Peter B. Edelman Oral History Interview – RFK #5, 1/3/1970

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Biographical Note

Edelman, legislative assistant to Senator Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) (1964-1968), discusses RFK's 1965 legislative agenda, speeches, and statements, RFK's relationship with Jacob K. Javits, and RFK's support of community action, among other issues.

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Peter B. Edelman—RFK #5

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Fifth of Eight Oral History Interviews

with

Peter B. Edelman

January 3, 1970
Washington, D.C.

By Larry Hackman

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

HACKMAN: We were talking about narcotics, and we didn't get quite all the way through it. I've got a couple of questions. There was an article in '65—this isn't very important—in the *Medical Tribune* and also in the *Journal of Practical Nursing* called, "Forward Looking Narcotics Legislation." Is that your article? It's attributed to Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy].

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EDELMAN: Yes, well then it would have been. I don't remember it specifically, but it probably would have been based on his remarks on either his testimony in New York, or probably, if it's about the legislation it's just based on his remarks in the Senate in June introducing the legislation.

HACKMAN: Are there published things that you write during the Senate period on this and on other things? How does that work?

EDELMAN: Yes, not too much. The major things that appeared over his byline during that period, such as the article in *Look* magazine on South Africa or, later on the chapter from the book about Vietnam that also appeared in *Look* magazine, are things that Adam [Adam Walinsky] worked on. We can talk about the book

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later, if you want to, and the process that went on with that.

I did from time to time, some things. I remember there was a guy who was with something like the *Tool and Dye News*; it was something very weird—*Wheel and Brake*? I don't know. Anyway, it was about training. The guy was just very friendly to Robert Kennedy and kept bugging us and bugging us. It didn't seem like anything, and so I finally just threw together some stuff and sent it to him and they made it into a front page article. It was a trade publication that did reach a couple of hundred thousand people. So, you had things like that from time to time. At the moment I don't remember specifically

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any others.

HACKMAN: When the Robert Kennedy-Javits [Jacob K. Javits] bills were introduced in '65, how much hope did you, the Senator, and Javits have that those bills would go through as they were? What did you really hope would happen?

EDELMAN: We were aware that the Administration [Lyndon B. Johnson Administration] was about to make new proposals in the field of narcotics legislation. This would be a typical example of things that senators do, which is that you try to put in your own bill, which is appreciably better than the Administration proposal, with the intention that it will be considered along with the Administration's legislation. The hope, based on the effort that will be made is not that

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your own bill will be enacted but that you can get the Administration's bill amended so that you get some credit—and also so that it's better.

The history of that is worth going through in this particular case. The first thing was that we had had cooperation from the Justice Department. I think we were entitled to it, as any senator would be entitled to technical assistance in bill drafting. There was a sort of a slightly exasperating imbroglio where the Justice Department accused us of stealing a piece of their bill, which they had shown us as an accommodation because the Senator had been Attorney General. I think I mentioned this the last time.

It turned out that

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the piece of the bill that they accused us of stealing was a piece of the civil commitment portion that was based on the old Keating [Kenneth B. Keating] bill.

In any event, the hearings got started. As I remember, the first hearings were in the House rather than in the Senate. The Senator went and testified. If one looks back through those prepared testimony things, you'll see that there were a number of areas in which we sought to improve the bill. We sought to make it available for a broader group of people accused of crime. The Administration bill, as I recall, only offered civil commitment to people accused of narcotics

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related crimes. Our thought was that if a man were arrested for—of course, this was all just federal crimes; it was just in the federal courts—if he was arrested, say, in the District of Columbia for robbery and he was an addict then he should also have civil commitment available to him. The Administration bill had some limitations in it about prior offenders not being able to have civil commitment. If I recall, we said that instead of merely one prior offense, you were only excluded from it if you had two or perhaps three prior felony convictions. That was one kind of thing.

We had a bill, which was not in the Administration proposal as I recall, which added the

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power of the judge to sentence someone after a conviction to treatment instead of to prison. In addition to that we had bills to provide Federal assistance for services and for construction for narcotics treatment at the state and local levels. Kennedy went and testified in the House that summer and advanced those propositions.

Then, we were working very closely with Senator Dodd's [Thomas J. Dodd] subcommittee [Special subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency], a fellow named Carl Perian [Carl L. Perian], who had had an interest in narcotics for some time. They're rather strange people; Perian looks like an overage juvenile delinquent himself.

The following year, in 1966, when it looked like there would be some activity and the Dodd subcommittee

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which had been holding hearings on the legislation, would have control over it, I drafted some amendments to the Administration bill which were based on our bill—which again is a typical kind of thing to do. I worked them out in conjunction with Carl Perian, and we had it worked out that when the matter came before an executive session of that Juvenile Delinquency subcommittee of the full Judiciary Committee that those amendments would go through. And again the Senator went and testified in early 1966 before the Senate and gave much the same testimony that he had in 1965 before the House.

Each of these times, of course, he got some press attention for what he was saying, he was establishing

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his credibility as a person who knew something about the field, but, of course, the ultimate test in addition to that would be whether he actually got some amendments accepted.

Well, then an unfortunate thing happened, which was that John McClellan [John L. McClellan], who had been miffed, as I think I described last time, in a sort of jurisdictional battle with Dodd, took the whole narcotics thing away from Dodd. Of course, at that point our amendments became totally irrelevant because there was no chance that McClellan would accept them. So, the thing went through the Judiciary Committee, and then when it came to the floor of the Senate the Senator just felt that it wasn't really worth making the effort to try to

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amend it. It would be worthwhile looking back at the dates when that was because my vague recollection is that there was something else going on in the office at the time and we just were unable to devote the time and the energy necessary to gearing up for that sort of a struggle.

In any event, as it finally went through, it did have some assistance in it for [Interruption]. Oh, yes, you see it was passed in the Senate on October 6, 1966. Kennedy was out campaigning around the country for congressional candidates, and I was up in New York working on Frank O'Connor's [Frank D. O'Connor] campaign. So, these are the kinds of things that happen. You just get involved in so many things that

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you can't cover every base. It obviously wasn't a fight of the magnitude of the struggle over civil rights or something else where you absolutely had to be there; it was a thing where you would take the initiative if you were around and had the time to do it. Even if we had won on the floor there would have been a conference; might have lost it in conference. There were so many uncertainties about it that he certainly wasn't going to run back from the campaign efforts to do it.

But in any event, the final thing did have in it some assistance to states and localities for construction of facilities, which had been one of the four bills. It had actually had been one introduced by Javits, but I think you could certainly

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say that our initiative in the area had probably helped to produce a bill that was broader in that respect than the original Administration bill.

HACKMAN: In working that out with Dodd and his staff—Perian is it?—would the Senator have to get into that, or could you do this on your own?

EDELMAN: Oh, I think that I could do it on my own, but I would keep him informed on what exactly I was doing. The way it would have gone, for example, is that I would have gone and said, "Now Senator, I've had notification or a letter from Senator Dodd that they're going to hold hearings on this thing and inviting you to testify." Generally, that would be a week to two to

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three weeks before the testinony.

By the way, just looking at these *Congressional Quarterly* things I see that some of my statements about the scope of the Administration bill were incorrect, so that anyone who was really going to look into this would have to go back to those details.

In any event, then I might say to him that I thought that, if it was okay with him, I'd like to get into some discussions about whether we could get some of his amendments actually adopted by the subcommittee. Again, in that case, what happened was that I arranged that as part of his testimony he would offer the amendments and he would say, "Here they are." It would go into the hearing record that he had actually

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mentioned and handed over to the subcommittee specific already drafted amendments. And then he [Dodd] would say, "Fine," or if he didn't want to do it, of course, something else.

HACKMAN: Yes, but you paid it was cleared. Did that mean only clear it with Dodd? I mean, did you have the feeling that those amendments would be accepted in that subcommittee?

EDELMAN: No, it was cleared with the staff of the subcommittee. With the staffs of subcommittees in general—if you can trust the world of the fellow, which is a different question—if the staff comes to the executive session and says, "We've looked over

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this and we want to amend the bill in the following ways," the subcommittee will, in general, go along because the staff has the substantive knowledge and expertise. Sometimes, if there's a thing that's idealogical, you could have a coalition of Republicans and Democratic conservatives who could beat you on it, and sometimes the staff—particularly in a case like that since those are not fellows who were among my favorites—could just say they're going to do it and then not do it.

This was all at a preliminary stage. I suppose what I might have done later on before the subcommittee was going to meet would have been to have the Senator send a letter, perhaps even telephone other members of

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the subcommittee and tell them about his amendments, or make sure, for example, that his brother [Edward M. Kennedy] who was on that subcommittee, would actually offer the amendments to the subcommittee when it met in executive session. All of those things would be worthwhile steps to take, depending really on how serious one is about a particular proposition and, again, what other time problems there are. You just do the most you can.

It's always easier to amend a bill in a committee of which one is a member himself. Then you don't have to do as much lobbying and preparation. You know that you'll be able to go into the subcommittee meeting, and, if the Senator's there and in town, he can go

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in and just offer the amendment. You have much less control over what happens in a committee that you're not a member of, and we were not members of Judiciary.

HACKMAN: Can you remember taking any action to get something going in '65 on the House side, in terms of introducing your bills on the House side, companion bills? I think Jonathan Bingham [Jonathan Brewster Bingham] finally...

EDELMAN: Oh yes, if you look at the *Congressional Record* reprint from June 6, 1965 or even, I think, better at the press release that went out that day; I'm not sure which was more extensive. But in any event we had about twelve members of the House who introduced them—six Republicans and six Democrats. I remember

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Reid [Ogden R. Reid] of New York and Springer [William L. Springer] of Illinois, who's also a Republican. In fact, Wilbur Mills introduced one of the bills, and Hale Boggs [Thomas Hale Boggs], I think, introduced some of the bills. It was quite an interesting and impressive array.

That's, I might say parenthetically, interesting to think about in terms of Robert Kennedy's evolution. He never would have gotten that cooperation over a bill as short a time as a year later. Once he began to break away from the Administration on Vietnam and become identified as a renegade, people like Wilbur Mills certainly would never have had that same kind of cooperation. In fact, Hale Boggs, I believe, did introduce one of our tax incentive bills

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in the House.

HACKMAN: Who decided who would do something like that? I mean would he just decide which twelve people he wanted to try to get to....

EDELMAN: Well, it would be a combination. The Republicans were produced by Javits of course, and as it was a bipartisan effort in the Senate, it could be in the House without much difficulty. In the case of the narcotics legislation I think it was a combination of his making suggestions and some telephone calls himself and my doing some of it. In the case of the tax incentive legislation, which I know we'll talk about in more detail, he basically thought about who it should be.

In all

of these things it was a kind of process that you might imagine: each of us would make suggestions, and if it were somebody that he had to call himself, he would call himself, if it could be done at the staff level, just in terms of not wasting effort, then it would be done at the staff level.

HACKMAN: Anything else then in this whole area in '67-'68 that you can remember?

EDELMAN: On the narcotics question?

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: No, he essentially didn't do much about the whole issue after the Congress acted in '66. I remember writing him a memo or discussing with him in '67 about his coming back to the issue some time and putting in some legislation to do the

kinds of things that hadn't been done with it. He was agreeable to that, but we just never got around to it.

HACKMAN: How did the Javits-Robert Kennedy relationship work out then? Let's take just through the rest of '65.

EDELMAN: It's hard to pinpoint in terms of time. The evolution was that we came in there with real mistrust back and forth and with Javits feeling that his turf had been invaded, feeling that there was new competition that had come along that he didn't like very much because he'd pretty much had it to himself when Keating was the other

Senator, didn't like the idea of being upstaged and so on. And Kennedy, for his part, was wary at the beginning. I, for my part, in '65

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was not only wary but just.... Javits used to drive me wild. I remember not only the difficulty of working with Steve Kurzman [Stephen Kurzman] over the narcotics bills with the insistence and the real paranoia that was expressed—it was explicit!—accusing me constantly of trying to work it out so we would steal it from Javits or upstage Javits in some way. That was all very unpleasant.

Javits has a very annoying habit of coming into any meeting without doing any homework and starting to mouth off without knowing what he's talking about. He has to prove that he's a broadly informed person and that he's effective.

I remember a meeting we had about Niagara Falls in our office. We were trying to get

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together on an effort to get an authorization and appropriation to the Corps of Engineers to do a study of the crumbling of the American Falls. There were certain issues—I don't remember exactly what they were—that were clear about what you could do geologically and what you couldn't, what the relations with the Canadian government were, what you had to ask them to do and what you didn't have to.

