey had worked so much on Ireland issues, and go out on the boat with him. But Carey doesn't do a lot of socializing with the Senator. He's *invited* to everything, and Carey does go to his birthday parties and a few other events. Carey will write some of the major speeches on maybe Iraq or whatever, but he won't go to the speech itself over at Johns Hopkins Graduate School, the center there.

Carey is a totally secure individual. He doesn't need to be seen with him or hang out with him to know where he stands with not only the Senator but also every single person who has ever worked on the Senator's staff. Carey is revered. He's made us all better. He has not only set an example of being unflappable, never yelling at anybody, working exceptionally hard and long hours, leaving no T uncrossed or I undotted. I remember having to send interns to pick up a press release, back in the days when we actually delivered them by hand to the press gallery, because Carey had read it and decided he wanted to change a comma, a perfectionist. His brain is extraordinary. He is right 99 percent of the time. He is our sounding board. He's like the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in our office.

You sit down with Carey and go over things, run stuff by him. You use him as your sounding board for advice on how you're going to proceed and whether you ought to. Should we do it this way? Should we do it that way? Should we call this person? Would this be a good way to proceed? He is the one who gives you great, great judgment, and he's done the same for the Senator. You can go in to have meetings with the Senator and you'll be in there with a couple of other people on a topic, and he'll say, "Why don't we bring Carey in?" It may not be anything Carey is working on, but Carey comes in as somebody who is an impartial wise man.

When we had the Senator's 75th birthday, he got up and thanked all of us for helping him achieve what he has achieved, but he wanted to single out two people: Barbara Souliotis, who's fantastic and indispensable—the chief of staff of his Boston office, and the first person he hired when he was elected in 1962, who had worked on his campaign and also is one of the people he remains very close to—and Carey Parker. There were big cheers for Barbs and lots of clapping and everything else, and then when he mentioned Carey's name, it was whistles and cheers and

stomps on the floor and huzzahs and everybody cheering and not stopping, because Carey has made us all better.

He will look at all of our drafts of speeches that we write, remarks that we write, and will edit them, and sometimes he'll edit them heavily. You learned not to be upset at your words being changed because it was always better, number one, and it was always done with a sense of, "This is really good, you really did terrific here, and just these few little changes might tweak it a bit." He always did it in a very gentle, sweet way if he was going to correct anything that you did. Once in a while you would come in—because Carey could always find something to make it better—and he would say, "This is fine," and you would say, "You don't want to change anything? You really didn't want to change anything?" He'd say, "No, no, that's fine, very good." You'd walk out the door and would be three feet off the floor of the hallway before you walked into your section of the office. You'd hold your speech, your remarks, the press release or whatever you'd written, up in the air and you'd say, "Carey didn't change anything!" Everybody would turn from their desks and go, "Wahooo!"

It was a singular moment that you never forgot, the first time Carey didn't want to change anything, because we all knew that we all got edited. It was always for the better, and was done in a very cordial and collegial way. I have the greatest affection—we all just love Carey Parker, and respect him so much. Everybody who knew of him on Capitol Hill felt the same way, just from his reputation. The few people who have worked with him and knew about him, like the Legislative Reference Service at the Library of Congress—There was a rumor, which I believe was true, that at their Christmas party, one of their toasts would be to Carey Parker, because there was a status involved in doing research that Carey Parker had asked for, because Carey always went the last ten miles. Other people could ask you to do research, but if you were doing a research project for Carey, it was usually some esoteric, amazing thing that nobody else had ever thought of to check out, and Carey was checking out. There was even status doing his research projects.

There's the famous story of how the Senator had to go with Jackie to [Aristotle] Onassis's funeral, and he was supposed to be managing a bill on the Senate floor. Because he could not do that, it fell to Fritz [Ernest F.] Hollings to manage the bill, so the Senator said, "I will lend you Carey Parker," which he did, and Carey worked with Hollings for that week that the Senator was gone in Greece. When he came back, Fritz Hollings famously said, "I will give you my entire staff and a first-round draft choice for Carey Parker." *[laughing]*

**Heininger:** And the Senator said, "Thanks but no thanks."

**Miller:** "No thanks." I would also like to say about Carey that here's a man who could be making seven figures downtown, but Carey chose to stay in public service because he loves Edward Kennedy and because he felt that what he was doing in the Senate was very important and mattered, and he enjoyed it. He loved all of the strategies on legislative work. He loved the strategies on who was going to be in the new Democratic class, placed on which committees. You tried to find out who the Republicans were going to put on the Judiciary Committee, on the HELP [Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions] Committee, Armed Services, whatever, and then you tried to match, not only from what the new Senators' requests were and what seniority slots were going to be filled by other Senators who wanted to move onto those committees and what

was open, but then you tried to put the most appropriate Senator on that committee, who would be able to do that work and do it well and stand up against whoever the Republicans were putting on.

I remember one time doing a little sleuthing and talking to a Republican who was in the know and who didn't at the time realize what he was telling me, and I got all of the people that they were putting on the different key committees. I walked in to Carey and said, "Here you are." And he said, "How did you get this?" It was one of those moments when I was able to pay Carey back for all the wonderful things he'd done for the rest of us and help him. That was a little feather in my cap that I still remember with great pleasure, because I surprised Carey, and you don't surprise Carey very often.

**Heininger:** Now there's a very different personality between Carey Parker and, say, Larry Horowitz?

**Miller:** Oh yes. Larry was not low-key; Carey was. Larry knows he's smart and knows he's competent and knows he's capable and knows what is the best thing to do, and makes sure you know that. And you know something? He's right. As you get to know Larry, he makes decisions decisively and quickly. He would sometimes be brusque, but underneath is a softie, has a softie heart. He is a caring man. He is a *devoted* father and husband and adores his children and has brought up some beautiful children. His children have done terribly well. His daughter clerked on the Supreme Court and his son has done very well as well. Larry's just terrific.

One of the things I admire about Edward Kennedy is that he doesn't have yes men around him. Larry would talk back to the Senator and say, "You can't do that," or "That's the stupidest thing I ever heard," that kind of thing. Now Carey would say, "I don't think that's wise," or he would say, "You know, that's probably not the best way to go." Carey would always do it diplomatically; Larry would be much more abrupt, but got the point across.

