EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH GREGORY CRAIG

July 13, 2010
Washington, D.C.

Interviewer
James Sterling Young
Young: This is an interview with Greg Craig, July 13, in Washington, D.C.

Craig: There may be one intervention in the course of this meeting, because I’m waiting to be served with a subpoena to testify and I’ve accepted service, and the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]—this is in a trial actually having to do with Senator [Edward M.] Kennedy, his office. It will take two minutes.

Young: I won’t even ask you about that. [laughter] So, I’ve already stated that this is the interview with you and the date.

You had a many-faceted relationship with the Senator. One of the things I think is important to give people in the future who want to study him and study the times, through these documents and through the oral history, is to bring out the nature, scope and extent of his involvement in foreign international military affairs. Adam Clymer talked a lot about that, but most people who study the Senate or study Kennedy or write about him do not really pay much attention to it. I think it’s just an extremely important part of his thinking and his work. I got that even talking with him. Basically, I suppose it’s neglected because he was not on the Foreign Relations Committee, but it was extensive. I think it began long before you came there, but I think it might have taken a change when you came on in 1984, I believe. So that’s one of the things.

He had a picture of what his own thinking was, what the nature of his involvement was, and how he decided what to grab hold of and get into. His dealings with other Senators across the aisle and within his own party were how he worked the Senate, how he decided to take on something. And, his relations with the White House for these many Presidencies. Your work with him after you left the staff, I think is important. Somebody said you never leave the staff, you’re always on the staff, and so I think that’s important, too.

The last interview I had with him was a few months before he was diagnosed. The last two interviews were before and after his endorsement of [Barack] Obama. They were on that subject and it was fascinating stuff. So, I don’t have a list of questions. These are the topics that I’d like to cover. Maybe you’d like to talk a bit about how you got on the staff. I think I know that story, but I haven’t heard it from the horse’s mouth.

Craig: Now you’ve got at least one of the horses. [laughter] I was a partner in the law firm of Williams & Connelly, and I was representing John Hinckley. In the course of the trial, I realized that Senator Kennedy’s name would come up in the trial, because John Hinckley had been
stalking Senator Kennedy as well as President [Jimmy] Carter, Jodie Foster, and President [Ronald] Reagan. He hadn’t really stalked Reagan to the extent that he had both Carter and Foster, and then to a lesser extent Senator Kennedy, but he had been in Senator Kennedy’s outside office at a time that he had a gun on his person. So, if Senator Kennedy had come through his reception room at the time that John Hinckley was there, he would have been shot by Mr. Hinckley.

I learned all this because I was John Hinckley’s lawyer, and was aware of John’s activities and also of the evidence in the case. John, when he was arrested, had a visiting pass with Ted Kennedy’s signature on it, from the United States Senate, which you get when you visit Senators’ offices. There was no guarantee that we were going to go to trial, since we had tried very hard to negotiate a plea. That effort had failed, and I realized we were going to trial. The Kennedy name would come up. The trial was going to be lengthy, with multiple types of media involved, because John had made tape recordings, he had written poems, he had taken pictures, and he had video. It was going to be a full-blown trial of John’s craziness, and I was concerned about copycat killers taking up where John left off and finishing his mission. There are a lot of crazy people out there.

I knew Bob Shrum on the Senator’s staff and so I called him up and said, “Can we have dinner? I want to tell you something that is very concerning to me.” We had dinner and I told Shrum that we were approaching this trial and I thought special security arrangements should be made for Senator Kennedy during the period of the trial so that copycats would not be tempted, or if they were, that they’d be precluded from doing any harm to the Senator. I had really not ever met the Senator but briefly, in Boston or Cambridge, at various Harvard-related events, and I didn’t know him at all. Bob was very grateful for this, though he said, “It’s unlikely that any changes in the Senator’s security would be made.”

By the way, this was a period of time when there were no metal detectors, there was no security walking into the United States Senate office buildings. I think there was some security when you went to the floor of the Senate or the gallery of the Senate. I don’t know what precautions were taken, although I think Shrum told me afterwards that it was impossible to get Senator Kennedy to do anything special when it came to security that other Senators were not doing, that he declined any special arrangements. I said, “Why not just put a metal detector outside his office, so that you could at least find out whether people coming into his office are armed or not, and dangerous?” And I don’t think they even did that. That’s how I came into the orbit of the Kennedy office, because I reached out to tell my friend in the office that this was going to happen and they should take some precautions.

The trial was in April of ’82 and I think the verdict was in May or June. I can’t remember precisely, but it was the spring/summer of ’82. President Reagan was shot in March of ’81, you know, just two or three months after he had taken office. It was very early in his administration. Later in ’82 or early ’83, Bob gave me a call and said, “Would you be interested in working for Senator Kennedy? There are some staff positions opening up.”

I think we can date this because Senator Kennedy had agreed, or had been allowed, to go on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I think that was in early ’83 or late ’82. It was after his Presidential run. And I was very interested in being involved in that. I had not had any
experience with the military and I thought, to be involved with the Armed Services Committee and his foreign policy area—Ever since I was 18 years old, I had been interested in foreign policy. I had the good fortune of becoming a lawyer but the bad fortune of having a profession that was very exciting, distracting me from foreign policy. The great challenge of my life has been to try to integrate the law, the practice of the law, with some involvement in foreign policy and national security affairs.

So I was interested in exploring with the Kennedy office, not so much being a lawyer on his Judiciary Committee, as much as I admired that and his civil rights record, because I had been involved in the Civil Rights Movement as an undergraduate, but more being involved with national security, particularly the armed services aspect. I had conversations with Larry Horowitz, and with Jim Steinberg, the younger staffer at that time who was handling the Armed Services Committee. Jan Kalitsky was handling the foreign policy side of the office and another fellow, Joe Kruzel, who was killed in Bosnia, in Sarajevo, was in charge of the Armed Services Committee. Joe went off to become a professor at Ohio University. He was a very distinguished fellow who was involved in, I think, working with Richard Holbrooke and General Wes [Wesley] Clark.

Young: He was the minority counsel?

Craig: No, he was Senator Kennedy’s staffer for SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee].

Young: So he was on the personal staff.

Craig: On the personal staff. He was on Senator Kennedy’s personal staff and Jim worked with him, doing the armed services stuff. The idea was that they were going to consolidate the foreign policy and the armed services staff, to have essentially a national security staff, and maybe that they were reducing the numbers of staffers. I don’t know what the deal was.

When I went on there, there were essentially two people working with me and for me. One was Matt [Murray], a really good young guy who was the nonproliferation fellow, and then Jim Steinberg was doing the armed services stuff, and me. It was reduced, I think, from about four or five to three when I came on. So it may have been that I was part of a downgrading, [laughter] at least initially, of that part of the office.

By the time I left, we had Bill Lynn, Nancy Soderberg, Jim Steinberg, and Trina Vargo. We had built up a staff that had arms control experts as well as Irish, foreign policy, and human rights experts. So by the time I left, there were probably six people doing foreign policy armed services and national security for Senator Kennedy.

In any event, the meeting with Horowitz went well. The meeting with Steinberg went less well, because Jim really wanted the job, to be running the Armed Services Committee for Senator Kennedy.

Young: And you were replacing Jan Kalitsky.

Craig: I was replacing Kalitsky and Joe Kruzel.
Young: So one for two.

Craig: They were reducing the number of staffers and they were getting a 40-year-old, who was a partner in a law firm, coming in above the people who had been there. I had no experience either in the armed services community or, formally, in foreign policy. So it was a bit of a big gamble for Senator Kennedy. He didn’t know me from Adam, and all he could take at face value was the fact that I cared a lot about national security and foreign policy issues.

Young: Did you have an interview with him?

Craig: I did.

Young: What was it like?

Craig: It was perfunctory. There was nothing unusual about it. He asked a little about my background, my trial practice. He wasn’t so interested in my expertise in foreign policy. He was not interested in that particularly at all. He wanted to get to know me a little bit, I think. It was one-on-one and I will tell you that it was not a breathtaking tour of the horizon on national security issues of the day. It was Senator Kennedy trying to find out what sort of a person I was. I was coming in with recommendations that were fairly glowing, but they had nothing to do with the armed services community or the foreign policy community.

Young: Nick Littlefield had approached you then.

Craig: He wasn’t on the scene at all. I got Nick into the Kennedy office, you’ve got it backwards. [laughter]

Young: I’ve got it backwards. Yes, and he didn’t want to do your job.

Craig: He didn’t want to. I was trying to hire him. As I left in ’88 I said, “Nick, you really ought to get down here and get to know Senator Kennedy, because this job is available.” He came down and talked to the Senator. That’s another story, but in fact, I was the one who got Nick into the Kennedy office.

Young: That’s a real gap. I should have known my dates better.

Craig: I have to tell you, before I took this job, I did talk to a number of former Kennedy staffers I knew, to find out what life was like in the Kennedy world. Harold Ickes, Carl Wagner, people who worked on the campaign, as well as people who had done the substantive work and the legal stuff. But at the end of the day, he said he’d like to offer me the job.

I said, “I have one problem, I’m going to trial with Edward Bennett Williams in Florida, in the October/November timeframe, but after that trial is over I can start, so let’s shoot for the end of the year.” And that was the plan. What happened was, the trial got postponed and so I was sort of here, and I told Edward Bennett Williams that I’d be leaving the law firm, I guess it was late in November. But I had three weeks between the time I was leaving the law firm and the time that I was starting with Senator Kennedy on January 1, 1984.
There was a lot of activity going on in Central America and I didn’t know anything about Central America, so I just on my own found a friend who spoke Spanish, and we went down and spent a week-plus in Salvador and a week-plus in Nicaragua, and then three days maybe in Panama, and then went back and wrote a report for Senator Kennedy on what I thought was going on down there. That was really my first—

**Young:** This was a self-assignment on your part. He hadn’t even discussed it.

**Craig:** I never talked to him.

**Young:** Did he have any interest in it?

**Craig:** I honestly didn’t know. I realized that there was a lot going on down there that was of critical importance to our values and to U.S. foreign policy in the entire hemisphere, and that the way in which we handled it was going to be critical. We didn’t have a great record as far as I was concerned, in Central America.

So I spent time in Salvador with the journalists, primarily, going out into the field. There was a retired military guy by the name of Ed King, who seemed to know everybody and spoke Spanish fluently; I went out in the field with him. I went out with Ry [J. Randolph] Ryan, who was a reporter for the *Globe*. Karen DeYoung from the *Post* had given me some names of other journalists. I did spend an hour and a half with Ambassador [Thomas] Pickering. I went to the embassy and said, “I’m the new foreign policy advisor for Senator Kennedy, I’d love to talk to the Ambassador.” He said, “Absolutely,” so I went and had a long session with him. But I was not given any kind of formal treatment or briefings or anything, although I did run into Senator [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan when I was down there.

Then I came back and wrote a report that I delivered orally to him in his study, about what was going on down there. He seemed to like the report. He said, “We should start talking about this more on the floor, we should be doing more on this on the floor.” There was a group of Senate and House staffers that met on a regular basis, on U.S. policy in Central America, and I became part of that group.

**Young:** Do you recall, were these mainly Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee, or military?

**Craig:** No, they were from all over the place. Dick McCall was on Senator Byrd’s staff. Cindy Arnson was—I can’t remember, she was in the House. There were people from other committees as well as from individuals. Chris Dodd’s person was very much involved in the staff. Also, Senator [William] Bradley’s people were involved in this. But in February, I can remember the first public impact Senator Kennedy’s interest had in this was when the [Henry] Kissinger Report came out. I don’t know if you recall the Kissinger Report.

**Young:** Yes.

**Craig:** There were four or five baskets: security, economic development, human rights, political reform, and the Kissinger Commission was writing a report on this.
Young: Established by President Reagan.

Craig: By President Reagan, to give advice from this blue-ribbon, bipartisan group, on what we should be doing in Central America. Central America, as you recall, was a cauldron of competition between the left and the right, with the military involved heavily, at least in Salvador, and the question was, was there a Democratic left or was it a Marxist/Communist left? Should the Cold War template be imposed upon what’s going on in Central America or should there be a different approach than the standard Cold War approach? Were the Cubans involved in Salvador, were they involved in Nicaragua? To what extent? Was this a real threat to the national security of the United States and to what extent was it the growing pains of young, developing countries that were trying to find their own way? And should the United States let them find their own way or were we in fact dealing with a growing revolution that threatened our basic interests? That was pretty exciting stuff.