Javits came into the meeting after it had started—I don't know if Kennedy was there or not; he may have been in and out—and Javits just took over and was just wrong, wrong, wrong on every aspect of it. If the Canadian government

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didn't have to be notified, he was saying that the first step was to contact the Canadian government, if it was already know geologically what should be done he was saying that he wanted to study something about the rocks. It just was disruptive because people tried to say, "Well, now, Senator I don't know that you have this exactly right," and he wasn't listening and having any of that. Essentially, we just had to wait until he left, and then get the thing kind of settled properly.

This would happen again and again. In the subcommittee—any subcommittee that we sat on with him together, particularly in the Labor and Public Welfare Committee—if we would come in with an amendment,

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his normal pattern was to say that it was a terrible amendment, that it was too costly or badly drafted or not sufficently considered or that hadn't been hearings on it. Then you would sort of talk, and pretty soon he'd be saying sort of implicitly that, if somehow he were the major cosponsor of it, it would be all right, and then it would end up being the Kennedy-Javits thing, and he would be terribly enthusiastic about it. He would have just probably changed a comma or two in order to have made it into a well-considered amendment that bore his mark.

So my first reaction was one of being very, very down on Javits. There was other evidence: he was not effective on the

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floor because people disliked him so much. Yet, as time passed, it was clear that he was terribly conscientious, that he really did believe in the right things, that he was impressive in the array of issues that he took an interest in even if in some cases it was merely so he could say there was a Javits position or a Javits bill on an issue if he was always inclined to think that the universe of possibilities about an issue stopped with the Javits' bill. But one acquired a certain admiration for his conscientiousness, and a certain understanding that when there was nowhere else you could go, you could always go the Javits' staff to get cooperation on something.

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Then Kennedy, after while, took to saying over and over again when you would have some exasperation with Javits, "Well, now, what poor fellow has it pretty rough. If I were in his shoes, I wouldn't like me either," with reference to all the publicity. He said, "It's awfully hard for him, me coming into the whole thing here and sort of upstaging him and so on." So, he'd be very understanding about that, and after a while, I think because the Senator was at least to me—perhaps because he knew that I was so antagonistic to Javits and he just wanted to cool me so conciliatory, I got to rather have an affection for Javits.

I must say that

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in in the last year particularly, I've lost that again. I've come full circle, and I'm every bit as down on Javits as I was at the beginning. I find him really a rather divisive and selfish person and just what I thought originally—rather superficial and rather equivocating. He never had a strong, worthwhile position on the war and so on. But I think you could say, as far as the Senator's concerned, that from being a rather wary thing on both sides they grew to have a genuine like and respect for each other and a genuine ability to work with each other.

HACKMAN: Was there a point reached when there was some kind of a formal or semi formal understandings on how you would handle

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certain kinds of things, whether they be announcements of projects or legislation affecting New York?

EDELMAN: Yes. Fairly early Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan] and Dick Aurelio [Richard Aurelio] reached an understanding on how announcements would be handled. We very seldom tried to get in ahead of Javits; we almost always announced things with him. Joe Dolan, of course, will talk about that at more length in his recollections because he was the one who did that. We did legislation together on things like the Floyd [William Floyd] estate, or whatever that was, and the house up in Buffalo, whoever's house, and on the Hudson River; things that afftect New York State that were not terribly controversial we worked together on.

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We had very good relations with his staff. Pat Connell [Patricia Connell]—now Pat Shakow—is a good friend of mine and of Adam's. A lovely girl, just a marvelous person, so we were always able to work with her and the rest of the staff, apart from Steve Kurzman and later on Bob Patricelli [Robert Patricelli] who is kind of a friend of mine but who in a working relationship inherited some of Kurzman's suspicion and paranoia and obstreperousness. Pat Connell and Jim Grossman [James Grossman] and Aurelio and Bill Duke [William Duke], these people were all very easy to deal with.

HACKMAN: One of the other things that comes up in a very early period where there's a relationship with Javits is the Appalachian thing.

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EDELMAN: He was enraged by that; he was enraged by it basically because he hadn't thought of it. That was a perfect example of the kind of thing that I'm talking about. His first reaction was to jump all up and down and say it hadn't been considered and so on. And then finally because we had boxed him, he finally had to cosponsor it and go along, Of course, later on he would talk about how it was partly his amendment, particularly when he was out of earshot. Yes, that's the kind of thing that in the beginning must have had him climbing the walls.

HACKMAN: Can you remember the origins of that in terms of Robert Kennedy's proposal?

EDELMAN: Of the amendments?

HACKMAN: Yes.

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EDELMAN: Yes, very definitely. Robert Kennedy had made the proposal in the campaign, and Adam remembered it. The Appalachian bill was coming to the floor—I believe it had already been reported out of committee; it was coming to the floor—and Adam just had a brainstorm. He said, "My goodness, didn't we make a campaign promise on this?" I said I thought so. He want running out—the Senator was on his way out the door to go home—and he caught him, and he said, "Oh, I have a terrific idea." The Senator listened, he said he thought was fine.

Adam went to Ron Linton [Ronald M. Linton], who was on the staff of the Senate Public Works Committee and was always rather friendly to us, and they were

able to work out, not that the thirteen counties would be added just like that to the program but that they would be studied. The understanding was that after they were studied they would be studied favorably and they would get in. So, it was accepted on the floor.

Now, that was rather unusual because the Appalachian bill was kind of a pork barrel$_s$ at least partly. It's very unusual for somebody to be able to go to the sponsors of the bill and say "Will you add something in my state to it?" because where that would stop no one would know. Every state that was contiguous to it would say that it had some counties that had Appalachian-type characteristics. So that that

kind of accommodation one seldom gets.

Well, I think that the history of it was that in New York's case they had specifically invited Rockefeller [Nelson A. Rockefeller] to the conferences about Appalachia and he had specifically turned it down and kept out of it. As Democrats they felt they could embarrass him a little. They did have a basis because they had originally thought of those counties as part of the indicated area; there was a basis for doing it. So, we just were lucky; we stepped into the situation that was a built-in winner.

HACKMAN: You don't remember getting any resistance from, say, Mansfield [Mike Mansfield]? I know he was upset because other people were considering amendments for their areas?

Edward Kennedy, I think, from Massachusetts and McClellan for the Ozarks.

EDELMAN: Yes, I'm sure there was some grumbles about it that a freshman Senator would stand up and make that kind of proposal, which does go against the kinds of traditions that I was talking about.

I don't know about Mansfield specifically, but what they finally had to do about the other areas was to create a bill that or maybe it was even an amendment to Appalachia—would study the possibity of area development in all the other areas. What you now have is kind of area development councils in a number of areas with some money. And there is the Four Corners

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Program in Arkansas, and there is the New England program that I think has some funds.

HACKMAN: Did the Senator have to do any groundwork to got support from other Senators on this?

EDELMAN: No, because what usually happens is that if you have the support of the chairman of the committee, who was Pat McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara] in that instance, and also the floor manager of the bill, if you stand up as a member of the majority party and make the proposal and the floor manager—just the floor manager or else the floor manager and the chairman of the committee if they're two different people—say, "that's fine; we have objection to that"

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no one ever objects. It goes through by a voice vote. Sometimes that's very dangerous because if you have a conservative floor manager to a bill you can got very badly messed up that way by deals that they cook up. But in that instance that only thing that had to be worked out was McNamara's acquiescence.

HACKMAN: Who actually drafted the amendment? Can you remember how that works?

EDELMAN: No, Adam would have to talk about that. My recollection is that he sat down with Ron Linton and John Sweeney [John L. Sweeney], who were the two committee staff people.

HACKMAN: Was Linton McNamara's man? Could he speak for McNamara on this, or did it have to be cleared with McNamara?

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EDELMAN: McNamara was not a very heavy person, other than being aviordupois heavy. But he was a very nice fellow who was just basically an old labor organizer—Not that labor organizers aren't sometimes very smart, but he just wasn't very substantive. So, if Linton and Sweeney came to him and said—I don't remember which of the two of them would have been the one—that they thought something ought to be done, he would never have been a problem about it.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any problems in putting together the information that was needed to justify the inclusion of those counties in the thing? Who did the work on that?

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EDELMAN: You mean the actual study after the amendment was passed?

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: The Appalachian Regional Commission did.

HACKMAN: You didn't have to do anything before?

EDELMAN: No. They said that within a certain amount of time this would take place, and they came back to us and said it had been fixed up and so on. Then we got a fourteenth county added a year or so later.

HACKMAN: Can you remember, in putting together the working of his, I guess, speech on the floor offering the amendment, considering what to say about Rockefeller or how much to criticize Rockefeller?

EDELMAN: Yes. Again that's more Adam—He did the

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work on this particular thing. But yes, there was definitely discussion of that, and what came out was a moderated.... He did knock Rockefeller in that speech, as I recall, but it was perhaps moderated somewhat by....

HACKMAN: There was some moderation as to what would go in the *Congressional Record*. Can you remember talking about this taking place? I mean some of the things that he said on, the floor, at least that I've read, were then modified, particularly the criticism towards Rockefeller.

EDELMAN: He actually said something?

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: Adam would just have to talk about that. I wasn't on the floor that day.

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HACKMAN: Do you remember talking about how early you informed Javits about this thing? This is one of the things apparently that upset Javits. As he says, he didn't find out until an hour before or whatever that the amendment was going to be offered. Do you remember any of that back and forth?

EDELMAN: Yes, I think Adam called somebody on his staff and told him about it. They never got to him, or if they did get to him he was being cute about it. I'm quite clear in my own mind that if you extend notice to his staff it's untrue that he knew nothing until an hour before.

HACKMAN: Can you remember Robert Kennedy's reaction to his own performance on the

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floor on that amendment? Some people have said that he didn't handle himself that well on the floor.

EDELMAN: I think he was just glad to get through it. He was at that point, I think, still a little bit shy about standing up on the floor. What I remember specifically, Larry, was a question in his mind of whether he should do it at all because of the fact that it was such an early time for a freshman Senator, particularly one who was being watched as much as he was, too stand up and talk at all on the floor. As we've said to each other in other conversations, that's changed so much just in four years. But I remember specifically a discussion about that

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and his finally deciding that he guessed it didn't break the rules to stand up and offer the amendment, have it accepted, and sit down—do a very cut and dried kind of thing.

HACKMAN: After the amendment's passed then can you remember any conversations with Rockefeller or correspondence, or whatever back and forth? What happens by May, when he abandons his opposition and writes the Regional Commission, asking them to...

EDELMAN: I basically don't remember. I remember some exchanges and accusations back and forth.

HACKMAN: Can you remember having to do anything to get other states in the Appalachian corporation or whatever to give New York

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some money that first year? Was there anything that had to be worked out?

EDELMAN: Basically Sweeney, who went over to the Appalachian Regional Commission...

HACKMAN: Was cooperative.

EDELMAN: ...was cooperative and worked that out. I don’t remember that the Senator ever had to actually talk to any governor anything of that kind. But they kept us informed. They would tell us that there was going to be a meeting the next day and so on, and it may be—I wish my recollection of that was better—that every now and then they said that if he would make a phone call to somebody or other it might help. And I certainly remember the process

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going on. I’m sorry to be so vague about it.

HACKMAN: How satisfied was he then with the way the whole thing worked out? Were there things that you had to continually do over time?

EDELMAN: Some. But no, it was beautiful, it was beautiful. One wished that everything could be that smooth. The kinds of things that there were over time is the kind of thing you were just saying. What it was mostly is that they would come to us and say, “Now, such and such is going to happen. We want to alert you in advance so you can put out a press release and get some credit.” But then there was the question at the time that the act would be renewed,

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and as I say we added a fourteenth county in ‘67 I think. We would put out press releases from time to time when the money was being distributed and so on, and he would do a little radio beeper broadcast up to Appalachian areas and say, “Look what I did for you.” The follow up was mostly not work; it was mostly claiming credit, which he deserved.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any effort being required to get that area into that highway program? Wasn’t this another step that was to be taken?

EDELMAN: The Route 17 issue?

HACKMAN: Yes, the Appalachian highway program.

EDELMAN: No, the Appalachian highway program would be part and parcel of that.

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HACKMAN: I thought there was a separate step required.

EDELMAN: Well, now, how did that work? I don’t know whether it was the step of getting them into the Appalachian highway program or whether what we’re really talking about.... I think that what we're talking about is part and parcel of the same thing, which is that a part of their coming into the Appalachia program one of the things was to decide which elements of the roads in there would be in.... Well, I guess you're right, I guess you're right because you had to decide which parts of the roads in the southern tier would be in the highway program. But then you had to get the other members of the commission,

other states, to move over and give you a piece of their money, which in really what you're talking about.

HACKMAN: I think that happened in early '66.

EDELMAN: Yes. And I remember their coming in with the suggested plan of what roads would be included. There was one little piece from Pennsylvania that ran up to Binghamton or somewhere. Then, of course, the major thing was getting Route 17 completed faster by getting Appalachia funds poured into it. That's one of those items where my recollection is vague, but where I think that what the Appalachian Regional Commission people, which is really Sweeney and—what's the other cat's name? I don't remember—said that we had to do some

ceremonial phone call thing to pave the way. Kennedy should call so and so. It may have been that he was supposed to call....

