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Biographical Note

United States Senator, Minnesota, 1965 - 1977; Vice President, United States, 1977 - 1981. In this interview, Mondale discusses Robert F. Kennedy's time as Attorney General, what it was like to work with him in the Senate, and his campaign for the presidency, among other issues.

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Walter Mondale – RFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

SENATOR WALTER MONDALE

May 17, 1973
Washington, D.C.

By Roberta Greene

For the Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Program
of the Kennedy Library

GREENE: First of all, did you have any contact with Robert Kennedy prior to, or during the 1960 campaign?

MONDALE: No. I remember reading about him, but I didn't meet him. In Minnesota [R. Sargent] Sarge Shriver, I think, did most of the work. I met Sarge. The president came out a couple of times as a candidate. Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] came out once in the 1956 campaign just to say hello, took part in an event, I didn't know him. I really met Bob on a serious basis when I came to the Senate. I had met him a few times before because I was attorney general of Minnesota, and we bumped into each other at this and that event, but I really got to know him when we came into the Senate together.

GREENE: There were no contacts when you were on the consumer affairs council?

MONDALE: I think I met him once in the course of that, but I didn't really know him.

GREENE: Well, since you haven't been interviewed for John Kennedy's oral history project, maybe you can give your views on the council here and we can share them with the other project. How did you feel about that. . . .?

MONDALE: Of course I was very pleased to be appointed. . . .

GREENE: How did that come about?

MONDALE: I think we went through [Hubert H.] Humphrey. I was attorney general then, and there was a story that he was going to establish a council. In Minnesota as attorney general, I think I set up one of the first consumer units. I was there before [Ralph] Nader in this whole consumer thing, and when I saw the president moving I asked Humphrey to get me on there, and he did.

GREENE: What did you think of the other members and the way they operated?

MONDALE: I thought it was an excellent council with one exception, that it was a pretty pure operation with all the old traditional, magnificent consumer advocates. You know, Colston Warne and all of them, and they were magnificent people. But I thought we'd have done a little bit better with a little more dissent on there than we had.

GREENE: Who would you say was the exception?

MONDALE: Well, Sylvia Porter was on it for a while. I thought she was a good spokesman. Then there was a businessman from New York. I forget his name right now, but he spoke up once in a while. They both quit. I think they just thought that there was no balance there.

GREENE: What was the relationship between the CAC [Consumer Advisory Council] and [Walter W.] Heller's group, the Council of Economic Advisers?

MONDALE: Quite close. Walter Heller, I think, was assigned the task of sort of shepherding us. Of course, I'm from Minnesota and I knew Walter well, and I thought that they worked very closely. Every time we came to town [Robert J.] Bob Lampman or somebody like that on CEA staff was working with us.

GREENE: There was talk, at least from the memos that I've seen, of creating a special consumer assistant or advisor in the White House.

MONDALE: That's right.

GREENE: That came out of your . . .

MONDALE: That came out of our committee. We were of the impression that Kennedy was going to do that before he was killed. And then one of the first things [Lyndon Baines] Johnson did is, as I recall, was to set up in

Esther Peterson that office of special . . . And then, of course, it was followed by the T.V. ad gal and now we have . . .

GREENE: Betty Furness?

MONDALE: Yes.

GREENE: Do you remember any discussion about who the . . . ? It seems that it was a foregone conclusion that it would be a woman to head this council. Is that the way you remember it?

MONDALE: I don't remember that, no. We just wanted a special consumer representative.

GREENE: Because at one point there was . . .

MONDALE: Everybody loved Esther Peterson, and I think that there was a strong recommendation for her, but I don't think the sex was. . . .

GREENE: Well, okay. Well, Heller seemed to think it should have been a woman. Then there was a unanimous resolution and passed by the CAC requesting that it be Esther Peterson and Heller . . .

MONDALE: Yes . . .

