

Ralph A. Dungan, Oral History Interview – 12/9/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: Ralph A. Dungan

Interviewer: Larry J. Hackman

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Biographical Note

Dungan was a staff assistant to Senator John F. Kennedy (JFK) from 1956-1960; special assistant to the President from 1961-1964; and Ambassador to Chile from 1964-1967. In this interview he discusses Theodore C. Sorensen's role and personality during the Senate years; Dungan's work on the Senate Labor Committee, the Landrum-Griffin Act, and JFK's relationship with labor leaders; and the 1960 presidential campaign including the primaries in West Virginia and Oregon and the 1960 Democratic National Convention, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

Ralph A. Dungan

December 9, 1967
Princeton, New Jersey

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

DUNGAN: I want to talk about first how I came really into the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] operation. It was through Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] whom I knew socially and I think, as I recall, met first at the home of Bill Welsh [William B. Welsh], and old close friend of mine who was at that time an assistant to Senator Lehman [Herbert H. Lehman] of New York. We saw Ted and Camilla [Camilla Palmer] several times among a group of young professionals in Washington. And I'd say maybe six months or so after I first met him, maybe a year, he gave me a ring and wanted me to consider coming up and joining the Kennedy staff

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as their guy on the Government Operations Committee. At that time it was under McClellan [John L. McClellan], and I guess still is. I walked around that one a little bit and decided, you know, I didn't.... That was dominated by a very unsavory character—that is, the staff of the committee. I was kind of going to be Kennedy's spy. That really didn't excite me at all even though I was quite bored down in the Budget Bureau at that time under the Eisenhower Administration [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. So finally he called again in another year or so. This time it was a job in the office as a legislative assistant, and it didn't take me very long to decide that that was a good idea. So, as I recall, it was sometime in late November, early December 1956 when I went up and joined them. Lee White [Lee C. White] moved on from that job down to the Small Business Committee. His reasons for leaving the office were

never very explicit, but it became quite clear after my first

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six months in the office why that happened. Lee and I used to—we talked about it, not a heck of a lot, but enough to make me feel confident that my own assessment of the situation was an accurate one, or at least one that he shared. This relates a little bit to the personality of Sorensen and his relationship to the President at that time. He was a pretty young guy, as you know, at that time and was very edgy about his relationship. In fact, I would say that all the way through, certainly to a lesser degree as he went into the White House and the more mature years, I would guess that Sorensen always had a feeling of insecurity. He was an insecure guy in many ways. In any event, in the office itself in the Senate it was not a very pleasant working experience for the second guy. The President let him—which was his way of doing things anyway, not to get directly involved because

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you had one fellow responsible and that fellow was responsible for others—so the President let him go ahead and hire. He hired me, and subsequently Feldman [Myer Feldman] and Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] and all of them. Well, in any event, in those days in the office the difficulty of having any kind of a direct relationship with John Kennedy was great, not because Kennedy was particularly averse to it, although he was not the kind that was given to sitting around and palavering. There were, you know, business things—sitting on a committee. I had some of those, particularly in the early days. One of the first things he did after I arrived was made some major pronouncements on the Middle East resolution at that time. And because I had been working very closely with related material downtown, I was able to be of some help. Mostly I picked up a lot of the Massachusetts stuff, though, and a lot of, as it

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turned out, the major substantive legislative stuff that he was working on because Sorensen was active on the speeches and the broader political strategy business. There were only two of us working on substantive things. Then there was Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.], who, you know, always would want to try to preserve a pleasant relationship within the office but didn't have much time for Ted [Sorensen], who respected him as an intellectual and so forth, but he was not Ted's kind of guy, Ted Reardon's kind of guy.

In any event, the reasons White left were because life was not very pleasant in that office for the second guy; and really that's, I guess, the basic reason I left when I did, in whenever it was...

HACKMAN: '57.

DUNGAN: '57, I think, yes. Late '57, when I left in the sense of going over to the subcommittee. It was a very convenient way for me to solve a

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situation inside the office which was fairly tense because of the Sorensen relationship, or lack thereof, and at the same time be fully involved, in a sense more fully involved, with the Senate or—and, incidentally, a little bit more money which was important to me at that time because of a growing family.

So, that's how it happened. And then Sorensen and I both looked over Feldman. We were having lunch one day, the three of us, and the purpose of the whole thing was—he had had a contact with Feldman, or, several—the purpose was for me to take a look at him and say, you know, “Do you think there's anything the matter?” which there wasn't, certainly. Feldman had a much higher tolerance for the kind of junk that Ted was very capable of giving out than either White or myself or a lot of other people subsequently who had a much, much lower tolerance. And Ted's kind of oppressive personality became more pronounced as time went on. Then time got shorter, and he had less time for even the

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minimum amount of social intercourse.

HACKMAN: What do you mean when you say the type of junk he gave out?

DUNGAN: Well, his sharpness of manner, his brusqueness, just plain impolite. He was not the warmest, nor is he the warmest human being that ever walked down the pike. And in a working situation this became very difficult for everybody, I mean the stenographers and the professionals and everybody. When you work as closely, physically closely as we did in that very cramped little office—you know, hell, I was no more than three feet away from him and we might go for hours without any kind of communication. He had great powers of concentration and so forth. I guess really the one thing that bothered me most that I haven't told many people was an incident one day that really—perhaps I shouldn't make so much of it, but for me it was very, very telling. One day the Senator came roaring into the back office, yelling like hell about something,

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I even forget the substance of the issue, directing his fire at me. And I didn't say anything. I hadn't touched the damned issue. It was Sorensen who had worked on it. He just sat right there and let me take the whole heat without ever saying, “It wasn't him, it was me.” And I figured at that point whatever happened along the line, if it in any way impaired his relationship with the principal, Sorensen would pitch anybody over. It seemed to me that was borne out by subsequent events, and a lot of other people thought that same thing. So our relationship ever since that time has been very good, but always I've kept it at a distance. It got a little complicated I must say now, looking back on it, as it was quite clear that he and Camilla were becoming further apart. And I could see the effect of the strain of the office and the whole presidential and senatorial effort—pressing, pressing, pressing. Sorensen's great

mistake as a human being, I would say, is that

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he pitched over everything to John Kennedy, and it's a great tragedy in many ways, I think. I think it further distorted his own personality, he screwed up his own personal life, and I don't know. I don't know.

HACKMAN: What could you tell in that period about the relationship between then Senator Kennedy and Sorensen, their personal relationship?

DUNGAN: Well, this is the period in which—and I suspect, if not by design, certainly by instinct—the way Sorensen was getting, it was very close, as close as anybody had in a business way with Kennedy. I'm sure in your other interviews the one element of Kennedy that comes through so clearly, throughout all the period I knew him anyway, was his capacity to compartmentalize. This is one thing, incidentally, that Sorensen, I think, never really could quite adjust to, the fact that he was compartmentalized just like everybody else even though he had, without any doubt, a *primus inter pares* position among

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all, almost including the family. I mean there were times when I'd get a call and the old man [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] would make some sort of a suggestion or something. The line would be, "Well, see what Ted thinks about it." But even with that kind of a preeminent role in the whole situation, he never was fully accepted. Since I think he aspired and in many ways considered himself, and in many ways was, the alter ego, it never really quite came off. And there were all sorts of other people who had relationships with him at particular times or on particular kinds of occasions; Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], for instance, in a political situation or even a personal one in which O'Donnell would have the power to [make cutting sound] just cut him right out, and did, as he would anybody else, as far as that goes. So that was a curious aspect of that relationship. But the relationship clearly in the senatorial days was much, much closer actually than

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it was as life became much more complicated and the President's relationships began to spread more widely. But in Senate days he was it.

HACKMAN: What was your opinion of Senator Kennedy at the time you came to work? Did this enter into your decision to take the job?

DUNGAN: Oh yes. My decision to take the job was compounded of I would say about 10 to 20 percent irritation and boredom at the other end of the Avenue and the rest, I suppose you could say, enlightened

opportunism or just opportunism. I always have felt as a matter of theory that anybody in the public service.... You see, I had gone from college to Princeton to Washington very consciously—this started back when I was in the Navy—deciding that I was going to go into the public service and make it a career. And, therefore, I also thought that anybody that was in this business, especially the federal government, at any level, really ought to know the legislative side of the racket. So this

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was a wonderful opportunity; lots of things coalesced that suited my own career ideas and certainly provided an exciting prospect. And security, which is so often the hallmark of the civil servant, was not a great concern for me and hasn't been since. As I get older, maybe that's an important thing. So, that's how I came to go up there.

Now, I'd say one other thing about this personality business of Sorensen's, and then I think we ought to get off it. I think it had a very important effect partly positive and partly negative, so far as Kennedy's activity on the Hill in the senatorial years. I think Kennedy could have made—his lack of attention to day-to-day routine in the Senate could have been smoothed over a good deal more than we did. And part of the reason that we didn't do it as well—when I say “we,” we had individual and then collective responsibility for it—was because Sorensen's whole attitude

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toward other staff people was so snobbish, standoffish. The same personality that, you know, everybody in the office found rather intolerable, the other senatorial assistants found absolutely—he was hated by most guys. As a result, when I was there, I used to do more and more of the contact work with other offices, although he did with certain particular ones. But you know the way the Senate operates really, the lubricant of the Senate are these kind of fuzzy talk-talk relationships. They're not really hard in the sense of getting something accomplished every minute. And he had a very low tolerance for that kind of palaver; the Senator did, too. The trouble is that he couldn't be like the Senator in every case, and he wouldn't take the time. I may be wrong about him, but.... So I did a lot of that.

HACKMAN: Now is this before you went to the subcommittee, or is that all the way through?

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DUNGAN: Before and after, and particularly in the days—I used to do an awful lot of it on the floor. It was fairly easy for me to do it because we were involved in certain—the pension and welfare fund legislation, Landrum-Griffin Bill, the various attempts we made on minimum wage legislation. So I was more in contact with those guys in their working environment, that is the floor, and through the subcommittee staff, too, was another way—but also in the office. People used to begin to call me and wouldn't call him, which was the way he wanted it, of course, even though he

was recognized clearly as the principal assistant. They used to call Reardon, too, depending on the kind of fellow. And Reardon handled an awful lot of the day-to-day stuff and almost all of the Massachusetts stuff, except things that had to do with substantive legislative policy which he never wanted to do at all. I might talk just for a second about Ted Reardon, a really great guy, but a guy who somewhere along the line,

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well before I knew him, I think came to the decision that he wasn't a very capable fellow and that, therefore, he wouldn't get very heavily involved in substance. He would just handle the detail and take care of the Senator, take care of him in the sense of protecting him against any inconvenience, which I think was a great mistake because I think he was a very able guy, but he never developed it.

HACKMAN: At the time you came on did you talk to Senator Kennedy before you took the job or just Sorensen?

DUNGAN: Yes. Well, I came up and had a brief conversation with him, not more than ten minutes. He wanted to know a little bit about the Catholicism bit.

HACKMAN: I wondered if he was interested in that.

DUNGAN: Yes, he was interested in it, not so much I think in terms of how I might be useful to him in handling the problem, but I think more on the basis of, as I look back on it, more on the basis of was he getting some Catholic nut in there. He didn't want to get

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somebody that was going to take a crusade to launch him into the presidency qua Catholic. It didn't take him long to find out that I wasn't that kind of turkey. As it turned out, I did quite a bit of work on the religious side of it, particularly in contacting people and so forth.

HACKMAN: Did you discuss at that time with him the political future, was this a factor in your own...