The Kissinger Commission wrote, by and large, a very impressive report. There was one basket in there that had to do with human rights that I thought was very weak—maybe it was security. All I can remember is before we actually got the basket, we drafted a long response that Senator Kennedy had ready to go. The day it was published or released, we got that analysis down to Meg Greenfield at the Washington Post, and so the Senator who responded to the Kissinger Report and wrote this very critical analysis of it, was Senator Kennedy. That was something that I think took people by surprise, that Senator Kennedy was suddenly engaged in Central American debates. He then started sponsoring some forums.

We didn’t have the majority, we were in the minority, so we couldn’t hold hearings, but we could have forums. He and Senator [David] Durenberger had a forum on violence in Central America, one having to do with violence in Nicaragua, and we organized one having to do with violence in Salvador, and brought up witnesses. And then finally, an appropriation came through. I think it was $22 billion of appropriated—it couldn’t have been that much money, it was much less than that. Maybe $8 billion. I can’t remember the precise number, but an appropriation that was specifically designated to support our initiatives in Central America came onto the floor, out of the Appropriations Committee, not out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and it looked as though it was just going to have an up-or-down vote with no real debate.

Our little group of foreign policy advisors that cared a lot about Central America concluded that this—you know, we had been involved in this policy now for two years, without a debate on the floor of the United States Senate about the wisdom of it, the plusses, the minuses. There had been one or two hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Senator Dodd had run, but this had never gone onto the floor of the Senate. So we were pushing hard to get a time agreement that would allow us to offer amendments to the appropriation that would reflect concerns about how the money was spent.

For example, I think Senator [Dale] Bumpers had a terrific motion, or amendment, that proposed that if there were a coup d’état in Salvador and the democratically elected President of Salvador, who was going to be Napoleon Duarte, were set aside, then all appropriations would be halted. So it was a deterrent to military action.
Well, clearly, [Daniel K.] Inouye wasn’t interested in having a debate and his counterpart on the Republican side was not interested in having a debate. So we had to go down and force the sponsors of the supplemental appropriation to agree to consider these various amendments. There was no other Senator that was willing to do it except Senator Kennedy [laughter], and so down he went, and it was near the end of the session. My recollection is that he was headed off to some family event in Colorado and he said, “I’ve got maybe two, three hours to do this, and if we don’t have an agreement by the end of the two or three hours, then I’m not going to be able to carry it on much longer.”

But he went down there and he fought for a time agreement, to allow us to consider some specific amendments. I can remember Senator [Richard] Lugar coming up to me after Senator Kennedy had left the floor to take some calls. He said, “When did Ted get interested in all this? This is all brand new.” And I said, “He cares a lot about it. The state of Massachusetts has got people down in Central America, and the church is very much involved and is coming into his office on a daily basis. So I think that’s the reason for it.” But at the end of the day, Senator Kennedy, I think singlehandedly, forced the United States Senate to put aside three or four days to debate U.S. policy.

Young: And as a minority member.

Craig: As a member of the minority. I think he did it singlehandedly. I think near the end of it, Chris Dodd came down and was supportive, but the basic initiative came from someone outside the committee. I think if he had been on the committee, he couldn’t have done it this way. The upshot of this was, when everybody got back the following week there was a four-day debate. It ended on Thursday, with probably 10 or 15 amendments debated and voted upon that were substantive, interesting amendments. There was a declaration of war amendment that Senator Bradley was very interested in. You cannot send American troops down there beyond the following number of advisors, without coming back to the Congress and seeking permission. You know, things like that.

Young: Land reform, was that part of it?

Craig: I’d have to go back.

Young: Yes.

Craig: We lost all of the votes. I think we came the closest with Dale Bumpers’ vote, to deter a coup. There was one that was also asking the intelligence community to conduct an investigation into what extent the right wing was involved in the assassination of Archbishop [Oscar] Romero. That one, actually, I think they took. They said, “We want to find that out.”

But at the end of this debate, on Thursday night, Barry Goldwater came out on the floor. It must have been 9:30 or 10:00 at night, and he clearly had been having dinner and drinks, and he was feeling uninhibited. He made some statements on the floor that night that were then reported by David Rogers in the Wall Street Journal the next day, that Friday, which implied that the American intelligence community was mining the harbors of the Nicaraguan waters. That the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] with small boats, was putting mines in the harbors to keep
vessels from coming in and having normal trade with Nicaragua, as part of an effort to squeeze the Sandinistas. Mining a nation’s harbors was a clear-cut violation of international law.

**Young**: He was on the floor, Goldwater was on the floor?

**Craig**: Goldwater came on the floor and this came out.

**Young**: This came out through [Joseph] Biden, wasn’t it? Did Biden discover this intelligence report?

**Craig**: No. It was a leak from Goldwater.

**Young**: Who was on the Intelligence Committee.

**Craig**: He and [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan, I think, were running the Intelligence Committee, and the leak came from Goldwater.

**Young**: I see.

**Craig**: And I think people suspected that he’d had a drink or two. Biden had nothing to do with it, to be quite honest, but what happened was it created a furor over that weekend, because David Rogers reported it. We were all talking about it, the staff were all talking about it. “Whoa, it’s out there now that we’re mining the harbors in Nicaragua, in violation of international law.” So when Senator Kennedy came back to Washington and we briefed him on it, he said, “You know, we went through a whole week of debate on U.S. policy towards Central America and this didn’t come out at all! So I’m going to go back on the floor and we’re going to have a debate about mining the harbors in Nicaragua.”

So he boiled back out on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, and he said, “I’m going to stay here until we—you know, we didn’t have a fair debate, nobody told us. We’re going to have a debate on this resolution that I’m introducing right now, to stop mining the harbors in Nicaragua.”

Well, the leadership on the Republican side didn’t want to have that debate. I think we had two parts to this resolution, but the upshot was they accepted the part that prohibited the mining of the harbors. They didn’t accept the other part. They kept half of our resolution and as a result of that debate, there was a law passed that prohibited the United States government from mining the harbors in Nicaragua, which was a huge achievement. And that was all Edward M. Kennedy’s doing. He went down to the floor on two different occasions; first, to start the debate and second, to win the resolution banning the mining of the harbors. Now, that’s pretty darn good. I think that was in March or April of 1984. You can look it up.

**Young**: Also, thank God for Goldwater. [*laughter*]

**Craig**: Well, yes, we wouldn’t have known anything about it.

**Young**: Until later.
Craig: Well, we could have found out. It also prompted, of course, an International Court hearing. The government of Nicaragua hired Paul Reichler and Abe Chayes, and they brought suit against the government of the United States and won, with a declaration from the International Court of Justice in The Hague, that what the U.S. Government had done was illegal. So that was part of that.

The other thing was that Senator Kennedy gave me permission to go down and work with the Miskito Indians. The place was so polarized in Nicaragua, pro-contra and anti-contra, and the lines were so sharply drawn, that it was very difficult to have a substantive impact on the ground in Nicaragua, given the polarization. What we ended up doing was focusing on the plight of the Miskito Indians, which had also been exploited by American security interests. The CIA had essentially paid a bunch of Miskito Indians to set up a contra organization within the Miskito Indian tribe, and the Miskito Indians had been mistreated by the Sandinistas.

Young: How did he get on this issue?

Craig: Well, it was a hearing that he had held with Senator Dave Durenberger. Not a hearing but a forum, where we had brought up some Miskito Indians from a little village called Sumabila to testify. They were to testify about the way in which the contras had come in and forced the young men in the village to sign up, and taken them off. They essentially kidnapped these young Indians, to participate in the contras.

Young: So was Kennedy looking for a way—

Craig: To make a difference.

Young: To make a difference, where the big situation was—you couldn’t do much of anything about that.

Craig: Frozen, it was frozen. That’s typical Kennedy. Well, what we did was have a number of programs and reports about the plight of the Miskito Indians, how the Sandinistas had mistreated the Indians, how the CIA was exploiting the Indians and how, wouldn’t it be sensible to take the Atlantic Coast and try to get it out of the civil war that was going on over on the Pacific Coast and the more Hispanic territory?

The Miskito Indians first of all, they were Protestant, they were English oriented, they had English names. They were not divided along pro- and anti-contra. They had not been afflicted by the politics of Managua or the politics of the land issues in the West. So our idea was to try to set up a system whereby there could be a separate peace negotiated between the Sandinista government and the Miskito Indians in the Atlantic Coast, and just get that chunk of population and territory out of the war, so the Americans wouldn’t go down there and hire people to join the Contras, and the Sandinistas would leave them alone.

We worked on that for about a year and a half and Brooklyn Rivera, a young leader of the Miskito Indians, came up and met with Senator Kennedy, had dinner with Senator Kennedy at his house one evening, and led an effort to negotiate this kind of a separate peace with Daniel Ortega. We were really the ones who sponsored that, another I thought enormously important initiative, that cut between—
Young: And it succeeded.

Craig: It did. It reduced the violence on the Atlantic Coast by tenfold.

Young: You got the CIA out of there.

Craig: Well, I’m not sure that it ever got the CIA out of there entirely, but the CIA was not being very successful there, in any event. They had Steadman Fagoth, who was—the CIA’s Indians all lived in Tegucigalpa and spent all their time in a bar. That was where the CIA Indians were, and there were a couple of guys who were down there doing violent things, but by and large, the results of the ’84/’85 efforts on Senator Kennedy’s part were successful in keeping the Miskito Indians essentially out of the violence. That was that.

Young: What a beginning.

Craig: What a beginning. That was ’84. What also happened in ’84 was that we were going to organize a forum on South Africa, to occur in late September or early October of 1984. During that year, whenever a South African anti-apartheid leader was in town, we’d always see him. We’d bring him into Senator Kennedy’s office. He saw Johnny [Johnstone] Makatini, who was an ANC leader. He saw Oliver Tambo, who was the president of the African National Congress. I mean that Edward M. Kennedy was the only member of the United States Senate who was willing to sit down and meet with Oliver Tambo, the president of the ANC, in 1984, because the United States government had designated the ANC as a terrorist organization, and for a Senator to meet with someone who was designated as the head of a terrorist organization was highly risky as a political matter.

Oliver Tambo was Nelson Mandela’s law partner, a highly respected lawyer. He was not a bloodthirsty, indiscriminate killer or a terrorist, he was a very distinguished man who was trying to end apartheid. So, we had this stream of South African anti-apartheid people coming through. At the invitation of the President of the General Assembly, Joe Barba from Nigeria, the Senator gave a speech at the UN [United Nations], which was called the anti-apartheid voice in the United States, and that speech was in September of 1984. It was a great speech. The General Assembly wasn’t assembled but it was in the General Assembly, and the place was filled with people. We organized that through the President of the General Assembly, whose name was Joe Garba, from Nigeria at the time. And so we had this growing concern about the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa in ’84 as well.

Young: Africa was already on his agenda when you came in.

Craig: Africa was. South Africa was not on his agenda at all. He had always been very concerned that getting involved with South Africa would mean everybody would compare him with Bobby [Kennedy].

Young: Yes.

Craig: He cared about it, but he never focused on it and was unwilling to. And then what happened was we organized a forum because Desmond Tutu was at the General Theological Seminary in New York. Percy Qoboza, who was the editor of the Sowetan, had been up at
Harvard at the Neiman Foundation for Journalism. There were another two or three anti-apartheid activists in the United States at that time in September. So we said, “Let’s get them all down together and have a forum, and talk about what’s going on in South Africa and anti-apartheid.”

So Desmond came down. We brought in Allan Boesak. We flew him across because he wasn’t here in the U.S., and I met Allan at the airport and brought him in, had dinner with him and set up this forum, which we had to cancel because the debate on the MX missile occurred that day. So the forum never occurred, but Edward M. Kennedy had lunch in his office with Desmond and with Allan. Both Desmond and Allan were eloquent and impassioned about the fact that the apartheid regime was getting increased access, increased recognition, and increased legitimacy.