Larry worked his tail off. Larry had a way of being very strong and tough, so that when he was over in Russia with the Senator and talking with all of these Russians, they knew they couldn't roll Larry, and the Senator admired and respected that. You don't roll Larry Horowitz. He needed somebody who couldn't be rolled to handle some of the assignments that he got. That's the reason why, unlike some other chiefs of staff, Larry remains a very close friend.

Any time Larry comes to Washington, the Senator has him out to dinner, has his daughter out to dinner with him, calls Larry for all kinds of things. Still, if he's going abroad or to Russia or whatever, Larry stays in touch with these people. He's still EMK's man on Russia. Even though we have foreign policy people, he's going to talk to Larry. He's still his man on healthcare matters. Larry is the one who helped with his family members who had any kind of cancer problems, and Larry's the one who came to the Cape, as far as I know, and helped sort through all of the Senator's options for his own care once the brain tumor was diagnosed. Any one of us who knows Larry Horowitz would trust Larry Horowitz with our life, too.

We have been so blessed with the quality of people that Ted Kennedy has attracted. These people are outstanding, and I think it says so much about Edward Kennedy, because these people are devoted to him. We all love him. We just adore this man. We've been blessed to know him

up close and personal and over a long lot of years, to see his growth, and to see, also, his outreach to others and his empathy and his, as I say, outrage against injustice and the kind things he does and the determined things he does and how he doesn't back down from what he knows is right. All of us not only feel honored to have been a part of his team, but to have known him, because we'd all pretty much agree that he's one of the most magnificent human beings we've ever encountered in our lives.

You can talk to people who've worked for other Senators and other great politicians or well-known politicians—I remember Chris Matthews telling me that, when he interviewed all the Nixon people for his book on Kennedy and Nixon, the Nixon people all were proud that they had worked in the White House, and that they respected Nixon. They all had a great sense of fulfillment in terms of being able to work at these top-level jobs, and admiration, to a degree. But he said that when he interviewed the Kennedy people, it was so different. He said they all cried and they all said that they loved him. He said, "When I asked the Nixon people if they loved Nixon, they weren't going to admit loving the man."

What I find fascinating is that with all three of the brothers and all the different people who worked with them on all the staffs—they all loved JFK [John F. Kennedy], RFK [Robert F. Kennedy], and EMK.

I was like the alumni secretary who arced over all of them, because I worked for all of the brothers and was often the only one they knew on Edward Kennedy's staff. Many of the JFK people and the RFK people would get in touch with me if they needed to get in touch with the Senator. You pinch yourself when Ted Sorensen calls and asks if you can get a letter put into his briefcase. When you're 18, Ted Sorensen was on Mount Olympus, with John Kennedy in the White House, and now I'm on a first-name basis and hugging Ted Sorensen and Pierre Salinger and all of these extraordinary people who were amazing in their service to the country.

All of them, at times when men did not say that they loved other men, were more than willing to say that they loved John Kennedy; they loved Robert Kennedy; and the men who have worked for Edward Kennedy love Edward Kennedy. All of the staff does, and you don't find that in many other Senate offices.

**Heininger:** What about Ranny Cooper? There's a very different personality from the other ones.

**Miller:** Ranny is one of the people I respect the most who has passed through the office. First of all, she showed everybody that a woman could be chief of staff and run a great ship and make excellent decisions, could make sure the staff was running on all cylinders, give very wise guidance to Edward Kennedy, and could also say, "No, you can't do that."

Many times the Senator plays devil's advocate with us; he'll tease and he'll sometimes say, "Well, I think I'll do this," or "What do you think about this?" or "What do you think about that?" I've been in many a meeting with Ranny and the Senator and Carey and others, sometimes really tough meetings, where we were trying to decide whether to sue the guy who had stolen the autopsy pictures of John Kennedy, things that were really horrendous. Ranny is one of these great people who can get a meeting going, go down an agenda, and not let it go off on ten

thousand tangents so that what could be determined in 15 minutes takes an hour and a half. Ranny can run the show—

**Heininger:** In 15 minutes.

**Miller:** —and get things decided on. She's very open to listening, but she could also pull it back to the key topic if things got too far afield. She is also willing to let everybody come in, say their piece, and hear the other side of things. She's an honest broker. She will make sure that he hears both sides on how to proceed. She will tell him what her advice is, but she also lets him hear the other side, as all of our really best people do.

On Profile in Courage nominations, for instance, because he couldn't read the whole thing, Carey and I read everything about who ought to be the nominee for the Profile in Courage Award and who should be the winner. We would look at all of this, then I would talk to Carey and we'd bat it around. Sometimes Carey and I agreed and sometimes we didn't, but when I wrote the memo to the Senator, I would always indicate that Carey thinks this and I think that. I would never, ever, not tell him two sides of everything. You were not effective and you did not serve him well if you were not an honest broker, so you would run down everything.

Happily, Carey and I agreed many times and we were able to influence some. A couple of the people I really cared about, who had been passed over in years past, I brought back and made the Senator focus on. I explained why I thought they were better than any of this year's nominees, and they ended up winning the Profile in Courage Award. I felt like I helped reward people for doing great things. My staff work was very fulfilling in that regard. Sometimes somebody wasn't nominated, and we'd go through the discussion—In the initial conference calls with the rest of the Profile in Courage Committee, I put forward one fellow once, the President of the Ukraine, who had not been nominated by anybody. I was astounded that he hadn't been, so I mentioned that to the Senator. He immediately glommed on to it and the next thing you know he's the one winning the award. That one I went up for because I had been instrumental in making it happen. I got to shake his hand and it meant a lot.

Ranny was also an extraordinary general through Palm Beach and through *very* difficult times. She knew how to orchestrate everything that needed to be prepared for that. We were all given assignments so that we had talking points and updates on background. She asked me to write a major memorandum on his involvement with the family over the years, and I did a huge, big, long thing that backgrounded everybody and reminded everybody. I think I spoke about Palm Beach in the last interview.

**Heininger:** Only a little.

**Miller:** Only a little? Because of Ranny, Edward Kennedy is still in the United States Senate. I don't say that lightly. Ranny was spectacular. There were times when people wanted to give up the ghost. It was like Chinese water torture—drip, drip, drip every day—Again, because of Chappaquiddick, there were all of these nasty cracks and nasty things about him.