DUNGAN: No. No, no. I just assumed before I came up, but he never was very explicit about what his political plans were to me, certainly. I don't know, it was quite clear I was coming aboard there as a worker, substantive worker. That's the way the relationship was, and I accepted it that way. He didn't lay that on heavily, and he certainly didn't say, "Keep your nose out of this, that, or the other thing." As I recall that interview, it was pleasant and very brief and, as is usual or was usual with him, hectic. He could never sit still for five minutes like that, he was shuffling papers around or yelling for Evelyn Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] or something. He's not the kind

where you sit down, as you do

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with the Bill Fulbrights [J. William Fulbright], and shoot the bull for half an hour about all sorts of things, not at all, and especially in those days. Every second was counting in his mind. Anyway, that's the kind of personality that he had.

HACKMAN: Was there any tie-in with what you'd been doing at the Budget Bureau as far as qualifications for the job? You had been working some in foreign aid, right, at the Budget Bureau?

DUNGAN: Sorensen knew all this and must have at least filled him in briefly, but I doubt very much that that would have been an important consideration in his mind in saying, "Go ahead." In the first place Sorensen really hired me, and the discussion with the Senator was, I suspect, pro forma. And I would have been fired just as unceremoniously without the Senator ever being involved if that occasion ever came about. And we did this with other people, all of them. Oh no, we didn't really. I don't think we really ever fired anybody. Because some of the ones that would come in

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subsequently were people that came in through family channels oftentimes; Fred Holborn [Frederick L. Holborn], for instance. Fred was always a difficult, difficult person in the staff arrangement—not because he was, I think, inherently difficult. Well, that's a complicated story. I don't know, maybe we ought to talk about it.

HACKMAN: Well, is this the idea of Holborn as a security leak in some cases?

DUNGAN: Well, security, yes. There was some question about that always. And I never knew whether.... I never really made up my own mind. Holborn did have the quality of being a compulsive insider and a great talker. And that was true from the first time he came up into our office. I liked Fred always and thought he made a contribution. I don't think he was the kind of a pretzel that should have been in that operation really: his manner was really too strange, his way of thinking and everything else. You know, the Kennedys always have had a feeling that they were versatile

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enough to accept the kookiest and somehow utilize them. Now that's all right at the level of the Senator or Sarge [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] or Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] or somebody like that. The difficulty is that sometimes that kind of person causes more sweat, tears, and effort by people underneath, as was the case with Fred. It happened to be particularly with Ted Sorensen who had a kind of thing on Holborn and, you know, really

didn't trust him, and perhaps with good reason. I know he used to spend quite a bit of effort going around trying to gut him or protect himself from him or protect the Senator from him. It was usually under the guise of protecting the Senator, even in his own mind, I think. I was fairly relaxed with Holborn. He came in as a kind of a junior to me. I supervised him directly on certain things. But Fred was very hard to supervise. He wasn't the kind of a guy you say, "Do this and do that." He just might drift off on his own thing. So

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our relationship was a very good one. But I cited him first as an example of the kind of a guy who got into the Kennedy organization—and there were many of them over the years—who, while it was inconvenient in one way or another to have around, would never get axed. I guess that happens in all political campaigns. A lot of people get hung on and you never get rid of them.

HACKMAN: Did he contribute anything substantively?

DUNGAN: Oh yes, oh yes. I think he contributed a great deal. I mean I can't think of anything right offhand, but I'm now talking about day-to-day work. Oh yes, he's a bright guy, and if for no other things, he clipped things out; he was an avid reader, books and magazines all over the damned place. Then he had lots of contacts in, and he'd pull things out. And the Senator of course, was an omnivorous picker up of little things like that. No, he was a very important contributor I would say—not a very important, a significant contributor

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of tidbits, not of major stream ideas, strategy tactics or anything else, but a good steady worker. He used to handle a lot of mail when I could keep him on it. And we had tremendous volumes of mail which became my responsibility really. So I tried to shunt that off so he could take care of the routine stuff and I could stay on the important, but more or less routine, legislative chores and Sorensen could be off on the research of why a Catholic would make a strong president or more meaty things.

Then, as I say, I decided to leave, or it was convenient for me to ease out of the office situation. Feldman came in. I went over to the labor subcommittee because of our interest in the labor legislation, minimum wage, migrant labor, labor rackets bill, pension and welfare, all those things; all of his legislative activity was centering in the labor committee, except for the foreign affairs side, and that really wasn't legislative

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in that sense. So it was quite natural for us to have our guy on that committee. Also, and this was always a factor in the Kennedy operation, it meant that he had an extra hand that was his that he didn't have to pay for, that was on the labor committee payroll.

HACKMAN: Who had he been looking to before in this area for advice in staff work on the labor stuff?

DUNGAN: Well, to some degree Jack Forsythe [John S. Forsythe] who was the counsel of the labor subcommittee. But, you know, he never trusted Jack; Jack was Hill's [Lister Hill] man, and Hill had different legislative and policy and political interests than Jack Kennedy did. That's the way it is in the Senate. Then, of course, he relied then, and we relied later, on a whole variety of people from outside, as you know, the academicians, the labor lawyers, Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg]. You know, their name is legion, all sorts of people.

HACKMAN: How much of that existed at the time you came on?

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DUNGAN: Of the contact with outside people?

HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: I would say not so substantial, not great, and certainly not with the intensity and detail and systematization that happened as we got further into this stuff. We also had certain people downtown. There was a fellow who's now dead—I forget his name, Joe...

HACKMAN: Who was he working for?

DUNGAN: Labor Department. Joe—I forget his name, but anyway he used to help with the pension and welfare fund legislation; Saul—I'd remember if I'd see their faces. There were a number of people within the executive branch, in short, with whom we had contacts and who were very anxious and willing to help. You know, it was the first time in their lives they got anywhere close to anything that's really important and moving. There are lots of people that help in Washington if you just let them in. And that was the great genius of

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the Kennedy operation. We'd let anybody in, anybody could play. We didn't always let them get up to the first table, but they all could play with us. And I spent a lot of time suffering fools as a result of that, but it was well worth it.

So, over to the.... Here's where I get really fuzzy on details, actually. I even forget when it was that I went over there. It was probably in the spring of 1958, it was certainly a full year.

HACKMAN: From the listings I've seen, just biographical sketches I've looked at in a couple of places, they had your service over there between '57 and

'60.

DUNGAN: Yes, that's not true. '57 and '60 in the labor committee?

HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: Well, it may be. It may have been late '57. Yes, maybe just about a year. It probably was because we got plunged in shortly after I got in there very heavily into first, the pension and welfare fund, then the fair labor standards, and then the whole labor-McClellan business.

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HACKMAN: Let's see, the pension and welfare fund came up first, I believe, in '57, and it was '58 before it was passed. That was Kennedy-Douglas-Ives.

DUNGAN: Right. And that was really the first major thing that I worked on. And a lot of that was well in the works before. Sar Levitan [Sar A. Levitan] was the name of the fellow that worked with us on labor—on pension stuff particularly.

So I became the subcommittee's, the labor subcommittee's staff of the majority. We had some punk Republicans over on that staff. Boy, they were really murder. One guy was a Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] guy.

HACKMAN: Bernstein [Michael J. Bernstein].

DUNGAN: No, Bernstein, he was anybody's whore. He was a nasty guy. He's probably still there. No, there were a couple of other young ones around there whose names escape me for the moment, but there were some real lemons in that labor committee. Indeed, the majority staff didn't meet our standards, but I

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guess it was by and large as good or better than most career staff guys in the Senate.

HACKMAN: Was Merrick [Samuel V. Merrick] there at that point?

DUNGAN: Yes, Sam was there. No, Sam came... Let's see, I got Sam up there, subsequently—I forget when it was, '58 or so. I couldn't handle the Railway Labor Act stuff which Morse [Wayne L. Morse] was interested in and he had that subcommittee. I guess I got to know Sam first through the Catholic Round Table. He was other at the Board [National Labor Relations Board] and was ambitious and interested to move out, and this is what he did, so we got him up on that thing. Of course, by the time he came aboard I was dealing more and more with the politics, or with

things outside the Labor Committee things. I'd dash back into the Labor Committee activity, as such, only when it was absolutely necessary. I was spending more time on general office stuff and politics as we moved closer to 1960. It's always a nervous kind of arrangement in the Senate. You never know when the chairman

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is going to blow the whistle and say, you know, "Goddamn it you work for this subcommittee. You're being paid by us," and this and that. They hardly ever did, but I was always worried, you know, that he would. He never did, of course. Boy, I can't recall.... It's so far back I really have a hell of a time trying to think about some of that legislation which was very, very important. It was important to him, I think, in terms of legislative accomplishment and longer run political objectives, but it was also very important in its own right.

HACKMAN: Did he discuss this idea, that he'd have to get something of a major nature done here?

DUNGAN: Well, no, he never did with me, but, you know, he was not given to that kind of.... I mean, you know, everybody knew that. That was one thing about this operation. Like any fast moving operation, a good deal of it's never made explicit. It's just that everybody knows what the play is, and it's pretty tough when you get some people in who don't

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know the signals. It's like going to an auction.

The other field, of course, that we worked on, that I worked on, that was pretty intensive when I was in the office was the immigration field and that was, again, because of the.... Well, it had two aspects. It was almost wholly political, or asset. I don't think he cared very much about immigration any more than any of the rest of us although we could get very excited about the Asia-Pacific triangle because of its foreign policy implications. But it had relevance both in terms of the New England situation, especially with the Portuguese and the Iberian peninsula people—especially the Portuguese down in New Bedford and that whole area—and the Italians. Of course, that enlarged into, basically, the Italians and the Jewish in terms of a national political thing. It was always good, and you were always identified with Lehman and all those great eastern liberals.

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HACKMAN: Yes, and he worked with Pastore [John O. Pastore] somewhat, didn't he?

DUNGAN: Right. Actually, Pastore kind of joined up. Pastore at this point was getting on our coattails rather than the other way around although the

bill was the Kennedy-Pastore bill.

HACKMAN: That's right because he had been with Lehman earlier on it.

DUNGAN: Well, Kennedy spotted immigration as an important thing, and I suppose it was for Massachusetts politicians for a long while. It didn't take him long to grab it though. Actually, Pastore was, I guess, getting a lot of heat from his Italo-Americans and thought, "Well, Jesus, if this young scrub can get it, why not me?" I worked very closely with him. As a matter of fact, I have very close relationships with that office which stem from those early days, his staff people and the Senator himself, a great guy. So we had the Kennedy-Ives bill. There's no sense in going into the details because I don't remember them

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anyway at this point. I'd say the Kennedy-Ives bill was the first time that Jack Kennedy really got involved in a detailed floor fight. I think it's the first bill that he ever really assumed leadership on, or certainly the first one in which he assumed leadership that was as involved and complicated an item of legislation as it was. I think it provided excellent training for the really terrible experience of the Landrum-Griffin bill, which was a mess, really a mess.

HACKMAN: Can you remember some of your contacts, or did you have them at that time, with some of the labor people as far as getting the thing started—Title VI sweeteners and working this out?

DUNGAN: Yes, now what were the Title VI sweeteners? I remember we had...

HACKMAN: The first five titles were the general reform things going along with McClellan's committee, and the Title

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VI sweeteners were—well, you know, in '59 the debate was whether you were going to go to a two-package approach and send up them separately. Well, I don't think that was so much of a question in '58. Even McClellan, I believe, bought this Title VI in '58.

DUNGAN: This was the labor bill of rights in Title VI, was it not? No, Title VI. I know...

HACKMAN: No, Title VI was the Taft-Hartley changes.

DUNGAN: Right, right, right. Now I remember, yes.

HACKMAN: I think that bill of rights became Title I the next time around.