GREENE: . . . took it under advisement but said he'd really like to get some new female blood in on it. Does that ring a bell?

MONDALE: No, I don't remember that.

GREENE: No. Okay. In 1963, well, this may have been after the assassination, I don't have an exact date, but when it was made into a presidential commission that was after . . . ?

MONDALE: That was after I left.

GREENE: Do you have any recollections of the president during those three appearances he made before the CAC.

MONDALE: Yeah. I think I was there twice, maybe three times. When we were set up he met with us. Some months later he came in and said a little bit . . .

GREENE: You'd presented your first report.

MONDALE: Yes. I remember he commented he didn't like the cover. Should have been blue, red and red. I forget what it was.

GREENE: Anything beyond that?

MONDALE: He was very pleasant, you know. Thanked us for the work and that sort of thing.

GREENE: Is there anything else on the CAC?

MONDALE: Not really. I mean the report that we put out when I was there kind of indicates where we went and what we were trying to do. Beyond that I don't think I have anything to add.

GREENE: Okay. You were a member of the executive board of the National Association of Attorneys General? Was there any contact between this group and the Justice Department? Was there anybody who acted as a liaison?

MONDALE: We had a very loose relationship there. I think we had a conference once on consumer matters in Washington which the Justice Department either sponsored or helped us with. At every one of our meetings there'd be Justice Department people there. [William A.] Bill Geoghegan, I recall, [Herbert J.] Jack Miller and others would come. That's where I got to know them. They've been friends of mine since. They would come around, and I think at one of the meetings Bobby Kennedy spoke, but it was a very kind of a loose relationship.

GREENE: I guess that would go for the committee you were on for consumer and investment protection . . .

MONDALE: Yes.

GREENE: . . . and the other arms of this . . . ?

MONDALE: I'm sure we heard from some Justice Department people during the course of our work, but I don't think we had, you know, a kind of an institutionalized relationship there.

GREENE: What about the reputation of Robert Kennedy as attorney general in the Justice Department among the states' attorneys general during that period?

MONDALE: I think it was pretty good. I got the feeling, I think, some of the old hands thought he was a little inexperienced in the law. You remember the president's crack, that he thought he ought to spend some time

as attorney general before he goes out to make a living in the law. That was taken both ways, humorously and seriously, by a lot of. . . . I think he suffered . . .

GREENE: Did that change at all?

MONDALE: I think so. I think the longer he was there the more they respected him. His assistants were all very good and made a good impression--Jack Miller, and Geoghegan and all of them, John Reilly and so on--all made an excellent impression on the association seat. Bobby Kennedy hired Jack Reilly who had been sort of our executive secretary, so there was a nice immediate relationship there. Jack's a very fine man and they worked together very nicely. I think, you know, the conservatives were suspicious of Bobby. Those of us who were young and liberals liked him very much.

GREENE: Were there ever occasions when you needed support from the Justice Department in your own activities?

MONDALE: No, not really. You see, they were just getting started in the development of strike forces, and so on. We had an active program, anti-crime program, crime bureau program, and so on, at that point. Except that they didn't have the law enforcement act, they didn't have . . . They'd just begun the juvenile delinquency act. We worked a little bit with that. But most of that kind of closer, institutional and money relationship was developed after I left the attorney general's office. It didn't have it, and I think it's much better today.

GREENE: Well, if there's nothing else before that, I guess we can skip to the Senate. You don't have anything on the 1964 convention or that whole period when you were running . . .? No, that's when you were out.

MONDALE: I was attorney general and I was very actively involved in trying to get Humphrey vice-president. I was chairman of the Johnson re-election campaign. I was chairman of the Kennedy campaign first. As a matter of fact, the day he was killed I was meeting with [Nicholas D.] Nick Coleman who's now majority leader of the Senate. We were planning the campaign in my office, and my girl came in and said the president was shot. God, it was awful.