Ah, yes, we went to see Jennings Randolph; that's what it was. I remember going with Kennedy and either Sweeney or his assistant, whose name I don't recall, to see Randolph one day—it was about those roads sand saying to him, "Now, the staff proposes...." Gosh, what was going through? Was it an appropriation? It was legislation going through where this would have to be put in as part the legislation, this proposal for the roads. We were saying to him, "The staff proposes that you put in these roads, and we think that's good. It

would be good for New York." It was kind of ceremonial. Randolph said, "That's fine," and then it was done. That's probably what you're referring to.

HACKMAN: Yes. Anything else on Appalachia that you can remember?

EDELMAN: No. That that we bring that up I remember writing the Senator a memo about that, which for some reason or other he liked. I guess he thought it was going to be terribly complicated to explain about all the highways. I laid it out in two paragraphs and he was very delighted. That and the fourteenth county are the only other things, and the other things I mentioned about putting together little statements from time to time.

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HACKMAN: Okay. The next thing would be voting rights in '65, and the first question is really. Let me just shut it off. [Interruption] Well, the first question really on the voting rights bill in on the general Administration bill. Can you remember him having any great concern and feed in on that before that deal was worked out?

EDELMAN: Yes. That dates, unfortunately, I don't have in mind, but I believe in about March it came to our attention—and I don't know just how—that a group of people convened by Paul Douglas' [Paul H. Douglas] administrative assistant, Howard Shuman, were drafting an alternative to the Administration bill at the same time

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that the Administration bill was being drafted

Now, there had been a working civil rights coalition in the Senate, in the Congress, of course, for a long time—the leadership conference. They had gotten to be very, very familiar with one another since just the previous year they'd passed the Civil Rights Act of '64,and they were used to each other. But, nevertheless, Kennedy was somewhat miffed then they didn't automatically kind of invite him into that coalition. I think on their part it was simply an oversight. They naturally gravitated to their own previous allies and just didn't stop to think that he was among them now rather then somewhere else.

Nonetheless,

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somehow I got involved in that drafting session, with a certain amount of conveyed irritation on Kennedy's part that he hadn't been, in on the whole thing earlier. We drafted over the entire weekend and it was a very interesting process and an important one. Not that it could ever be duplicated, because in general, Administration bills are usually not drafted in such a fishbowl. There was an urgency about this because, as I recall, hadn't there been things going on in the South? I don't remember the sequence of events, but...

HACKMAN: The Selma March is in the Spring.

EDELMAN: It's after that.

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: Well, for some reason there was an

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urgency about it. For some reason the Administration bill was being drafted in a way so that people knew what was going on, and the very fact of our sitting in the basement of the old Senate Office Building drafting a counter bill was affecting the process.

They would literally call up Harold Reis [Harold F. Reis] or—now, what's that guy's name from the legislative, Hoffman, Herb Hoffman [Herbert H. Hoffman], or Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] would call up and they would say, "What do you have on such and such?" And we would say, "Well, we had to and so." Then there would be sort of an embarrassed silence on the other end of the phone, and they would say, "Thank you" and go back. They

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you'd get a...

HACKMAN: Would he ever tell you what they were doing there?

EDELMAN: Some cases, yes. Again, I don't have the details in mind, but we knew that their bill was getting stronger and stronger as they were hearing what was in our bill.

One question, which is interesting in retrospect, was over the poll tax, where some of us who had been strict constructionists later in our lives then others were contending that the poll tax could not be repealed by legislation. That was a combination argument, really. It's the classic argument of whether you should try to do something that was that extreme and jeopardize the rest of the bill. So,

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we spent some time taping about that. We talked about the triggering mechanism and around and around, and finally got a bill that was a damng good bill, in the course of two days. And then on Monday morning there was a big meeting and Kennedy wasn't back. I was there; of course, I was very much of a neophyte.

HACKMAN: Let me just say, this had been you throughout the weekend? It hadn't been Robert Kennedy?

EDELMAN: That's right. It had been me throughout the weekend, and not in particular contact with Kennedy, except that once we had the bill I called him up and told him there was going to be this meeting of the Senators. He either did not get back in time or may have

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gotten back for the very final few minutes of it.

Now, what I'm trying to remember is what the argument was. I felt that the Senators were being too timid. I think it was whether to put in the bill. But the bill was put in, wasn't it? Wasn't there a Douglas voting rights bill?

HACKMAN: I don't remember that there was.

EDELMAN: Well, you'd have to check back. If there was not.... I get it confused with '67 where Douglas had his own version. If it wasn't '67, it wouldn't have been Douglas, but whoever. Somebody had their own version on the protection of civil rights workers. I think it was that the bill was not introduced, and that some of us felt that it should be to pull

the Administration along. And we were very upset that no one speaking up for us except Phil Hart [Philip A. Hart], who told us that he agreed with us but then was unduly conciliatory, we thought, in the meeting with the Senators.

That's interesting again because I would think that certainly by '68 in a meeting like that I would have argued it out toe-to-toe with Senators, and, of course, in '65 I just was terribly reticent.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anyone else arguing your viewpoint at that time?

EDELMAN: The staff was very reticent, very quiet. I don't think any staff member spoke up. As I say, to my recollection, Hart was the only one who wanted to introduce the bill, and when they all argued

against him he just sort of folded up. I hope I have the issue right, which was that. But whatever the issue was it came out the wrong way. Well, nothing more to say, except I think that's what it was. In any event, we clearly had affected the way the bill was drafted.

Alright, so that was the first stage. Then the Administration bill came up, and the question was what Senator Kennedy should do about it. Robert Kennedy had an interest in the voting rights of Puerto Ricans since the previous year when there had been an effort in connection with the '64 act to guarantee the right of Puerto Ricans to vote in federal elections. In some sense, it's interesting because

of the poll tax. This was a minor issue that raised many of the same questions as really the poll tax issue did: congressional power to enforce the 14th Amendment.

Burke Marshall and I talked it over. Kennedy said he'd like to do something in the area. I talked to Alex Bickel [Alexander M. Bickel] at Yale, got a letter from him, Paul Freund [Paul A. Freund] at Harvard, and Boris Bittker [Boris I. Bittker] at Yale. Got letters from all of them saying that they thought an amendment to go the full way and federally prohibit all literacy test from being applied to a person who's been in Puerto Rica and receives education up to a certain level—6th or 8th grade—in a language other than English.

The theory of that was perhaps not as broad as the poll tax. The theory of that, as we saw it, was simply that was was an arbitrary discrimination within the meaning of the equal protection clause to say that one natural born citizen educated in an English-speaking school could vote without a literacy test, but that a person educated in a school where the language was predominantly other than English—which might be French-speaking in New Hampshire or Louisiana, or Spanish in the Southwest—could not vote. We said that was an arbitrary discrimination. So, the issue didn't go quite as far as the poll tax issue.

In any event, that was an example of where we cooperated very well with Javits. And remember this is, at this point, before those narcotics bills were put in because our amendment was introduced in May. I guess at Kennedy's direction—I wouldn't have done it otherwise—I sat down with Pat Connell, and together the two of us drafted the amendment on the back of an envelope, put it in, introduced it, and had it printed. It was introduced by Kennedy with Javits as cosponsor, but it was pretty mush a coequal kind of thing.

Meanwhile, Robert Kennedy felt because he was still a freshman senator that he wanted to take a New York related issue. This was an issue that he had thought about previously, was familiar with. It was small, winnable—we didn't know winnable, but we thought winnable—and he just felt he shouldn't take any greater initiative at that point.

So, the question was what Edward Kennedy should do, and again Burke Marshall was a very key figure in ths discussion. I remember discussions about a lot of things: improving the trigger so that you encompassed more states or encompassed whatever you did encompass for a longer period let's say: stronger provisions on Federal registrars. Gosh, it's hard to remember, but those, I suppose, were the kinds of questions that existed about the bill. We talked around and around about the poll tax and finally concluded—I must say again that I was one of those who was initially doubtful, because in 1962 it had taken a constitutional amendment to get rid of the poll tax in Federal elections—that that was the effort that Edward Kennedy would try to make on the floor. We knew about the litigation, obviously, that was proceeding in the court, were aware that we would, in fact, help the litigation if we succeeded because the court would then have a finding by Congress on it. So, I wanted to find the existing situation unconstitutional.

That I might stop over for a minute because one of the arguments that the Justice Department made later on, and that Eugene McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] used to justify his vote on the poll

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tax, was that the litigation was pending and would take care of the matter. That is a false, phony agrument. What they were really saying is, "Don't overload the bill. Don't add this on because we might somehow lose the whole bill in conference or some other way."

HACKMAN: Katzenbach was saying that or who, when you say "they" were saying that?

EDELMAN: The Justice Department, Katzenbach, yes, and some of the floor managers perhaps in pleading privately that it not be done. But their argument—they couldn't really say that publicly—was that the litigation was pending. So, I want to make clear that the pendency of litigtaion was all the more reason

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for enacting it because it would have helped the litigation.

HACKMAN: Now, is McCarthy clearly aware of that argument was not a solid argument at the time, or do you know if that point was ever made to him?

EDELMAN: I don't know. The only thing that one can say about that is that he's correct in saying that the Administration came to him and asked him to vote as he did. The only thing is if you look at the people who were voting on each side, he was in bad company and the fellows on Edward Kennedy's side were in good company.

HACKMAN: Why was there a feeling that Edward Kennedy had to do something at that point? I mean, how was that explained

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or spoken about?

EDELMAN: A combination of wanting to do something.... Wanting to be a good senator, I suppose, was the first motivation. It is true somewhat in Edward

Kennedy's case more than Robert's—but true of both of them, and maybe true of any politican; I don't want to be too hard on them, but at least true of them—that they had a tendency to say, "I want to do a thing on the thing." In other words, "I want to do something on that issue," without having very clearly thought through what the thing was. Now, that's not unfair, but a terrible thing, because they had staff who could take that creation of priorities in their time, their sensing that the overall issue, whatever it might have been, was

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important, and do the staff work to find out what were the important aspects of that to puruse. So it's not shocking that Edward Kennedy would come in and say, "I want to do a thing on the Voting Rights Act. That reflected a perception that that was one of the important issues of the year, that he had a commitment to votinf rights, that he wanted to see what he could do that was not being done by somebody else where he could really make a contribution. So, that there would be some politis and some claiming credit in it, but it really was relatively incidental.

That would be the kind of genesis, and then he would call people in. In this case his brother did participate somewhat in

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his decision maybe even more than usual because held been Attorney General. And, as I say, Burke Marshall and I had some participation in it.

HACKMAN: In the weekend drafting session, when you were working with the civil rights people, where is Burke Marshall at this point? Is he working with Katzenbach and Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] and these people?

EDELMAN: Yes.

HACKMAN: Is he presenting any viewpoints that Robert Kennedy clearly wanted presented at that point?

EDELMAN: Not to my knowledge, no. He was either still in the government at that point, or, if he had left, he was sufficiently close to it that they could call him back in as a consultant.

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HACKMAN: Yes, it's the latter case.

EDELMAN: He was downtwon working on the bill, but I don't know that he had any specific instructions or thoughts from Kennedy. He might have directly...

HACKMAN: You don't remember ever any disagreements between the two of them during this legislation, do you?

EDELMAN: No. My recolleciton is that he acquiesced in the decision to work on the poll tax as it was done, so at that point his position was different from the Justice Department.

HACKMAN: If Burke Marshall has to acquiesce and you're intially opposed, who's really carrying the strong viewpoint that you should go for the poll tax amendment? Robert Kennedy?

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EDELMAN: Yes, maybe some other constitutional lawyers who had been consulted, people like the ones that I named, particularly the Harvard people in Edward Kennedy's case.

HACKMAN: Well, we got sort of sidetracked while you were talking about the Puerto Rican...

EDELMAN: Oh, let me finish with the history of the Puerto Rican thing since that was what we did on the Voting Rights Act, yes.

So, we introduce it in May because of the filibuster and so on, the final vote didn't come until July. The Senator went to Runnymade in June?

HACKMAN: No, I don't think so.

EDELMAN: Was that the next year? No, he went to South Africa. I thought he was out for awhile somewhere, but it doesn't

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matters.

We came down to the time when the vote would come. This was my first experience with this kind of thing, but we started a lobbying effort. Javits' people took the Republicans and we took the Democrats, I called staff, the Senator called those senators when he thought his phone call would be helpful.

We went onto the floor and won 48-19 I recall. We were quite surprised at the magnitude of the victory. There were some people out of town. They had only 67 senators their present and voting, but we got some votes we didn't expect. And what it turned out was that it was essentially a New York amendment that the two senators from New York wanted; those kinds of things tend to provoke less opposition.