DUNGAN: That's right, that's right. Well, no, I don't remember how the Title VI came in. I can go back a little bit though on our contacts with the labor guys. First of all, at one point in my career before the PAC [Political Action Committees] and the A.F. of L. Political Action League had joined

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The merger, actually, I had worked for the A.F. of L. so I knew a lot of these guys and had kept contact with them before I joined Kennedy. He himself had had strong labor support, mostly at the state and local level, but began about the time I was coming in, a little bit before, actually, to have increasing contact with the higher moguls. I don't know, I don't recall offhand—and this would be easily checked—where he first had contact with George Meany as a person, for instance, or when was the first time he met Arthur Goldberg. But it's certainly clear that it wasn't very long. I guess one of the key fellows was a lobbyist. What the heck was his name? He was a lobbyist for the railway unions on the Hill. Cy....

HACKMAN: Cy Anderson [C.H. Anderson].

DUNGAN: Cy Anderson, whom I know quite well and the office never trusted—I never quite trusted. In the first place he worked for that group of unions who were really pirates, and are, and Cy was, like a lot of

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those old-line lobbyists, kind of amoral and conniving. He had relationships with a really crazy bunch of people, especially on the Commerce Committee. Cy was one of their key contacts; then there were others, labor lobbyists on the Hill. Esther Peterson [Esther E. Peterson], for instance.

HACKMAN: Did he had these relationships when you came on or when you went to the committee, or did these develop?

DUNGAN: Oh no. These were all—they were there before I came because it was their job to pick off bright young senators. After all, he had come over there in 1952 so there were four years of building relationships. Actually, a lot of them got—I guess Sorensen maintained them—a lot of them got shifted over to me although he always maintained continuing tight contact at least with the ones that he thought were the senior and most important. Again, coming back to him—and I hate to.... Cy Anderson, whom I didn't like very well

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but dealt with because he had access to lots of people in the labor movement of his principles

in addition to the railway union chiefs, detested Sorensen, as did quite a few of the other lobbyists, some of them with varying degree. Now I must say after I went there, our relationships with the trade union guys were much better, not because I gave anything more, but they felt, you know, it was easier to talk. Esther and I, for instance, became extremely close friends, and still are, particularly on minimum wage legislation. There were some I didn't like. I didn't get along very well with the Machinists' people. The Machinists were pretty black anyway.

HACKMAN: Al Hayes [Albert J. Hayes].

DUNGAN: Al Hayes and that whole gang who's very—in terms of our political interests the Machinists were not a very strong element, a heavy Masonic influence and so forth. That was apparent from the very beginning.

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[BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

So, at the... I'd be darned interested. I don't know. I forget whether any of the Kennedy books trace—I doubt that they do—trace back at which point in time he began to mix it up, you know, get personally involved with any key labor leaders. I know he had meetings with McDonald [David J. McDonald] before I came aboard.

HACKMAN: Who controlled the access of these people, the lobbyists, primarily, to him in that period?

DUNGAN: Well, the lobbyists, basically, would grab him wandering around the corridors, back and forth to the floor or something like that. After awhile, even by the time I was there, but certainly as we moved along from the '56 period, it was easy to cut the lobbyist off. You know, you'd just say he was too busy or something like that and they'd talk to us. Also when it became clear—you know, their business is sensing where power resides and where decision-making, and therefore, when it became clear that we had the power to make certain decisions, they didn't have to deal with him, just as soon not, until he became

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kind of the candle around which all the moths clustered. Then they'd love to say that they saw Jack; it boosted their stock downtown. You know, in the office, although he was not given to small talk, we used to call them the labor fakers, of which there were many. And then we had the other set of contacts on the other side too—industrial, management, NAM [National Association of Manufacturers] types, and the Chamber of Commerce, who were usually really scroungy bastards, I must say. I guess they came in to us often with a chip on their shoulder, and we reciprocated.

Well, then we went into the phase, of course, in the whole labor field, particularly on

the Landrum-Griffin reform bill, of really having to get into some very complicated labor law which is the point at which we assembled our panel of experts to advise on labor law, the so-called “blue ribbon committee” of Archie Cox’s [Archibald Cox].

HACKMAN: Whose idea was this primarily? Did this come from the

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Senator’s office or were other people on the committee involved in this?

DUNGAN: No, certainly not the committee. No, it was us, and I forget where the idea came from, whether it was Sorensen’s, mine, his. Sounds very much like—well, by this time it was a well-worn technique in the Kennedy office, and it became even. . . . And we’re still carrying it on. I’m afraid it’s an institution of society now—the task force or the blue ribbon committee. The seminar on urban problems is the most recent elaboration of this thing. That worked very well, though. That wasn’t a phony thing because I made sure that it wasn’t. I had a great stake in the quality of the output of that operation, and the people who were involved in it were very serious people, albeit some with a point of view, like Arthur and—what the hell was the name of that tall guy who represented the Chamber of Commerce? Anyhow, that’s the guy that accused me one day of practicing law without a license. Well, he actually said, “What

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law school are you from?” I said, “Well, I hate to admit it, but I never went to law school.” He said, “My God, another one practicing without a license.” So that was a good effort. Of course, Archie Cox with all of his pristine, puritanical, academic ways was just wonderful help. Again I was a kind of a buffer between him and the Senator. It was curious. Most of the time Kennedy would like to get it straight, however complicated, and then every once in a while when you’d get into a technical area like this, he’d really kind of think twice about why in the hell did he get involved in this kind of a technical discussion and he’d run off or trail off. Then we’d do the. . . .

HACKMAN: How much substantive knowledge did the Senator have of all this at the time? Was he interested in, you know, really getting into this?

DUNGAN: As a matter of fact, as far as the labor reform stuff, he was interested in the problems: he was kind of bored, really, with the legislative process of trying to design

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laws and amend and modify others that would accomplish. . . . He was interested in the problem and the development of an equitable solution. He was bored and I was bored and

almost everybody else was bored with the business of screwing around with that very intricate set of statutes known as our labor law in order to make sure that this is consistent with that. Of course, it's the art of the labor lawyer, and indeed every other lawyer, to make a field that's complicated enough ever so much more complicated. And it's part of... Everybody, every institution like labor tries to build its own set of formularies up which will make it more difficult for anybody to change the situation. So the tedium of unraveling this kind of thing was not, you know, meat and drink for him by a long shot and, as I say, not for me either, but somebody had to do it.

HACKMAN: Somebody has said that he was never really able to understand why labor and management just couldn't sit down at a table and work all this stuff out. He

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couldn't understand the gut issues involved and why these things were so important to these people. Do you think that's true?

DUNGAN: Well, I think that's true. I think in general that's true. But it's not only labor-management. I mentioned it somewhere before, I think, you know, he was a big man, a universal man in so many ways, and while he bumped into many people, common people, he, I don't think, really had a full appreciation of the intractability of the human mind as embodied in Joe Blow at the local level or in local unions and all that that implied for everything up the line. He never really dealt with the run-of-the-mill, stupid citizen or trade unionist or whatever else. There's a lot of that, that's very true. I can remember manifestations of this, not in terms of a dumb trade unionist or a dumb anything, or a dumb businessman. But, you know, he'd want to do something or another and you'd come in to him and say, "But you've got this, Mr. President, and that." And he'd get so

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irritated because he saw so clearly the objective, the end, and the working out of the means was something that really bored him. This is why, to jump way ahead, I would say where we made some of the greatest... We didn't make so much progress as we should have in the three years of his presidency. That would be, I think, particularly true in foreign affairs field, that we never really captured the institutional mechanisms. Indeed what we did was superimpose something on it. Jumping back now to the Senate days, he did not have a large amount of patience with the working out of details. He didn't like to fool around with the instrumentalities that mortal men had created. He liked to jump to the problem and to its intellectual, not intellectual but its theoretical solution—theoretical I don't really mean. He was interested in the ideas, not the stuff that flows from the ideas: laws, regulations, systems, et cetera.

HACKMAN: While we're talking about this and skipping forward again, people have said, though, that during the Adminis-

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tration when a given problem would come up, he'd be very interested in solving the immediate crisis, particularly in relation to National Security Council things. He wasn't interested in the Eisenhower type of long-range speculation and plans. What do you think about that?

DUNGAN: No, I don't think that's true. I think that he himself had it all in some sort of a larger framework. The reason that Eisenhower had a Bobby Cutler [Robert Cutler] and a Planning Board and all that kind of junk is because he had such a darn small mind and also because of his mental habits that had been developed over the years, whereas Kennedy was an intuitive kind of fellow and had a really small "c" catholic mind that wove all of these complicated things in, and he had a plan. It might not have been very explicit to a lot of other people.

HACKMAN: So he didn't feel he needed it. He already had it.

DUNGAN: That's right. And he's right, he's absolutely right. The more you try to get it all down on paper, the more

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difficult it is and complicated it is, particularly for relatively small minds to see how all these things relate. No, I'm all for the intuitive politician any day than the other kind who needs it all down on a piece of paper.

HACKMAN: Staying on this labor thing, do you remember anything about the '58 hearings where—well, this was the time of the confrontation where Meany was talking about "God save us from our friends," referring to Cox, I believe.

DUNGAN: No, referring to the President.

HACKMAN: Referring to the President.

DUNGAN: Well, it was a little vague. We were all kind of wrapped up in that one. Well, this was a very tense time. You know, he was genuinely outraged by the stuff that was coming out of the McClellan committee and the intransigence and the lack of understanding on the part of, quote, "responsible" labor leaders to come up with any positive suggestions as to how one should take care of this, their inability to handle it within

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the labor community and their unwillingness to let public authority through the laws come—to address themselves to it. Of course, I'm not only talking about Hoffa [Jimmy Hoffa] and the Teamsters but the whole damn building and construction trades outfit and many others. Industrial people were relatively clean in terms of racketeering. You might not like their strong arms but they were relatively clean. Some of the others were and are tremendously corrupt. Now it was one of the toughest kinds of issues for a prospective Democratic candidate, as it quite clear. At the same time he himself was convinced, and the public, a substantial part of the right and center right elements in the body politic were urging labor reform, you know, he had no other way to go than in that direction. And the trick was to bring the guys around to something that would not really turn them off. Just to sum it up, this was the effort, that is, to get a reasonably fair and effective labor bill without getting the labor

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people alienated. And how that was done, it seems to me, is basically detail which, as far as I'm concerned, is not very important to history. In any event, I don't remember it with sufficient accuracy.

HACKMAN: I think it's been written about a lot lately.

DUNGAN: Yes, that's right. It's a little risky for me to.... I think what I could add is some insight into what he was thinking about various players in the game at that point. But I think it also ought to be said that it's a little risky for even me to do it, and I think I was probably as close to him on this stuff as anybody, mainly because to a very large degree he kept his own counsel. I think you're right when you say that he always thought somehow labor and management should be able to get together on things and I guess got irritated when they didn't. I think I can say some things, though, if they get locked away for awhile. I think he always thought of George Meany as being kind of

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an honest but dumb mick. I think he thought of Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] at least at this time, as being a little bit arrogant and not very helpful in this whole enterprise. He didn't have any time for Al Hayes—although, again, he had a curious way of looking at people. He looked at Hayes differently, as he did almost every guy—you know, you can't sum them up, his feelings about any one man. With Al Hayes, for instance, he saw him as a kind of an entertaining old curmudgeon, but also a guy who's institutionally—and that is because of his association with the Machinists—probably locked in to a position that was not healthy for Kennedy. His relationship with Goldberg then, I would say, became a very close one. We all came to rely really on Goldberg's judgment. He had some staff people down in his office, lawyers, who really have carried on that firm since. Dave Feller [David E. Feller] and a couple of others who, you know, were of

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tremendous value.

HACKMAN: Was Lou Sherman [Louis Sherman] down there at that time?

DUNGAN: No, Lou Sherman was with the construction trades. He represented Gray [Richard J. Gray] and the whole construction council. That was a different ball game. I used to deal with Lou, and I guess Arthur had a pretty good relationship with Lou, but they could never really talk all the way and with complete candor because they represented opposing views. Merrick had a good relationship with Lou because of NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] stuff. And, of course, the construction trades were always involved with the Board, having one kind of litigation or another. Well, really there's not a heck of a lot more to say, I think, about this particular phase of things.