Then after the death settled and everything, I picked up on the Johnson campaign. We all wanted Humphrey vice-president. I worked on that. We had a big fund raiser for Johnson in June of 1964, I worked on that. Then I got assigned that thankless task as chairman of the Mississippi freedom challenge to the Credentials Committee and worked on that.

GREENE: But there was no direct contact with Robert Kennedy?

MONDALE: No. I don't think he was involved in that. Some of the Kennedy people. . . . [Kenneth P.] Kenny O'Donnell was around a little bit. But I didn't see too many there working on that problem directly. The people who were attacking us were Edith Greene from Oregon and some others that I . . . I didn't see Bobby's footprints there.

GREENE: Was there any concern in the Humphrey camp, especially earlier, that Robert Kennedy might go after the vice-presidential nomination actively?

MONDALE: At the convention?

GREENE: Yes.

MONDALE: Not really. I believe, as I recall, that by the time the convention came around it was almost accepted by everyone that Johnson would pick his man. And of course, the dominance of Johnson in '64 is hard to remember after we saw the administration unravel at the end of 1967, so it's hard to remember that he was really king of the hills at that time. I think when the president said there would be no Cabinet officers considered everyone knew he was talking about Bobby, and I think Bobby more or less knew that was the. . . . I don't think he was trying. I was not on the inside of that. You know, they had the big film . . .

GREENE: Right. At the end.

MONDALE: . . . for Jack. But, I don't know. I think it was deliberately played at the end rather than at the beginning . . .

GREENE: It was switched.

MONDALE: Yeah.

GREENE: Right.

MONDALE: . . . so that there couldn't be any of that uprising stuff.

GREENE: Right. I just wondered if there was any concern about that in the Humphrey camp, since there was . . .

MONDALE: Humphrey may have had some, but that didn't seem . . . We were all concerned about keeping Johnson's good will because we thought there was one vote . . . I think that was about all.

GREENE: Okay, then how did your relationship develop once you both arrived at the Senate?

MONDALE: I arrived a couple of days early, because Humphrey stepped down, and I think it was about the second or third day of January when we all came in. I think we were natural allies. I always liked Bobby. I mean, I was always in the Humphrey organization, but I always very much liked Bobby and I think he knew that. We sat together in that famous fifth row. You know, they had so many Democrats then. They had an extra row, and Bobby said we were closer to the men's room than we were to the Senate. There was myself, [Joseph D.] Joe Tydings, Fred Harris and Bobby. We sat back in a row that no longer exists. And you know, we had fun back there.

Then through most of his Senate career we sat together. I think for a while we weren't together, but my seat was right next to his most of the time. And although we were never on the same committees . . . I took his seat on the labor committee. When he was killed I took his place. As a matter of fact . . . I felt a responsibility . . . I tried to carry on a lot of the stuff that I thought . . .

GREENE: I was going to ask you about that later because it's obvious . . .

MONDALE: I did. A lot of the stuff on Indians and Migrants, and so I tried to help because I thought that something should be done. But, while we were not on the same committees, we spent a lot of time talking, you know, about this and that, and so I got to know him very well.

GREENE: Did you see him socially?

MONDALE: Some. I was out at Hickory Hill two or three times. I would not say that we were running together socially. But we did get together socially. We'd meet elsewhere and I was out there two or three times. But he always knew, and I never tried to hide, that I was a Humphrey man. I was not against him, but I was for Humphrey and he knew that. That was just one of his better. . . .

GREENE: How was he regarded, as far as you know, by other senators?

MONDALE: I think if you look at the philosophy of a person, that they like a tough liberal, then he was very well liked. If you're very conservative, I think, there was that philosophical gap. Although I've heard people presented [James O.] Jimmy Eastland, says he's a good friend of Bobby's, tells people about it, even to this day. He got

along well with him, not philosophically, but they liked each other personally. And Bob had friends like that.