In terms of Palm Beach, he was down there. When he's down there he's off the clock, because he's scheduled about every 15 minutes when he's in Washington. Bill Barry was there and Jean [Kennedy Smith] was there. I think it had been only six months since Steve had died, and when

Bill Barry's there, you also talk about Robert Kennedy, so he had an evening sitting around with Bill and Jean, talking about his brother and Steve, and that brought back a lot of memories that tear at the scar tissue again. To go back to your bedroom and get to sleep with their photographs everywhere you look in your room is very hard.

He developed a coping mechanism to block the thoughts. The way he would do that would be by getting into a different milieu, going out to dinner with friends, just hearing loud music someplace, at a dance restaurant where there was anything that kept his mind off of the pain. When he was having trouble trying to get those thoughts out of his mind that night, he went to Patrick and to Willie [Kennedy Smith] and said, "I think I'd like to go out. Anybody want to go with me to Au Bar?" They knew immediately that this was not an easy evening for him. What people have to understand is that it's been very hard over the years being Ted Kennedy, and some nights are tougher than others.

**Heininger:** Tell me what his relationship has been with Willie through the years. We did talk some about what had happened, but what has his relationship with Willie been and what has it been subsequently?

**Miller:** Willie was interning in our office. The Senator brought him in, as he did Chris Lawford and Caroline and a bunch of the others, Max [Matthew Kennedy] and Dougie [Douglas Harriman Kennedy]. All of these folks who wanted to come and interned in the Senate office so that they would know either what their fathers had done or what their uncles had done. It was totally volunteer, totally free; they weren't paid, but they had to sit and answer phones, do filing, go and get lunch for people, and do what all the other interns did. They had to open mail and sort things, and Willie was one of them.

I think everybody was very pleased when he decided he wanted to be a doctor. He was very much taken with Teddy's prosthesis and the way he was able to make that work for him and was interested in the progression of the prostheses, getting better and better over the years as Teddy got new ones. He would bang one up—he ran and walked so much and did so many athletic things, that he used them up about every year—and outgrew them. But Willie was not one of the cousins that the Senator was seeing regularly and was as close to, because he had his own father in Steve Smith.

**Heininger:** Like Caroline.

**Miller:** Like Caroline, because of a couple of things. First of all, Willie lived in New York initially, and then his family had a house in the Hamptons, so the Smiths didn't go to the compound, whereas the RFKs did. Then the RFKs were more in Washington and a little bit in New York. The Senator would go back and forth and see his sister in New York, but Willie would be away at school. I'm calling him Willie when he now prefers Will or William, but he's always been Willie to me, just like Dougie is always Dougie, because I've known them since they were in elementary school or younger in fact. Gosh, I remember Dougie when he was in his father's arms and only three months old. I've watched them grow up and they've known me that long.



Willie, I don't believe, would be like some of the RFKs. Max, Rory [Kennedy], Dougie, and Christopher [Kennedy] grew up in the Washington area. When there were teacher training days, school would get out at half day, and those children would all come to the Senator's office and help stamp passes and run around and be little kids. Then when the Senator came back from the floor or a vote and they were there, he would play hide-and-go-seek with them. He would stand outside his office, and they would all run inside his private office and hide. You'd hear, "Fee fi fo fum, I'm coming to get. . . ." You'd hear that voice, loudly, through the entire office. [laughing] You could always hear his laugh down the hall and that voice, because it was so powerful and so distinctive. Those kids were there every three weeks for half a day and he really got to know them. Willie was not known as well and not hanging out with the Senator and his family as much, but he was still family, so that was that.

**Heininger:** Did he know the [Eunice Kennedy] Shriver kids as well?

**Miller:** Yes. He was very close to Maria [Shriver]. Maria used to always send him balloons and something funny on his birthday, and she'd come in and visit whenever she was in town. He really knew her because, also, Maria and Caroline were very close. The Shrivers were also at the Cape. He knew the Lawford girls, but they were all so busy in their own worlds and were not as political. Vicki [Lawford] interned in the office for a while, and she's married and has three girls, living out in Falls Church. But it was the families who were involved in politics and the Shrivers—who were involved in the nitty-gritty of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and Special Olympics and all of that—that he saw most often. Timmy [Shriver] lived in this area; Mark [Shriver] lived in this area. He'd see Bobby [Shriver] from time to time, if he was out in California, but the members of the family he was closest to were Caroline and John [Kennedy, Jr.].

He was almost like a second father to them. He is like the grandfather to Caroline's children. He was very close to Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy II], especially when he was in Congress, and Kathleen [Hartington Kennedy] and Bobby and Michael [Kennedy]. They were up in Boston, Bobby in New York, but Joe and Michael and Kathleen were all campaign managers for different reelection campaigns. He had them do that. It was half figurehead, because you always had the backstop of people who knew how to do it, and taught them everything as the campaign was going on, but they really did work hard and got to know what it was all about and what their father had gone through. That was part of the reason that he included them. And it was a terrific growth experience for them.

So he was closer to the RFKs in that regard, and Dougie and Max were both in the office as interns, and when Douglas asked him to be the best man at his wedding. I said to Doug, "Usually people have their brothers be their best man," and he said, "Well, my brothers are going to be ushers and I love them. But I adore Teddy. He was there for me all my life when my own father wasn't." I said, "You know your own father would have been if he could have been." He said, "Yes, but he wasn't, and Ted Kennedy was. My Uncle Teddy was there for me every step of the way. Whenever I needed him, he was there, and I love him more than anybody else in the world." His emotion was *visceral*. Whenever Dougie would be in town, he'd come in to see him, and that's the way the kids all feel about him. It's visceral how much they love him.

**Heininger:** What's Ted's relationship with his own kids?

**Miller:** Terrific. One of the things that happens at all of the Kennedy weddings is that usually the night before, at the bachelor dinner, they all get up and they give toasts. I remember Max standing up—and it wasn't his toast—it was at Teddy's wedding out on Block Island. He joshed a little bit and then he said, "I would like to raise a toast to Teddy, and thank him for sharing his father with us." And boy, did you see every one of those kids jump. He talked about how much it was appreciated, because they hadn't had a father and Teddy's father had been their father, and it had meant so much to all of them. There was not a dry eye in the house by the time Max finished. I was so emotionally moved, I could barely contain myself. I later talked to Max and I said, "That was a side of you I had not seen before. That was extraordinary." They've all said things like that.