HACKMAN: Can you remember the time he went on the McClellan Committee, the investigation committee? Was this an important decision or was it seen as an important

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important decision at that time...

DUNGAN: Politically?

HACKMAN: Yes, to get involved in the hearing?

DUNGAN: Oh hell, yes. But it had both its pluses and minuses.

HACKMAN: Can you talk about that?

DUNGAN: Yes, it certainly was an important decision. I was not involved in the making of it. I was aware that it was going on, obviously aware of where the things cut. I can infer without ever having been in on the discussions, which I'm sure occurred between him and Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] and probably Ken O'Donnell and others, maybe even the old man—more than likely this was the kind of thing that had been discussed at some sort of a family pow-wow, not in terms of decision-making but just general ruminating—the arguments would go somewhat, you know, “You're going to get all this labor exposure. You're going to be in the spotlight as chairman of the labor subcommittee in any event. People are going to be saying, ‘Why don't

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you do something about this?’ So you might as well get whatever pluses are involved in the national publicity and television exposure.” I'm sure the decision was made along that line.

Plus, once again, I think he had a lot of the—not as much as Bobby—the kind of the crusading, not the crusading but the Irish Puritanism about him. He didn't like guys punching other guys. He was basically a very fair fellow and wanted other people to be fair in an unfair life. He didn't have excessively sanguine ideas about how far the law and its instrumentalities could insure this fairness, but he was for fairness, and to the extent that he could get anything going, he would.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything with Walter Reuther and this Kohler strike business that came out of that hearing and the relationship between Reuther that resulted?

DUNGAN: Yes. Well now, I don't remember anything that

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changed in that relationship. They were always in peppering us with their side of the story. I don't know. I don't recall anything that really changed one way or another.

HACKMAN: What was his opinion of McClellan through all this?

DUNGAN: He didn't like McClellan. He was kind of torn there though because Bobby was his employee. My first approach, as I mentioned earlier, for a job in that office was to go on the McClellan Committee basically because he didn't think his interests were being protected there, that he was getting screwed either by the staff at the direction of or certainly with the tolerance of McClellan. I really don't think he ever liked John McClellan. Maybe that's because I don't. He was not the kind that would really... I mean he was very circumspect about talking about people, particularly with staff. Now in the confines of his room and later on in the presidency you know, I got more insights into his views on certain kinds of individuals, certain types, particularly

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since I was dealing with people, as such, to a larger extent. But he was a very careful, a very charitable person that way. On the other hand, he was also capable of the most unbalanced judgments, you know, a blast at a guy on the basis of the most flimsy kind of thing.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem did Bobby's work on that committee present to you in your work to try to get along with these other people?

DUNGAN: Oh, not much because we could always write him off as the uncontrollable, brash young man, which he was.

HACKMAN: Do you think you can remember more about the '59 legislation that

became the Landrim-Griffin bill?

DUNGAN: Yes, I remember it as being long and tedious and frustrating. But I'd really have to go back over....

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything at all that spring or over the winter of '58-'59 about this idea of going for two bills without putting any Taft-Hartley changes in?

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DUNGAN: I don't.

HACKMAN: Let's see what else I've got on...

DUNGAN: Who remembers that kind of detail?

HACKMAN: Very few people. But it's amazing, you know, some people can take that stuff and go right through, and some people who were very closely involved like you were, who've moved on to something else, can't remember it at all.

DUNGAN: I could if I... And now I keep a date book so that now I think I probably could do this on anything recently. But at that period of time, boy, I was running so fast to keep ahead that I never could recall.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about trying to get Sam Ervin [Sam J. Ervin, Jr.] to cooperate on this in sponsoring this?

DUNGAN: Oh yes. I remember that.

HACKMAN: And then sort of drifting off?

DUNGAN: Yes. Well, you see at this point none of them were really very anxious to help good old Jack. None of them. Especially since, you know, with the labor liberals

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he ran into the problem of their alienating their support, and it was not worth it to them. He was taking big risks...

HACKMAN: Pretty tough to find somebody to replace Ives [Irving McNeil Ives].

DUNGAN: That's right. You know, in a sense we conned Ives into it. I remember

he lived next door to us there for one thing, and Ted Reardon and his son, who was his administrative assistant, were good friends, and I was pretty good friends with him. So Jack Kennedy kind of flim-flammed him on it. I do remember very well that afternoon of getting him on the bill. And the old man, you know, kind of just, "Okay, Jack," and... We quick got a press release out before anybody had a chance to change their mind. It was really a very comical situation. And he was really resisting. Kennedy had a funny way about him. He wasn't diffident at all. When you get into that kind of situation, boy, he really was damned aggressive. "You know, Senator, you said you were going to do such..."

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"Well, Jack, yes. I don't want to back out, but you know, the party and..." "That's all right, Senator." Out! I remember very vividly that afternoon. And boy, did we get that press release out fast, wow! That wasn't easy.

HACKMAN: So about Ervin then?

DUNGAN: Well, Ervin was much more canny. He'd say, "Now Jack, I'd like to talk about..." so on and so on. And I wasn't really in on that conversation. I don't know exactly what the various negotiations were. That was much more difficult, and I'm sure he didn't use the high pressure technique. As I recall, didn't Ervin get on it and then get off it?

HACKMAN: Yes, he got off it as soon as it went to the committee. I think it was first presented as strictly a reform measure, and then when it went to the committee, the committee tacked on some of the Taft-Hartley changes that were favorable to

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labor, basically, and he couldn't go for that, started to back off, and McClellan was probably talking to him a lot.

DUNGAN: He was also probably getting a lot of pressure from the textile people.

HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: Plus he just didn't believe in labor except to curb them.

HACKMAN: Can you recall the hearings that spring, February and March, I believe, of the subcommittee and then the whole committee? Was Senator Kennedy absent a lot in that period, traveling around, do you recall? Someone has said that a great deal of the burden fell on Morse in that period, he was carrying the ball.

DUNGAN: Yes. As a matter of fact it was a very difficult period for me—not so much for Morse because he loved it. Well, it was a difficult period. He was doing a lot of traveling around, and I could never get a date for the hearings. And this is, of course,

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the area where he found it most tedious. The most desirable way for him to do it would be to let somebody on the staff or some other less occupied senator get the bill ready, and then he'd discuss it at the policy level, and away it would go. I think you have to say that in a way, in one sense, Jack Kennedy was not a very good senator, a very good legislator, in the sense that he was intolerant of a process, a careful process of review of various alternatives and so forth. You know, maybe he was right. Maybe that is a thing that the Senator oughtn't to have to be worried about.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem was that usually?

DUNGAN: I don't really think that though. I'll be very honest with you—there's no reason why I shouldn't be honest. Given this whole circumstance of history and the fact that 1960-63 occurred, I wouldn't want it any differently, but if I were trying to write a really objective picture of a senator, I'd

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have to say he would fail against it. It's probably just as well he didn't try to meet my perfect picture. He probably would never have been president and so forth and so on. I would say, though, by the standards of a good legislator he'd be less than perfect, considerably.

HACKMAN: What was the reaction of the other committee members to his absences in that period?

DUNGAN: Oh, he used to get.... Goldwater just loved it, you know. And he wouldn't show up for one and then the Republicans would all kind of boycott the next because they weren't interested in moving it, especially when it got the Title VI stuff, which is really where it got chilly. You see, we argued more on the Taft-Hartley changes than we did on the control side of it.

HACKMAN: This thing really dragged out, if I remember, a lot longer than we expected.

DUNGAN: Months. Months and months. It was awful. The debates used to get really venomous. Old

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Win Prouty [Winston L. Prouty] used to sit over there in his dour New England way; John Cooper [John S. Cooper], he was the only one that we could depend on to have something to say; Javits [Jacob K. Javits] was absolutely intolerable with his long diatribes. Oh, it was an awful period of time. And Kennedy hated subcommittee meetings like this. We'd line up on either side of this big table in that committee room and go over and over and over. The greatest fun on that bill was the conference committee. Old Graham Barden [Graham A. Barden] was running that. That was really.... We held them in the old Supreme Court chamber. You know, my memories don't go into detail because the detail was technical, highly technical, and I don't even recall hardly any of it now, except running back and forth to phones and testing this out and that out. This is where Frank Thompson [Frank Thompson, Jr.] and I got to be such good friends because he was on the conference committee, too.

HACKMAN: After the thing had left the Senate and gone to the House, can you

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remember trying to get labor to pull off on the Shelley Bill at that time and try to swing behind the Elliott Bill which was then...

DUNGAN: ...companion piece to the....

HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: Yes, I remember that vaguely now that you mention it, but I don't remember any details.

HACKMAN: That was Metcalf [Lee Metcalf] and Bolling [Richard W. Bolling] and Rayburn [Sam Rayburn] and some of these people were trying to—do you remember having any impression of how strongly Rayburn was pushing this or trying to help?

DUNGAN: I remember one time going over there to talk to the chief, to the Speaker about it.

HACKMAN: What about the McClellan bill of rights proposal on the Senate floor when McClellan gave that big speech and Douglas [Paul Douglas] and Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] were out of town and it lost by one vote? Do you remember it?

DUNGAN: No. Christ, you ought to write a book.

HACKMAN: That's where I get a lot of my information.

DUNGAN: Where did you get it? From which book? [Tape recorder is turned off]

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HACKMAN: I've worn this labor thing out, but do you have any recollections of the vote in the House when Landrum-Griffin was substituted for the Elliott Bill? There's always been a big dispute about the Texas delegation and Rayburn's ability to get the Texas votes—and the question is of Lyndon Johnson's [Lyndon B. Johnson] influence on this Texas delegation. Do you remember anything about that?

DUNGAN: Yes, I remember having gone over—now you're bringing things to recall. I do remember having gone over to talk to D.B. Hardeman to get the Speaker to really lean on those guys. Hardeman was the Speaker's assistant. And I recall having come away from that conversation with no feeling that anything was going to be done.

HACKMAN: Just lack of enthusiasm on Rayburn's part of what?

DUNGAN: Right, right. I recall that we felt that there was some going back and forth on the other side. But we, of course, could never prove that.

HACKMAN: What about Wayne Morse in this period? You mentioned

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him previously. There was a break in this period, I think, during the conference or a little bit before.

DUNGAN: Yes, Wayne, you know, would get off on all sorts of—he still does, you know, just go off. “A matter of principle. I don't care, Jack, I love you.” Wayne is the most erratic, irascible kind of a guy, and a grandstander to boot. I don't recall just where he got off. It might have been because he had been gotten to. He can be gotten to, but he usually cloaks it under some grand constitutional principle.

HACKMAN: I think common-situs picketing was one of the big things, as to whether it was going to be delayed. He wanted it handled then, and I think Senator Kennedy decided, “Well, we'll do it next year. We can't get anything done now.”

DUNGAN: Yes, which was true. We couldn't get anything done. We had a real...

HACKMAN: It was quite an effort I think to get the thing

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taken to the Senate floor, if I'm not mistaken.

DUNGAN: Yes, right. It also was an issue that very few people could understand. There were so many complicated issues in, and at that point it must be said that Kennedy, I think rightfully, decided, you know, "We had better jolly well get a bill through, not only from my political standpoint, but something needs to get done." And he was ready to pitch off anything that would impede that. This was one that did. Also he had the construction trades guys on him fairly strong, with their allies, and the railroad brotherhoods.

HACKMAN: Somebody told me that Morse got very upset at one point because of a meeting that was held early that he didn't make. Do you have any recollection of that? He was at the County Fair in Montgomery County or something.

DUNGAN: Oh yes. I remember him being to a fair, but I don't remember the substance of the meeting. He was out showing a prize bull or something. But I

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don't remember.

Is all this stuff detailed in this book you mentioned?