I think Russell Long [Russell B. Long] voted for us. It would be interesting to look back and see; I believe he did.

And then came the conference. To say a bit more about my role, which helps elucidate the institutional role of a legislative assistant: initial drafting of the amendment, calling and talking to staff people, helping the Senator see which senators he should call personally, working with the floor managers of the bill to develop a time when it would actually come up for a vote, preparing floor materials—which meant that I had to have all the statistics and all the arguments worked up into a long memorandum which he could easily refer to—sitting next to him on the floor

and whispering in his ear to help him answer things to the extent that was necessary.

Then, after the vote and after this bill is passed, the question of the conference. He called up Manny Celler [Emanuel Celler] and said that this had been done, wrote to all of the House and Senate conferees, talked to some people by phone, and got some commitments that they would help. It stayed in the bill through conference—it had not been in the House version of the bill—and that was how it became law.

HACKMAN: Okay. Any contact with the Puerto Rican community in New York as this thing was developing?

EDELMAN: Yes. There was a lady, whose name I forget, who later turned out to be sort of

a baddie she turns out to be a person who keeps running for positions on fringe tickets. Gosh, I wish I remembered it. In any event, somebody had put us on to her. We checked with her and with I don't remember who all else at the drafting statege to tell them that we were doing it. Those were the days when you kind of could get away with just telling somebody you were doing something; you didn't have to ask them if you could.

Then I remember quite specifcally that when the bill was signed we arranged for six or eight Puerto Rican community leaders to come down and be at the signing; Herman Badillo, this lady whose name I don't remember....

HACKMAN: Another lady whose name you don't remember.

EDELMAN: Another lady whose name I odn't remember, yes, I'm afraid, I'm sorry about that. I just don't remember who else; Herman Badillo was there for sure. But those are the major contacts we had.

Then the next thing that happened was that the Senator said to me, "Now I've got this, I'd really like to do something about it." So, somehow I got to a gal named Polly Baca, who is a Mexican-American who was working at the time for John McNiff for whatever union John McNiff is with. They, for some reason, had great interest in Puerto-Ricans; whether they ahd some membership or what, I don't know.

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We worked out a day in September where we would go around through primarily...

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...East Harlem and the South Bronx to encourage people to go out and reigster and vote. We had an old bus that we got somehwhere. It was O. Roy Chalk's bus from *El Diario La Preusa*—and there had been some advance work. It was fun. There was the thing I mentioned last time that I wanted to make sure of because he really did want to follow up on stuff like that, and I think that was perhaps effective.

HACKMAN: In the phone calls to get the first vote in the Senate, and then to get

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the cooperation from the House and Senate conferees, how would he sell something like this? Were there any trades?

EDELMAN: No, not that I know of. It's never inconceivable that there would be, but my recollection on that occasion.... There was maybe one or two. Maybe somebody had; I never heard about it. Essentially, what he would do is say, "I'm calling you about this amendment that I introduced, which corrects an injustice that we have in the State of New York. We have many Puerto Ricans who have come to New York who are unable to vote because of the literacy test that we have in New York. People in our own state don't have to take

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the literacy test because of the presumption that comes from their education, but the Puerto Ricans are not entitled to the benefit of that presumption, and all this amendment does is give them that entitlement." That kind of thing, and generally people would say, "Well, that sounds okay people."

HACKMAN: Were there frequently trades, or if there were would you know about them? Was he good at this, or did he like to do this, or did he have an aversion to it?

EDELMAN: I would say he had an aversion to it. I would say that in his case there were very infrequently trades. I would say that generally in the Senate there aren't overt trades. What happens

is that you just know, if somebody's done something for you, that you ought to go easy on him or help him along on something else or he won'd help you the next time. It's much more implicit than a guy actually saying, "I'll do your thing if you do my thing," much more implicit than that.

HACKMAN: Can you remember issues when there was that kind of thing, though?

EDELMAN: It's interesting, not with Robert Kennedy; somehow with Joe Tydings it always seems to happen. Joe Tydings' [Joseph D. Tydings] staff is forever telling people that they can't do something on something because the Senator is trying to get John McClellan or Jim Eastland [James O. Eastland] to let him hold hearings on

something, and if he takes the position on the other thing then they won't let him do what he wants to do. And Kennedy essentially would never get himself into that position.

As I said before in another conversation, he was reluctant to go to John McClellan to ask him to be able have that special subcommittee, I guess it was on health. Is that what we decided it was on? No, it was on the way federal programs operate, overlapping and stuff. And I would think that that was one of the reasons why he was reluctant to do it; he didn't want to get into a situation where he owed John McClellan a favor.

HACKMAN: Looking at the overall voting rights bill, did the Administration in the

early spring of '65 over come to Robert Kennedy and ask for a feed in on the legislation? I mean, did Katzenbach consult with him closely during that period? Did he ever feel as a former Attorney General in a very recent period, that he was just left out completely by the Administration?

EDELMAN: I don't really know the answer to that. I have a feeling—it's a sort of a vague recollection—that he was somewhat miffed, but I don't really know.

HACKMAN: So he would be miffed at both the Administration and at sort of the civil rights people?

EDELMAN: The second was a very short-lived kind of thing. I think he was ultimately, not very long after, convinced that they had left him off for the reason that I

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said that they just hadn’t really considered him in the context of now being a senator. As far as the Administration was concerned, I don’t suppose he really expected to be heavily consulted, but, on on the other hand, I have the feeling that he felt a little bit left out. I think that was one reason why in the end he sort of was in favor of his brother going against him on the poll tax.

HACKMAN: Can you remember—I guess it’s in very early ‘65—when the marches are taking place—from Selma to Montgomery and there are a lot of arrests and some violence? Can you remember any conslutations with King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] or with any of the other civil rights leaders at that time, or considering

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what kind of statement Robert Kennedy should make, or anything like this?

EDELMAN: No. He may have talked to some, but I think that’s rather interesting to think back on because he definitely made no statement, unless it was some off-the-cuff thing. You just know that two years later if that kind of thing had been going on, he would have been out in the forefront making a statement. Indeed, later that year after Watts, he was the first major national figure to make a statement about some of the causes and deeper implications.

I don’t want to be unfair to him because I have a theory that he was still walking around in something of a daze in early ’65 from

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November ’63, and that he only began to come out of that sometime that summer. For whatever reason he just didn’t react to that Selma-Montgomery thing. Part of it may have been that he’d been too close to that when he was Attorney General and that he was a little sick and tired of all of that. That wouldn’t surprise me either.

HACKMAN: What is really Burke Marshall’s role as time goes by in relation to civil rights things?

EDELMAN: He’s the major adviser. As the issues passed from straight civil rights to northern kind of ghetto-type issues, Burke is involved less and less. But in the fall, when the Senator went to South America, he told Burke and he told me

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that we should get together with one another because he wanted to make a major civil rights speech. Have I gone into this before?

HACKMAN: No.

EDELMAN: He wanted to make a major civil rights speech sometime when he got back, and that's about all he said. So, I went up to Burke's house one night in November of '65 and stayed overnight. We talked through all the southern issues that remained, all off the questions of how you amended the 1867 laws to get around the Screws case [Screws v. United States, 1945] and stuff about, "under color of state action," and how essentially you could nail a law enforcement official or even a private citizen who acted to deprive another

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of his life, liberty, and property without due process of law—deprive another, in essence, of his civil rights. More broadly, how you could get better protection for civil rights workers and indigenous people in the South who were trying to work for justice and change. Those were kind of the remaining issues after the '64 act and the '65 act.

There were also issues about jury exclusion, how you could insure fair juries; there were issues about clarifying the right to remove cases from state to Federal court in civil rights situations; perhaps two or three other categories.

Burke and I went through this at great length, and I wrote the Senator a long memo in which

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I said, "These are some of the areas that you could go into in a speech." And then, in the last two paragraphs of the memo, I said, "In addition to that, there are northern-type issues which are civil rigts in the broad sense, but the kind of thing you raised in your Watts speech and questions about employment, housing, education, and so on, economic opportunity."

He read the memo on his return, and he said, "That's a very good memo, Peter, but what I want to give a speech on are the things that you touched on in the last page of your memo." So, all of this work and discussion with Burke had been clearly quite for naught.

Then I sat dawn and I started to read—

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there'd been an issue of *Daedalus* that fall on the Negro-American that was quite good—and so on. I wrote a speech draft, which was quite long and which was divided into education, employment, housing, police, whatever other areas, and which essentially was a potpourri of the proposals that were floating around—statistics and so on. It wasn't too good, but could have been expanded into a good, conventional kind of "Here is what the agenda is on these various issues." Well, he read that, said he thought it was a good draft, said it seemed to him to need some more work in some places, but in general was quite complimentary about it.

Then—

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let's see, what happened? Oh, then at the same time he had to give a speech at Long Island University in December. Adam took that speech and wrote a short, crisp version out of it, which was in some sense a reprise of the Watts speech and in some sense had taken some of the things that I had. You'd have to look back to the exact text to see what the point was, but it was a good speech.

Adam, with that draft, and I, to talk to the Senator about my longer draft, went over to Rollie Evans' [Rowland Evans, Jr.] one night, where he was having dinner. There was a couple from California, who were some friends of friends, who we had some friends of friends, who we had along with us who we were taking out to dinner. We walked

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into Rollie Evans. It was a typical Kennedy thing because there was all this glitter around—the Arthur Schlesingers [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] and the Averell Harrimans [William Averell Harriman], and who know who else—but all of these people around; and, of course, our friends were just gawking and were invited to have a drink while Adam and I went up and sat down with the Senator, and so on.

But the net of that conversation was that he cleared Adam's speech and that we somehow got an understanding that Adam and I would work together on sort of improving my draft. It was left rather vague. Well, then Adam and I sat down and we really had, as we often did, a good long discussion about the way it ought to be done, and we agreed at a fairly early point in the conversation that somehow this organization: (1) education, (2) housing, (3) employment, and so on, didn't work. That subject matter thing was to fragmented and didn't

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grasp it whole, as it ought to be grasped.

So we talked some more and this was really a conversation that went on over some hours, maybe even into a couple of days; and finally had the, what seems rather obvious in retrospect, insight that the way to do it was to do a series of speeches because it was obviously a very big subject, and to do them (1) around sort of metropolitan issues, integration—that would be the first sppech—and (2) around ghetto problems. Partially that would provde that there was no such thing as a monolithic, either/or approach—integration or gulling the ghetto. In fact, you could pursue both strategies. Prove that it was necessary to keep pushing on integration, but at the same time that you couldn't forget an entire generation of people who were left behind. Then, groping for a third speech, something about how to tie in, which we didn't succeed in doing very well, the concerns of every American in this problem.

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by talking about, what happened to be a pet theory of Adam's—what he called "the tracks people get on in life and can't get off of," and the need to give people sort of educational opportunities to get on to other tracks in the course of their adult and working lives.

So then we went back to Kennedy and we said, "All right, we've worked it out this way and we'd like you to do three speeches as so and so." And it happened that he had three successive dates in January, we discovered: January 20th, to the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in New York, January 21st to the Community Conference in Harlem, and January 22nd to the regional convention of the UAW [United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America].

So we said, "The three speeches should be given on the three days. You'll get all this press coverage and won't it be wonderful?"

He said, "Okay." He said, "I'm not sure about that first one but okay."

So I wrote the first speech. Adam wrote the other two and we edited each other. I'm fairly proud of that first speech.

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If you look back at it, it never got much attention, but it was a pretty tough statement of some of the stuff that ought to be done to really force integration in metropolitan areas. I'm not sure that I was even fully aware of all the implications at the time when I wrote it.

But he went and gave it at the Federation of Jewish Philantropists and it was an utter, total bomb. Walking into a chicken á la king lunch at the American Hotel in New York and standing up and giving this very long, very serious, very heavy speech really threatening all them because theyw ere al the people who he was talkinga bout; it was just a bomb, and he was really very irritated with me afterwards. But the second sppech was a gret success in Harlem because it was talking about the kinds of community things that had to be done. And the thrid speech was about right for the UAW, although certainly not meorable.

Then we had them printed up.

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Joe Clark [Joseph S. Clark]—no, Phil Hart, I guess, put them into the *Congressional Record* and we had them printed up. It was really kind of our bible. It was a kind of a turning point in our efforts around the office because it gave use a major focus; by contrast everything that we'd been doing through the year '65 on the domestic side really was pale in contrast to that, which was an overall look at things which set out an agenda really for us for quite some time to work on into the future.

Well, then the very next thing that happened was that.... And now I'm getting on into talking about Bedford-Stuyvesant, if that's....

HACKMAN: Go ahead. While you're on this train of thought I think you should go ahead.