Teddy had a great deal of his father's attention because of the cancer. His dad went with him every three weeks to Children's Hospital Boston, had a bed that he stayed in overnight, in the hospital room. He held Teddy's head when he was throwing up because of the chemotherapy. He learned how to give injections so that he could bring him back home early and give him the citrovorum factor that was the antidote to the methotrexate. That was killing the cancer cells, but if you kept it in too long it killed other cells as well, so you had to let it work for two days and then stop it, and he learned how to do that. He also was able, as a result, to give Patrick inoculations when he had an asthma attack, but many a time he was taking Patrick to the emergency room in Hyannis in the middle of the night. Another of those burdens and responsibilities he's had has been sick children.

And Kara—He always had to work harder with Kara because Kara was a bit left out because the two boys were so ill and having so many crises. Fortunately for the Senator, Kara was a good gal, and she had a best friend named Linda Semans, who—Everybody should have a best friend like Linda Semans. She was as close as you could be without being a sister and essentially is a member of the family and does everything with Kara. She has been devoted to her and very loyal.

I think Kara at times felt a little left behind and left out, but the Senator was always saying, "I have to reach out to Kara. I have to make sure she's involved in this," or taken care of in that. Part of the reason was that Joan was ill, so Kara did not always have the opportunity to have a mother who was there for her, because her mom was ill, as well as her two brothers.

When she was going to go to college, to Tufts, the Senator said to me, "Kara's going off to college and I'm thinking about whether I should go up, whether I'd be a distraction to go and help her move into her dorm or not, whether I should or shouldn't go. I can't lift much of anything." I said, "You want my advice?" and he said yes. I said, "You go. You absolutely go with your daughter, because everybody should have a parent when they move into their dorm. Besides, you will be able to see where she is at school. You'll be able to meet her roommate; you'll be able to visualize when you call her, where she is and what she's doing. You don't want to have her feel like you didn't care or that it's because Joan couldn't do it and you're it." He nodded and listened, and I didn't hear anything more. The next thing I knew he was at Tufts, moving her into school on the first day. He took either Charlie Tretter or Don Dowd with him, so that they could help lift stuff because his back precluded that. But I know it meant the world to Kara to have him there, and it showed how much he loved her.

I think, too, as she's gotten older and they've been able to relate to one another as adults—He took her to Paris for the opening of the Jacqueline Kennedy exhibit that they had at the Corcoran and at the Metropolitan. When it opened at the Louvre, it was just a father/daughter weekend, and they had a *wonderful* time. There are pictures of the two of them in the plane, laughing and talking, and she got to meet everybody, on his arm. This was his beautiful daughter, and she got to go for this very special dinner and event with *the* top society and officials of France.

When Kara got lung cancer, he was just devastated; everybody was devastated. Here she was, only in her forties, but she had smoked and it came home to roost. When they went to Johns Hopkins, they were told that Hopkins did not feel it was operable and that she had maybe six months to live. Edward Kennedy said, "That's unacceptable; I will not resign myself to that," and he found a doctor in Massachusetts.

I believe his name was Dr. [David J.] Sugarbaker, who said he thought he could do the surgery, and by God he did. Kara then had radiation and chemotherapy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Every day that she had chemotherapy, the Senator got up in the morning and he and Vicki went with her to the hospital. He saw her in to chemotherapy every morning, and Vicki stayed and they would watch videos and talk. They really bonded through this crisis. Then the Senator would come back and would go to Mass every day at lunch, to pray for his daughter, as he had gone to Mass, I think for six months to a year, after his mother had died, at St. Joseph's, which is right there across the street. The Senator and Vicki never gave up on Kara and never let her give up on herself. They got her through that and she made it. She is now cancer free, when anybody else, after Johns Hopkins tells you that you have six months to live, would have just gotten their affairs in order.

It was the same with Patrick when he had the tumor at the top of his spine. The Senator was with him through the surgery. He had all of this trouble and nobody could figure out what was the matter because X-rays were always below the tumor or above the tumor. They finally elongated it and there it was. If it had been something like four more days, it would have paralyzed him from the neck down. Fortunately it was benign, but the Senator was there for Patrick again. I think also, as a result of that experience, it really cemented a bond between Vicki and Kara as well as always with the Senator. He has really stepped up whenever his children have needed him, even though he was trying to be the surrogate father to all these others simultaneously.

**Heininger:** Do you think the three kids have ever resented that they've had to share their father?

**Miller:** Oh, I would imagine, sure. In their heart of hearts it's been tough that he couldn't be there all the time, just for them, but this is a very unique family. As Chris Lawford has said, "It's like having 29 brothers and sisters."

**Heininger:** It's like a village.

**Miller:** Yes. Everybody circles the wagons for everybody else. They're very loyal and very loving and they're all each other's best friends. Caroline's best friends are Maria Shriver and Sydney Lawford. Max has moved back and forth across the country a number of times because he missed his brothers so much. He didn't want to be too far away. They really do love each

other and they really are loyal to one another. They have the best times with one another, and they want their children to know each other.

One of the things they always try to do is get to the compound for Labor Day, because that's the big gathering time, when everybody comes back. They tell everybody else what trips they went on, whether they went to the Galapagos or down the Amazon, what they did or where they were helping, in what refugee camp, over the summer, until Labor Day. That's the homecoming. The compound at Hyannis Port is the touchstone; it is their roots; it is the continuity factor for the whole family. It is why the Senator also chose not to stay in his apartment in Boston while he was doing radiation and chemo, which would have been more convenient to go from every morning. He drove in from the Cape every morning to do his radiation and chemo. It's also afforded him more privacy and peace and quiet.

**Heininger:** Yes, but his boat is also in Hyannis.

**Miller:** But the boat is in Hyannis. In April, when that boat goes into the water, all is right with the world. He recharges his batteries when he can sit back in that boat and get out on the Sound and see the wind fill those sails and the spray come up, and have family out there laughing and talking and joshing and eating clam chowder.

**Heininger:** To say nothing about the fact that there are no paparazzi out there in the middle of the ocean.

**Miller:** Most of the time, most of the time. A few telephoto lenses lately—I know it's been written about, that I'm the one who used to tease him when he walked out the door. After he says to us, "Have a great vacation in August, has the Senate recessed?" I would say, "Remember two words: 'telephoto lenses,'" and he'd laugh. He never realized how powerful they could be, and found out, to his chagrin a couple of times, just how powerful they really are.