HACKMAN: Yes. I've got the book in my suitcase, as a matter of fact. I was looking it over last night. I could leave it with you.

DUNGAN: No, that's all right. I can get one from the library.

HACKMAN: What about this idea of taking his name off the bill?

DUNGAN: Oh, that was a pure politician ploy. You know. That's all.

HACKMAN: Do you have any recollection of...

DUNGAN: We were trying to walk away from it at that point—"My God, let's get the thing..." The ball game was entirely different. Well, we weren't walking away from it in substance; we were too far in it. Of course, the Republicans weren't going to let us let loose of that one either.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about Robert Kennedy's appearance on the Jack Paar Show and that interview

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he had?

DUNGAN: Very well, very well.

HACKMAN: Did it create a lot of problems?

DUNGAN: That's right. Bobby's candor again, as it will all the time until he's an old, old man, I suspect—for him and everybody else.

HACKMAN: This guy in this book, his thesis is that it was really public opinion that forced the decision rather than the interest groups, although the interest groups gave the whole thing the direction; that it was Bobby's appearance and Ike's speech—and I don't remember, somebody else gave a speech on that period.

DUNGAN: Well, it's very hard to tell that, I would say. As far as Kennedy was concerned himself, the public opinion, that is the letters and all that kind of stuff, didn't amount to a hill of beans. We used to weigh them and, you know, look at all these things. It was a combination of things. And I would put at the head of the list politics, his own personal interest in being identified with this reform legis-

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lation; his concern with the substantive issues—and probably that came first, in time, anyway—and then his responsibility as chairman of that subcommittee, the McClellan committee: all these things working together. I don't know, suppose thing had been done by the Congress in the whole business of labor rackets. I don't think the public would have turned out one congressman for that reason alone. It is true that there were a lot of people all hopped up about it, particularly the McClellan hearings.

HACKMAN: Can you remember if the '58 election was... Labor seemed to regard the '58 elections as a great victory; a lot of liberals got elected to the House; and some people have speculated that labor got pretty cocky in '59.

DUNGAN: They did, they did. Yes, this is one of the things that used to turn us off quite a bit about labor. You know, they'd talk about... What they were telling me about was thinking

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about the necessity for their support in 1960, and then, as you indicate, a certain amount of cockiness as a result of their success in '58. We took it kind of in stride, I must say. I don't think we were overly impressed. I mean we always had a healthy respect for labor money

and labor votes. But it was never what I would call.... You know, some people up there [unclear] and say—but then that’s the way we were with almost everybody.

I must say my own position on a lot of this stuff, I’m very—maybe this is partly a reflection of.... I was never so emotionally involved in some of these controls—either in the abuses to which these controls were directed. I just never thought they were all that important. Indeed, I thought that some of it was the invention of the labor lawyers.

HACKMAN: We’re just about to run out of tape on this side.

DUNGAN: Okay.

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[BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2]

I would say his views on the Senate as an institution were probably not explicit and he never formalized them. I, for instance, can’t say that I’ve heard him say that “I think that the Senate is a big cave of winds and not a very important institution” or anything like that. Indeed, I probably.... Therefore, what I think about what he thought about it is all inferential. I think that he probably felt that it was a very important instrument in the representative government of the United States; and, also, as an institution under other circumstances than those of running for presidential office, he probably would have been kind of fascinated with it as a device, fascinated in a very general sense, but not very fascinated with going through the rigmarole of the routine that the Senate had build for itself over the years. Indeed, on that score he, you know, was very intolerant—as he was of any kind of routine type operation. And he didn’t work very hard at it. He didn’t learn all

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its archean ways, its ins and outs of how you get things done. He picked that up quickly as he needed to from a somewhat more experienced hand or that was the job for all of us, to get things done. Now, when he had to get into it, as in the Landrum-Griffin debate or the pension and welfare fund debate, he learned enough and learned it fast, to handle himself well. Maybe like every other clever guy he sees where the power lies and concentrates on that rather than learning it from the ground—he shortcuts. This explains the relationship he had with Bobby Baker [Robert G. Baker] which I would say was quite casual in a way and close in another way—close in the sense that he knew that Baker could protect him on roll calls and this kind of stuff so he played up to Baker and had a relationship that served his need without getting himself entwined in any other kind of Baker’s other shenanigans. And I’m not talking about his financial or other peccadilloes, but I’m talking now about the “club” shenanigans with Johnson. He never got so close that

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Baker could hurt him if it became.... Although there were many times, particularly in the

'58-'59 period that Baker was really giving it to him, at Johnson's behest.

HACKMAN: In what ways? Could you explain that?

DUNGAN: Oh yes, by passing rumors around the floor about he wasn't here for that vote and.... Baker was a real rat in my opinion in many, many ways. Although, again, I had a superficially very good relationship with him. This is what I was mentioning earlier about the burden of.... You know, I did an awful lot of that soft-soaping. But Bobby was, you know, just kind of an amoral machine for Lyndon Johnson, and he did lots of things; good, bad, and indifferent. Now, this isn't to say that he didn't do many, many favors for us—and I guess for me, if I look back on it, personally. He made things easier; he did his job well, which was what his job was, to make things easier for the senators and for the Senate to do its business. But in

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the course of all this thing he, you know, could use gossip and information and whatever else to his own ends or to Lyndon's ends, usually Lyndon's. It wasn't a very nice situation, I would say. I would say, as it regards—you know, where he had great fondness for a man like Lister Hill, where he had a great respect and certain kind of fondness for a man like Dick Russell [Richard B. Russell, Jr.], basically he was a loner, and he didn't care very much about these guys or about the whole institution. And they all knew it. And that's why he never became a member of the club: (a) he didn't particularly want to, and (b) they didn't want him because he didn't want to. And his style was not adapted to the club.

It's curious, though—to jump ahead now in time—I really think that.... He didn't worry about it; it didn't preoccupy him, but he used to think in the presidency about what he would do after the presidency. And one of the ideas of course was to do go down, buy a house in Virginia or Maryland somewhere and establish

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residence, and then go back into the Senate or maybe even get something passed by which he would go in the Senate and be kind of an elder statesman. Why I bring that up is that I think he might have found that role a rather pleasant one where he wouldn't have had to be part of the establishment, but he could be in and talking and involved.

HACKMAN: Do you think he changed a great deal in the '56 to '60 period?

DUNGAN: Oh, absolutely fantastic.

HACKMAN: In what way?

DUNGAN: Well, I would say just in almost all the superficial things and also in the depth and breadth of his grasp of issues. I remember having come home when I first joined him. I went up with him to Baltimore where

he was giving a speech, I think to B'nai B'rith, or some Jewish group. And it was on integration, as I recall. In any event I went up with him to Baltimore, and I stood in the back of the hall when he made the speech. Then I came back and said

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to my wife, "My God, this guy aspires to be president of the United States. I can give a speech much better than that." He was really pathetic, fumbling and fumbling—you know, always sincere and everything, but really pretty amateurish. To some extent, this same kind of inexperience was reflected in other aspects, substantive knowledge of particular problems. He was pretty naïve, for instance, about—not about integration, he knew that pretty well from the House; but in labor he was not very well versed, particularly in minimum wage; in the whole Taft-Hartley business not, except for particular things where they had tried and he knew about those; education not too good either. In effect what happened was you had a tremendous, a fantastic maturing process in that period of time. And you could see it almost by the hour, certainly by the day. He soaked up everything, got more sophistication about international affairs, kept moving out; people were always drifting by, generalists

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and politicians and everybody else. And he always had time for them one way or another. And he worked at it all the time, not in a kind of a driving way in the sense of a systematic working toward, but it all just fit in with the goal to which he was working.

HACKMAN: What were you spending you time doing, let's say, after the Landrum-Griffin thing was out of the way? At what point did you start to do any traveling or getting really involved in politics?

DUNGAN: Well, we shifted immediately to a minimum wage bill, remember. And that was warm in the early part of 1960. I was pretty heavily involved in it, and it became fairly clear that it was going nowhere in an election year.

HACKMAN: That came up in that special session in August?

DUNGAN: Right. But around May of that year, as I recall—or even earlier, probably April or March—I really detached myself from the labor subcommittee because I had been spending more and more and more time, and I went on the campaign payroll and actually physically moved

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from the labor committee down to the Esso Building. And that's the point at which I became involved. I think this was after the Wisconsin primary. In any event, I was not involved in the primary out there and I forget whether I was heavily in—I think not. It was after the

Wisconsin primary, I guess, that the Esso Building was set up. No...

HACKMAN: It was quite a while before that.

DUNGAN: Yes, in January we set up the Esso Building, as I recall, later January of '60.

HACKMAN: What was the state of connection between that and the Senate office? I've heard that the liaison was pretty poor.

DUNGAN: It was. That's because really the only person, or the only two people there who were connected really with the Kennedy office were myself and Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith]. Nobody else had any connection really. Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] came down, but he was an investigator on the Rackets Committee. Then there was a friend of Bobby's,

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Dave Hackett [David L. Hackett], came on. But most of them were new. Jean Lewis was down there, too, who had been—you know her background in the Senate office. She, I guess, and myself were the real two connections there, but she on a different level. So it was not until after Wisconsin that I actually got involved and went down to West Virginia. That's where I started actively campaigning. I guess I went into West Virginia fundamentally because the labor vote was so important and I knew quite a few of those fellows down there, Miles...

HACKMAN: Stanley [Miles C. Stanley].

DUNGAN: My gosh, you remember a lot of these names.

HACKMAN: You see, it's not a problem of memory with me because I've read them recently. This doesn't go back seven or eight years with me.

DUNGAN: Miles Stanley—now and then there were UAW [United Auto Workers] people and so forth. That was a tough place though because of the religion being so obvious. And, you know, it penetrated into the labor movement. You weren't

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dealing with trade unions qua trade unions. You were dealing with them as citizen, dash, whatever else they were. And of course it was easy for them to go for Hubert down there. Miles particularly was a hard shell, black fellow. He just didn't like Kennedy very much for a variety of reasons. So that was West Virginia.

HACKMAN: Over the winter of '59-'60, had you been keeping up contacts with labor people, political contacts, or how was this developing with Meany and...

DUNGAN: Only at the Washington level, not consciously for political reasons—you know, that is looking forward to campaigning—because we always took it for granted actually that this machinery would fall into place. Also, I was not really the inner circles of the political planning among the Washington unit, partly because I was out of the office and not really under his nose and really in a quasi technician's job, although not a technician's job, and partly because I wasn't that close in. I would imagine that it would Sorensen and O'Donnell

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and even O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] sometimes did not get included, although he had closer and longer political connections with the President than I. And then Bobby, the old man...

HACKMAN: Was there much pushing back and forth in this period in...

DUNGAN: ...struggling for a position?

HACKMAN: Yes, trying to get involved in politics?

DUNGAN: You mean me, or people in general?

HACKMAN: The whole thing.

DUNGAN: Well now, are you talking now about the individuals willing to break away from whatever their other concerns were to get into the political...

HACKMAN: Yes, yes.

DUNGAN: I wasn't aware of it. I think Salinger definitely was, but that was because he was looking and he had his own ambitions to join up. But other than that, no, I don't think so. Mike Feldman and myself, we didn't feel so insecure that we had to.... For instance, I didn't feel as if life had stopped because

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nobody asked me to go out and tramp around Wisconsin, just as critical as that was. There were just other functions to be performed. Also, there was never any, nobody ever sat down around a table and said, you know, "Here's the grand plan, boys. And you're going to do this,

and you're going to do that, and it's all going to add up." It wasn't that way at all.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about the relationships developing with the various labor groups on politics in this period, Reuther and McDonald, and Meany and these people, as to trying to get some definite commitments and support.