P. W. Botha had traveled successfully to all the capitals of Europe and the apartheid government was considering itself very successful, diplomatically, at being accepted by the European and American community. We were in the middle of a Presidential campaign and the subject of apartheid as a U.S. foreign policy concern had never come up. Senator Kennedy was moved by these descriptions of the fact that nobody in the international community at that moment—I think it was September or early October—was paying any attention to apartheid. And he said, “How can I help? I’d love to be able to help.”

And Desmond said, “You must come and visit us, because if you just come, the whole world will watch and where you go, the world will follow and whatever you see, the world will also see.” So he agreed to do it. We were going to do it in December of ’84, then Desmond got the Nobel Peace Prize, and so we had to postpone that trip until January, until after Desmond had gone to Oslo and received the prize. But I went over in December to do the advance work on that trip, and I mean, the rest is history.

Around Thanksgiving, the anti-apartheid movement in this country started picking up steam. We had made our decision to go over there long before this happened, but over Thanksgiving, I think Randall Robinson and some people got arrested in front of the South African Embassy and things started picking up on the campus. So by the time Senator Kennedy went, there was a huge amount of attention.

Young: Press attention.
Craig: Press attention. The world was looking at this, and 45 or 50 press people traveled with us during that two-week period in South Africa.

Young: This was a private trip.
Craig: A private trip.

Young: He was not representing, he was not going as a Senator.
Craig: No. He was going at the invitation of the South African Council of Churches, Desmond Tutu, and the Civic Crusade, which was Allan Boesak and his group.

Young: They were the hosts.
Craig: They were the hosts. And we set up a series of meetings and visits that Senator Kennedy made in that two-week period. He also went to Namibia.

Young: Some time ago, I needed help on the Desmond Tutu interview. The Senator had called me up and said, “He’s in town, could you interview him?” This was like three days before and I said, “I need briefing,” and you very kindly—I got you on the phone and I saw your memo about the trip and what you were doing and where you were going.

Craig: Did I write a memo for you or was it something for the papers?

Young: No, it was something from the office.

Craig: Gosh. So by the way, that year, not only did he do all this stuff in Central America and start this South African process that resulted in legislation, not only in ’84 but ’85 and ’86 and that ended in the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act, which would not have happened but for Edward M. Kennedy, but that Christmas he went to Ethiopia and the Sudan, where there was a huge famine. Jerry Tinker took him there, and I think Ted [Kennedy Jr] and Kara [Kennedy] went as well.

Young: Yes, they did.

Craig: Over Christmas in 1984, where this enormous famine was. Sixty people a night were dying in Makele.

Young: You weren’t with him.

Craig: I did not go on that. And then in early ’85, I think—

Young: Don’t you want to say a few words about—was that trip to South Africa a success?

Craig: By any measure. It was a difficult trip.

Young: It was very difficult. He got a lot of adverse publicity.

Craig: Inside South Africa.

Young: One of which set Larry Horowitz off the—

Craig: Don’t get me going about Horowitz.

Young: “This is a disaster,” he said. But that was planned, wasn’t it, by the opposition to the people, AZAPO [Azanian People’s Organisation] and the others?

Craig: Larry was never comfortable with these four trips.

Young: Except to Moscow. [laughter]

Craig: Except when he was running to Moscow and he was totally in control. As I say, don’t get me going on this. As far as I could tell, he did not understand either the significance of the
Central American stuff, which I think was heroic and historic, or the South African stuff, which was difficult. It was not all peaches and cream and kumbaya, as it was with Bobby Kennedy. This was entrenched interests working against our trip, trying to make it fail. And participating in the effort to make it fail were the American Embassy and the Ambassador!

Young: Nickel.

Craig: Herman Nickel was working hard against the Senator’s success and lectured the Senator when he introduced him.

Young: And also the violence level was drumming.

Craig: It was going up.

Young: When Bobby [Kennedy] was there, there was hope rising.

Craig: Bobby was talking to students. Bobby was taking the white students at Cape Town University and—

Young: Liberals.

Craig: Liberal whites, yes. That was easy! We were talking to black power people, we were talking to a range of people who had different political agendas. It was an incredibly courageous trip for him to take. I don’t think Senator Kennedy himself knew how fraught with political confusion this would be. This was not ever going to be like Bobby Kennedy’s, “Oh, thank you for coming, thank you for telling us how to do this, and for showing us the way, you made us feel good about ourselves.” This was going to be much more difficult.

From the very first night—I don’t know if you heard the stories about the trip. We landed and there was a demonstration of the black power people against the trip, in the Jan Smuts Airport. The security people had allowed these guys to come in. Then we drove off because there was going to be a welcoming ceremony in Soweto that night, and Senator Kennedy was going to spend the night at Desmond’s house in Soweto. And of course it was illegal for us to go, but we had been told the government of South Africa believed that they were responsible for Senator Kennedy’s security, so the security police would take us where we needed to go, even though it would otherwise be illegal for us to go in these townships.

As we drove off in the night, it was about a 40-minute drive, maybe an hour, from Jan Smuts Airport to Desmond’s house in Soweto. Halfway there, and this is at 9:30, 10:00 at night, dark, the entourage pulls over and people with guns, our security people, surround our car to protect it. The lead of the entourage, of the collection of cars, the head security man comes out and says to Senator Kennedy in the back seat with Desmond, “We have learned that there are demonstrators around Bishop Tutu’s house. We are not sure we can guarantee your safety. We recommend that you go to the hotel and not go into Soweto.”

Now, imagine that. At 10:00 at night, being told that the government of South Africa cannot guarantee your safety where you’re going to go that night, and they recommend that you go back to the hotel, thereby defeating the welcoming event.
Well, Senator Kennedy was concerned about the health and well-being of his family, which was in the bus behind. So the way it was resolved was the bus with the journalists were sent back to the hotel and Senator Kennedy and Desmond—and I was with them—went forward, on into Soweto, which was a spectacular welcome.

**Young:** No demonstrators were there?

**Craig:** There were no demonstrators. There was not a single demonstrator there! It was a church choir singing with candles, welcoming Senator Kennedy to the township. Senator Kennedy spent the night in Desmond’s house, in the master bedroom. He told this story all the time, about seeing the Nobel Peace Prize there. That was just one example of the ways in which the security officials of South African Police sought to disrupt and destroy and defeat our objectives on this trip. So I’m just not sympathetic when Larry Horowitz says it was a disaster.

What happened was that Senator Kennedy came back with a great moral profile, of standing up and calling the world’s attention to the situation and conditions of apartheid, and it made him the chief sponsor of this legislation.

**Young:** They defeated the great speech, which he couldn’t give at the cathedral.

**Craig:** Right. Regina Mundi is the name of the cathedral. That was the last event and it was very much like the first. The last event, the security people said if you go down there, we cannot guarantee your safety. But the thing that we were concerned about, and I think the reason that the Senator decided that he was not going to push the speech, was that the police, who were now there in multitudes, might hurt the demonstrators that were going to be there. And that violence would be associated with his event. So that if the Senator spoke and the police were all over there trying to keep order and there were demonstrators here and demonstrators there, pro-Kennedy and anti-Kennedy, and someone got hurt, that would be the headline. So he made a decision that he was not going to have anything to do with the danger of bloodshed, so that speech never got given, much to Bob Shrum’s disappointment. The greatest speech never given, one of many that he has written. [laughter]

**Young:** All great.

**Craig:** All great. That was a great disappointment, but what he had done was he’d gone to the single-sex hostels, he’d gone to the black spots. He’d met with Pik Botha. That was an interesting meeting, by the way, because we had been wanting to see Nelson Mandela, and we’d made it quite clear we wanted to visit him. We knew that Nelson Mandela had been moved from Robben Island to Pollsmoor Prison, which is in Cape Town, and one of the things on our agenda at the meeting with the Foreign Minister, whose name was Pik Botha, was to press the request to see Mandela.

At the end of the meeting, we had a long session. What I will never forget about that was, there was a table about this size and there were bowls filled with cigarettes in front of everybody, so that if you wanted to smoke, it was easy. We discussed South Africa, U.S. policy, constructive engagement, Africa generally, the history of South Africa. He would say, “You don’t understand, our blacks are not like your blacks,” all that argument.
At the end of it, he took Kennedy aside and had a private one-on-one with him, which the Senator then explained to me afterwards. He said, “We will be happy for you to see Nelson Mandela but, coming from a family that has suffered so much from violence and being such a proponent of nonviolence in your own life and in your own support of the Civil Rights Movement, we will allow you to see Nelson Mandela on the condition that you will publicly oppose the ANC position of using violence to advance the cause of anti-apartheid.” Whoa. So that put Senator Kennedy in a position: Well, I can go see Nelson Mandela, but I’ve got to take a position contrary to where the ANC is, which is embattled with South Africa. And so we thought that over and he didn’t do it.

**Young:** It was not an agonizing decision, was it?

**Craig:** No, it wasn’t, although I think he would have thought that Nelson Mandela would have been disappointed for him essentially to denounce the ANC as the price of going to see Mandela. That’s the way we portrayed it to the Senator, when he made the decision. In other words, “The price of admission to see Nelson Mandela is for you to denounce the ANC. And you can’t do that.”

Instead of doing that, we went and we had a “press conference.” It was a bit of a demonstration outside of Pollsmoor Prison, when we were in Cape Town. You know, it probably was a disaster in terms of public relations, in terms of the pictures that were coming back. It had a huge impact, I think, on the United States Senate, as they watched this happen and they realized exactly how much turmoil and how much agony and suffering was going on in that country.

**Young:** Is there any way of assessing its impact in South Africa?

**Craig:** You’d have to ask—I mean, if you ask Nelson Mandela or Tabo Embeke or Desmond Tutu or some of the other people who were there, I think they would say it had a huge impact, largely because for the first time, the world was back watching them. The attention of the world had gotten focused again on South Africa, in ways that it had not been over the last five years. The attention of the world had wandered off to other matters, Central America being one.

But with Senator Kennedy’s visit, what happened thereafter was Tom Brokaw went and started having shows there. Ted Koppel went and had shows there, and suddenly South Africa became a big deal on the campuses. We were planning to be there in December of 1984 and didn’t get there until January of ’85, but we were there just as this was building and so, because of that, it hit the Congress of the United States with a power that otherwise would not have happened. [Samuel] Nunn went over and [David] Boren went over, conservative Democrats went over, and they checked with Senator Kennedy’s staff about who they should see, what they should do.

Senator Kennedy met with some leaders of the Civic Crusade, one man by the name of Terror [Mosiuoa] Lakota, another man by the name of Popo Molefe, who were arrested and were being tried, in ’85 and ’86, and so when Nunn and Boren went over, they went to the Delmas trial. That was hugely important. Terror then became, after the liberation and after the election, a leading member of the ANC governing body.
Young: Bishop Tutu, if I remember correctly, said about that trip—I believe this is in an interview I had with him, “We felt very alone, very alone in the world, and he was the other voice of America to us, the voice that we were not hearing from the Reagan Administration.”

Craig: I think that’s right.

Young: And that’s sort of how he—

Craig: But if you look at the developments that occurred after the trip, the Commonwealth put together a panel, a distinguished persons panel, to come and look at apartheid and make recommendations to the Commonwealth of Nations, about what they should do.

Young: Margaret Thatcher was not—

Craig: Malcolm Fraser was the chairman of that eminent persons group, and the eminent persons group then wrote a report that was just devastating, and recommended sanctions. And this was not a revolutionary, left-wing, socialist operation. Malcolm Fraser was a conservative Prime Minister from Australia who supported American policy on Vietnam.

Young: So that led eventually—

Craig: This was all building up through ’85, ’86.

Young: Then came sanctions.

Craig: There was sanctions legislation introduced in ’85, which had four sanctions. That was then adopted by Executive Order. It never was forced to the floor with a vote because as we were getting to the vote, suddenly Reagan issued an Executive Order saying, “All right, no more Krugerrands, no more new investment.” I can’t remember what all of them were; they were very modest reforms.