But you're right, that boat, the *Mya*, has been the great love of his life, after Vicki, and it has sustained him. He'd do his exercises in the morning and now, I don't think the radiation is over, but he's still taking the chemo I think, once a week or however many times, but you can do that in pill form for this kind of cancer. He doesn't need to have the intravenous infusion, which makes it easier now, not having to go into Boston every day. But he can sit down on that boat. Carey and I and a few others have been out on that boat with him, pretty much that list of people who've been with him a long time. You learn how to do the backstays. If you're going to be on that boat, you're not just going to sit around and do nothing. You learn how to do the backstays, so when the boom swings around and you're tacking differently, you've helped rig a different sail, and you learn something new. You become crew and help, not just out for the ride.

I remember one time being in the boat and Eunice and Vicki and a number of others were with us. Eunice was talking about the fact that Timmy [Shriver] and Linda [Potter Shriver] were going to have another baby and what the name should be, what names had already been taken, all that kind of stuff. We were all talking about names and what would be the best name to go with Shriver. We decided Sam Shriver would be fun, and Samuel Shriver is what the name turned out to be. They just played word games and fun, fun stuff. Then, of course, came the love of racing and the discussion of which person was doing well that season and what big America's Cup

event was coming up and whether those sailboats would be coming into Boston Harbor, where he and John Kerry were going to go sail *Intrepid* and some of those experiences. All of that was up for discussion.

Jack Fallon, who was a great, great friend and great sailor—He loved Jack. He was kind of an honorary older brother. Jack would sometimes be with us; he'd be wonderful and talk all the time about sailing and different techniques, the people being able to get across the finish line or get across the starting line without doing it too soon when the race began. Something about the sea just recharges him and restores him. I'm hoping he has a lot more time left to go sailing on the *Mya*.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Heininger:** I guess he'd really rather be put on the *Mya* and sent off sailing into the sunset.

**Miller:** Yes, that's right. But fortunately Vicki knows that he is the equal, if not more so, of his brothers. When I gave my retirement speech, I talked about that and embarrassed the hell out of him. I just said, flat out, that it was time somebody said it, that his brothers would be proud of him. He has written a legacy as large and equal to theirs in its own way, and deserves that recognition. I got an awful lot of feedback after that from former staff, and everybody who was there, who said, "Nobody said that before and thank God you did." I appreciated hearing the feedback, but it was something that everybody felt was long overdue. I had the opportunity to say it and I did.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Heininger:** A long way off.

**Miller:** Yes. I think the surgery has bought us time and I hope it's bought us to the end of his term, at minimum, because we still need to finish the oral history and he still needs to finish the oral history. I don't know how far he is on his book yet. I don't think it's beyond just the earliest planning stages. That would really be something wonderful to have written. He also needs to get his Center for the Study of the Senate off the dime. Everything has been moved up to the front burner.

**Heininger:** The fundraising has started for that.

**Miller:** Oh yes, absolutely, and everybody is going to be working really hard on that, in that field.

I would like to say something about his loyalty to his friends. He had very close friends: the Johns—John Tunney, John Culver, John Douglas, John Goemans; Claude Hooton; and of course Chris Dodd. But also, those with whom he went to college and law school—Tim Hanan, all of those people—he never left them behind. All of these people he kept with him.

I remember being up there once—I think it was for the debut of Vicki's press after they got married—and one of the people there, I think his name was Dan Burns, he'd gone to elementary school with, in fourth grade, and they remained friends all that time. I remember talking with Dan about how unusual it was to maintain a friendship from elementary school. He agreed and savored it and saw him with some regularity.

That was really quite something, but more than just maintaining the friendships, he is there for them when they have trouble. When John Tunney's son Mark was having brain surgery in California in the last six or seven years, he dropped everything, got on a plane, and flew to be at John's side. Nobody knew whether Mark was going to live or not, and Ted Kennedy was not going to let John Tunney go through that without him at his side. That's the kind of friend he is.

Claude Hooton—with whom he traveled all over in '60 and had campaigned, and who's a hail-fellow-well-met, a jolly soul, and a lovely man and a caring, good heart—has been his friend all the way through school and beyond, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The same with John Goemans, who lived in Hawaii and then came here for a while. [REDACTED]

He's always been there, whether it's John Douglas, who is now living at a retirement facility that's very nice, the one attached to Sibley Hospital. He was a partner in Covington & Burling, and the kind of guy who was a surrogate older brother. I especially remember, during the '80 campaign, that he was one of the wise men Edward Kennedy always asked for his opinion. John's the kind of guy who, when the Senator was coming in from a loss in a primary at 3:00 in the morning at Dulles, would join 25 of us to go out to meet the plane and make him feel better. John would go too. That's the kind of loyal friend he was. In return, Edward Kennedy has John

come, almost every two weeks, to his home to have dinner with him, to talk about everything he's doing, and to keep John in the loop, even though John's about 85 now and failing a bit, but he is not forgetting John and leaving him alone now that his wife has died. He's the type of guy who is always, always there for his friends.

Let's see if there are some other key things. Did I tell you the story about Governor [George] Wallace with regard to staff and asking our advice on different things, and wanting us not to be yes men?

One time he called us in and said, "Governor Wallace has called me, and has invited me to come down and speak on July fourth to a big picnic of people from Alabama. What do you think I ought to do?" Carey and I and a couple of others were saying, "I don't think that sounds like a good thing. You could get booed and hissed. These people could shout lots of nasty stuff and hold up signs and all that." I was saying that George Wallace was anathema, "He stood up against everything your brothers believed in." I was totally against it, everybody was, and he let us not be afraid to say so to him. We knew that we would be doing him a disservice if we didn't tell him what we really thought.

He went around his desk, picked up the phone, looked at us, and pretended to dial. He said, "Hi, Governor Wallace, George? Ted Kennedy here. I just want you to know that I'm going to be happy to accept your invitation to come and speak." We all just—Our jaws dropped. We thought we'd really carried the day there. We looked at him with our eyes blinking, and he put the phone down, after saying to this fake phone call Governor Wallace, "I just want you to know, however, that my entire staff is against this, but I'm coming anyway." *[laughing]*

He put the phone down and looked at us—there were about four or five of us in the room—and he said: "You all are against this, but you have to realize that you and some other people want me to run for President of the United States. A President has to be able to go to every part of the country, and I need to go to the South. I have an opportunity here to talk to people that I normally do not get to talk to, and I will be able to bring to them a message that they normally don't get to hear. This is an opportunity to interact with other parts of the United States, which a President has to do." Then he grinned and said, "And besides, how often do you have a chance to speak to 4,000 blue-collar guys swilling beer?"