DUNGAN: Oh, he was always trying to get—you know, he would never neglect an opportunity to get people tied down to him in one way or another. But, of course, they weren't being tied down this early in the game, any of them. A lot of this was done outside of any meetings that I would have been privy to. The old man was dabbling heavily at this point with people that he thought he could be influential with, like Dave McDonald for

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instance. Kennedy himself, I think, went through this kind of rigmarole. But he recognized that it was too early for anybody to be really committing himself, and therefore he wasn't tying people down specifically in a political sense. You know, the one thing he didn't do was to waste time, generally speaking. And therefore he wouldn't have been likely to go into a big tizzy with any of these fellows, and be upset that he didn't have them right on the line. After all, they had Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson], and I remember thinking he was a real contender in 1960.

HACKMAN: You talked earlier about the...

DUNGAN: Kennedy also, I think, always really felt he had the labor guys. And when push came to shove, he had the labor movement behind him more strongly than any of the real contenders.

HACKMAN: Why do you think he felt that way, in regard to, particularly...

DUNGAN: LBJ?

HACKMAN: Humphrey.

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DUNGAN: Oh, Humphrey.

HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: I don't think he ever though that Humphrey was a really serious contender. The only guys that we thought were really contenders were Lyndon and possibly Symington [Stuart Symington II]. I think the way

we saw it, you had the good guys, that is the liberal Democrats, versus the middle of the road southern group, and their candidate would either be Symington or Johnson. This is the way I saw it. I don't know whether they all saw it—you know, the game changed and the players and the analysis changed from minute to minute as it always does in politics.

HACKMAN: What were you primarily doing in West Virginia? Did you spend most of your time in Charleston?

DUNGAN: No, I traveled all through the state, actually initially I tried to work—we didn't have but a few weeks—and initially I tried to work on pro-labor people. I saw that that was quite useless

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at my level in West Virginia because if anything was going to be happening with the labor people, it was going to be happening at the national level. So I would do what I could do there on the telephone. Then Kenny and Larry and I used to room in the same suite. So really what I began to do was just work as they did, although more like Donahue [Richard K. Donahue] and all the rest—scouts [were] out—by county, traveling around. I was a little freer than most. I didn't have an assigned county. I traveled through the whole state, a little bit like I did in the 1960 campaign itself, just going around and seeing who was who, and doing specific things in specific spots. Matt Reese [Matthew A. Reese, Jr.] and I worked very closely together, and this was his general job.

HACKMAN: You talked earlier a little bit about religion. Can you remember anything about the religious strategy in relation to West Virginia, and if you were involved in this to any extent?

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DUNGAN: I was not in West Virginia, except I was along, but I didn't contribute very much to that last, that Monday night telecast. He had that one down so pat and his sense of the situation was so accurate that he didn't have need or get very much staff advice that night. And the religious strategy in West Virginia was just show them you don't have horns, go around, shake as many hands as possible. That's all. But there were no rational, logical discussions.

HACKMAN: Some people have said that there was a basic shift between Wisconsin and West Virginia on the religious issue between the Wisconsin vote showed that it was going to be more of a factor than he previously thought or found.... Was that accurate, do you think?

DUNGAN: Yes, sure. I remember going down in the airplane looking at the Lou Harris [Louis Harris] poll sometime in December, which showed, you know, in effect, that religion wasn't any factor at all and indeed

Kennedy would sweep the place by—nobody was within thirty percentage

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points of him. By the time we arrived there that poll was exactly the opposite because he became a serious contender, and when that happened, why, the bigots came out of the woodwork. It was a hell of an issue, and very difficult to cope with. Well, heck, it's like any other kind of prejudice. It's very difficult to deal with.

HACKMAN: Can you look back during the Senate years and recall discussions of how this would be handled or were you talking with people about this at that time, in those years?

DUNGAN: How we would handle it in a practical situation like West Virginia?

HACKMAN: Well...

DUNGAN: I don't know. I can't really say that—yes, I can say because we did talk more about... I talked to him more about the religious bit and how to handle the issue and this question of getting it out in the open early more than I did, let's say, about other elements of campaign strategy. And it was characteristic of him,

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in any event, not to duck something that was going to come. He didn't try to anticipate everything in any other field and make his position clear so that all would know, intellectual fury and all that kind of stuff. But on an issue like this one, or any other one that was going to come up, I think he felt the earlier he got it out the better; especially on this one because the more it was discussed, the more diffused the opinion would be and the less sharp the issue would be, at least in some minds. Also, you know, looking at it from a Catholic point of view—which he never did but I did—I thought it was awfully important for him, since he was going to be involved in the damned thing anyway, to be a kind of a means by which what I call the Murray Doctrine became accepted not only in American Catholic minds, particularly in American Catholic minds, but also generally speaking. You know, I've been involved mildly with J.C. Murray [John Courtney Murray] since I've been in college, and I knew a lot. I remember

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one day having lunch with him early in the game, probably around '58 or sometime. We were in the cafeteria. He came down from Woodstock, and we talked about this whole issue, how to handle it. So I had a separate interest which happened to coincide with the President's interest, which he wouldn't have given a damn about because he wasn't that involved with the question of the Catholic community and its relationships to the body politic in the United

States.

And there were a lot of people, incidentally, intellectual Catholics I think who thought of Kennedy as kind of the knight in shining armor who was going to lead the progressive elements, particularly in the lay community into the promised land.

HACKMAN: But he didn't quite see that?

DUNGAN: Oh, the last thing in the world he ever.... Leading Catholic laymen—that was a role that he did not see himself in, either the traditional sense of that term or any other sense. He had a very Calvinistic

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sense of religion. He was more Calvinist than he was Catholic. In lots of his attitudes he had the—well, he was a typical product of the Boston variety of Catholicism.

HACKMAN: Did he fit well in with the rest of his family in this sense or was he much different, particularly with...

DUNGAN: Bobby? Bobby was much different I think. Bobby was more pietistic. He was more Boston Irish Catholic than he was Harvard Catholic, if you will. Jack was more the other way. He was a Calvinist who went to Catholic church. I used to, every once in a while, especially when I first went there.... I was not used to the shorthand way of dealing with issues and problems, much more discursive. And I talked to him about the philosophy of Maritain [Jacques Maritain] and this kind of stuff. Boy, he was impatient, whew! But certain things stuck. He knew that there was an American Catholic theologian by the name of J.C. Murray and generally what he thought. And he himself

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talked to him. He knew there was a Bishop Hannan [Philip M. Hannan] downtown who could give him guidance on certain formal kind of things.

HACKMAN: When did he start to talk to these people?

DUNGAN: Gosh. I think I had a liaison with Hannan as early as '58 which was independent of anything I would have had as an ordinary citizen. Of course, I had the Murray contact and lots of others. John Cogley, for instance, is an old friend of mine, and that's how John Cogley got to be known in this circle.

HACKMAN: How about Bishop Wright [John J. Wright]?

DUNGAN: No, John Wright he knew from Springfield, you see.

HACKMAN: That's right.

DUNGAN: As a matter of fact, I only met Wright myself. I can't say I know him very well. But that was his separate one. And then he had Cushing [Richard James Cushing], and lines in to Spellman [Francis J. Spellman], although

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they were never very good. So he had a variety of conflicting lines into the Catholic community, and that's what got him so damned irritated. And he thought lots of them were hypocrites, which they are.

HACKMAN: Did he feel that some of these people were opposed to him strictly on political....

DUNGAN: Oh yes, oh yes.

HACKMAN: Spellman, for instance?

DUNGAN: Yes, definitely.

HACKMAN: Who else that you can think of?

DUNGAN: That he thought were opposed to him on political grounds?

HACKMAN: Yes, yes. On that most of them were?

DUNGAN: I think he felt the whole American hierarchy was, with the Jesuits and so on. He had some big stereotypes which I don't think he ever bothered to—that were never gotten rid of simply because he didn't bother to get rid of them. It wasn't that important to him.

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HACKMAN: What about Catholic education, his opinion of that?

DUNGAN: I don't think he had any strong—you mean parochial education as opposed to public schools?

HACKMAN: Yes. Somebody had mentioned that he felt that products of parochial education had closed minds, couldn't accept new things.

DUNGAN: I don't think that's true. I never heard him say it. He might not have said it to me. But I certainly didn't—there was no indication of that in

the kinds of people that were around him.

HACKMAN: That's true.

DUNGAN: He certainly had enough of them around in one way or another. He might have had that feeling, but it never impeded him in terms of his judgment on a particular guy for a particular job. But this is typical, once again, of the kind of compartmentalization that went on.

HACKMAN: Did he talk in the early Senate period about...

DUNGAN: As a matter of fact, I suspect he could very well

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have arrived at that generalization given the locale of his upbringing and so forth. Add a lot of the people he came into contact with were probably very stuffy.

HACKMAN: Did he talk with you about particular areas he felt he had to make some changes in, particularly aid to parochial education and that?

DUNGAN: Most of that was.... I never got into the discussion—well, I did briefly, but not in great detail. My own feeling was so strongly on the question of opposition to assistance, at that time, for parochial schools, and I still think so. And we all felt that way, so there was really no great discussion. As far as the Catholics were concerned, what were they going to do? You know, his attitude there was, "Gee, if they don't want me, if we don't have them, there's no sense in hanging myself on the parochial school business."

HACKMAN: Was he concerned to any great degree, or were the

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people around him concerned to any degree about alienating the Catholics?

DUNGAN: Well, that's what I say. His attitude of, "Gee, if I don't have them, why bother?" A lot of them, for instance J.C. Murray, were sensitive to that and didn't like that being taken for granted. No, Murray was too big a guy to be really overly concerned with that, but a lot of Catholics were. And I think rightly so. You never make the mistake, even if you think that kind of thing, of telling people or leaving them under the impression that that's your attitude.

HACKMAN: Did he feel that any of these questions that people were asking about

his religion were legitimate questions or do you think he felt people really had no business asking these things?

DUNGAN: Yes, I think he felt that way. Private affair. The Calvinist. No relevance. "I told you before what I think in the Church is not important." And,

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equally, he couldn't understand—well, he understood really, but he had no tolerance of it. I think he also felt that he was unnecessarily bearing the burden of what he considered to be questionable, if not erroneous, Church doctrines and attitudes and practices and so forth. He was carrying the whole load of the Second Vatican Council. Looking back in it now—he never, certainly, articulated it this way—but the mistakes of centuries, at least as far as they manifested themselves in American political terms, he was carrying and he thought that was pretty unfair. He had enough problems with trade unions and so forth. He did—I remember one day having that kind of a conversation. He didn't articulate it exactly that way, but it did irritate him. "It's so unfair," he's say.

HACKMAN: Did you do any writing for him on this area in that period of time?

DUNGAN: Yes, I did. What happened was that certain phrases that would sneak into the answers in our mail really

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became—you know, we'd stick to the same phraseology on aid to parochial schools or, you know, "I'd obey my church and my conscience." We went over that Knebel [Fletcher Knebel] piece pretty carefully. So that, you know, it's hard to say where things that I would put down as formulations of positions on certain things became his and where other people contributed. God, there were all sorts of people putting things in. I can remember having some tussles with Sorensen on some them where he would want to go much further than I thought that the President ought to, needed to go from a political point of view, and it put him in an extreme position, objectively speaking. But Sorensen himself, coming from his nativist South Dakota, or Nebraska—I wouldn't say he's prejudiced, but I mean his whole way of looking at the problem tended to be more extreme than it needed to be. Even the way the words came out were edgy, would

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grate on Catholics. But he could say exactly the same thing in different ways. So I used to do a lot of that adjusting, editing and toning down, more than actually stating a position because they—when I say "they," both the President and Sorensen—were wary about my specific Catholic background.

HACKMAN: Can you remember being surprised at the reaction to that interview? The *Life* or *Look* interview?

DUNGAN: *Look*. No. Well, yes, I thought it was a pretty good statement myself; I didn't think there was anything that horrendous about it.