The following year, 1986, the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act was introduced. This is the Kennedy-[Lowell] Weicker legislation, which picked some target industries, like agricultural products, like steel, that were much more significant, whereas on the House side, the [Ronald] Dellums act was a wholesale embargo, and that just sailed through. So on the House side, we had a wholesale embargo; on the Senate side we had the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act of 1986.

Young: And the Reagan Executive Order, which was the mildest of the lot.

Craig: That was ’85. We already had that under our belt.

Young: Yes, it was already on the books.

Craig: That was already on the books, and we were going up one step. Now in ’86, we were still in the minority in the Senate. We did not have a majority and so the real question was what hope did we have on the floor of the Senate to pass anything of this nature?

Young: But you regained in the vote that was held that year, regained the majority.
Craig: Well, for ’87.

Young: Yes.

Craig: But in ’86, we were in the minority and the President vetoed. What happened was we passed the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act legislation, and this is a very important event because you had a wholesale embargo as legislation from the House of Representatives, you had selective sanctions, although much tougher than previous, coming out of the Senate, and we had maybe five days left. So, someone had to go over to the House and say, “For us to have any chance of getting this through, you just have to sign on to a much weaker piece of legislation.”

Young: Or the veto.

Craig: That then happened, but before a veto we had to get a law. Someone had to go persuade the leadership in the House. That was Ron Dellums. The Black Caucus had won what they wanted to win and now someone had to ask them to give it up, in order to achieve legislation, and Ted Kennedy was the one person who had credibility with the American civil rights community. He could go over and say, “If we’re going to have a real law that we can send to the President of the United States, you have got to just sign on to the Senate bill and don’t change a word.” And there was a very significant meeting with, I would say, probably ten members of the African-American Caucus, the Black Caucus.

Young: You were there.

Craig: I was. We were the only two white people there. [laughter] I think, though, had it been any other Senator trying to persuade them to give up what they’d won on the House side, it never would have happened.

Young: Was that the first time you had really observed Kennedy at this kind of thing, saying no in a better cause, to—

Craig: To moderate?

Young: Yes.

Craig: That was. I’d seen him work in the Armed Services Committee. We had done a lot of stuff in the Armed Services Committee. He frequently—I mean with Pete Wilson, on manpower issues having to do with the Military Family Act of 1985. He would cut the baby. He’d say, “This is how we’ll do it. You can do this but I want this,” and he would work it out. But the first time I really saw him go to an ally and say, “You’ve got to give in on this, you’ve got to give in or else we’re not going to get anywhere.” And as a result of that, there was a law passed by Congress, it was vetoed by President Reagan, and the Congress overturned his veto.

Young: By a substantial amount.

Craig: Well over two-thirds. Who would ever have thought that would have happened? We were still the minority in the Senate.
Young: Someone from the outside activists, not necessarily on apartheid but civil rights in general, said, “Kennedy was the only person who could tell us to ‘Lay off and take what you’ve got.’”

Craig: Right. Well, that was an example of what he did.

Young: Yes, but there must have been other instances where he said, “Accept half a loaf or whatever you’ve got, there will always be another day.” Nobody else could have told that to them.

Craig: It’s true, because he had credibility. I’ve got to tell you, I’ve been thinking a little bit about this since Robert Byrd died. This relationship that Kennedy and Byrd had was extraordinary, and I think it changed American history in the following way.

In 1984, after [Walter] Mondale was so badly defeated, the more conservative elements of the Democratic Party challenged Robert Byrd’s leadership. These were the Bennett Johnstons, the [Ernest F.] Hollings, Sam Nunn, Lawton Chiles, David Boren. These were people who thought that the Democratic Party had gone too far to the left and that they wanted one of their folks, sort of from the New South, to take over the leadership, and the highest figure was the Majority Leader. So Lawton Chiles ran against Robert Byrd in December of ’84, and Senator Kennedy supported Robert Byrd. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party in the Senate supported Robert Byrd because Chiles represented this group of Bennett Johnston, Sam Nunn, Fritz Hollings, and David Boren, and it was 37 to 11.

Robert Byrd never forgot that and one of the things that I remember Senator Kennedy saying was that Robert Byrd was one of the few members of the Democratic Party who did not ever ask him to withdraw from the Presidential campaign in 1980. Byrd said, “Let the Democratic Party speak.” He wouldn’t do that. There were all sorts of Democrats saying, “Kennedy should get out, he’s going to hurt [Jimmy] Carter.” Byrd never did that. Kennedy supported Byrd’s position as Majority Leader in 1984.

In 1985, the Democratic Leadership Council was established and again, it was these conservative southern Democrats. [William] Clinton was part of it, Jimmy Carter was part of it. It was the residue of Jimmy Carter and Fritz Hollings and Lawton Chiles and David Boren who created the DLC and paid no attention to Robert Byrd. Once again, Senator Kennedy recognized that Byrd could be an ally on all these things, and he pursued Byrd, became friends with him. Byrd voted for the Martin Luther King legislation. Byrd supported the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act of 1986.

In 1986, in November, Bennett Johnston ran against Byrd, because Democrats had won the election and we were going to get the majority back, and he thought, Now is the time to replace Byrd. You know, ’84 was a disaster to the Democratic Party, now is the time to replace Byrd. Eighty-six was a victory for the Democratic Party. The Bennett Johnstons, the Sam Nunn, thought, Now is the time to do it. And once again, Kennedy supported Byrd. So I think Byrd found, strangely enough, an alliance with the New England liberal wing of the Democratic Party that kept him in power, because if Kennedy had joined with Bennett Johnston or with Lawton
Chiles, Byrd was gone. And so the Byrd-Kennedy, that was an inflection point. In 1971, I think they were on bad terms.

**Young:** Were they? He defeated Kennedy to the Majority Whip.

**Craig:** Right. I don’t think Byrd liked Kennedy. The years that I was there, between ’84 and ’88, I think that relationship changed. The impact of that was that I think because of the relationship that Kennedy had with Byrd, the civil rights gains in the ’60s were preserved, rather than reversed, and things like Grove City, the Anti-apartheid Act, the Martin Luther King birthday holiday, all this stuff went forward. And the domestic stuff that Kennedy cared so much about, in terms of health insurance, Byrd supported it as well. He wasn’t going to get in the way of it. It was remarkable. And also on the foreign policy stuff.

Byrd sponsored something that people don’t know about. In ’86/’87, we moved into the Panama situation, because Panama was fighting for its life with [Manuel] Noriega. And Senator Kennedy had close personal friendships down there and we visited those folks when he went down to SOUTHCOM. Believe it or not, the human rights movement in the United States supporting democracy in Panama also had the support of Jesse Helms. So there was this bizarre, never-to-be-replicated alliance between Jesse Helms on the right and Edward M. Kennedy on the left, to bring democracy to Panama, because Noriega was exercising total control.

**Young:** What explains Helms?

**Craig:** Helms hated the Panama Canal Treaty. Noriega represented the—

**Young:** The giveaway of the canal?

**Craig:** Well, Omar Torrijos was the head of La Guardia. Noriega was Omar Torrijos’ guy, and so as far as Helms was concerned, Noriega was just like Omar Torrijos. But in addition to this, the *rabiblanco*, who were the wealthy, white conservative bankers, the financial community components, also hated Noriega. You know, he was mixed blood, he was lower class. And they came up and they found their friend in Jesse Helms. The small-D democrats found their friend in Ted Kennedy, and so this relationship developed. We wanted to put together a bipartisan, fact-finding delegation to go down and interview people involved in the Civil Crusade in Panama. But we needed somebody to fund it. It was not going to be done through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It was two Senators plus, I think Jeff Bingaman’s guy was very much involved in it, and also Alfonse D’Amato. For whatever reason, it was Helms and D’Amato and Durenberger on the Republican side, and Kennedy and [Claiborne] Pell and Bingaman on the Democratic side.

**Young:** The year was?

**Craig:** Nineteen eighty-seven.

**Young:** Well, either before or after the Democrats got a majority.
Craig: It was ’87. We had the majority and I can tell you why; because we were running the Armed Services Committee at the time, we had an impact. But Kennedy went to Byrd and said, “Is there any way that you can put together some funding for this staff delegation”—unprecedented—“to go down and spend a week interviewing people and reporting back to the Senate on the conditions in Panama?” Byrd did it. Byrd found the funding and paid for this staff delegation. We came back and wrote a report that was an inch and a half, and recommended sanctions against Noriega and essentially took the policy away from the State Department, took the policy away from the Pentagon. The Pentagon wanted to continue to have exercises with La Guardia, continued to want to have business as usual with the National Guard, and that just ended as a result of that trip.

D’Amato was Chairman of the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations. Senator Kennedy was on the Armed Services Committee, and from Helms to Kennedy it was a coalition that just changed U.S. policy towards Panama. Now, that coalition came apart over the issue of the invasion, but not on the issue of sanctions.

Young: That was [George H. W.] Bush.

Craig: Gosh, a lot happened in those five years.

Young: An awful lot happened.

Craig: From ’84 to—’87 was Panama, ’88 was the trip to Poland, and we also had the trip to Latin America in ’85.

Young: That was to Brazil, Argentina?

Craig: Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru.

Young: Chile, and that was where the big—

Craig: Chile, that was exciting. That was exciting for more than one reason. In Argentina, we had been careful to make sure that wherever we went, we were paying tribute to people who had fought on the side of human rights and democracy against the dictator, the military dictator. We wanted to identify someone from the Peronista Party who had been to jail or who had been supportive of democracy and against the military dictators. The Liberal Party was in power at that time and that was not a problem. We met with the President, Raúl Alfonsín, but we had to find a Peronista to meet with, and the Governor of La Rioja, Carlos Menem—and we checked with our Argentine political people, “Would it be all right if we met with Menem?” And they said, “Yes, no problem.”

So we went up to La Rioja. It is a little town, a very provincial capital, right underneath the Andes. We went up there and spent the day and the evening with Carlos Menem, and spent the night there. Carlos Menem fell in love with Ted Kennedy, because Ted Kennedy, in the toast that night, said, “To the next President of Argentina.” And Menem said, “How did he know?” [laughter] Well, it turned out that Menem was elected President thereafter.
The next morning, we had to fly in small planes from La Rioja into Santiago, Chile. Now, if you look at that, you will realize that you’re flying right along the top ridge of the Andean range, and over Aconcagua, which is the big mountain between Chile and Argentina. It is 23,000 feet. It’s not close to Everest, but it’s higher than anything else in this whole hemisphere. That’s scary stuff, very scary mountains, and in our little plane were Senator Kennedy, Pat Lawford, Jean Kennedy Smith, John Douglas and myself.

As we got on the plane, the sister said, “I don’t want to look out the window.” So we closed all the windows and flew in darkness while I was trying to draft the arrival statement for the press when we arrived. Every now and then I’d sneak a look out there and those peaks were right there, they were right next to us as we were going down the range.

And then when we arrived in Santiago, we were in the midst of demonstrations organized by the military. Have you heard that story?

Young: I haven’t had a firsthand account of it. I figured that you would give it. I know about secondary, but I know about the leak, for example, from—

Craig: The CIA [Central Intelligence Agency].

Young: The CIA Station Chief or whoever else it was.

Craig: Well, then you know the story.

Young: Yes, but I’ve put it together from comments. You were an eyewitness.

Craig: I was the recipient of the leak.

Young: Yes.

Craig: As we left the Ambassador’s residence in Buenos Aires to go out to the airport to fly to La Rioja, the CIA Station Chief—and I didn’t know who he was, but he turned out to be the CIA Station Chief—took me aside and told me, in a corner room, that the military was organizing demonstrations against us in Santiago, and were going to keep us out of the airport. They did not want us to get into the town of Santiago. The whole point was to keep us at the airport, that there were demonstrators with placards and signs whom the military had organized against Senator Kennedy, and we had to be ready for it. He said he thought this was probably something that they’d learned from the South Africa trip. They thought that this would disrupt or confuse people as to what Senator Kennedy’s real mission was. So I told Senator Kennedy that, and there was nothing we could do.

So we arrived and it was happening. Now, the political leaders who were coming to meet us at the airport had been attacked. They had stones and eggs thrown at them as they came out to the airport. The security people, just like in South Africa, said, “We cannot take you back without putting you in jeopardy, so we won’t.” So there we were stuck at the airport with our Ambassador and our little group.