We laughed and left the office shaking our heads and wondering, but recognizing that what he said was very true. He went and Wallace invited him to dinner, had his whole family there, took all kinds of pictures of him with all of his family. He went out, gave a speech, and told them about things that they'd never heard before, in terms of civil rights and a lot of other stuff. He was well received. The Wallaces fell in love with him. They sent photos back, all to be autographed. You never heard an unkind word out of Wallace's mouth about Ted Kennedy again. It was a triumph, and we were absolutely wrong. His instincts, his political instincts, are right on the mark, and that was another example.

His political instincts also are there for just doing the right thing. He and Vicki called Bob Novak when his cancer diagnosis came out. Many people would not have done that, because of much nasty stuff Novak has written and said in the past about Ted Kennedy. But, as Novak wrote in his

column, he felt so much better after talking to Vicki. The Senator has always known when to put politics aside and when not to be involved with something that you should just let pass.

One of the things I forgot, with regard to his daughter, was that at her wedding, he was standing below the stairs when she came out, in her wedding dress, to come down the circular staircase to him. He was then going to take her to the car, to the church to walk her down the aisle. He looked up at her, and when he first saw her all dressed in her beautiful dress, the tears just started running down his face. Kara was overwhelmed that her father would see her as his little girl in her wedding dress and begin to weep. It was a very moving movement

Then he walked her down the aisle, gave her an absolutely spectacular toast, and took her out on the dance floor for that first dance. His three children—Kara, Teddy, and Patrick—know that their dad may not have been perfect all the time. They may have had to share him a lot of the time, and they may have had to go through all kinds of things in public because of who he is, but by God they know they were loved and they know he adored them. They know that he would have done anything for them and did. They know that they're all alive and well because of him. He made an extraordinary difference.

One other aspect about him is that he loves music, and I think he proposed to Vicki during *La Bohème*, in the intermission. But before that, he went through three cassettes of Fleetwood Mac; it was the one thing that was always going in the car. When you were sitting in the backseat staffing him, going from one place to another, Fleetwood Mac was on, *Rumors*, that one. He loved that. He got the biggest kick out of Billy Joel's songs, and *Les Misérables*.

We were out at his house for a small gathering for something, and *Les Misérables* was on the stereo. All of a sudden, the song "Empty Tables, Empty Chairs" came on, and he pulled away from the conversation and went back deeper into the room and stood by himself, by the stereo, and just listened to that song. You knew that he was thinking of his brothers, because that song is about the people who are missing, and the ones who are no longer with us, who have fought the good fight and died. I remember watching his face and seeing that there are moments when it all comes flooding back and he can't carry on as he would normally do, and that was one of those moments.

When I dealt with the excursion by *National Geographic* to the Solomon Islands, when they were looking for *PT-109*, I dealt with the people who knew the native Biuku Gaza, who had rescued President Kennedy. They came to me about a proposal they had to help build him a house. Part of this effort was to go find *PT-109*, but not to disturb it, because it was a graveyard where two people died. Max was calling me from the Solomons when they got there, from the boat when they'd found it, asking how much could they blow the sand. I was saying, "Only this much, and not that much." I had been dealing with Caroline and Max going on it, and had put together a letter to be given to Biuku Gaza.

We had determined that, between the *National Geographic* and the Kennedy family, and these Australians who had known him, we would build a house for him, and we were telling him. Max also took a bust of President Kennedy. I went to the Senator with all of these possibilities, as this was evolving into a mission and a trip, and got him interested and agreeing to kick in money. He



said that he was willing to do that and that I should go and talk to his sisters. He said, “If you can get money out of each one of them,” [laughing] “more power to you, go ahead.”

I talked to each one of them and told them that without this native, there would have been no President Kennedy, and that this was the guy who made it possible for all of us to have what we have now. So they all ponied up and we were able to build this house for something like \$15,000. When Max got there, we then discovered that there was another native, whose name was Eroni Kumana and who lived on an outlying island, that Biuku Gaza had not seen since 1945, when they had *both* rescued President Kennedy. It was Kumana who had climbed up the palm tree and had gotten the coconut that he had carved. Max called me up and said, “Oh, my God, we have another native and it’s the real guy, and he’s wonderful. He’s named his son John Kennedy; he has a shrine to John Kennedy on his island.”

Nobody even knew he was alive because he didn’t have a boat and he couldn’t get to the island, but when the word filtered through the islands that they were coming, somehow somebody had brought him forward. We had to scramble to try to get, then, money to build a second house for Kumana and another bust. After the actual effort by *National Geographic* was over and they had done their search and made their documentary, I was still a housing contractor, helping to get a house built, another bust sent, another letter sent, and everything that we did, equally for the two.

One of probably the proudest things I’ve ever done in my service on Capitol Hill was to get these two 80-year-olds a house. In Kumana’s case, we fixed up the house he had and bought him a boat so he could go back and forth among the islands and not be so isolated anymore. They sent me photographs of the house in progress for Biuku. He lived his life in a grass shack. It was the first time he had ever had indoor plumbing, and there’s a picture of him sitting on “the throne” in his house, and another of him and his wife being handed the keys to this home that the Kennedy family had helped build for them, in appreciation for them rescuing President Kennedy. I tell you, there are few things that I’ve done that I felt more proud of and blessed to have had the opportunity to say thank you to these two natives, because without them, I wouldn’t have had *my* career. It really meant an awful lot. They deserved it and made history.

[BREAK]

**Heininger:** This is a resumption of the interview with Melody Miller on October 7, 2008.

**Miller:** I’m going to do a few quick hits on a couple of memories.

The family did not want, initially, to have anything as a museum in Dallas, at the Sixth Floor Museum. They’d just as soon have had the School Book Depository building knocked down and turned into a parking lot. Being something of a person interested in history, I was very much against that. I walked in and talked to the Senator about it and said, “This really is something that you can’t just obliterate. It happened there and it should be done right if it’s going to be done at all. I really worry about what’s going to happen.” He said, “Okay, then you monitor it and keep

me advised, but I don't want to do this on a daily basis or make all the decisions or anything else. You just keep me advised and you make the decisions."