You know, I always thought that he was partly mystical. In other words, I think he'd brood about a problem. He was not the normal political glad hand. I don't mean to put that kind of person down. Some people get great sustenance out of just the joy and celebration of being with people. I don't think that was always true with Bobby. I think he would fix himself on an issue, and that would sometimes transcend those personal relationships. So that because of that different dimension of his personality, I think some people were a little bit apprehensive about their relationships with him.

Some people didn't like him at all, of course. I know that the late Senator [Edward V.] Long from Missouri did not like him, thought that Bobby had been picking on him, and this and that. There were a few others that didn't like him. You may recall, the day they passed those social security amendments and the leadership ran that thing through . . .

GREENE: Right.

MONDALE: . . . we were going to filibuster it. I was up next and I got there and it had already passed. I know that . . . Well, it's part of the record, Bobby blew up, you know. Took it personal. Those kinds of people, I don't think forgot that right away.

GREENE: That was Long on the floor then.

MONDALE: Was it Russell Long or [Robert C.] Bob Byrd? It was Russell Long who did it.

GREENE: Long.

MONDALE: I wasn't sure whether the attack was against him or against Bob Byrd. The record will show that.

GREENE: I guess a lot of people blew up that day, including [Michael J.] Mansfield.

MONDALE: Yeah.

GREENE: It takes quite a bit to . . .

MONDALE: Well, it was a sleazy deal. You don't do that, not in the Senate.

GREENE: The gentlemen. How well did you know his staff? I know since you've gotten very close with some of them, but . . .

MONDALE: Well, I knew Peter Edelman. He's from Minnesota. I really think he's great. I got to know [Frank] Mankiewicz a little bit.

GREENE: What about Adam Walinsky?

MONDALE: Not very well. Adam wasn't easy to know. He's got his eyes fixed on the horizon.

GREENE: Did Robert Kennedy's staff, as far as you know, have a reputation of its own in the Senate. I've heard some people say they were really arrogant and. . . .

MONDALE: Well, they were very bright, and I think some of them thought they were brighter than their associates. They did tend to lord . . . A few of them did. Now, Peter was not among them, and I don't think Mankiewicz was that way, but there were some of them that seemed to think they were pretty good. Now that's not unique to any senate. I think we all have our problems.

I could see this in the way Bobby wanted people with ideas, and he wanted people with energy, and he wanted people that were thrusting ideas, and even crowding him. He did not want to live in some kind of vacuum. In order to do that you need young people that are sparkling with new ideas, with good brains. They're young, they're immature, and once in awhile they're so sure they're right, they're a little less than sensitive about people's feelings.

GREENE: Well, I would just assume that that quality would have been much less understood by some of the conservative intellectuals.

MONDALE: Oh, yes, and others. And Bob would do that once in a while.

GREENE: Be abrasive?

MONDALE: Well, yuh. And one day we'd crack jokes for an hour, the next day he'd chop you off. You know, you never knew. And I'd always wait. I got so I could figure his moods, and if he was owly that day I just didn't bother him, and if he looked like he wanted to have a good time, that was fine by me. But he'd chop you off once in a while. At first I got mad. I just figured out that's the way he was, it didn't bother me anymore, because he never meant it. The next day your relationship would be just as though it never happened. I'm not sure that he realized how some people were hurt by that.

GREENE: Did he strike you as brooding, particularly in the

beginning?

MONDALE: Yeah. Yes. I think he was still deeply scarred by the president's death. As a matter of fact, I'm sure he was to the end. I think there was a very bitter feeling between he and Johnson that really did not do much for either he or Johnson. I thought there was a bad chemistry there, that neither . . . They'd get locked in these animosities and I don't think it was good for either one of them.

GREENE: Did you ever discuss this relationship with Johnson?

MONDALE: Yes. He told me about going in to see Johnson, I think, on the vice-presidency, in which he made his pitch. I think most of this has been reported in the papers. I believe he told me the president swore at him. I forget the exact words, but he said there wasn't much left there. I think he really did not like Johnson, and I'm sure Johnson really did not like him. It was too bad because we needed both of them. It's too bad, and maybe . . .