Young: That was Harry Barnes.
Craig: Harry Barnes, right, and Harry was immediately calling everybody in the Foreign Ministry, he was calling back to Washington. Harry was being a real champ, and John Douglas was there, as were Pat Lawford and Jean Smith. There were probably 45 people from the press. At this point Senator Kennedy said, “Someone should go out and tell the press what’s going on here, because they don’t know what’s happening and this is something that’s been organized by the military, we know.” So I go out there—and my wife said she heard me on NPR [National Public Radio] saying, “We are being held here because the military has organized these demonstrations against us and they are unwilling to guarantee the security of Senator Kennedy or his party, and that is the reason we’re being held here.” “How do you know this?” “We were told by representatives of the United States government,” I said, “and that is very upsetting.”

I mean, they couldn’t do anything to me because I wasn’t a member of the CIA. In fact, I had just disclosed knowledge that the United States intelligence community did not want the military in Chile to know, that they knew all about this.

Young: Whatever happened to the station chief?

Craig: I don’t know what ever happened to the station chief. I got pulled in by the station chief in Santiago and interviewed intensely about how I learned about this and why I had done what I’d done. I said, “I learned about it from this fellow.” I just told him the story. Now, how did you hear about it?

Young: I think Adam Clymer.

Craig: Oh, I told him that, yes.

Young: Who interviewed long ago. I think he had something about that in his book.

Craig: Harry Barnes was fantastic. It was very difficult for him as Ambassador, but he was with Senator Kennedy throughout the whole trip. You couldn’t dislodge him. I mean, that was the difference between him and Herman Nickel. American policy was in favor of human rights and democracy in Chile and against it in South Africa, and we saw dramatic differences.

Young: Was [Augusto] Pinochet still in power?

Craig: Absolutely.

Young: But soon to fall.

Craig: I think he fell in a couple of years. Senator Kennedy said to me that the speech that he gave that day, that night in Santiago, was one of the most moving speeches he’d ever given. I think it was given at the Spanish school. There was some building with a huge arena and the speech, it was a special, a Shrum special, but it also had reference to some of the most beautiful poetry. The audience was just ready to go. It was a hugely powerful speech and a very knowledgeable and smart audience. Yes, it was a pretty incredible moment, because we did get in and we then went to our location at the Spanish school and people came and visited us and we had all our—
Young: Otherwise, your itinerary was—

Craig: Totally destroyed.

Young: —totally destroyed.

Craig: We went from the airport to this one location in downtown Santiago, and I think we had to go by helicopter.

Young: The helicopters were sent in to the airport.

Craig: To pick us up. So we flew over and met the Ambassador’s car there, that’s what happened.

Young: The helicopters appeared ten minutes after your press conference.

Craig: That’s exactly right. [laughter]

Young: So you got him out of the airport.

Craig: We got him out of the airport and we went to the Spanish escuela, and had our meetings and then had the event, and then went back to—I think we spent the night at Harry’s house, at the Ambassador’s residence. The next day we went to Peru.

Young: “Chile Libre,” they would sing.

Craig: “Chile Libre.” Oh, man, it was powerful. And outside that building there was a constant rally. We were holed up in this building, but there must have been 2,000 people outside the entire time that we were there.

Young: With the police?

Craig: Well, the police were in between, protecting us from our friends.

Young: How did you get out?

Craig: I think we drove back.

Young: Through the demonstration?

Craig: Yes, the demonstrations—those were all fake, there was nothing serious. We never saw serious demonstrators. A couple of people threw some rocks and some eggs. I think Harry’s car got egged and rocked, I think they had rocks, but that was about it. In terms of the numbers of people, they were all for us, and there were hundreds of them. There was a park right across the street from where we were interviewing everybody. That was pretty cool. That was ’85. So between ’84 and ’85, we had done Central America, he’d done the Sudan and a Mekele feeding station. He’d done South Africa. Larry took him off to Russia I think, in February or March of ’85, and then he did Latin America.
Young: Well, he was in Moscow in ’86, I thought. Arms control.

Craig: That’s right. Wait a second. We came back from the trip to South Africa in January of ’85. I think he turned right around and met with [Leonid] Brezhnev in March of ’85.

Young: Yes.

Craig: And Larry [Horowitz] took Tom Longstreth with him.

Young: That was on arms control.

Craig: Well, it was to get refuseniks.

Young: I’m trying to look at this.

Craig: The arms control observer group.

Young: You were with him on that.

Craig: Yes, there were many trips that he took to Geneva for the arms control observer group, and he met with Max Kampelman on a regular basis. I was involved with that. Gosh, there were many events there, too, involving the return of American hostages. He gave a speech in Geneva. And then Poland, was that ’88 or ’87, when he met with the Pope?

Young: Yes, afterwards. Let’s see. In ’85, my notes seem to say, he attended the arms control talks in Geneva as a member of the observers group.

Craig: I did that.

Young: In ’86, he visited the Soviet Union to discuss arms control and human rights. Also in ’86, you went to Cuba.

Craig: I did. Do you have the date of the trip to Latin America? I think that was ’85, late ’85.

Young: Well, it says ’86 here. “After the South Africa trip in ’85, traveled to Chile, Peru, Brazil and Argentina.”

Craig: That’s true, that’s all right, but it says ’86 there? That may be right.

Young: He’s doing a lot of traveling.

Craig: Yes, he is. He probably did more traveling in that three-, four-year period than in any other time in the Senate.

Young: I never got to discuss all these trips with him, but I did discuss the South Africa trip. It was on our unfinished agenda. He said, “I always went with a purpose.”

Craig: That’s exactly right. We always had something specific.
**Young:** His phrase sort of stuck with me, “I always went with a purpose.” And there was a follow-up usually or something, whether it was bringing dissidents out—

**Craig:** Or legislation.

**Young:** Or legislation, or something. Even though he would take family on a lot of them.

**Craig:** A lot of the trips were private, I mean they were not in his capacity as a United States Senator. The trip to Poland, there was one component of it. It was using military transportation. And that was the trip from Warsaw to—I’m thinking of the name of it in Polish, Oswiecim, which is Auschwitz. We went to Auschwitz and I had a tour with Senator Kennedy, there were only the two of us, because we were the only ones authorized to fly in military aircraft. We flew on an American military jet, from Warsaw to Auschwitz. You land in Krakow and then you drive to Auschwitz, and then on to Rome. And that was the only governmental transportation that we had on that trip.

I think, in some of those arms control observer groups, we did do visits to American bases in Italy. We visited the Commander in Chief of the Sixth Fleet in Naples, and had lunch with him there, went out on a submarine. We visited a military base, an American army base that was showing us how their beyond-the-horizon artillery and tanks were working. We visited military in the Fulda Gap in Germany and saw the headquarters in Stuttgart. I think it was the Sixth Army in Stuttgart, but I can’t remember for sure. But we did have arms control trips to Geneva and then picked up on armed services trips within Europe, while we were over there.

**Young:** He did say something about the arms control and one of those trips, I guess it was in ’86, was to Geneva. And it was later that year, after that trip, that Reagan and [Mikhail] Gorbachev met.

**Craig:** In Reykjavik?

**Young:** No, in Geneva. That was the first meeting Reagan had, I believe.

**Craig:** I don’t remember.

**Young:** Yes, that was after.

**Craig:** I will tell you—

**Young:** He told funny stories about Kampelman. Max.

**Craig:** He loved Max.

**Young:** You know, having drinks with the Soviet folks and then having a meeting with Max, official briefing. I wish I had gotten to talk to him more about this.

**Craig:** Let me just tell you one story about Geneva. I think it may have been the ’86 trip, you can get the precise date. Suddenly, the CIA was trying to get in touch with Senator Kennedy, and we were in Geneva for these meetings. The only way they had was through me, so they were
calling me to find out how to get to Senator Kennedy, and I said, “Why do you want to talk to Senator Kennedy?” “Well, he is the only person that we know of, who has met and talked with the new Russian Foreign Minister, [Eduard] Shevardnadze.” I said, “Tell me more.” And he said, “Well, when he traveled to Russia and went to Georgia, he spent the day with the head of the Communist Party in Georgia. They had lunch at a vineyard. We just want to find out what he remembers about Shevardnadze.” I said, “Okay, I’ll get him for you, give me a number to call back.”

So I went to tell Senator Kennedy and he said, “Oh, I remember that.” They apparently sat around and drank wine for three hours and had a wonderful time, but he couldn’t pronounce his name. So we had to practice, “Shevardnadze, Shevardnadze, Shevardnadze,” before he went on the phone with the CIA. [laughter] The CIA contacted Senator Kennedy as the only person that the CIA knew who had had any contact or information about Shevardnadze when he became Foreign Minister.

Oh, by the way, there were some Middle Eastern trips.

**Young:** Yes, there were.

**Craig:** Because we did go—I think it was before his reelection campaign.

**Young:** Yes.

**Craig:** Gosh, we did Israel, Jordan and Egypt. I would have said that was in late ’87, early ’88.

**Young:** He went to the Persian Gulf in ’87.

**Craig:** That was the re-flagging operation.

**Young:** Yes, that’s right. And in ’86, to Israel, Jordan, Egypt.

**Craig:** Eighty-six? That’s possible. I still believe the trip to Latin America was ’85. Can you check that? I think in ’85, he did three major trips. He did the South Africa trip, he did the Russia trip and he did the Latin America trip. In ’86, I think you’re right, it was the Middle East, and he did Geneva in ’86 as well.

**Young:** Your trip to Panama was in ’87, it says here.

**Craig:** The trip to Panama was for the Armed Services Committee. It was to visit the Southern Command. It was in January of 1987 and it was not political at all, but it turned into political because when we got down there, we met with the President. We exchanged letters with Noriega. Gabriel Lewis [Galindo] had just gone into exile, and so we met with Gabriel’s brother Sammy [Lewis Navarro], to find out about the political situation with Noriega, and this was at the President’s house. That trip got us into the middle of the Panamanian situation. That was in ’87, you’re right.
There’s another funny story about [Hosni] Mubarak. We had gotten a full briefing from the CIA about the heads of state we were going to be meeting with, including [Yitzhak] Rabin, including Shamir on the Israeli side and then also Mubarak, the President of Egypt.

Young: [Anwar] Sadat was?

Craig: Dead. Mubarak, the CIA said, was slow, rather stupid, didn’t understand the region very well. He was a complete creature of Sadat, he didn’t have good judgment. And then we met with him and we just came away with a completely different take. The CIA just had Mubarak wrong. We had a delightful meeting with Mubarak that lasted a couple of hours. Mubarak had flown all night long to get there in time to meet with Senator Kennedy and Jean, I think was at this meeting.

He was knowledgeable about not only what was going on in the Middle East, but what was going on in American politics. He was knowledgeable about international affairs in a breadth that was unusual. Senator Kennedy said as we came out, “When we get back to Washington, you call the CIA and just tell them that they were wrong about Mubarak.” So we did and the CIA came in and interviewed me and said, “What did you think about Mubarak?” I said, “This is one of the most impressive people I’ve met, this guy knows what he’s doing. He’s going to be around for a long time.” That was what, ’86? He’s still there in 2010.

Young: In general, were your briefings from official, State Department or whatever, Pentagon, were they good briefings or were they sort of obvious or officious?

Craig: When he would travel privately, he did not routinely get the country briefing that you get when you’re traveling as a member of a CODEL [Congressional Delegation trip]. Now, he loved the briefings from Max. He thought that Max Kampelman briefings were just top notch, and I didn’t sit in on those, those were just Senators only, so I can’t tell you. But there was a level of energy and intensity about Max Kampelman that came across. I think Max was wise to share with the Senators what his uncertainties were, what the ambiguities were, what the problems were. I think he was fully disclosing; there was nothing concealed. I doubt that there was any difference between the briefings that he gave President Reagan and the briefings he gave the United States Senate.

The briefings that we got from the military were uniformly impressive, but they were formulaic. You know, you would end up with a PowerPoint presentation, always. He got tired of those, I mean I think those wore thin after 10 or 15 minutes. He really wanted to have a conversation, rather than to be lectured. So although I thought the military was very impressive in the way they presented facts, I think his view was a little different from mine on that. I think he would have said they were—

Young: This was then—by that time it was a change from the Vietnam days.