Nancy Cheney was on the board of the Sixth Floor Museum and was a friend from Texas who had been a longtime supporter of the Senator, a contributor and a lovely woman who was at the top levels of the political and society folks of Dallas. I had come to know her and her daughter, who had interned for us at one time. Working through Nancy, [REDACTED] she ran stuff by me and I quietly gave her advice as to what the Senator would and would not want.

The first thing I told her was that there should be no picture from the [Abraham] Zapruder film of the President's head exploding. I said, "You can put up a lot of the different frames, but let's not have the one that is so devastating; that's just too gruesome." She translated that back and it was very well done. Then I helped get Walter Cronkite to come and be the narrator for one of the films. They had about three films, and they were going in one direction and I thought Walter Cronkite would be so much better. He was from Texas and he was happy to do it, and I was pleased to get him for them.

When it was done, all of these people on the board—[H. L.] Hunts and former mayors of Dallas and the top people who were the city council and the money people of Dallas—wanted Ted Kennedy or some member of the family to come and see what they had done, because they were proud of it. I had been very careful with Nancy to make sure they did not exploit or commercialize President Kennedy's death. I even went over the booklists in the bookstore, to make sure that there was not that—

**Heininger:** The conspiracy theory books.

**Miller:** Yes, no conspiracy theory stuff and no exploitation. I didn't want key rings, and I didn't want claptrap that would be inappropriate for the scene of a death. This was a *murder* site, so it had to be much different from a typical, normal souvenir store.

The Senator couldn't go, none of the family could go, because if he went—First of all, it would be an emotional, heart-wrenching thing, and he couldn't go and not be watched. There was no way he could come into Dallas without the newspaper finding out and without the people on the board wanting to meet him and take him through the museum and watch his every reaction. That just wasn't going to work, so I ended up going and being the Kennedy family's eyes and ears on this. I told them that I would fly in—I was landing in Dallas about 4:30—and that I wanted to go directly to the museum. I wanted to see it while people were still in it, and then after it closed, about an hour later, I was going to look at everything quietly, by myself. And that's what happened.

I landed in Dallas—I'd never been in Dallas before—and I remember a cold chill going through my body, because here I was in this place where I'd lost my President. I was picked up and was taken, by Nancy Cheney, to the School Book Depository. Suddenly I was on the same road as that motorcade, and there was the underpass ahead of me. It was one of the harder things that I've had to do in my life. I went up then to the sixth floor; walking those 15 steps to that window

and looking down was a [*pausing*] devastating thing in my life to have to do, but it turned out to be healing in an interesting way, because they really did a fine job.

As people came in, they didn't treat this museum as a tourist thing; their voices hushed. It was a pilgrimage, and everybody walked through, quiet and respectful, looking at everything, reading everything, and going into the different movies. I remember when I looked down, there were—It was an open area where they had benches where people could sit, because many people had been out of the country, it turns out, when he died, or came from other countries. They came here to mourn and to express their deep, deep condolences.

When I stood at that window and looked down, the first thought that went through my mind was *I* could have made that shot. It was that short a distance. Having seen it, it makes a lot of the people's claims—about how this was an impossible thing for this guy who shot guns and had a lens to be able to do—specious to me because it looks so much farther on television and in pictures than it is in real life. Then I went through and came to the end. There was a big scrapbook with blank pages, and people were able to write their impressions of the museum or whatever it was they wanted to write.

People wrote to President Kennedy. I went through these pages and photocopied a bunch of them for the family, so they would see the impact this museum made on people, what people were saying, and the impact John Kennedy made on them. There were Australians who said, "You were President of more people than you ever knew. You were our President too." There was a Haitian who said, "I look forward to having tea with you in heaven." There was a young woman from Indiana who was 21, and she wrote, "When I came through this museum, I didn't expect to feel very much because, after all, when Ronald Reagan was shot I didn't cry, but boy, John Kennedy must have been really something, because when I came through this museum I cried." There were people who wrote, "Dear Mr. President—We did go to the moon. You led us and we got there. We will miss you forever." People wrote and thanked the people of Dallas for doing such a good job with the museum.

You could not read this outpouring of emotion and of love without getting goose bumps. When I finished, I went downstairs and went to the grassy knoll. I looked, and I looked at the corner of the building—where there had been a little plaque that just said, "On this site, Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly assassinated John F. Kennedy from the sixth floor school book depository."—and I realized that if they had not built this museum and if they had not done what they did so well, it would have been as if he hadn't mattered, and *he mattered*.

I wrote a long, four- or five-page memorandum to the family and took them through my entire day there. I stayed with Nancy Cheney. The Senator called me that night to see how I was, because he knew that it was going to be real emotional for me. He wanted to see how I'd gotten through it, and hear what I had to say. I thought that was so sweet of him. Then I wrote this memorandum and explained to them that I felt that this had been well done and why, walked them through it, and talked to them about how it mattered and why it had actually been a healing thing for me. I felt that I had finally been able to pay back John Kennedy for everything he'd done for me, by going through this. I attached many of the pages from the memory book.

I got the most beautiful letters back from Eunice and Jean and the Senator and everybody that it had been sent to in the family, saying that they now understood that it was good that it had not been turned into a parking lot and that maybe they might even be able to go there someday. In the time since then, Eunice Kennedy Shriver has been able to go there. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend has gone. I believe Patrick Kennedy has gone. Edward Kennedy will never go. He could not handle being watched to the degree that they would watch him, of all people.

One of the things that I ended up having to do over the years was be his diplomat and liaison with Dallas, because as more years went by there were more occasions for which people couldn't understand why he wouldn't come. There were new people who came on the board

Many of these new people had moved to Dallas and had not gone through that incredible time. When I was down there they had a luncheon for me and they asked me, "Why do people hate Dallas and not Los Angeles, where Robert Kennedy was killed?" I had to very gently explain to them the difference: how there had been cheering in classrooms, how the flags had not been lowered to half-staff, and how there had been the problems with hate literature and full-page ads and many things that made people think that the people of Dallas had incited some of this hatred that eventually killed him.