HACKMAN: What.... You've got something you wanted....

DUNGAN: Well, I was going to say it really is interesting to see how, to think back on it, how big people made these issues which now, in a perspective of ten or fifteen years, don't really seem to be all that important. Of course, in this particular area that we're talking about such rapid change has come about in the Church itself. It's an interesting

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reflection on history, the things we take seriously that really aren't. Like we could go out and play golf this afternoon if I played golf.

HACKMAN: Did he take the issue of birth control seriously? Was he intrigued by this at all?

DUNGAN: Bored.

HACKMAN: Because somebody had said that this was one of the few things in this area that made a great deal of sense to him, so he was somewhat interested in it there.

DUNGAN: Oh, well, yes. He was very interested in birth control—in population control, demographic problems. Anybody that is in the international field can't help but be concerned with it, and particularly if he is as interested, as he was, in India. He, you know, was totally bored with the theological and Church-related arguments to this. This is the kind of thing he had little tolerance for.

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HACKMAN: Was it obvious, speaking of foreign affairs, that he was a lot more interested in this area than in other areas?

DUNGAN: Oh my gosh, yes. Especially if you were the guy that was responsible for keeping his nose to the grindstone on labor affairs. It was a hell of a time to get him to spend the requisite amount of time on subcommittee hearings or anything else. It was true even when he went into the White House. I mean, if you had looked at his time or his calendar in the White House years—I've never done it, but I'm darn sure that if you did you would find at least a third to a half of his

time being spent on international questions, partly because they were very, very important but also partly because this was the way his mind went.

HACKMAN: Were you involved in any of this in the Senate, particularly foreign aid?

DUNGAN: In the first year that I was there I did a lot of that because of my direct past experience, but in the

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last couple of years very, very little, in fact practically none.

HACKMAN: Do you think his father's role changed in relation to him during the period you were there, '56 to '60, the extent he got involved in things.

DUNGAN: Yes, I think so. I think as he grew and grew and became more confident, that the father's role went down. Now not formally. He followed the role and was in the picture, and you couldn't keep him out. He was that kind of a guy. But, yes, I think it did change. We used to see him coming, you know, and be properly deferential and so forth but never take it too seriously. He was a canny old guy, I must say, really was at that time, but not all that good and it was an excessively old style outlook. He thought power was, you know, Dick Daley [Richard J. Daley] and John Kenny [John V. Kenny]. And so it was, really, in the time period he was concerned with.

HACKMAN: Did you discuss his civil rights votes with him at all during this time—the '57 act, I believe it was?

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DUNGAN: Sorensen was the principal guy, and I was in on the strategy, but I didn't have very much to do with it.

HACKMAN: Going back a little bit, at the time he came there in '56, do you remember what the reaction was in the office to the run for the vice presidency in '56 out there?

DUNGAN: Do you mean did they think that was a good idea?

HACKMAN: Were they disappointed?

DUNGAN: Oh no.

HACKMAN: By that time it had....

DUNGAN: Oh no. It was very soon after that that everybody came to the conclusion that was the best thing that ever happened. It didn't take long, like about twenty-four hours, for people to recognize that.

HACKMAN: Did you have any contacts in '59 or '60 with various Catholic politicians around the country, maybe New Jersey or Pennsylvania, in this period talking to them on this issue...

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DUNGAN: No.

HACKMAN: People like Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence]?

DUNGAN: No, no, no, no, no. Because I wasn't that involved in the political side of this, qua politics, and also I think Sorensen did some of this with guys like David Lawrence. But, you see, those guys weren't operating as Catholics primarily. And you know, looking back on it now, it probably would have been an idea to start appealing to them as Catholics because the particular kinds of people that were talking about it are very much, quote, our kind of folks, close quotes, they can be talked to as Catholics. In other words, he could have done what he didn't like to do, which was to be looked on as a Catholic, could have done it as a practical thing, not as a matter of principle.

HACKMAN: Were you aware at the time that you came on of the Bailey [John Moran Bailey] memo, the thing that Sorensen had supposedly put together?

DUNGAN: No, I wasn't. The one that was used in '56?

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HACKMAN: Yes.

DUNGAN: Yes.

HACKMAN: Was something like this used in '60, or as '60 approached? No?

DUNGAN: This would confirm what you were suggesting earlier, the notion that you put all this stuff out in advance. I don't think that was ever a conscious policy there except to the point that I mentioned before.

HACKMAN: There's one other thing on West Virginia. How important did you think funds were at that time, vis-à-vis the Humphrey campaign, in getting support in West Virginia?

DUNGAN: Oh, I think undoubtedly our more favorable position with money in West Virginia was a very significant factor. I don't know whether anybody's ever done an analysis of that particular election, but West Virginia's like certain of our big cities in the sense that there are so-called controlled wards. And there's no doubt that money plays an important role. The guy that's got ten dollars more gets it.

HACKMAN: Yes, getting on the slate, this whole process of

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slating.

DUNGAN: So, I don't know. I think one could probably do an analysis and figure out that either it was very important or not so important. But we used it; it was used quite freely.

HACKMAN: Can you remember staff discussions about how much money had to be spent and...

DUNGAN: Well, yes. But that was held very closely, the total amount. I handled some, you know, and saw it handled. You know, we would decide at the local level, not.... He usually never got involved in this anyway. We decided how much was needed here and there and the other place.

HACKMAN: The reason I'd asked that is because I've seen it mentioned that Shriver was usually for spending more money than some other people would, and I was just...

DUNGAN: Oh, well, Shriver's an idiot in doing things like that. I thought he was anyway. He had a lot of silly people around him. Shriver would deal, as he did in the 1960 campaign, with the business and

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professional people. And there was always a cleavage between the Shriver-like forces, the family forces who were trying to help "good old Jack," and the hardnosed pols like O'Brien and O'Donnell and so forth. I wouldn't say that the hardnosed pols were all that bad. [BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2] But they're a hell of a lot more hard-headed and realistic and plugged into the political machinery than Shriver and all of his friends, you know, that he collected from all over—Harvard days or Groton days or whatever days that were involved. And Shriver's judgment is not all that good on this kind of thing. He makes so many, you see, that he's bound to come out percentage-wise. Sorensen's great genius is he can do a lot of things like *Time* magazine.

HACKMAN: A lot of people have said that most of the Kennedy people, the inner circle had very little respect for the political pros in various states. I don't know, was this apparent in the primaries? Do you think this was an accurate assessment?

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DUNGAN: Of how the Kennedy people didn't have respect for the pros?

HACKMAN: Yes, personal respect for them. They knew they had to deal with them, but they...

DUNGAN: Well, it depends. There were two kinds of Kennedy people. There were the O'Donnells and so forth who, I think, by and large thought the pros were all right, who, you know, didn't worry about what their moral judgments were, how good governmentish they were. The name of the game was to get elected. To that kind of fellow, that was a matter of indifference. Then there were the other kind who looked down their aquiline noses at these fellows. And I felt a little bit both ways: deal with them, but don't deal with them.... That was true with Kenny too. Kenny dealt with things one at a time. In other words, the job today or this month or this year is to win an election. Let's worry about the issues and how we deal with them after the election. That's, you know, for instance, the West Virginia thing was handled very, very much that way—

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a straight professional operation. And that's the way West Virginia politics are handled, professional in the sense of "How much?" You've got to back it with a very solid campaign, and I don't even think that the money would have solved the problem, especially in that atmosphere, without the other thing having been done. So, you get down to the question of how important the money is, or was.

HACKMAN: As a result of the West Virginia vote, could you see that labor was falling more in line at that point in terms of definite commitments? Can you remember any?

DUNGAN: I'd say no, there was no strong indication at that stage in the game that labor was in line. They don't get in line that easily. I mean, there's no reason for them to do so.

HACKMAN: After the West Virginia primary, do you think the Kennedy operation as a whole made a much greater attempt to get support of liberals, or people who had been attracted to Stevenson and Humphrey? Is this the first time you really.... I think you were talking to Robert Nathan [Robert Roy Nathan] and

people like this in this period

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after West Virginia. Do you recall?

DUNGAN: Yes, but I knew Nathan long before that.

HACKMAN: This was no big...

DUNGAN: No, I don't think there was any major effort. What we did was systematically go after delegates. You know, if that involved, in one particular thing, you know, becoming a Stevenson liberal. Let's say, or a Mississippi conservative, why, we'd put that particular coat on. So that there was no special effort. It was strictly a numbers game, I would say.

HACKMAN: All right, you worked some in Oregon, right?

DUNGAN: Yes, a couple of days, just a few days. We left West Virginia and went out there for about a week, as I recall. It was a mess, you know. Oregon was as disorganized a state from a political point of view as they come, and just, I would say, largely irrelevant. And we went through motions.

HACKMAN: Can you recall what your impressions of Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin] were? He was working out there. Was he doing any

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kind of job?

DUNGAN: Yes, big load of baloney, as I think Hy is and has been. He was great on the back-slapping. He does all right for Hy. But I don't think he—yes, he's all right in a Chicago-type machine situation where you can sit around and shoot the bull for a long while with certain key guys and maybe move them into a position and make some bargains. But in an unstructured situation like Oregon is and was and probably forever will be, you know, he's about as much help as a bump on a log. Frankly, from my little experience in Oregon, I never could figure out what the hell you did do with it. But I knew that all the techniques that we were bringing in from the East were—I was less than sanguine about their possibilities, except for the telephone calling thing which we finally, against a very, very negative judgment, agreed to do. I remember my talking to somebody about it. "Where are these telephone committees?" "Well, we decided we wouldn't do that.

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Mr. So-and-so decided we wouldn't do that because, gee whiz, if you did get a lady up out of the basement when she's doing her wash, there that would be a negative vote rather than a positive one." So there's—well, we got them organized. You know, the traditional way they campaign out here is to get people to put signs up in their front yard.

And then I took a trip down to the university, down to Eugene and went out into a rural area one night. What I was trying to do was to get a sense of how the thing was going and what we could do at this late time to spruce it up. Boy, it was a pretty dismal picture. I never realized how anti-Catholic certain parts of Oregon were—the whole damn state, as far as that goes. It was a surprise to me, which it shouldn't have been. I mean we should have had that all well taped. But, boy, that was pretty black territory, too.

HACKMAN: Can you remember the labor situation out there with Morse running and Edith Green [Edith S. Green] working for Kennedy at

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that point?

DUNGAN: Morse was really not very helpful; Edith tried to be. They were in the midst of a pitched battle, as they always are. The labor guys were split all over. It was a bad labor movement. We had a strike going on in a newspaper out there at that time in which we were right—you know, trying to get dragged into the middle of. And labor was, it was like anything else in Oregon that we found. It was on the liberal Democratic side, indeed perhaps on the Republican side too—any kind of an organization was really not worth a hoot, even the trade union movement. There was nothing there that could be used as a group more or less. Everybody was, it was a highly individualistic kind of enterprise and environment in which to operate. You just did your best. What we should have done and finally did decide to do out there was to just concentrate on the last week on television and radio spots and just saturate the place and then cross your fingers.

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That was the only thing we thought we could do that was reasonable, and I'm not so sure in this day and age that that's what one oughtn't to do generally in a campaign, assuming that you're willing to do enough of the stuff so that the spot, radio or television spot clicks with the listener at the time. In other words, you know, this is not the first time he's heard the name.

HACKMAN: Morse was sort of changing his mind in this period; he decided he wasn't going to run; and then I think he came into the primary fairly late. Can you remember having any contacts with him on this during that period? I've got some names of people that were...

DUNGAN: I was reading last night, I was looking over some of the early history

of the campaign, and Morse came out, one of the very early ones, supporting John Kennedy for president.

HACKMAN: You mean during the campaign?

DUNGAN: Oh, way, way, way early.