Craig: Yes, it was an all-military force, he was on the Armed Services.

Young: His briefings were—on his first trip, they were quite misleading.

Craig: In Vietnam. I had no idea what was going on there.
Young: It was—you couldn’t depend on the military.

Craig: Well, I’m trying to figure out where we were getting briefings that might have been slanted. We got briefings, for example, when we went to the Teddy Roosevelt, which was a new aircraft carrier, and they were going through their night exercises. Those briefings were terrific. We had briefings that the Commander in Chief Atlantic—we had briefings that were incredibly impressive. The briefings in SOUTHCOM were pretty good. General [John] Galvin was a very impressive Army General, four-star general, in Panama at the time.

Young: State Department briefings?

Craig: I don’t think we ever got them.

Young: I believe he did get them before, when he went to Moscow.

Craig: That’s true.

Young: In fact, he was almost sort of a back channel.

Craig: And when we did Cuba, I would go in and get full briefings from the Cuba desk, and he would go in and talk to [George] Shultz. And then when I came back from Cuba, both Senator Kennedy and I went in and briefed Shultz about what had happened in Cuba, because there was one occasion when I took a letter from Shultz to [Fidel] Castro, about issues that were going on between the two governments. I don’t think—and, did we get briefings before the trip to the Middle East? No, I think I did those. That trip to the Middle East was filled with constituents. There were a bunch of friends of his from Massachusetts who went with him to Israel and Jordan and Egypt, and when there were heads of states meetings, they didn’t participate. Those were also private trips.

Young: Earlier, before you were on board, he went to Greece and he had friends from Massachusetts.

Craig: Oh, the colonels? Did he take people from Massachusetts? Of course.

Young: Oh, yes, of course. Barbara Souliotis, plus some Greek constituents. [laughter] In ’83, when the arrangement was made for you to join the staff in ’84, had he made his announcement that he was not going to run?

Craig: No.

Young: So that was still in the air at that time.

Craig: When I joined the staff it was still an open issue, as to whether he was going to run for President. It was resolved fairly quickly after that, I think, in February/March of ’84.

Young: I’m trying to think as to whether there was any connection between his activities as a Senator and his agenda and his foreign, domestic agenda.
Craig: In his decision not to run?

Young: No, in his thinking about running. I think he would have liked to be President.

Craig: Oh, you do?

Young: Except for certain intervening events, that would have been his year, I think.

Craig: Eighty-four.

Young: That he would have chosen to run. Ranny Cooper was on the staff when you came.

Craig: I think she arrived a little later. Larry was running the show. She succeeded Larry. That’s my memory.

Young: You were there. What impression do you have of that? What guidance did he get? People are going to be raising this question in the future. People have said different things in general about this. One is that until he got the Presidential aspirations out of his system or it was all over, that is when he really became a Senator, in terms of when he threw himself into his Senate work. I’m not sure they have all the evidence on their side for that, when you look at what he was doing in the Senate beforehand. Another point of view people have raised is if he had wanted to be President, he would have never been doing thus-and-so.

Craig: All the stuff that we did in ’84, he wouldn’t have done, and ’85. I didn’t go to work for him because he was running for the Presidency.

Young: No, that’s obvious. There might have been some others who would have liked to work for a future President.

Craig: No, I went to work for him because of the Armed Services foreign policy job that he was offering me. I was not included in conversations that he was having with his political advisors, so there was Paul Kirk, Carey Parker or Shrum. I wasn’t in that group. When they talked politics, I wasn’t part of that.

Young: But what you were seeing was not a Presidential candidate at work in the Senate.

Craig: No. I was working for a Senator who had, to my delight, a very big appetite for international relations, national security issues, and wanted to be involved on the world stage.

Young: How do you think he came about that appetite? Why was it there? It seems to have started fairly early.

Craig: I think he always had the appetite. When his brother was elected President, he was doing trips. He loved these trips. He was doing trips to Africa. I think he had trips to Africa during the transition in 1960/61.

Young: That’s right. He had an extensive trip to South America.

Craig: And he spent his honeymoon with Joan [Bennett Kennedy] in Chile, I think.
Young: Yes.

Craig: So I think that was always there. He gave speeches all the time about international stuff. I mean when Mark Schneider—I have to tell you, I think it was to a certain extent opportunistic. When there were moments that he could make a difference on an issue that he had some comfort with, he had no hesitancy about going out there and giving a speech or introducing a resolution or meeting with people or running a hearing. He got very comfortable, particularly on human rights issues in our hemisphere, and I think that is largely attributable to the influence and impact that Mark Schneider had on him. Kalitsky was more in the Russian/Horowitz world. I wasn’t in that world at all and was not allowed in that world. I mean, Horowitz didn’t want to have any second voice talking to Senator Kennedy about that.

I will tell you, when the Harvard people were organizing through Graham Allison meetings with the Russians and the Americans and the Cubans, who all participated in the missile crisis, I had worked out with them for John [Kennedy] Jr. to go to the session that was going to be in Moscow. I talked to John about it and put him in touch with the people at Harvard, and he was very excited about going over and sitting in the room and listening to the conversations between the people who were making decisions. [Robert] McNamara was still alive then, [McGeorge] Bundy was not, but there were a lot of people that were from his father’s administration. I had set that all up and John said, “You’d better tell my uncle about this.” I said, “You’re right,” and so I called Senator Kennedy and he said, “Well, I’m not so sure about this, we’ve got a lot of things going on, on our own, let me talk to Larry.” And Larry just killed it.

Now that, to me, was a gratuitous and ill-advised decision that was a part of Larry’s view of Edward M. Kennedy as a wasting asset. He saw it as a zero sum game. If Senator Kennedy expended political capital in this way or another member of the family did, it would diminish his ability to do other things. Now, I saw that precisely the opposite way. I saw it as a multiplier effect. The more Senator Kennedy did, if it was done well and organized well and there was a purpose to it and it had some policy implications, the more effective he became. I had a completely different view. I think, by the way—I shouldn’t go any farther on this.

My view is that Senator Kennedy was at his best when he was uninhibited and confident in being able to speak the way he felt and say what he believed, and that when people surrounded him, making him feel as though he was on thin ice at any given moment, he could embarrass himself or he would humiliate himself or wasn’t up to the job, which some people did on a regular basis, that did enormous damage to his effectiveness. And one of the greatest things Vicki Kennedy ever did for Edward M. Kennedy was to release him from his own sense of inadequacy, and allow him to be much more comfortable with himself.

Young: Not having to prove himself.

Craig: No. And not having to cover things up or not having to be crabbed in dealing, or controlled, you’re actually much more spontaneous. What he thought, what he said and what he did was not something to hide from people, it was to show people. That was my attitude towards Edward M. Kennedy. I thought the more you saw of him, the more you liked him, and other people had the views that there was the potential—I’ll give you an example.
I was asked to describe to the press some of the arrangements that we were doing in South Africa. Would the Senator be walking up the hill to visit the people on the top of the hill, or something like that. And I said, “No, he’s got a bad back and he’s not going to be walking that distance.” The office was flabbergasted that I would reveal that Senator Kennedy had a bad back. That office, when I joined that office, was overwhelmingly concerned that secrets be maintained and that there be a total control over disclosure about Edward M. Kennedy’s life. I just had a different view of it.

Young: Well, it’s understandable, how they might have come to that institutional viewpoint.

Craig: I understand it. There were clearly parts of his life that were private, that didn’t need to be discussed in the public, but I mean by and large, the more confidence he got, the better he was as a Senator. I saw him, between the time I first got to know him, and up to his very last days, grow in self-confidence. By the time he died, he was comfortable talking and doing anything with everybody. But when I first started working for him, he was terribly self-conscious and insecure, I think. So he grew enormously in the last 25 years of his life.

Young: You know, in the course of my own five years, just in the context of interviewing him for oral history, I could see the same thing.

Craig: Yes, it’s true.

Young: That is the arc.

Craig: It is, and he improved. His ability to connect—

Young: In one interview I’d say, “Wasn’t that fun? You know, I’m not grading you.” [laughter]

Craig: He did have fun, he really did, and that was part of his gift. Okay, what else? I don’t know how much I can talk about working for him after my staff work, because a lot of it was legal.

Young: Well, no, I don’t need any of the legal stuff, I need the political. After you left the staff, you were still pretty close to him.

Craig: Yes. Actually, I got closer and closer after I left.

Young: What were the things you and he worked together on and discussed? And that would include, as the election approached, the political.

Craig: The Obama thing, if that’s what you’re asking about.

Young: Yes.

Craig: The Obama thing, it’s very interesting because unlike Nick or Ranny or some of the other people who were involved in politics, I didn’t feel that I had to go call up Senator Kennedy and get his permission to get involved in Presidential politics. If I saw someone that I really was enthusiastic about, I felt free to go do it. I was independently in favor of John Kerry. It wasn’t
because Edward M. Kennedy supported John Kerry. It was because I knew John Kerry, I knew I could be of assistance to John Kerry, and so I worked with John Kerry. As you may know, I was George Bush to John Kerry in the debate prep.

Young: Yes.

Craig: So that when I, sitting with George Stevens, came to the conclusion that this young Senator from Illinois was someone that I thought should be President of the United States, I didn’t go tell Senator Kennedy that. I think I had long conversations with Nick and Jenny [Littlefield] about it and said, “This guy is phenomenal, this guy is what we’ve been hoping for, I think he will inspire people generationally, as well as some of us older folks.” But they were waiting to see what Senator Kennedy was going to do and they had great reservations because they thought that Hillary [Clinton] had it locked up.

The only conversation I had with Ted Kennedy about Obama was when I wrote the letter. I called up Vicki. It had been in the public press that I had been involved in the Obama campaign, was supporting Obama, and this was before Iowa. And then he won Iowa and I was up in New Hampshire, and then I was down in South Carolina and I was headed towards Nevada.

I was on my way to Nevada and we had won in Iowa, we had lost in New Hampshire. Between New Hampshire and South Carolina, there was a bunch of stuff that Bill Clinton did and some of the Clinton people did, that I thought was playing the race card in a negative way, trying to get whites to vote on the basis of race in South Carolina. So I called up Vicki and I said, “I am now getting pissed off about the Clinton campaign and I’m about to write a letter to Senator Kennedy.” She said, “Now is the time to do it.” So Vicki encouraged me to write a letter.

I had a client in Colorado that I was preparing for a deposition, and he said, “I ski every morning, so my deposition preparation will be from 1:00 to 6:00 every afternoon.” This was in Aspen. So one morning, I wrote a letter to Edward M. Kennedy, telling him why I was supporting Obama and why I thought he should, and that it was consistent with what his family represented to the country. I sent it back to my office, who then put it on my letterhead and hand-delivered it to Tracy Place. He then called me right away, and he said, “I have this conversation coming up with President Clinton. I just got your letter, it’s a wonderful letter, thank you so much, can I show it to Caroline [Kennedy Schlossberg]?” I said, “Absolutely, it’s yours.” And he said, “I have this difficult conversation that’s coming up with President Clinton, would you put down some talking points or go over—if you could just take a few minutes. What do you think the Clinton people have done that has been off base and you think over the line?” I said, “I’ll do it in a minute.”

And I did. I sat down and it took me three seconds to put together maybe five or six, seven points, talking about the people that were in the campaign, including [Jeanne] Shaheen up in New Hampshire, who had to resign, including Bill Clinton in South Carolina, who had compared him to Jesse Jackson. There were about five things. The head of the black network had said something about his history on the streets with drugs, and he made some reference to Obama’s background. So I put this together and immediately got it to Senator Kennedy, and then I went on my way. I was in the Nevada headquarters when Caroline called me and she said, “I’m thinking of doing something.”
Young: This was in November or December?

Craig: It was before he endorsed.

Young: Yes. He endorsed in January.

Craig: Gosh, you know, I’d have to look at the precise dates. My sense is it was before Iowa. He endorsed before Iowa. Are you sure it wasn’t December? Because Iowa was very early in January, so I think it was November or December of 2007 that he endorsed at American University. I was at that event.