EDELMAN: The very next thing that happened was

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that about a month later in February or perhaps March '66, Kennedy had scheduled the trip into Bedford-Stuyvesant. As we talked about in another discussion, his New York office was always looking for things for him to do, so this occasion was a meeting with community leaders in Bedford-Stuyvesant. He went in there, and essentially what happened is they said, "We're sick and tired of all you political leaders coming in here. Well, let's do something." Even a plea that said, "If we don't get some help in doing something we're not going to last here as leaders very long."

So there was that second speech. It had been Adam's theory that he'd been trying to tell to somebody for years. Long before he ever met Robert Kennedy he had this theory about rebuilding the ghetto and so on and grasping the web whole, and all the rhetoric. He had sort of put one over on everybody

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with that speech because he'd finally sold the pet Walinsky theory. But there it all was, written out—a total impact project for the ghetto. So they started talking about that. Tom Johnston was put to work on it from the New York office and Adam went up to supply some intellectual fuel from time to time, in working with the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

Then, another piece of Adam's strategy was the special impact legislation, which he had in the back of his head somewhere. When they got back from South Africa in the summer, the poverty legislation was coming up. I had been working on the minimum wage legislation anyways, so Adam said to me, rather generously, that he would handle the poverty legislation. Of course, it turned out that the reason he wanted to do it was that he had this special impact amendment in mind, which was subsequently enacted, and which provided the money for the Bedford-Stuyvesant project. So, it all tied together.

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The special impact amendment was another good Javits performance and, I might say, a bad Kennedy performance. Adam had it all drafted, and the Senator hadn't paid any attention to it. He hadn't paid any attention whatsoever and walked into the committee just cold, was reading the stuff, just reading it, and not even reading it all that well, and didn't know what he was talking about. People were saying, "Maybe we really should adjourn the meeting until another time," out of sort of sympathy for him. Javits was saying it was a bad idea and attacking it. The whole thing was a very, very bad scene, and Adam just came back distraught. I remember him walking into the office saying, "My God, what are we going to do? I can’t get him to focus on it,” and so on and so forth. We did have our moments of unhappiness. It all worked out and it became the Kennedy-Javits

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program and so on.

So they got twenty-five million dollars into the appropriation for that year for it, of which seven million went to Bedford Stuyvesant to be used over a two pear period—and the whole thing got off the ground. We can come back to same of the later controversies of the project in December of 1966. But that—effort to put Bedford Stuyvesant together and the associated to get the poverty bill amended. And the thematic post-Watts kind of news—new departure for Kennedy were all terribly important in this development thing in the year of 1966.

HACKMAN: Had there been people making an effort through ’65 to get him to focus on—to take an overall approach or even to get him focused on two or three major things as opposed to sort of a helter, skelter thing that you described—not helter-skelter but certainly not a unity that comes later?

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EDELMAN: No, I wouldn’t say so. Our major theory in ’65 was that we would try to attach amendments to Administration bills as they came through so he was feeling his way.

As I said earlier, he was most interested in education. He went to all the hearings on all the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts, asked a lot of questions, and got those amendments added on in the House. So that that was the theme for him, education. He talked and gave a lot of speeches about education.

But if you look back to his speeches in ’65 to sort of see what’s on his mind, he gave a tremendous number—not that they’re not important—of speeches to regional development councils in New York, talking about the need for counties to cooperate with each other, the need for planning, and the need for improved zoning and all that. And that’s fine but I said, I think before, that’s the kind of thing you almost say when you don’t have anything else to say.

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HACKMAN: Well, how did most of those come about then? Was this him wanting to accept that kind of invitation, or is it because there’s so, sort of, a vacuum or they’re....?

EDELMAN: Both. Both, but the major thing, as I said before, is that he was working, which is deliberate and not a vacuum, to be a good senator from the State of New

York. Clearly, in retrospect, and I think even at the time, what was on his mind was that he had plenty of time to make a big splash on national issues. What he had to do is make a strong base for himself in New York. He had to keep on working that state, getting around and seeing people, and making legislative proposals that related to the people of New York.

So, you look at the pattern from the Veteran Hospital's closing thing, to the Puerto Rican amendment, to the Appalachian amendment, to all of these

speeches to local groups encouraging them to work on planning, to the work that we did with Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman] on trying to get some regional planning efforts going in the state under Department of Agriculture auspices, and so on—which I spent quite a bit of time on in 1965—and the work with the dairy interests and, so on. He was basically trying to service the state. His legislative efforts, his speeches, and his trips all reflected that that was the unifying theme. So, that wasn't really a vacuum, but it wasn't obviously addressing the crisis that the nation faced. On the other hand, until Watts it wasn't so clear at that point, apart from the developing war, that it was a time of great crisis.

HACKMAN: Well, maybe this goes together. You made a statement last time, and just reiterated it, that in the early period he really felt education was the key; get everyone in school and that takes care a lot of you problems. What happens then?

You said something shook that? Was Watts one of the things that happened that shakes that?

EDELMAN: Yes, I would say Watts is one of things. I would say his beginning to actually get into ghettos, to visit in a deeper way than he ever had. And hearing people tell him over and over again that the problem was they couldn't get a job. I remember standing on a street corner in Watts with him in November of 1965 and asking a man—he was a perfectly healthy looking man—what the problem was. The man said to him "flustration." Kennedy said, "Excuse me?" He said, "flustration." He said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, man when you're over fifty and you is black, you can't get a job no how." It was that kind of thing.

We went to visit Operation Bootstrap, which was in its infancy at that time in Watts,

which has been a relatively successful program. They were tyring to train young men to be auto mechanics and various other things. We just went around and talked to a lot of people. As I say, he did the same thing in New York, and he heard over and over again, "Well, why the hell should I stay in school? There's no job for me when I get out?" So, it was a process.

HACKMAN: Okay, one other point on the voting rights thing. How satisfied was he with the way the legislation was implemented? Was he frequently pushing people at Justice to do something they weren't doing?

EDELMAN: No, I would say he wasn't frequently pushing, no. Perhaps he should have been pushing more, but I think that he lost interest in the South from the kind of point of view that he'd been interested in it—that is the vindication of equal rights. It was exactly correlated to his beginning to get interested in the ghettos of

the North. So he just would not have paid that much attention to somebody—and there wasn't that much pressure on him, I might say. Now and then we would get people who would call from the South and say, "No voting registrars have ever been"—or they'd write letters—"sent into Sunflower County. Can't you do something about it?" He usually just wasn't inclined to get into that.

You see, then his interested in the South revives again in 1967, but it revives in a new guise. It revives around economic issues, and it's significant that it grows into an alliance with people who before that he had thought were other fringe elements—that is basically FDP [Freedom Democratic Party] people. In 1966, when the CDGM [Child Development Group of Mississippi] fight was going on, he wouldn't get into it because his brother-in-law assured him that the people, the CDGM people, had

had been doing bad things and that the MAP [Mississippi Action for Progress] program, which Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] started in league with Aaron Henry [Aaron E. Henry] and others—and Aaron Henry was Robert Kennedy's friend—was the correct one.

So when he went down there in '67 and saw the hunger and he saw who really had the indigenous contacts and who really was of the people, it was like a whole layer stripped away for him, a whole new way to look at things. He got interested again, but from the point of view that there were hungry people there.

Somehow, his feeling about the legal rights was that basically once those were passed, their enforcement was somebody else's job. He wanted to move on to the economic questions that there were in the North. It wasn't until he went back South and saw that there were very fundamental economic questions there, too, that he got reinterested in the South.

HACKMAN: Were you making any vigorous effort to turn him around on the CDGM thing, or was anyone?

EDELMAN: No.

HACKMAN: Did you have a good feel for that situation at the time?

EDELMAN: No, I did not. I had heard from people, Dick Boone [Richard W. Boone], of course, was very central, to that fight and was a good friend of ours. He had started out being more of a friend of Adam's, but was a good friend of ours in the office, had known Kennedy personally from back in the days of the White House Counsel [President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime], or whatever it was called, on Juvenile Delinquency.

I would say, because of the fact that Kennedy and Shriver were brothers-in-laws they never came to us and leaned. They never leaned hard, knowing that it would be hard for Kennedy. So, you had Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] and Jack Conway [Jack T. Conway]; all of them were very close to us.

We heard peripherally about it, but never very heavy. So, I never made any

real effort to dig into it. I remember a conversation in a car in New York with the Senator where I brought it up very tentatively saying, "Have you thought about it?" Had he gone into it? It seemed like the CDGM people were taking a screwing.

He just said, he couldn't get into it because of Shriver and because Aaron Henry and the others were his friends. Under those circumstances, he just couldn't get into it. And that was the end of it. We never talked about it again.

HACKMAN: One other thing on Burke Marshall. Did he feed in a lot, particularly memos, suggestions like this, or was it always the Senator going to him, usually the Senator going to him?

EDELMAN: More the Senator going to him. If he had suggestions, I think he probably made them orally. I never saw any memos from Burke Marshall. Their conversations must have been all oral.

People have different styles. I'm not much of a memo writer either. On the other hand, Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] and John Douglas [John W. Douglas], for example, were great memo writers and letter writers setting out what you ought to do. They're good at it; particularly Fred is very good at ordering thoughts and listing a series of strategies. I carried around, in my sort of folder, of things to do, for a whole year one of his memos that was just such a good list of what our priorities ought to be. You could refer back to it months later and get guidance from it.

HACKMAN: Do you remember.... I'm being selfish here simply because I've got an interview coming up with Marshall. Do you remember things that Marshall plays a really important role in during the whole period that we haven't discussed so far?

EDELMAN: Well, he's such a counselor, such a good counselor on everything. Kennedy talks to him about so many things. I don't think Kennedy talks to him much about

foreign affairs, but certainly anything related to civil rights and just when he wants a common sense opinion. On political things too, if they're sort of not how you deal with it daily, but more general guidances, general judgment on what Kennedy ought to do on something, Burke was always someone that he turned to. One specific experience that I had with Burke, which is not terribly important, but I might go into, it is something we would go into anyways is reapportionment.

HACKMAN: Yes, that's next on....

EDELMAN: In early '65 the Dirksen Amendment [Everett M. Dirksen] was developing and coming along, and it was natural for me with my lawyer background to be interested in that, comfortable for me, and it was important. So, I went to the Senator—he had an invitation from the Columbia Law School Forum to come and give a speech—and I suggested to him that he accept that and that he use it to talk about reapportionment. That, I might say

parenthetically, is... Perhaps we'll get into more detail on the way in which speeches got accepted and so on, but one way in which they got accepted was that Adam or I would see an invitation floating around, take it into to him and say, "Now, this is an opportunity to do something that we think you ought to do or that you've been wanting to do."

So, he said, yes, he'd be glad to go to Columbia and do that; that seemed a good idea, and I should get in touch with Burke Marshall. So, I wrote up a draft of the thing, and Burke and I worked on it together. It ended up, in fact, that.... Let's see, we didn't do too much on it together at that point, actually, now that I think about it. But, it ended up that Kennedy couldn't go to deliver the speech because he had to go back and vote on something. We got Burke to go and deliver it and answer some questions and so on, which was a pretty good substitution.

Burke and I flew back to Washington, together that day and talked to.... Kennedy was scheduled to testify a week or so later for the Bayh subcommittee [Birch Bayh] on Constitutional Amendments on reapportionment. So, at that point, we talked in much greater detail

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about what editing changes because it would be substantially the same as the speech. He was, of course, very helpful.

Then, just continuing on the reapportionment thing, although....

HACKMAN: Was he at all reluctant to get involved in this issue? I mean, can you remember discussing it in terms of what his contribution could be on the reapportionment issues? The leadership Douglas and these people, had already been involved.

EDELMAN: He was very interested in it because, you remember, he had argued the Gray against Sanders case [*Gray v. Sanders*, 1963] in the Supreme Court about the common unit rule in Georgia in, I guess, the fall of ’62. So, he felt he had a stake in it. It was the only case he’d ever argued in the Supreme Court. He felt he had some credentials and so on because he’d been Attorney General. He had essentially been responsible for the Justice Department

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getting involved, as it remained involved as a friend of the Court, in this issue.

We became a part of the network of which was led by Douglas, Proxmire [William Proxmire], and Tydings. When the filibuster started later on, we were very intimately involved and were assigned floor time. You know, all the things that go on in a filibuster in terms of who will watch the floor and so on.

It was true that Kennedy felt the issue was in good hands, so he didn’t make a major effort about it. He didn’t try to inject himself into the leadership on the issue. I kept telling him that there was more that he could do about it. He obviously felt that there was no particular need to do more about it. Of course, in terms of the result, he was right.