As you recall, a lot of what Kennedy said honestly in those days was dismissed by the press on the grounds that it was politically motivated, that he was trying to get Johnson, that the policies, for example his criticism of Vietnam, were really not honest, but political. And that's too bad, because that's the time to have stopped that war, and I'm sure Bob felt very honestly about it. I think it troubled him a good deal that when he'd give these speeches they were not accepted at face value.

GREENE: Did you ever get the feeling particularly, let's say in 1965, early '66, that he held back on criticizing the war because it would be misconstrued?

MONDALE: I believe he did. He never said that to me directly, but I believe he did. I think he found it hard to make a public break, and partly because he knew that it would be dismissed as politics.

GREENE: What about this element in the way he was treated by other members of the Senate? Did you ever feel that they didn't draw him into certain things that he might otherwise have been drawn into because it would alienate Johnson, or would put Kennedy in a difficult position?

[INTERRUPTION]

MONDALE: That could well be, but I don't know. Obviously I did not know about that personally. I think he was pretty close to Mansfield.

But I'm sure everyone was very painfully aware of the hostility that existed between Kennedy and Johnson, and they were painfully aware that both were watching to see into whose orbit one would go. I don't think it was beyond either Johnson or Kennedy to remember.

GREENE: Did you, either directly or through your relationship with Senator Humphrey, get a personal view of the other side of it, how Johnson felt?

MONDALE: No. Humphrey is pathologically opposed to personal hostilities. I mean, it's one of his most delightful and almost unbelievable characteristics. He just hates to hate anybody. He hates personal fights and he . . .

You remember when Bobby ran for the Senate? A lot of people around Johnson pleaded with him to stay out of that primary. Bob was having a lot of problems in the final election, in the Jewish community where Humphrey was very strong. Humphrey went up there and campaigned for him, and I think Bob appreciated that. He did that over the advice of people in and around the White House because he just felt, you know, that we're finally all on the same team and he just didn't like to play politics that way.

I always thought that if Bob had lived, either he or Humphrey would have been president, because I think Bob would have played the game. I think they had that kind of relationship. They might have teamed up as president and vice-president, either way. The one would have fought like the devil for the other. And because we couldn't bring that . . . I think Bob would have been credible with the peace people. I think we would have coalesced. It would have made Humphrey, if he were the nominee, stronger in relationship to other pressures.

GREENE: He didn't need very much, you know. It was such a close election.

MONDALE: Less than half a point.

GREENE: What was . . . ?

MONDALE: I don't think Bob would have condoned that wild stuff. I think he would have been such a credible alternative that I think people would have felt the system was giving 'em a chance. I don't know that, because the fever was so terrible. But I always thought that, when Bob was killed a lot of us went with him, because we lost four to eight years of social progress there.

GREENE: What were Humphrey's personal feelings about

Kennedy, beyond that fact that he wouldn't hold any grudges? How did you regard him?

MONDALE: I think he liked Bob and I think Bob liked him. I think there was a nice relationship there. It went back to the early 1960 campaigns that were always bitterly fought, you know. I think out of it they kind of came to respect each other.

I think they appreciated the way Humphrey was the good soldier in West Virginia and helped pull that thing together. Humphrey, you know, just worked like a dog for the Kennedy programs as whip in the Senate. I think they appreciated that. He was in there helping Bobby when he needed it in New York, and they knew he wasn't petty or vindictive, and he isn't. Of course, they're both men. They both had competing ambitions but, you know, if you're in politics long enough and you're mature enough, you learn to live with that.

GREENE: It's inevitable.