Young: It was in January. I had an interview with him either in December or in January, before that endorsement, and I think it may have been November.

Craig: So I can tell you it was after Iowa, it was after New Hampshire, it was after South Carolina, because I was in Nevada when I talked to Caroline. So it was after Nevada. There were these first four very early ones that were critical, and then the next thing was Super Tuesday. What I can remember is having a conversation with him about the Bill Clinton telephone conversation.

Young: After he had had them or before?

Craig: Before he had the Bill Clinton conversation, with a bill of particulars of what the Clinton people had done that was objectionable to him. The letter that I wrote to him was between South Carolina and Nevada. The telephone conversation I had with Caroline was while I was in the state headquarters in Nevada, in Las Vegas, at about 6:00 in the morning my time, and so it must have been 9:00. She said it was Jack’s birthday, so she had to—we talked for about 45 minutes. And then they called me, I think it was the day before they announced that they were going to endorse Obama, maybe a Thursday? And I went off and got a bottle of champagne and a bunch of balloons, and I took them down and delivered them to the house with one of my kids, and the house was filled up with the Kennedy brain trust. Ranny was there, and I think Shrum was there. They were working on a speech for American University.

So, my communications with him were limited to my conversation with him about Bill Clinton and the anticipated phone call, and my letter to him, which he sent to Caroline, which caused her to call me. And then I had a long conversation with Caroline, which I’m sure just went right back to him, because they were very much working together at that point.

Young: Listening to the buzz, or whatever, when did you sense that Kennedy was leaning toward or moving toward Obama?

Craig: I have no idea. I wasn’t taking anybody’s pulse.

Young: He wasn’t saying anything.

Craig: I wasn’t taking the pulse. The only thing I knew was that I had called Vicki to say that I was really pissed off at how the Clintons were handling things, and I was going to—look, I had not intruded on Senator Kennedy’s life. I had not presumed to advise him politically. I knew that
he had his own considerations. I knew that the Clintons had been marvelous to him when they had been President, in the White House, and that I wasn’t going to be putting myself in a position with my friendship with Senator Kennedy of making it all about politics. I never raised the Obama issue with Kennedy until that period of time between New Hampshire and South Carolina. And then I talked to Vicki and she encouraged me. So as a result of that, I wrote the letter. I think the letter had an impact. I think actually, he told me that the letter had an impact and Caroline did, too.

I think Patrick [Kennedy] got a copy of the letter. I had a long conversation with Patrick. Senator Kennedy asked me to talk to Patrick, and I had breakfast with Patrick about it, because he had signed on to Hillary already. We met at the Mayflower and had breakfast, and I explained to him why I was so excited about Obama and what I thought he could mean for the country. And so I think Patrick changed course.

Craig: And spoke at length at the endorsement.

Young: Well, he certainly had a few words to say, yes. Were you there? Have you ever seen it?

Young: Oh, yes, I’ve seen it on film.

Craig: On television. It was one of the great moments in American politics.

Young: You know, he did share with me his notes of these conversations.

Craig: With Clinton?

Young: And others. In fact, I was present at some of them but not with Clinton. He hadn’t called during the interview.

Craig: Did Obama call during the interview?

Young: No, others involved. I interviewed Obama himself about this a couple of weeks ago, two or three weeks ago. It was kind of an unprecedented thing for him, for Ted to do, to come out in a primary season for one of the Presidential candidates.

Craig: It wasn’t unprecedented in that he had done the same thing with John Kerry. I mean he carried John Kerry through Iowa, but that’s different because John Kerry is another Senator from Massachusetts. So 2004 was different. Senator Kennedy did not get in the [Albert, Jr.] Gore versus Bradley thing in 2000 at all, I don’t think. He did get in the John Kerry, he did get in the Obama. In ’96, Clinton was running for reelection, there was no role for Senator Kennedy. In ’92, did Senator Kennedy get involved in the Presidential? I don’t think he did, no. He only got involved in 2004 because of John Kerry. He certainly was involved in [Michael] Dukakis in ’88, but he was running for reelection in ’88 himself, so I don’t think he spent a lot of time with Mike Dukakis in the primaries.

Young: It is said that he made a principle of not endorsing, formally endorsing a candidate while the nomination campaigns were going on, that he did not intervene in primaries.
Craig: Well, that certainly wasn’t true in 2004.

Young: That was an exception. Certainly, Obama was an exception.

Craig: Right. In 2000, he did not.

Young: I’m talking about all the Presidential campaigns going way back. I don’t know whether it’s true or not, at least when making formal announcements. Did you have any business in the Senate, when you were on the staff, with Kerry’s office?

Craig: John Kerry? I did, yes.

Young: What kinds of issues?

Craig: Mostly foreign-policy-related issues. John was very much interested in that bank, oh, what’s the name of that bank? There were two things that John was interested in. One had to do with to what extent was there evidence to suggest that the contra activities were involved. He had hearings on this and there was someone from the Vice President’s office who had been involved in perhaps allegations of drug smuggling that was used to finance the contras. I helped him prepare for an examination of a witness, I think his name was Martinez¹, I can’t remember, in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that he was pursuing.

But there was also this Saudi Arabia bank (BCCI) that was a complete fraud that he was conducting an investigation of, which I helped with as a trial lawyer, gathering evidence and putting together a case. I helped him with that. His staffer was Jonathan Winer and that was the only thing I had to do with that. Kerry wanted some advice about how to help with South African stuff, and so I helped him write a speech on the floor of the Senate, about South Africa, but that’s about all. That was pretty much it. He was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we weren’t, so he was much more plugged into what was going on institutionally. We were running our own little operation.

By the end of the day, as I said, we had Nancy Soderberg doing stuff for us, we had Trina Vargo doing Ireland for us, and we had Jim Steinberg and Bill Lynn doing Armed Services stuff for us. It was a pretty good staff, the national security staff in Senator Kennedy’s office. I didn’t work that much with John Kerry. I worked more, probably, with Senator Dodd’s office, because Senator Dodd’s staffers were much more engaged in hemispheric stuff, where we were working; Chile, Nicaragua, Salvador, Panama. Janice O’Connell became a very close friend.

Young: Yes. Dodd had served in the Peace Corps.

Craig: In the Dominican Republic, I think, DR. So that’s pretty much it.

Young: I think the Byrd/Kennedy relationship was quite a story.

Craig: Hasn’t been told.

Young: I don’t think it’s been told at all. I had a long interview with Senator Byrd early on, and I’ll say something about that after the tape is off.

Craig: We will talk about it after the taping, but that was my perception, that during that four-year period, there was an inflexion in the relationship and it was, I think, largely because these conservative Democrats from the South were running against Byrd for leadership positions.

Young: I haven’t dated it. I couldn’t date it and this is very helpful from that perspective, which nobody has talked about. Where they started and where they ended up.

Craig: Quite a story.

Young: And what a story that is. Some day, somebody’s going to write a book about Kennedy and Byrd, they’ve got to. [laughter] I won’t be around.

Craig: There is a wonderful story about Byrd and his staff, on the day of the vote for the Martin Luther King national holiday. It was not self-evident that that was going to pass. It was something that Senator Kennedy cared enormously about and Senator Byrd is reported to have said to his staff that morning, “I’ve done what I had to do for Ted. I made the time, put it on the schedule. Now I’ve got to decide how I’m going to vote.

“I don’t owe anything more to Ted Kennedy,” said Byrd, according to his staff. So he went around the staff and the staff was all intimidated by Byrd, they didn’t know what his thinking was. You know, even though he came from a border state, it didn’t like black people, and so they were advising caution, and he didn’t have to vote for this, it wouldn’t hurt him at home at all. And at the end of this conversation, I am told, Byrd just lit into every single one of them. He said, “Not one of you people has the courage to tell me what I have to do. I am the one Senator in this body that has to vote for this holiday, and no one here has the courage to tell me that. I have to vote for this.” Isn’t that a great story?

Young: That’s a wonderful story. What do you have to say about the characteristics that Kennedy had that distinguished him from so many other people in the Senate or in political life?

Craig: Gosh, there’s so much. I think the first quality that set him apart from everybody else I’ve ever worked with in public policy is that he really loved what he was doing more than almost anybody I’ve ever been involved with. He loved going to work, he loved working in the Senate. He loved the Senate and the people in the Senate and it showed. He worked very hard when he had to work and I never heard him grumble or complain or moan. When Tim Wirth left with this speech on the floor of the Senate decrying the qualities of the institution, Senator Kennedy was very tough on Wirth for doing that. He just couldn’t understand it. And I think this was not something that he had to overcome. This was something in his blood that he loved this institution and he loved his job. So that’s the first thing. If you have to do stuff that you don’t like to do, it shows, and you’re likely not to be very good at it.

The second quality is the loyalty that he showed to his friends, to his family and to his staff. It was huge, and I’ve never seen that in any other political leader, including the President or
including—except his close friends like John Culver. The quality of his loyalty. Third, I think no one had a better sense of humor or loved to laugh more than Ted Kennedy. That’s a hugely important quality. I think that’s a powerful weapon in a way, because people love to laugh and people forgive a lot, and I think Senator Kennedy had that.

Those are three things. I will tell you that I’m not sure he would have been a great President. I think he was clearly a great Senator, and a legislator requires different things than an executive, and he was a master at that. So I think those three qualities. He loved what he did, he was loyal to his friends and his supporters and to his staff and his family, and he had a great sense of humor. You’ve heard him tell stories, I mean there’s no raconteur on the face of the planet that could tell stories the way he told stories.

Young: And he could act them out.

Craig: Oh, yes.

Young: This is something I noticed in interviewing a lot of people, they could tell stories but they couldn’t relive the stories.

Craig: Oh, he brought you right into what is going on right at that moment. John Culver can do that. John Culver is the only other person, I think, who tells a story—It’s a little bit like Bill Cosby. Bill Cosby makes you laugh without ever really having a punch line. It’s the situation that he is reacting to as he tells the story, that’s John Culver’s style.

Young: Well, that’s John Culver, but it’s a little bit different from Ted.

Craig: It is a little different.

Young: He could be anybody. I mean, he had the accent.

Craig: He was a mime, he was a great mime.

Young: This is going to confuse some of the people who read the interviews with him, when they come out because—

Craig: You can’t see.

Young: What is this, what’s he talking about? So he’s now doing this person, now he’s doing that person, but it doesn’t show which person he’s doing.

Craig: That’s right. Well, you know, I used to kid him that English wasn’t his mother tongue. I come out of a law firm with some of the greatest lawyers in the legal profession. My senior partner is Edward Bennett Williams and when he calls me on the phone, it’s crisp, it’s succinct, it’s clear, I know exactly what he wants me to do and when he wants me to do it and what the assignment is.

One of the first communications I had with Senator Kennedy when I went on his staff, on the very first day I was there, my first call from Ted Kennedy, I did not understand a single thing he
was saying. It was all in—and the topic, he didn’t identify the topic. He didn’t use a subject and a verb and a predicate. It was words that were sort of strung together and I didn’t have the courage at that point to say, “Senator, I’m sorry, I don’t have a clue what you’re saying.”

I said, “Okay, okay, okay.” I went back in and I said to Horowitz, “Larry, I just had a conversation with the Senator and I don’t know what he was calling me about, can you help me?” It was because he was—it was spontaneous and it came out sometimes—[snaps fingers]. Thereafter, I could fill in the verbs and sort of finish the sentences for him because I knew him so well, but he was not a clear and crisp and concise speaker, unless he was reading speeches or telling a story.

Young: He knew what the topic was.

Craig: He certainly did and he knew exactly what he wanted me to do. I could almost recreate the fragments. I told that story to Nick and he said, “I know exactly what you’re talking about. ‘Go touch, maybe you ought to, on that part.’” I mean, 17 different things, and I hadn’t a clue what he was talking about.

Young: How did it change your life, to have worked for him? What did you take away from this experience? Not necessarily how it changed your life, but what did you get out of those six years?