I remember, in the summer, I had a law student working with me who helped me put together a three-hour speech for Kennedy to give on the floor as part of the filibuster. I took it to Kennedy, and, of

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course, it was very, very thick. He said, “I can’t get up and give that. I’ve never spoken for more than twenty minutes in my life,” which was the statement he made about things many times.

HACKMAN: Is that it?

EDELMAN: That’s it, yes.

HACKMAN: So he never gave this?

EDELMAN: Well, it’s in the *Congressional Record*, word for word, but he never actually stood up and read the whole thing. When the final debate was going on, he did give a speech which had excerpts of that in it. He inserted into the *Record* a memorandum, or a couple of memoranda, on issues that he was uniquely qualified to comment on. I couldn’t tell you what they were, but they were things that, as a former Attorney General, he had some credibility to stand up and talk about.

When the final credits were passed out he didn’t get very much credit about it and, I guess, really didn’t deserve that much because he hadn’t, in fact, been one of the major leaders.

HACKMAN: Was there much of a problem among the leadership of that group: Douglas, Tydings, Bayh, all of these people who were involved?

EDELMAN: Bayh was always in an equivocal position. There was always a question whether he would go along. I believe he did in the end. He had at one point an alternative proposal that he was thinking about coming in with, which was an effort to have an amendment, but to have an amendment which, basically, had no teeth in it. There was question right up to the end whether he was going to offer that as a substitute to the Dirksen Amendment. In the end, he did not. But apart from that, there was no problem; everyone else agreed with one another.

HACKMAN: Was he very fond of, or did he find it very easy to work with Tydings at this point? I noticed a lot of back and forth between yourself and Alan Wurtzel. Or is it just that the two of you find it very easy to work together?

EDELMAN: Well, he was a good friend of Joe Tydings. He was really responsible for Joe Tydings’ political career because he had made him U.S. Attorney in Baltimore in 1961. On the other hand, he once called Joe Tydings a paperweight. So, I don’t think he had a tremendous amount of personal respect for having Joe Tydings on your side on an issue. But yes, we found it very easy to work together. The fact that Wurtzel and I worked together was a little bit more than just that.

HACKMAN: I just wanted to show you that and see what you can remember about what he did on this and what his attitude on doing something like this was.

EDELMAN: This is a memorandum which I wrote him as the Dirksen Amendment was finally coming down to a possible vote. What I said to him was I was listing Senators in three categories: either shaky; against the Dirksen Amendment, but shaky or the fence; or in favor, but maybe could be persuaded out of it. I wanted him to find out just how these Senators would vote and what

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their attitudes were on various versions, such as the Bayh version that I mentioned, or wehther they would be willing to vote against all amendments. I don't recall he did very much with this. There is a note in his handwriting at the top of the memo that says, "Gaylord Nelson, read Don Hatch." I don't remember who Don Hatch was. So, I don't know that he did very much with this. He might have talked to two or three Senators. I had listed here sixteen Senators who he could so something with.

HACKMAN: What do you think his reaction or his reason would have been, that he didn't have much influence, he just didn't want to do it?

EDELMAN: A combination of the fact that others were working on the issue and.... Again I think that reluctance of being in a position of obligation since it wasn't really his fight as such was there.

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HACKMAN: In that file, I noticed you wrote letters to Paul Freund and Griswold [Erwin N. Griswold] asking them to testify neither of them did, I believed. Can you remember anything unusual in that?

EDELMAN: Griswold, no. I don't know what Paul Freund did. Griswold wrote a letter to the committee which was quite good and quite helpful and which was printed in the hearing record. I'm not sure whether Freund did or not.

HACKMAN: I think the initial replies you get from both is that they don't have time to come down. I just wonered if something like that would have upset the Senator particuarly, or if he would have even known about it.

EDELMAN: He knew that I was doing it. But, I think in Griswold's case there was a letter which went into it. The reason I did that is that I was in close enough touch, particularly with Larry Conrad [Larry A. Conrad] on Bayh's staff, who was less equivocal than his boss was. They said that one way I could help since I had those contacts, was to pursue them.

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HACKMAN: Let's say on something like making these contacts with other Senators that you suggested, if he didn't do it, would he frequently or would you frequently go to Edward Kennedy to do something like this? Was it felt that in some ways he'd be more effective than Robert Kennedy with a lot of people would?

EDELMAN: No, not particularly. They would be pursuing whatever they thought was helpful. In a case like that I wouldn't have called up and said that my Senator wouldn't do it, so would their Senator do it. They would just going ahead on their own steam and their own agenda.

HACKMAN: Can you remember him—he wrote a lot of letters to New York mayors, the Democratic Congressmen, assemblymen, and State senators from New York. It seems to me these are both results of one suggestion. Tydings makes a suggestion that he write to some people. Proxmire suggests that he set up a state committee to oppose the amendment.

Would you have conceived of doing things like this on your own, or did he only do these things because of Tydings' suggestion?

EDELMAN: Well, in some cases I might have. In that particular case it was the result of my being in fairly constant contact with the group of people, is I said earlier, and of our meeting from time to time or talking on the phone from time to time saying "What should be done now?"

Tom Vandervoort in Proxmire's office or Alan Wurtzel in Tydings' office would say, "Well, this is the kind of thing that we're doing, writing to local officials and to Congressmen or organizing a committee like this. If you'd like to do that, it would be good." And I would go to him and say, "Well, this is what others are doing. Would you do that?" He would say, "Sure," and we would do it for whatever marginal value it had on the issue.

These particular efforts were definitely coordinated efforts that were part of an overall strategy. I might have contributed

somewhat in those discussion to making suggestions.

HACKMAN: Can you generalize on that though? Was he likely or unlikely to want to do things like this to write to people at the state level and try to build something there?

EDELMAN: He was likely. In the case of the narcotics legislation, as you saw in the file, we sent that to all kinds of people for their comments and to try to work up enthusiasm for it. We always did that. On the tax incentive legislation we sent it around to everyone we could think of, businessmen, mayors, and so on. What you do with replies depends on what's happening legislatively; if there are hearings, you get them put in the hearing record, or sometimes you get something you can use in a speech, a particularly useful example, or a set of commentaries, or comments, or whatever.

We had a little bill too—which we can talk about some other time—provide for commitment for people who were acquitted

in Federal courts on the ground of insanity. We sent that around to all the judges and law enforcement officers and everything else. That was partly so Kennedy would get political points with those people and partly to build up support for the legislation. So, that's a stock tool that we used over and over again.

HACKMAN: Can you recall special efforts in '65 to get Javits to turn around on the Dirksen Amendment?

EDELMAN: I just don't know. Was Javits on the Dirksen Amendment?

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: But didn't he vote right in the end?

HACKMAN: Yes, I think he came around finally, but for a long time he wouldn't. And then didn't he at one time want to amend the Dirksen Amendment or something, slightly?

EDELMAN: That's right. He had one of the version that I was referring to in that memo. No, I would supposed that one of the things we were up in generating the

letters from the mayors and so on, was putting pressure on Javits. I'm sure that's true.

HACKMAN: What's Senator Kennedy's opinion of Dirksen?

EDELMAN: Really didn't like him. He thought he was an untrustworthy wiley, rather demagogic fellow. He never worked with Dirksen on anything. He just didn't like to go to him about anything.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any efforts that the Senator made, or that you made, or that Phil Ryan [Philip J. Ryan, Jr.] made that you got involved in, in relation to the reapportionment of the New York legislature? I know I've seen one memo in there that Zaretski [Joseph L. Zaretski] and Travia [Anthony J. Travia] had sent in a plan to present to the court, I guess, to reapportion the state legislature.

EDELMAN: I don’t think I ever worked on that. I don’t think we did much with that. People were constantly trying to get him involved in issues at the state level. You had to be very careful because you could just get eaten up by all of that, both in terms of time and in terms of politics. So, he did get into state things from time to time, visits to schools for the mentally retarded. The Medicaid thing in 1966 was very important. He really played a major role in getting a better bill enacted. I went up to Albany for four days at the end of April 1966 on the Medicaid bill, which was the only time I ever did that.

HACKMAN: We talked briefly, off tape, about that March 3rd speech to the National Council of the Aging. How did that issue come to you?

EDELMAN: Well, that’s the beginning of his interested in Social Security. That was a speech to National Council of the Aging.

In discussing the various ways in which he would get interested in issues, sometimes, as I said, they would be through staff, sometimes his own idea. That was the case where Jack Conway, really speaking for Reuther, came to him in early ’65—he’d only been in the Senate perhaps a month—and said, “One issue you ought to be involved in is old people, Social Security. Specifically, what we’d like you to do is be the champion, which no one is yet, of a general revenue contribution to pay for a much-expanded Social Security system. The way you can get into this is that we’re authorized to issue an invitation for you to give this speech to the annual convention of the National Council of the Aging.”

So, he said, “Okay.” I worked with Leonard Lesser, who was at that time at the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations], as the general counsel, on drafting the speech. Lesser sort of provided the material and I worked it up into a speech.

I remember taking the draft up to New York and he still has his suite in the Carlyle [Hotel] this is before he even had his apartment in the United Nations Plaza. He sat and read it. He was on his way to go out somewhere, and he sat and he read it. There was a proposal in there, which never saw the light of day to require that employers’ for certain kinds of employees would pay both the employer and the employee contribution. I don’t remember just what the category was, but the theory of it was for certain employees as to whom the employee contribution was not really paying for—these were low wage employees—the pension the employee was going to get. Why not be honest about it and make the employer pay the whole thing?

So, he read through this. I had some rather strong statements in there about the system being unfair and so on. First he said, “You’re trying to make a Socialist out of me,” and he chuckled. Then he read a little farther and he said, “Why if my father [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] read this, he’d talk again.” He’d be so

outraged. So, the thing was modified on down to the point where he decided that he wasn’t being made a Socialist out of it. It was still a heavy speech; it was still good.

The idea that Conway proposed was that he would give the speech, that the proposals would be rather a departure from anything anyone had said, that it would simmer around for a year or so and then the next year he would introduce a bill that embodied the proposals.

We again sent that speech out to lots of people and tried to get some ferment going about it and then did follow it up. Again, by working with Leonard Lesser and with the people at the Social Security Administration as well, we came up with a bill a year later. Well, I guess that’s all there is to that.

HACKMAN: What about AAU-NCAA [Amateur Athletic Union-National Collegiate Athletic Association] dispute? How did you get involved in that?

EDELMAN: He read about Gerry Lindgren, who was a runner from the University of Washington who was barred by the NCAA because he’d taken part in AAU competition of some kind. He made a statement about it,

which I guess I did not draft. I don’t remember the exact sequence of it, whether there was going to be.... I guess Magnuson [Warren G. Magnuson] was going to hold hearings on the dispute anyways. I think I went to him and said, “Since you made the statement about Gerry Lindgren, would you want to testify?” and he said, “Yes.”

It may have been that Nick Rodis [Nicholas Rodis] had talked to him. Nick Rodis was in the State Department at the time. One of them had been the best man at the other’s wedding. They were good friends and played football together. So, Nick and some gal came up and gave me all the material on it. I drafted the testimony. That was all there was to that.

But, again, you had the fact that Nick Rodis was his friend contributing to his involvement in that, just as the fact that Dean Markham [Dean F. Markham] was his friend contributed to his involvement on the narcotics issue. I would say that was part of the somewhat haphazard quality of 1965, that there was still time that we had, we weren't sufficiently, overextended, and over involved that we didn't have time to take on an issue on that basis.

HACKMAN: How much more time do you want to do? You okay?

EDELMAN: Sure.

HACKMAN: Okay, why don't we talk about his general attitude—we touched on the CDGM thing—but on OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] and the whole war on poverty concept in '65 and maybe in '66? I guess, just what can you first remember about his whole reaction to the idea of the legislation as it was?

EDELMAN: He was very much for it. He'd really had some part in it. He'd really been one of the inspirations for that legislation. If any major figure in the government was the father of the concept of community action, he was or at least he early embraced it when the people like Dick Boone were advancing it.

In addition to that, President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] had put him in charge of a task force to study the feasibility of a national service

corps, which ultimately became VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America]. So, he had quite a commitment and quite an involvement in the genesis of it. As I told you last time, one thing that I really remember him reiterating at every one of those meetings in the communities in New York in late 1964 was to tell them to start a community action program.

In '65 the reenactment of the bill had not been controversial at all, and, indeed, not really in '66 either very much so. It had just kind of gone through. They'd increased the scope of it, just about doubled it in '65 after the initials partial year's experience. He was a strong supporter. I was not on the subcommittee that dealt with it at that time, only got on that subcommittee in 1966. So, there wasn't much that he did in '65 about it, except generally to support it.