When I got back, I had to continue to monitor. When they cleaned the new monument, I had the Senator send a letter to be read, because there was no way he was going to accept an invitation to go to the rededication of the monument across the street in the park. The new board had allowed Oliver Stone to cut the trees and make everything go back to the way it was in '60, and to film right out of the seventh floor for his film *JFK*,

I ended up going toe-to-toe with Oliver Stone on that, that he really didn't need to make that shot and do that, that everybody else had filmed this in another place, and that we really did not have to have the motorcade staged a second time and have that all over the news with the family watching. They have yet to ever show or have a movie made on site in Ford's Theater, where [Abraham] Lincoln was shot. They always created a set. He could have done this in Richmond or in other places where it was done. But Stone said, "Well, I needed the shot." I said, "Yes, but the family didn't. You did, but not the family."

[One page has been redacted]

[BREAK]

**Heininger:** This is a resumption of the interview with Melody Miller.

**Miller:**

It's become a bit more of a tourist situation with a new director who came in, Jeff West, who put a camera up there, a live cam. You could go to a Web site and look and see exactly what was seen by Oswald, which was totally tasteless. I spoke

up and said so, and the *Dallas Morning News* agreed in an editorial, so I had some pulling and hauling with him. I met with him, but mostly we tried to keep it under control, although he did go and get the vest that Kevin Costner wore in the movie *JFK*, and put that on display, which was just Hollywood-izing things and was ridiculous, as Garrison was no hero.

They have a new guy in there. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] That was tough for a while, trying to keep the lid on, but it was an extraordinary experience to be a part of that, to understand the family's thinking on it, and to try to help Dallas understand. I also came to like the people there very much.

The other thing I wanted to mention was that Senator Kennedy got contact lenses. He was aware of those of us in the office who wore contact lenses, so we always knew that at any minute we were going to be asked to have wetting solution, because they dried up on his eyes, so I always carried it with me. At the '88 Democratic Convention, I was up above, because I was going to be taking him in to meet with Dan Rather in the booth. I got a call to come immediately to the Massachusetts delegation, the Senator was asking for me, and it was something about a contact lens. [laughing] I quickly went down to Massachusetts. He said that his lens was drying up, and I said we should get up as close as we could to Rather, and that there was a place there where we could do something about it. We had the Georgia state troopers forming a flying wedge for him wherever he went and we ended up right outside the CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] booth.

We went into a booth that was empty, a holding room area with a foyer and then another area with lots of dials to work the lights. He got in the chair and put his head back, and I was putting drops in his eyes when I heard, "Hi, Ted, how are you?" I looked up and it was Walter Cronkite. No state trooper was going to stop Walter Cronkite, so he walked right in; drops were running down the Senator's face. Cronkite and he start talking about sailing, their mothers, what was going on. The Senator introduced me to Cronkite. I'd met him before, but we had a nice chitchat, and then Cronkite, in his everlasting wisdom, said, "Oh, listen, you probably need to get ready to go on the air, so I'll get out of here." He left, I finished fixing the contact lens, and the Senator then went in, arriving when they were on commercial.

I had met Rather at Pete Dawkins's 50th birthday and had been seated between him and Pete, and so Rather and I had had a talk for about three hours, and stayed talking while everybody else moved around, because it was right after George Bush 41 had walked out on him on his set. We were telling each other war stories; he was telling me everything that had really happened and I was commiserating. The Senator went in and Rather saw me right behind the Senator and said, "Hi, Melody, how are you?" My credibility with everybody around me from CBS immediately went sky high, and Howard Stringer was sitting right there.

The Senator did that and then I took him around to CNN [Cable News Network] and he did [an interview with] Bernie [Shaw]. That was where Pat Buchanan was sitting, as one of the people who were on air as talking heads, and the Senator said hello to him. This was the first time that the Senator had interacted with Buchanan since Buchanan had written the piece being very sarcastic about the Senator deciding not to run again for the Presidency in '84 because Patrick

had asked him not to. Buchanan had said, “Yes, sure, his kid is really—” and made some derogatory remarks about Patrick. The Senator just cut him dead; there was no way he was ever going to talk to him again. This was the first time, in ’88, that he actually shook hands with him and said hello and things were patched up. George Will was maybe the other person who was sitting there.

We went in and he did his interview with Bernie. When we walked out, the Senator looked at me and blinked; his contact lens flipped out of his eye, did a somersault into my hand, and I caught it. We both laughed, because that was the last time he needed to keep the contact lenses in. We got the other one out, put them in his holder, and that was the end of the day, an extraordinarily hysterical day with those contact lenses and Walter Cronkite and then the thing falling into my hand.

The last thing I wanted to tell you about was that [*pausing*] this man about whom everybody is going to be speaking and writing and analyzing—As these tapes come out 50 years from now, they will never totally capture what he meant to his family and to his country, with every effort that they make, because it’s so enormous and so difficult to capture. Jackie wrote him a letter—and he has it framed at his home. It’s totally private, but I’ve been privileged to read it. The first line, I think, says it all, “Dear Teddy, Because of you we’re all going to make it.” And that’s the truth. It goes on from there, but I’m not at liberty to disclose more than that, but the first line says it all, “Because of you we’re all going to make it.”

His family has made it. Massachusetts has made it. His country is making it. He’s managed to make it, and so have the thousands and thousands of people that his work and career and good heart and efforts have touched. Because of him, we’re all going to make it. I hope he knows how much he’s loved, because, boy, do we love him. To lose him like this, if he doesn’t have any more time, is just an outrage, because you would have thought that one of the brothers would be allowed to have a gentle ending and not have his head attacked.

It’s so unfair, but as President Kennedy said, life is unfair, and Ted Kennedy would be the first one to tell you that he’s had a wonderful life, and he’d be the first one to tell you that he’s been given so much, because he focuses on what he’s been given and not on what has been taken away. The rest of us can be angry on his behalf, but most of all we’re just so grateful that we knew him; that we got to be associated with him; that we got to be a part of his team; that we got to do things that benefited the country and that were fulfilling; that we got to utilize ourselves to the fullest, and work with such other honorable people; that we really knew in our hearts that there could be people of integrity and public service; that it was an honorable profession; and that when it’s done right, there’s no better profession in the world. We feel great pride and great honor to have been associated with him. There’s nobody that we’ve loved more than this magnificent, magnificent man.

**Heininger:** That was wonderful.

**Miller:** Thank you very much.