Craig: Well, I was really grateful to have had it. The one other quality of Senator Kennedy that I think all the people who worked with him on his staff appreciated was his trust of his staff. He gave us enormous authority, and I think he was well served by doing that, because I don’t think the staff really ever embarrassed him. And the staff, of course, had the reputation for being the best staff in the Senate for 40-odd years, and that’s one of the greatnesses of Ted Kennedy. He was sufficiently comfortable in his own skin that he didn’t feel as though he had to be on top of every issue. He really used staff well.

Young: He’d be on top of every issue personally, I mean, to do his own thing.

Craig: Right. He got on top of it, but the way he got on top of it was to use his staff people very effectively. And then he became better and better and better, and he got better prepared than anybody on the floor of the Senate. He would be on top of it, but I’m saying that as he got ready for this, whatever it was, a speech or a vote or a hearing, he really relied on his staff and gave us authority and trusted us to do stuff in his name and on his behalf.

I came away feeling really empowered by that experience, because I felt as though I had worked with one of the great men in the government, and that I had more freedom than I probably would ever have, and that certainly is true. You had more freedom as a staffer for someone like Senator Edward M. Kennedy than you ever had in the Executive Branch. In the Executive Branch, you cannot do nearly as much as I was able to do with Edward M. Kennedy, on his staff.

That’s another conversation, another story but it was a hugely gratifying experience in that my sense of making a difference—the itch everyone has about wanting to make a difference in the world—got scratched working for Senator Kennedy, in areas that I cared really a lot about,
whether it was apartheid or human rights in Central America or nonproliferation. He made my life meaningful.

Young: You said something to this effect earlier, that in some strange way, the Senate was in this man’s blood.

Craig: Yes, I would agree with that.

Young: And we talk about judicial temperament, we talk about being Presidential, but it seems to me there’s something that should be called a Senate temperament. This was his work.

Craig: That’s right.

Young: This is what Jack did, and Bobby did that.

Craig: This was Teddy’s.

Young: This is me. He very much made himself into this, made his own life, I think. It’s a really remarkable achievement, to even keep the confidence of his electorate, repeated votes of confidence.

Craig: It was close, on occasion.

Young: Well, it turned out okay.

Craig: It did but, boy, ’94.

Young: Were you involved in the—were you into the ’94?

Craig: Ninety-four was the scariest. I was involved in it only because I had done Palm Beach with him. I was his lawyer during the Palm Beach thing. That was feeding into the ’94 campaign. I was involved in the ’88 campaign, which was not—I mean, that was 66, 67 percent. We were all scared of ’94, because of Mitt [Romney]. And it was also, it was pre-Vicki.

Young: No. Vicki was on that campaign.

Craig: Was she on that campaign?


Craig: Oh, well then, that explains how he probably won.

Young: Pre-Vicki and post-Vicki, I think is interesting. And valid.

Craig: It sure is.

Young: Vicki has been a very good friend of this project. She’s been helpful with him.

Craig: We all owe a lot to her.
Young: Was he instrumental in getting you to leave the State Department and help Clinton out?

Craig: No.

Young: He recommended you, didn’t he, to some of Clinton’s folks?

Craig: I don’t know. He may have, I don’t know. I don’t know exactly how that happened. The way it happened to me was I got a call from John Podesta, from the White House, saying, “You ought to know that your name is being discussed over here.” And I said, “With respect to what?” This was in August, just a little bit after the grand jury testimony.

You remember that four-minute speech that Clinton gave that was so bad? He [Podesta] called up and said, “We are thinking about having someone come over and coordinate activities between the political people and the legal people and the communications people, and you’re the one person who knows the whole legal team, knows the political people and knows the Hill, and you’d be perfect to do this.” And I said, “You know, John, I’m very happy doing the policy planning work for the Secretary of State and don’t let the President call me, because I don’t want to say no to the President.” I said that to him three times, and then the third time he called, which was maybe around Labor Day, I said, “All right, now look, this is called tampering in professional sports, and I don’t feel even that I can have a conversation with you about this again until I talk to the Secretary of State, because I’m someone who travels with her and she relies on me, and if I’m thinking about even having a conversation with the White House about going over there, I’ve got to talk to her.”

So I went and I talked to Madeleine [Albright] and she said, “Do you think you can help?” This was when we were headed toward impeachment. I don’t think Senator Kennedy was in the middle of this at all, as far as I knew. He may have been in the back door in the White House, but I didn’t see it.

Young: He was. Well, I don’t know with the White House, certainly with Clinton.

Craig: He mentioned me to Clinton?

Young: I don’t know that he mentioned you to Clinton but I know that Clinton was calling him a lot.

Craig: During the impeachment or just before the impeachment?

Young: In the House, you mean?

Craig: No. The period of time that I worked for the President was September of ’98 through the vote in the Senate of February, ’99. So I didn’t go over—and the President gave his grand jury testimony in August, so my conversations with the White House began in August. I went over on September 15 and stayed until—

Young: After the House had acted?
Craig: No, the House didn’t act until December 19, 1998. The trial in the Senate was in January/February of ’99, where I saw Senator Kennedy every day during that period.

Young: Well, certainly Ted was on Clinton’s call list early on, but I don’t know whether he mentioned you or not. It was pretty clear, I think, that Clinton needed some help in how to deal with the political aspects. I had to read what was going on in the House and then in the Senate. Clinton had his own strategy in mind, but it was not a winning strategy.

Craig: You’re telling me? [laughter] His strategy, he was relying on John Breaux. John Breaux told him the story about Huey Long. Have you heard this story?

Young: No, I have not.

Craig: God. Clinton would be on the phone every night talking to people, and one of his favorite people to talk to was John Breaux. And John Breaux said, “You know, the way Huey Long dealt with this is that he got 40 members of the Louisiana State Senate to sign a letter saying that they would never vote for impeachment under any circumstances. It killed it, because you needed two-thirds and if you had 40 saying they’d never do it, then that was the way it was.”

Clinton loved that idea, so he started calling around. He called Dodd, I think he called three or four people, and Robert Byrd got word of this and went straight to the floor of the Senate and said, “I’m hearing reports that the President of the United States is making calls, to try to tell United States Senators how they should vote on the question of impeachment. Do not tamper with this jury!” [laughter] It was like that. Do you remember that?

Young: Yes.

Craig: Oh, man, I thought, We’ve lost Byrd already and we haven’t even been impeached yet. That was Clinton’s strategy. It was a terrible strategy.

Young: He certainly pushed it. So I think Ted said, “He needs to be taught that this isn’t a realistic strategy.”

Craig: “Do not tamper with this jury!”

Young: Well, I guess there’s a lot more you could talk about, but this has been a wonderful interview.

Craig: Thank you very much. I enjoyed it.

Young: It’s very rich.

Craig: It brings back memories. I’ve got to say that that five-year period was certainly intense. I had forgotten exactly how much we did on the international side and on military. I mean, we didn’t even get into some of the military stuff. He had hearings on the new generation of submarines. He had hearings on the wisdom of appropriating funds for two new aircraft carriers. We did the re-flagging. We were over there and—
Young: You went over there at Christmas, actually.

Craig: It was just before Christmas.

Young: Well, the Christmas holidays and on these barges.

Craig: Yes, you’ve heard that story?

Young: Yes.

Craig: It was unbelievable.

Young: And Jerry built a communication system that connected—

Craig: That must have all come from me.

Young: It must have.

Craig: Because I was the only one on that trip, I think.

Young: Or maybe somebody else told me, you’ve got to ask Greg Craig about this, because this is what happened.

Craig: It was unbelievable. If they’d been defense contractors, they would have made multiple billions of dollars, because they had—

Young: These are Navy guys.

Craig: The Navy guys were in the frigates that were circling the two barges to protect them, to set up a perimeter. This is up at the very northern part of the Gulf, the Persian Gulf.

Young: And Iraq.

Craig: And on your right to the east is Iran and up to your north is Iraq.

Young: And this was during the war.

Craig: Yes, during the war between Iraq and Iran, and they were attacking tankers. I think it was Iraqi Air Force more than the Iranian Air Force at that time. This was an early warning system, but there was air traffic coming from our aircraft carriers, off of the coast, off of Oman. And the question was how would the people on the barges talk to the fliers? If you recall, in the invasion of Grenada, an American military guy, I think it was an American Army paratrooper who had come into Grenada, could not communicate with the Navy ships offshore, had to call the Pentagon on a pay phone in order to coordinate with the naval ships that were just offshore.

What happened was that they had developed, on these barges, a system whereby they could communicate with the Air Force guys as they were going overhead, without having to go back into some United States Air Force switchboard. They could just talk. That was a breakthrough, they were very proud of that. I don’t know who was in charge of the communications on those
barges, but it was the Marine Corps that was running the barges. The Army was running the helicopters, and the Navy was responsible for security. There may have been Air Force guys on the barges who were running the communications. That could have been it, because everybody was trying to get a part of that action, so they may have put Air Force guys on there. I don’t think that kind of intercommunications network had ever been established before.

We went up there on Christmas morning. We had Christmas Eve on the Okinawa, and Christmas morning ten feet above the Persian Gulf, going 180 miles an hour straight north, on these helicopters. It was pretty exciting.

**Young:** Why were you there at that time?

**Craig:** He was the chairman of the subcommittee on—

**Young:** I mean why December, why the day before Christmas?

**Craig:** He had this Horowitz idea of when the Kennedys go at Christmas, they go to places where people are in need of help. And so for many Christmases, Senator Kennedy and members of his family would go to a feeding station in Mekele. This was another Christmas.

**Young:** The troops, they were—

**Craig:** He was meeting the troops. He was the chairman of the subcommittee that was responsible for that region of the world. That was his area of responsibility. The subcommittee was Force Projection and Regional Defense, and in that subcommittee, he had all the Marine Corps programs, he had all the Special Operations programs. He had the Southern Command, he had the Central Command, which as you know is that Middle Eastern region that now includes Afghanistan. He had the transportation command, which was the airlift and the sealift, which was a huge part of the budget. And all of this activity in the re-flagging operation fell within his jurisdiction, so he went out there over Christmas.

I think we spent four or five days. We were in Kuwait, we were in Bahrain, we were in Oman, and we were on the New Jersey, which was a battleship. We spent Christmas Eve in the Okinawa, and met with a bunch of Marines. Frank Libutti was the Commanding Officer in the Marines. Then we went up that next morning really, really early, at the crack of dawn, to have a Christmas mass at each one of those two barges. Senator Kennedy fired a 50-calibre machine gun on Christmas morning. [laughter]

**Young:** I hope the warring parties were aware this wasn’t a new action.

**Craig:** No, he was just—I mean, we were out in the middle of a—

**Young:** I mean, gunfire sounding across the water.

**Craig:** I think they were far enough away that they didn’t hear the gunfire.

**Young:** He was very much more involved also, in other military affairs, wasn’t he? Family.
**Craig:** Oh, the Military Family Act of 1986. When he was on the subcommittee on personnel and manpower, that was when we were in the minority and that was ’84, ’85, ’86.

**Young:** He’s not generally known to have been a person supportive of the military.

**Craig:** You know, I just had breakfast with Sam Nunn’s staff director, who is an old Marine guy, the other day and he said, “Senator Kennedy’s staff, we knew that they had one instruction from Senator Kennedy and that was to support the troops.” He was very complimentary of Senator Kennedy’s role and performance as a member of the Armed Services Committee. His name is Arnold Punaro.

**Young:** That’s all been forgotten.

**Craig:** It’s all forgotten. Quality of life for the troops and for the families, he cared enormously about, and that felt like it fit. It was one of that collection of issues that were pure Kennedy, having to do with health care for the troops and their families, spousal employment, education for the kids. It fell right smack-dab into his wheelhouse. It was really perfect for him.

**Young:** And then later, body armor, that fit into his—

**Craig:** That was after I left.

**Young:** Yes, I know.

**Craig:** The Iraqi stuff. I did talk to him about Iraq and what position he should take on the resolution. He had already made up his mind. He didn’t like it, wasn’t going to support it, had gotten enough from the military people to convince him that it made no sense. So by the time he called me up and said, “Do you want to come in and talk about it?” I said, “You know, I don’t know as much as—”

I was in private practice at the time. That was 2002/2003. Those were great speeches, those Iraq speeches. I went to every one of them and I think he was very proud of those speeches, too.

Okay, I could just go on forever.

**Young:** I’ll turn this off.