MONDALE: Yeah. It's just like the Ford dealer and General Motors. They don't have to hate each other. They can compete like the devil and try to destroy each other in a commercial sense but they don't have to hate each other. I think that's kind of the relationship . . . I'm sure it was off and on again. I'm sure from time to time those relationships became depraved [?] When you consider the pressures on them, I think they had a pretty good relationship.

GREENE: I was thinking of 1966 when Robert Kennedy made his first really strong speech about Vietnam, when he called for a coalition government, and Humphrey said it was like letting the fox into the chicken coop. Does that stand out in your mind now?

MONDALE: I remember that very well. I was sorry that Humphrey did that, and yet it seems like every person whoever went to Vietnam got tied up into that kind of psychology and . . .

GREENE: You say that in your article, the Elizabeth Drew article, that it happened to you.

MONDALE: Yes. You know, poor old [George] Romney, he said he was brainwashed in every tour he went on. He was probably the only honest one. And you remember Bob had a lot of fun with that. He'd go around and give speeches and get the metaphor mixed, the chicken in the fox coop, and so on. He kept playing at colleges and laugh, all of them. Humphrey got off that in a little while, too.

GREENE: He wasn't even in the country when he said that.

MONDALE: He did it in Australia, . . .

GREENE: Australia, that's right.

MONDALE: . . . as I remember.

GREENE: How did you find Kennedy as far as the issues went? Was he well prepared and well informed?

MONDALE: Yes, I thought so. I thought he had an excellent staff. On proposals that he himself sponsored like his housing tax, I thought he was very well prepared. Of course, he had contacts all over. He was always having these parties out to his house, and he'd get the best minds there, and the reporters who were going to write it. He'd lived with government here long enough so he knew where the brains were, and when he had a problem he knew how to pick them out. I think he had a good deal of respect around here. When he stood up and argued, they knew he knew what he was talking about.

GREENE: Were there any weaknesses? Your finance committee activities, did you ever talk to him about that? How was he on economics?

MONDALE: I doubt that economics interested him much. He was deeply concerned about poverty, minorities, the war, housing, it was all the same thing. I don't believe that that really interested him that much.

GREENE: I forget who it was, somebody in the Senate, said that he had a total lack of understanding of money, that he could talk about billions and it could be actually millions, and in millions he could be talking about billions.

MONDALE: He was like [George C.] McGovern in that way. He had that housing plan that made a lot of sense, but I'm sure it was frightfully expensive. I remember somebody said, "How much would it cost?" He said, "Nothing." So he had a plan that was going to build billions of dollars of housing and wasn't going to cost anything. It was beautiful. I think he believed it. And what he had in mind is, you know, by the time the housing was built, and people paid taxes and so on, and this and that, it wouldn't cost anything. Of course, it would cost the treasury enormously at the outset. But I think he thought that was all right.

GREENE: In 1967 when he introduced that legislation, which was part of the Bedford-Stuyvesant project, it was

in two forms, remember? One was housing, and the other was to bring industry into the ghetto. You cosponsored the second part, you and I think, twenty or twenty-one other people, but you didn't cosponsor the housing bill which was actually probably more in keeping with your interests at the time. Why was that?

MONDALE: It was probably inadvertent. You know these things come through here by the hundreds. I cosponsored every bill he put in, and I think he cosponsored every one I . . . We agreed on practically everything. There was no problem there, and I'm sure that was just inadvertent.

That ended up with what was known as the special impacts program, which looked like a national bill but it was Bobby Kennedy money for Bed-Stuy. That's what it was, which was fine. He was trying to work up one national example of what you can do if you really went at it with a special impact. That program was for anything, housing, you know, the way it worked out it was for anything. That's still underway there. I don't know how successful it's been.

GREENE: Oh, pretty good.

MONDALE: I went up there and visited a couple of years ago. It looked to me like it was in trouble. This was after Bob was dead.

GREENE: They're doing pretty well. And now this community center, which is going to be sort of the hub of the area, the same architect they've got from Canal Square. I forget his name.