Then in '66, if I have my dates right.... Have you seen a *Congressional Record* where he gives a speech on the floor? I think that's in '66. I'm sure it's in '66. I don't think I have to

look for it. In '66, by this time, he was into sort of an early form of this priorities issue. The form that it was taking then was, "We have to spend more; we can afford to spend more on domestic things." He'd given a speech in April or May of '66 in Ellenville, New York, that I had drafted, attacking the President's [Lyndon B. Johnson] budget as not funding up to the authorizations, particularly on education proposals, and was surprised at the amount of attention it got. But people were already looking—this was after the power and responsibility speech on Vietnam—for issues that he was breaking with the President on.

In the committee on the poverty legislation in ’66, he spearheaded, he really led an effort to attach all kinds of additional money, some hundreds of millions more for Head Start, some hundreds of millions more for community action, and so on down the line through

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the poverty program. He then got up on the floor and defended it very heavily on the floor and lost. On the floor they struck out the money the committee had added and went down to the level the Administration had proposed.

So, his major effort in ’66, beyond the special impact legislation.... That was terribly important and he invested a lot of himself in that and seeing it through the conference and everything else. Then Adam spent a lot of time fighting with the Labor Department about the implementation of it. There was a big dispute about whether it would be given to OEO, which we did not want or given to the Labor Department, which we want. The OEO kept trying to undercut us. Adam kept having to go back and yell and scream and so on. I would say that was more Adam than the Senator, but he was still speaking for the Senator and the Senator was generally aware what he was doing.

So, the major effort was expended in the

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enactment and funding and implementation of Title I-D, the special impact Kennedy-Javits program. By this time he was sufficiently into the poverty program that he was making these efforts on money as well.

HACKMAN: Do you get the impression that he clearly felt that he didn’t want it to go to OEO too, that he was clear on that?

EDELMAN: Yes, based on the advice that he was given. I don’t know if he had a personal, intuitive, full grasp based on his own examination of it. He was told that it would be adminsitratered better and would be better for Bedford-Stuyvesant if went to the Labor Department, so he went along with that.

HACKMAN: Do you remember him having any clear concept of what community action meant when he first started, let’s say, in late ’64 and then through ’65?

EDELMAN: Yes, in a general way, he very definitely understood that it meant confrontation politics. That was what he and others had intended by it. He said many times, “it’s not going to be popular to have the

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Federal government financing people to come down and tell City Hall that it’s doing the wrong thing.” He was also very strong in trying to make people understand that on a program of this kind some money would be wasted and some money would go into people's pockets and that that was inevitable and should be understood.

He wouldn't have been articulate about it in a highly abstract way. He wouldn't have explicitly said that he had thought through whether community action should be a service strategy or a confrontation strategy and that he had opted for the latter, but he was clear in his own mind that it was to be a confrontation kind of thing. That was what he expected.

HACKMAN: Did he ever take credit in his own mind because of Hackett [David L. Hackett] and the people who worked with Hackett on the juvenile delinquency thing for the concept of community action? Do you really think you felt that concept was his?

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EDELMAN: I think he felt a strong identification with it; maybe "as his" would be too strong, but he felt a strong identification with the process that had produced it and a strong commitment to the idea that lay behind it. I think he was never as strong publicly about explicitly what it was supposed to be because that would have been rather damaging. To be completely open and honest what you were trying to do was fund a rebellion against established authority. So, I think, he was publicly a little reticent perhaps.

BEGIN TAPE II, SIDE I

I think Moynihan [Daniel Patrick Moynihan] is somewhat self-serving when he goes back and says that nobody knew quite what it was. I think, some people were very clear in their minds what it was. There was a sloppiness because the program had to get going so fast,

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started so fast. They had to just get the money out there so quickly.

Then, people didn't really want to own up to the fact that what they had in mind.... Perhaps that was a faultiness. They just thought that they could get away with more then it turned out they could get away with. There had been a sloppiness in thinking in that respect.

HACKMAN: You don't remember Robert Kennedy clearly having the feeling that the President [Johnson] hadn't really understood what this was all about, but rather that the President...

EDELMAN: ....understood too well. I don't think the President understood at the beginning. I don't think that Johnson really knew what the consequences of Title II were in the beginning. But when Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] called him up and told him, then he knew. [Interruption]

So, Kennedy, was a strong defender of

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the poverty program all the way through. Then in '67 it became his issue. He was really Joe Clark's strong right hand man on the subcommittee in getting it reenacted. He was very, very responsible—we'll get into this in more detail—for saving as much as was saved from the Green [Edith S. Green] Amendment by virture of his performance in the conference in the fall of '67. He was just terrific in the conference; went to every meeting and sat there, did a terrific job.

HACKMAN: Do you remember what his impression was of Shriver and the way he got the program underway in '65?

EDELMAN: No, except I think it was true that he never was very hot on Shriver. I never heard him complain particularly about Shriver.

HACKMAN: Anyone else at OEO that he was particularly close to, or he finds it easier to work with than he does...?

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EDELMAN: But of course, Boone and Conway left OEO very early. They were his two best friends. They were his two best friends. The people who came in after that in the community aciton area, Ted Berry, Bosman and so on, were such really awful guys that it was very hard to relate to them anyway.

We related to Edgar Khan because he was a good friend of Adam's and mine. For instance, in '67 when the bill was being marked up, I gave the draft to Edgar Khan. He went over it with me and gave me a lot of suggestions. There was really a question of who you would talk to in that agency when you wanted something. We didn't have many pals in that agency.

HACKMAN: What about old Bernie Boutin [Bernard L. Boutin]?

EDELMAN: Yes, of course he wasn't there very long.

HACKMAN: And Harding....

EDELMAN: And Harding [Bertram M. Harding] was just a nice fellow but a bureaucrat. Bernie Boutin was considered a friend

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by Kennedy. His role was so tied. The reason he was there was because he was being a political kind of scout for Johnson. So, he wasn't really someone who could do much for us.

I'm looking at a speech that Kennedy gave on the floor of the Senate on October 3, 1966, in which he kind of sums up—this is when the 1966 reenactment of the program was on the floor—what he had done. He talks about the fact that the committee had added 746 million dollars to the Administration request, which was 196 million for NYC [Neighborhood Youth Corps] and 150 million for special impact. Remember that we got a 25 million dollar approriation out of that 150 million. Also 200 million more for Head Start, 100 million more for neighborhood health centers, and 100 million more for community action. So, he had made a major effort.

I'm just looking for things about community action here which give some sense. By this time, if you look at this, he's already very heavy on jobs by the fall of '66. The transformation is quite complete by that time. There is a lot of stuff on jobs. I guess Adam deserves a lot of the credit for that.

He doesn't talk much about community action as such. He talks about priorities. He talks about spending; all the money that we spent on free rifle ammunition to gun clubs and 210 thousand dollars to promote the sale of cigarettes in three Asian countries alone. There isn't much in here about community action in a kind of an abstract non-programmatic way. Maybe that's just because he and Adam working together didn't feel that that was the most attractive thing to go into.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any significant shift in his mind about the concept of community action, whether it could work?

EDELMAN: Not explicitly. I think what happened in his mind as part of the shift was, (1) if you had asked him in 1965 as between education and community action what was more important, he would have said, "Education." He shifted from education to jobs as priorities and always sort of kept community action as a part of a strategy, but always of lesser priority. In other words, he was never really hot on that as being the major thing that you put your time, your money, and your effort into.

So, I don't think he went through any particular change about it to become less optimistic. I think that he always had it in a kind of secondary position. In terms of his own efforts about the poverty program he was.... The special impact thing, his discussion later on in 1967 or an emergency jobs program he was much more oriented to those aspects of dealing with poverty—jobs for people, ghetto economic development, bringing the private sector in, those kind of things.

I think that probably when you get down to it, he would have said, as he became more sophisticated, that powerlessness will be dealt with more by providing economic security, particularly through jobs to people, than it will be their efforts to make demands on City Hall.

HACKMAN: You said he was speaking, even in late ’64, of pushing people to get their CAA’s [Community Action Agencies] set up. How much then did the Senate office focus on this, and are there any local situations where you really get into, in depth, trying to get something going or settling issues within a community?

EDELMAN: Well, not very much. We were involved from time to time in the Syracuse situation later on—that would have been ’66 or ’67—where there was a tremendous fight. We tried to mediate. There was question of whether we would take the Senate hearings there in ’67, the same road show that went to Mississippi and New Mexico, and so on.

But Barbara Coleman [Barbara J. Coleman] did most of the work on servicing the efforts to get Federal program

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money, the efforts of various communities. I did not follow that on a day-to-day basis. She was enormously helpful to communities in expediting their Federal grant applications and so on. Included among those would have been things under the poverty program, but they were also water and sewer and anything else that was available in the Federal government.

HACKMAN: What about the Harlem program, which is the controversial one? Do you remember ever being called upon to...?

EDELMAN: Yes, but basically I never got into it in a very heavy way. At one point, in fact at a number of points, there was a dispute over whether there would be legal services and so on. He would make statements about that, in terms of trying to get the darn thing moving. So, he did some things of that kind. But, in general, you’d get into a local dispute and you’d just get—unless there’s a clear right and a clear wrong, which wasn’t very often the case—into trouble. And you can’t help too much as an outsider anyway.

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HACKMAN: Okay, switching to something else: How does he get into the issue of walnut logs? A point that is a long away from...

EDELMAN: The only reason I wanted to talk about that is that I think it was a mistake, actually. But somebody, who was on one side or the other—and it makes absolutely no difference—I believe it was the people who wanted to export the quotas. It was the domestic manufacturers of pianos and whatever else you use walnut veneer for, came to us—there is a piano company in the State of New York, Baldwin or somebody—

and said, “They are ruining us. We can’t get our walnut logs. These hearings are going on. Couldn’t the Senator make a statement?”

So, I think I just went to him and said this had happened and he probably just said, “Fine.” So, we submitted a little statement to the committee and didn’t think any more about it.

The reason why I wanted to raise the issue is to make the point that there is no such thing as an issue that

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has only one side to it. Because, sure enough, after we made the statement for the committee for the hearing record—the Senator didn’t go and appear personally; I mean, it’s so minor that he just submitted that statement—who do I hear from but the walnut log exporters? Thy of course, are also based in New York, as all exporters are partly based in New York. They came to us and said, “How could you be in favor of an export quota? You’re supposed to be a free trader,” so on and so forth. It was such a silly, peripheral kind of thing; we shouldn’t have messed with it at all. But anyway we did, and the reason why I wanted to mention it is just to show the fact that you always had two sides.

Now, it’s true that there were certain trade issues—if you’re from New York, you’re supposed to be a free trade Senator. I spent more time than I should have, perhaps, on the issue of imported rubber footwear because they had a good lawyer in Washington who used to bother me and I was very conscientious about

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trying to return people’s phone calls. The pressure that we put on the Treasury Department helped get the situation on importing rubber footwear—which is essentially sneakers, tennis shoes, and rubbers—eased.

Now, that was an issue where the New York side was clearly on the side of the importers. I suppose, servicing our constituency, we had some obligation. In the great scheme of things’ I don’t know how much good we really did.

On the other hand, when it came to cotton textiles, David Dubinsky sent his lady around, who was always a pain. Her name evades me for, perhaps, Freudian reasons—Evelyn Dubrow? Who was just a pain. They wanted us to co-sponsor a Hollings [Ernest F. Hollings] resolution on the cotton textiles, which they said was just to get some support to get a worldwide agreement rationalizing, as had been done with the artificial textiles. We co-sponsored that, and that was a serious mistake. We never should have, because a New York Senator should be clean, absolutely

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clean, since there are very few Senators who are clean free traders. Once you get into that then somebody always says, “Well, you made an exception for them, why can’t you do it for us?”

HACKMAN: Does he see many lobbyists himself or do they almost always deal with you people?

EDELMAN: He doesn't see too many lobbyists. We don't see very many lobbyists. The traditional kind of lobbyists; the greasier kind of lobbyist, just doesn't come around. I suppose they know that, first of all he has no need for their campaign contributions. I suppose in relation to the Presidency he might need it, but he would never ask for it or want it. They have no leverage on him, and essentially it's fairly axiomatic that he's usually on the other side from anybody who represents a special interest, fairly axiomatic.

So, you get them coming around from time to time, but the kinds of special interests who get the Senator who needs the money to sponsor legislation or do some minor item of dirty work for them, we never saw those.

HACKMAN: There aren't any instances when he just refuses

to see someone because he thinks they're coming for those....

EDELMAN: Oh, he refuses to see people all the time because he just feels it isn't important enough and that we can deal with it. Undoubtedly, there are some instances like that. I would think that there are probably times when Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman] or somebody that's a Kennedy person called him up with one of those and he'd have to deal with it, but generally speaking, we just weren't very much bothered with that. I think we were quite lucky.

As I say, the imported rubber footwear people didn't hesitate, but then they really had a legitimate case. We had another problem with watches that went on all the time, the import quota or whatever the hell it was on Swiss watch movements. That one kept coming up from time to time.