HACKMAN: And then came off again...

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DUNGAN: Yes, then he came off again in typical Morse style.

HACKMAN: Yes, well he was making a lot of speeches at that time that Kennedy was a traitor to the labor movement after Landrum-Griffin and all this.

DUNGAN: Yes, as a matter of fact, reading this chronology is fascinating. It's also interesting to see how many of the things that he did in his early years were.... For instance, in 1957 I remember having an argument with him on this. He supported this one-year appropriations limit that came out of the Hoover Commission where he sponsored a bill with Harry Byrd [Harry F. Byrd, Sr.]. You know, it was idiotic—and also a measure of his.... He didn't do that for strict political, Harry Byrd-Hoover Commission stuff, he did it also because he had some conviction. It was a measure of his level of sophistication about governmental finance and administrative-executive branch. It was very low; he didn't know a damn thing about the way the government really ran, except

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in certain special cases.

HACKMAN: Do you think this improved much between '56 and '60, as far as the budget process?

DUNGAN: No, no.

HACKMAN: He went in pretty cold.

DUNGAN: Yes, very cold, very cold. But by that time he was at a point where he soaked things up like mad. If he was good between '56 and '60 in terms of his capacity to absorb and relate, he was superb by the time '60 came. When he moved into the presidency, boy, you could hand it to him hot.

HACKMAN: How could you account for this...

DUNGAN: I don't know. I said to my wife, I remember, in 1956, "One thing about this guy, you can say anything else (and this was after that Baltimore experience) this is a man who had an absolutely phenomenal capacity to grow, to absorb things." Really phenomenal. I don't know how to explain it. I've never seen a person like it.

HACKMAN: That thing's not at all complete, but...

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DUNGAN: No, I know it isn't. I know.... I was just looking for that point at which Morse came out so strong. "Eleanor Roosevelt [Eleanor R. Roosevelt] attacks Kennedy on TV." Well, that's an interesting era and crossplay. Have you ever heard of Abba Schwartz [Abba P. Schwartz]...

HACKMAN: Right.

DUNGAN: ...and all that effort to patch up the Eleanor Roosevelt thing?

HACKMAN: Were you involved in any of this?

DUNGAN: Oh, very, very.

HACKMAN: Well, why don't you well about that?

DUNGAN: Well, Abba and I were good friends, and Abba and another guy, Wally Cohen [Wallace M. Cohen], who was his law partner in Washington always were making efforts to patch this up. I only heard secondhand from Abba of the efforts they had made in Chicago in 1956 to bring Mrs. Roosevelt and Jack Kennedy together, and what a fiasco that whole enterprise was. But Schwartz would always be after me because he was a compulsive insider. It would always be, "I love Jack," and that kind of

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stuff. But that wasn't really true. Abba just wanted to be where the power was. I mean I think he liked Jack Kennedy; don't misunderstand me. But I don't think he even recognized the degree to which his motivations were power. He was devoted to Mrs. Roosevelt, didn't think that these two great Democrats should remain estranged. I didn't know Mrs. Roosevelt that well. One time, as a move in this direction, he got me to go to Mrs. Roosevelt for tea, which was kind of pointless. But Abba did a lot of pointless things. I had not much leverage with the President. In any event, that kind of a problem doesn't get solved by a third party; it gets solved by the two individuals getting together. I also saw her one other time after the election in which she volunteered to help Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] with any little problems, to tell her how things were done and so forth. I just sipped my tea and thought,

“Eleanor, don’t worry about it. Don’t call her, she’ll call you.”

HACKMAN: What about his whole conception of, well, not just

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Mrs. Roosevelt, but liberals? People had said that he wasn’t—or he made the statement supposedly, he wasn’t comfortable with ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] types and this whole...

DUNGAN: I think this is another way of saying what I said before about how in our conversations on the question of religion, he was not so much concerned with the more theoretical, speculative implications of this in terms of history that are spun off in the living rooms of professional liberals. That irritated him. In a sense—I was going to say in a sense he didn’t like intellectuals, but I’m talking about a particular kind of pedantic fellow. You know the type. You see them around every university. This place is loaded with them, for instance. I must say I get irritated. They’re just spinning off things, you know, “Well, suppose he does this,” and “Suppose he does that.” “But look at that phrase that he said there. That means such and such.” That’s the kind of thing that used to irritate him.

HACKMAN: What about people like Paul Douglas and Joe Clark [Joseph S. Clark]?

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People like this in the Senate?

DUNGAN: I think Joe Clark came closer to being his description of an ADA type liberal than Paul Douglas. He might not have thought that Paul was very prudent in terms of choosing the issues and the time on which he’d fight the issues, but I don’t think he considered Paul a knee-jerk liberal, as he did Clark. Clark could be aroused to tilt at the windmills, at least in that ’56-’58 period. He’s a lot less likely to do that now. Maybe it’s because he’s getting older. But even then, I mean, he went—Clark last time up, shot for the majority leader. The thing that would irritate him about a guy like Clark was that he wasn’t smart enough to think through the implications. And that the majority whip ticks that Clark made last year was typical. This is where he’d fault him. Any damned fool could have counted the noses and not exposed himself to that kind of

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embarrassment.

HACKMAN: Well, let’s get into the Convention then maybe.

DUNGAN: Okay.

HACKMAN: To what extent were you involved in the planning for the Convention, platform and physical arrangements, things like this? Or were you to any extent?

DUNGAN: Well, I worked mostly on keeping in contact with the delegates and, once again, keeping contact with the labor people. But this was all—you know, I would say there might have been a half a dozen really important actors within the Kennedy operation on the Convention. I mean there were lots and lots of people, myself included, who did things. But to be very realistic, I would not consider the contribution of any of that group as being of overriding importance. In this sense Mr. Truman [Harry S. Truman] was right; it was rigged. Once certain things happened, certain things were put into play or certain people made decisions, it just went like.... And, therefore, all the running around to

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delegations and so forth I don't think make that much difference. Now I may take an excessively simplified view of it. In other words, I think a lot of it is pure baloney. And part of it is a little bit of a circus, and lots of the actors in this thing don't realize it's this way. I'm not cynical. I don't think they're controlled. But I don't think there are very many people who make decisions and that the cool fellow who sits back does all the work that he has to do. For instance, you know, you don't get a delegation just by talking to the head of it. You have to work at two ends. But when you get down to the crunching moment where the delegation could go in terms of its own attitudes, either way, then it's very important who the real leader or leaders are in that delegation. But that doesn't require a whole cadre of people. Now, that does become important, and we did the work of months of detail, of knowing every delegate by name and his wife, and, you know the system. I think that

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was very helpful in certain instances. But I also think a lot of the, you know, this guy and that guy going around to check somebody in his list of delegates might have done more harm than good; especially considering some of the people who were the hustlers.

HACKMAN: Can you think of some specific examples of this or what you mean by it?

DUNGAN: Well, now, I'm probably speaking from prejudice. I think this is where you tended to get some of the old Kennedy friends who might have been great football players at Hyannis Port, but when you're really going out for a guy from Oshkosh—this wasn't true for all of them, but many of them—it turned them right off. They did more damage to the President than otherwise.

HACKMAN: You had a lot of contacts with the New Jersey delegation at this convention, did you not?

DUNGAN: Some.

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HACKMAN: Could you go into that?

DUNGAN: No. No, I didn't have that much contact with New Jersey. But in fact, once again, I was working the labor beat. But it wasn't so important. There were a lot of labor delegates, but what labor decided or didn't decide was all handled by Walter and George and a few other people directly with the President; sometimes with Bobby. In any event the President would tend to look, when he got into, as he did, into a crunchy situation, to a labor statesman like Arthur Goldberg who would have immediate access. You're dealing above the staff level when you get into the Convention type setting. That was even true of a guy like Kenny, as all the accounts of those last decisions suggest.

HACKMAN: Meany and Biemiller [Andrew J. Biemiller] and Al Zack [Albert J. Zack] made the tours of the candidates. Do you remember that? Particularly, did you get any feedback from the confrontation between Meany and Johnson? That was supposedly a real long, rough session.

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DUNGAN: It was?

HACKMAN: Yes, from what I hear. Some people have said that at this point Meany gave some of the COPE [Committee on Political Education] people the go-ahead on the floor. Of course, as you say, it didn't make that much difference what the hell the COPE people were doing on the floor probably at that point.

DUNGAN: That's right.

HACKMAN: I thought maybe you could...

DUNGAN: I don't imagine that George Meany and Lyndon really hit it off very well. Was Al Barkan [Alexander E. Barkan] in there or was it Al Zack?

HACKMAN: It was Al Zack, which is maybe a little surprising. I don't quite get that either, but that's what a couple of people have said. What was the relationship with—McDevitt [James L. McDevitt] at that time was head of COPE and Al Barkan—pretty good working relationship or did you have many

contacts with those people?

DUNGAN: Oh yes, very close contacts with them. Both McDevitt

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and Barkan are old friends from labor, way back. McDevitt was basically an ineffective guy. He was an old A.F. of L type that got stuck in—a nice guy, but he was not very effective and was used to a different kind of politics. He was very parochial, in other words. Barkan on the other hand was much more sophisticated, had been around more, came out of a more flexible type enterprise, and at that time, I thought, was pretty good. I think since that time my impression is that he's been kind of forced through the extrusion mold on 16th street, which it too bad. As one has to do, you've got to choose over there between the A.F. of L dominant group or the other. And the others are out. Well, that's neither here nor there. They had a pretty good working relationship. Al was deferential to McDevitt, and McDevitt was satisfied to kind of preside without running, and Al really ran it. But again, you see, I think in terms of the Convention, and labor involvement was really not that important. I

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considered my role there was to maintain contact with those people that I knew and, you know, keep them straightened out so that they didn't think that people weren't paying attention to them and that they didn't get some wild hairs; this was basically not disturbing as a pattern that was pretty well preordained, or would be at one point.

HACKMAN: Was there anything that came up that was really any...

DUNGAN: Not that I... Actually, I spent quite a bit of time just in general glad-handing.

HACKMAN: We should talk about the vice presidency, certainly. What kind of feeling did you have and some of the other people when the Convention started about the possibility of Johnson being selected?

DUNGAN: Never thought of it. It was so far out of my mind that I never thought of it as a possibility. It appalled me when I heard of it. I really hit the roof along with some of my labor friends.

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HACKMAN: When you would talk with these labor people, did you talk with them a lot about this as the Convention went on, or was this something people you were talking to were very interested in?

DUNGAN: No. My own line to the ones I did talk to about vice presidential speculation was all fairly indefinite. But when they would say, "How about Johnson?" I'd say, "Oh, not a smell," or, "Over my dead body," or something like that which, I think, must have been the line of a number. This was not a line out of the central office, obviously. But, well, you know, you've seen the stuff on Bobby's reaction and O'Donnell's and everybody else's. But it was a natural reaction for all of us. Well, hell, he'd been the enemy for umpty-ump months and really the only real one in my opinion, the only real opposition. So when the word came down, boy, we were really—I was shocked. I was trying to hide from all

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my labor friends. I knew that that would all be handled by two or three guys at the top, and they'd all go along. But they were really angry.

HACKMAN: Did you get around and make any contacts after this, after the announcement came out in an effort to smooth things over, or did you really hide?

DUNGAN: I did. I figured there wasn't very much to do. I mean I was so opposed to it myself. It took me a long way to come around to thinking about the political advantages. I sort of figured Symington had gotten some cotton planted in some way—a real live one.

HACKMAN: Who was your favorite, can you recall or did you have any single one?

DUNGAN: I didn't have any. That was the great difficulty. I guess I was as much for Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] as for anybody, even though he was kind of weak, and he doesn't come from a politically helpful part of the country. Well, look, I'm getting bushed

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and it's twelve o'clock.

HACKMAN: Yes, I was just going to say....

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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