MONDALE: Yes. I read something the other day indicating that they think they're moving.

GREENE: It looks pretty good. I was just wondering. You say it's inadvertent. I thought perhaps what you were saying about the weakness in the funding area might have had something to do with it.

MONDALE: I don't think so. You usually go on a bill like that without endorsing specifics. You go on it for general objectives, and I'm sure that that was not it.

GREENE: Can you remember any instances when you asked him for support specifically on things that were less routine?

MONDALE: The one that struck me was fair housing.

GREENE: Right. Sixty-seven.

MONDALE: I always had the feeling that Bob did not feel too deeply about the hope for integration. I think we're all partly a product of our upbringing. If a person grows up in a major city and he sees these monolithic blacks as suspicious, I don't think he figures it's possible. I grew up in a rural area and I thought it made a lot of sense. He always said the emphasis should not be fair housing . . . Bed-Stuy . . . [INTERRUPTION]. . . and even thought I don't think he felt hopeful, he did support the . . . Was very helpful in the effort to . . . You know we had five [sociables?] on bulletin boards. He was very helpful.

GREENE: Yeah. In fact there were, again I don't know how many, cosponsors, but a great many. Is there any effort under those circumstances to divide the statements that are made so that you don't duplicate each others' efforts or do you . . . ?

MONDALE: Not really. I'll tell you the way that works. When you get into major debate like fair housing, and you say well, we're going have what, five days of speeches here. Then the staffs will get together and they'll say, well, you count assigned times, and then they say, why don't you talk about patterns of demography, and someone else will talk about the economics, and somebody else will talk about jobs, and try to touch different points. But a tremendous amount of duplication and overriding is not that relevant.

GREENE: But there is some effort made to delineate . . .

MONDALE: Sometimes. It's not that structured.

GREENE: In 1966 he came out to Minnesota . . .

MONDALE: Yes.

GREENE: . . . to campaign.

MONDALE: At my request.

GREENE: The one I know about is Turkey Day.

MONDALE: Turkey Day, right. He got the biggest crowd they've ever had on Turkey Day. They had about maybe 75,000 there. He did that very well.

GREENE: Anything special about the occasion that you remember?

MONDALE: Well, we had a lot of fun. He came out, had a good crowd. The one thing I regretted was that it was received as sort of an insult to Humphrey which I didn't intend it to be. You know, what's Bobby doing here, and why are you bringing the enemy into the Minnesota camp? My opponent used that a little bit. I regretted that because I didn't mean it that way.

Other than that, I thought he did very well. People were thrilled to have him. It was a short but a good speech and, you know, almost the spiritual quality of the reception he got. People trying to kiss him, and touch him, and handing up gifts and cards, and God bless you. Just incredible, the emotional response that greeted him.

GREENE: I've heard some people, particularly in New York, for whom he campaigned, say that they almost considered it a handicap to have Robert Kennedy come out and campaign for you because the candidate got completely lost in the shuffle.

MONDALE: Yes. Oh, yeah.

GREENE: Did you feel that way at all?

MONDALE: Oh, yeah. You know, the kids would just roam all over him. I'd just go out and get a Coke or something. They didn't even know I was there. That was true. Also, I didn't think that he, coming out to help me, really was thinking that through very much. He just got up and gave his speech and sat down. But he was there to help me, and I'm very grateful for it. But there was that. Oh yeah. He was a . . . And I think that year, 1966, he was trying to establish a reputation for going out and proving his coattails and setting himself up for the 1968 thing.

GREENE: Although it seems to me, as I remember it, that he really campaigned only for those people who were either close personally or who had been very helpful to his brother.

MONDALE: I believe that's right. His reason for helping me is, I think we agreed so much. We worked together so much, I think he thought that was. . . .

GREENE: Was that the only occasion, by the way, Turkey Day?

MONDALE: He just came in and went right out, Turkey Day. That's the only time. Ted's been in several times.

END OF TAPE