The trade area is one where we saw special interests—had to. But, oh gosh, what would be some other examples? I suppose when there was going to be a question on regulation, no lobbyist against truth in lending ever dared

show up in our office. No lobbyist against truth in packaging. They all sent their letters in and all that. We had letters from all the food manufacturers and everything else, but I don't ever recall the food industry even bothering to send its lobbyist into see us, because what chance did they have of getting anything out of us?

HACKMAN: Did he ever talk about someone like Myer Feldman who was, I guess, a Kennedy man who then on some issues goes around to the other side, or even

Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorenson] in some instances? Or does he talk about someone like Burke Marshall who goes to work for IBM [International Business Machines]?

EDELMAN: No, he never says anything like that. I never heard him make a derogatory comment about somebody who was a clear Kennedy person. That gets into that loyalty stuff. Whatever feelings and judgments he had, he would keep to himself.

The closest it ever came was that once we had a conversation that was rather uncomfortable about whether Nick Katzenbach was a good Attorney General or not, because Katzenbach had got into that fight with

Bazelon [David L. Bazelon] over the right to question witnesses during the pre-arraignment period, which had been a foolish fight. Katzenbach had come off very badly. There were two or three other things where Katzenbach... I don't remember what they were. Maybe it was the question of Voting Rights Act enforcement. Even though Kennedy didn't get into that much, I think perhaps there was some documentation of where registrars were not in some places where they ought to have been. I don't remember all of the things, but I remember the conversation in which he said, "Gee, Nick isn't really...." or, "what do you think? Nick isn't really doing all the things he ought to be doing, is he?" That was the extent of it. That was even on a policy ground.

Then there might be somebody like Bob Wood [Robert C. Wood] in HUD [Housing Urban Development]. He'd ask whether Bob Wood was friendly or not on the questions that we were dealing with him about. But that was a direct adversary, direct negotiating kind of relationship. If it was, "why is Ted Sorensen representing General Motors?" I never

heard him say a word about that.

HACKMAN: Something left from last time you talked about the handicapped hearings and Frank Moore [Frank C. Moore]. You said, "We had this guy Frank Moore who was going to do the handicapped hearings." How would something like that come about? Were there other instances when someone was sort of going to do hearings for you? What did that mean?

EDELMAN: Well, every year we were entitled to a fellow from the American Political Science Association [APSA]. In 1965, it had been Wendell Pigman who stayed in and came on the staff. In 1966 we were interviewing various people. We had a number of thoughts about things that the Senator might get into. I don't remember how the thought on the hearings on the programs for the handicapped had come up. It was just floating around the office as something he'd like to do sometime. This fellow came into the office whose background was that he was a psychologist who was particularly an expert on vocational rehabilitation. I said

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to the Senator, “Now, I’ve talked to six or seven people about who’s going to be our APSA fellow. There is this one who if we got him could work on these hearings. I’ve talked to the Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] subcommittee and they would let you be the acting chairman of the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization to hold those hearings.” He said, “Fine, let’s take that fellow and get him working.” That was the way it happened.

So, Frank came on for the specific purpose of being there for his six months or four months or whatever and to get as far along in those hearings as we could get in that time.

Then I got the bright idea—LSD was just coming to be a big thing at that time—that we should start out, to give ourselves experience and get a little publicity, with a quickie on LSD, which we did. Frank Moore and I worked it up, which wasn’t that bad for a two-days series of hearings, and it had some educative value. The minute we jumped into it, of course, Senator Dodd announced that he was holding hearings on the same subject—always a difficult man, Senator

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Dodd, and again, that enigmatic Carl Perian who was so friendly and at the same time would hustle us out of our last nickel if he thought it was in his interest to do so.

So, we had the two days of hearings of LSD. We had Dr. Yolles [Stanley F. Yolles] and we had people who came in from all over the country to testify. We scored a minor coup in getting the government to let the Sandoz Company [Sandoz Pharmaceuticals Company] start manufacturing LSD again for experimental purposes, because in the panic that had been cut off completely. Those psychologists and other researchers who were doing legitimate research with LSD had their supply cut off. So, we at least accomplished that.

Then Frank started building toward more detailed hearings. Since his interest was vocational rehabilitation, he started doing it around vocational rehabilitation rather than other kinds of handicaps. Essentially, unfortunately, he built a very boring set of hearings. They were substantively good; they showed how vocational rehab people never refer anybody to the employment service and

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never talk to the employment service. It could have, if one had had the patience, really uncovered the failure of whole large segment of delivering services to handicapped people. Howard Rusk came down and testified and so on.

But the Senator, somehow never really got interested in it. He would never look at the stuff for the hearings until the morning of the thing and finally Frank Moore left in the fall of ’66 and we just never came back to the subject again. So, there’s a volume of hearings that exists that's got a lot of interesting information in it, but nobody really picked up on it. We didn't have enough of an interest in Frank Moore to hire him and keep him.

It's one of those things that if I knew then what I know now kind of, I'd say to myself.... Because the whole way in which services get to handicapped children in this society, including the mentally retarded and so on, is a disaster. In a way, we knew that then. We listened to a testimony from Willard Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz], I remember,

about how the whole way in which they dealt with Selective Service rejectees was a disaster. I guess the problem was that the field was very big and that Frank Moore was not picking out the more exciting aspects of it. So, the Senator lost interest, which was too bad.

HACKMAN: The last topic which I have is Presidential inability. I guess, just how did you get into it?

EDELMAN: Well, again, remembering that in '65 I was much more attuned to legal and constitutional type issues, the amendment was coming along. It was on the floor and going to be acted on; there wasn't much question about it. That's one where Burke Marshall, by the way, played some role, too.

HACKMAN: He writes a letter to Joe Kraft [Joseph Kraft] for one thing—I don't if Kraft ever had a column on it—but about this Wilson [Woodrow Wilson]-Lansing [Robert Lansing] land thing.

EDELMAN: I went and saw Allen Dulles [Allen W. Dulles] who was the keeper of Lansing's papers or had access to them. Allen Dulles was very nice and very helpful. The basic thing was that Lansing got

fired by Wilson because Wilson in his illness had gotten very paranoid and thought that Lansing was conspiring against him. In fact, Wilson was being run by Mrs. Wilson [Edith Bolling Gait Wilson] and Colonel House [Edward M. House]. In retrospect, it was a serious question as to whether he should have been disabled, but it raised the spector since what the amendment provided was that the Cabinet could get together and declare that the President was disabled and, therefore, the Vice President would be acting. It raised the spector that a paranoid President would get wind of that and try to fire the Cabinet, before they could fire him, and put in people who were safer for him. Then you get into a constitutional crisis. Who could act? Would the deputies who become acting until the man, a new man, is confirmed act that time? What if it was when Congress was out of session and he'd be able to make recess appointments? What would that do to it?

So, first we tried to—we never really

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tried to hold up on passage of the amendment. What we did try to do, and did do, was get some exchanges with Bayh where we clarified some of these matters on the floor. Burke was helpful in framing some of those questions and answers. Of course, I did some of that myself. I think we did make some different in terms of getting some of those technical issues about what would happen in the case the various hypotheticals about the President firing the Cabinet and so on.

Then, in addition to that, there was the thing which I never came back to and which someone ought to. There was an attorney named Richard Hanson in Nebraska who kept writing to us about it. He was very interested in it. Somebody ought to introduce legislation. The amendment leaves open the possibility that the Congress can provide for a different way of determination of the President's disability, involuntary disability. Nobody's ever introduced legislation on that, but somebody really ought to.

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HACKMAN: Yes, I know in the memo that Hanson writes to you it seems that he feels that you people are seriously considering offering an amendment in '66. Do you remember why that wasn't offered for the alternative to set up the process whereby a different body could be...?

EDELMAN: Just because we didn't get to it, a matter of priorities. It was one of those things that I always had on my list to do sometime and never got to.

HACKMAN: Any reluctance at all on Senator Kennedy's part to co-sponsor this when, I think, Bayh makes the request as early as December of '64, maybe, right after the election?

EDELMAN: I don't remember. As I say, I don't remember the specific way in which Kennedy got to thinking about all of these matters. But if you look back to the debate on the floor in '65, when it was going through, he engaged in some extremely intelligent and sophisticated hypothetical making as to what the problems could be. He was very personally and privately concerned about it because his point was that

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during the Cuban missile crisis various people, whom he did not wish to name, had gone to pieces.

This was another hypothetical: Suppose in the crisis where the President, who is of sound mind, is going to make a very difficult decision which is controversial and which could involve the nation in war, hostilities, loss of life, and so on. What if some timid Cabinet members got together and said, "We just can't allow this to happen. Let us say that the President is really disabled and let us take over from him." He was very concerned about that,

that by not a too complex extension of the facts of the Cuban missile crisis that indeed could happen, that there were enough people whose minds sort of got out of joint from the pressure and the nervous-making of that whole issue that indeed it wouldn’t have taken very much more to have seen them begin to think really in a sort of temporarily unbalanced way about unseating the President. So, that’s why he was so terribly concerned.

HACKMAN: Did he ever talk about how the people were on the missile crisis?

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EDELMAN: No, no.

HACKMAN: Okay, a couple of other things that are sort of not related, but.... What can you remember about his reading habits in ’65 as you became acquainted with him? How much outside reading did he do on things that weren’t directly related to the Senate?

EDELMAN: That’s hard to recall. He usually always carried a book around with him and liked history: Melbourne’s [Viscount William Lamb Melbourne] biography of Lord Cecil [David Cecil]—or is it Lord Cecil’s biography of Melbourne?

HACKMAN: I don’t know British history, either.

EDELMAN: One of the two. And who is the...?

HACKMAN: Lord Tweedsmuir [Baron John Buchan Tweedsmuir]?

EDELMAN: Yes, very big on that. He had read Edith Hamilton many times. He would carry that book around with him and reread it.

HACKMAN: Why?

EDELMAN: Liked it. It was inspirational. It gave him some sense of guidance. He was very fond of the thoughts in there and would quote them. I just think that he liked to go back and refuel himself with it. The same thing with Camus [Albert Camus], later on, he would. Particularly *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*—whatever he would go back and reread.

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HACKMAN: Can you remember giving him things that he particularly liked or that he wouldn’t read?

EDELMAN: Yes, he liked Robert Coles’ *Children of Crisis*. That was later on. That was, I believe, in ’67 that that came out. I gave that to him. Bob Coles sent to him an autographed copy, but I called it to his attention and he read it and liked it. He admired Bob Coles very much. From time to time there would be others, I don’t specifically recall right now. Adam was much bigger on giving him things to read, and he used to get very sore because Adam would give him things that he thought were too heavy, even though in his own picking of things to read, he picked perfectly heavy things.

He reread Samuel Elliot Morison’s *History of the American People* that came out sometime during there—you know, that sort of one volume history. He picked that up at an airport once when I was with him and read it.

He liked history mostly. The Greeks he liked very much. He’d read all the Greek plays as well.

HACKMAN: What do we have left to talk about in ’65? The HUD bill, the HUD legislation, wasn’t that in ’65?

EDELMAN: Yes, there are a few things which I can just go through briefly. The main thing on education which we’ve adverted to a couple of times is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act where he participated so heavily in the hearings where we drafted, Adam drafted, an an amendment that was really a thing that was central to his concern about testing, making sure that the way in which the money had been spent which be evaluated by testing the children in some way. This was never really implemented, but it was enacted on the House side. In some sense we’re only now finally getting around to that with some of the recent studies that have been done about where the Title I money goes.

To the housing bill of ’65 he got added an amendment which would allow unused public housing quotas in one city to be reassigned to another one.

Medicare he got added into an amendment which

was for the benefit of New York that allowed them to keep higher quality standards in hospitals then the American Hospital Association standards.

Cigarettes we got into in ’65. I think I described in an earlier conversation how my friend the lawyer got onto making him give the testimony. Then the bill came to the floor and he stood up with Maurine Neuberger [Maurice B. Neuberger] in late May of ’65 and tried to knock out the three and a half year moratorium on FTC [Federal Trade Commission] authority to get into the field to impose a band on a requirement that there be a warning in that advertising. He lost that; I think, he got a total of 28 votes for it. So, that was an effort he made in ’65.

Then we don’t really come back to it again until ’67. In ’66, he inserts a couple of things into the record to indicate his continuing interest but in ’67 he makes a speech before the World Council on Smoking and Health [World Conference on Smoking and Health]. He puts in the bills. He gets into a flurry of real controversy and negotiation

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with the cigarette companies which then gets dropped in the campaign of ’68; but we can talk about the ’67 part of it later.

HACKMAN: One thing I recall, is which we didn’t talk about, is the March 6th statement on Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

EDELMAN: May 6th.

HACKMAN: May 6th, I’m sorry. Can you remember the direct....

EDELMAN: Yes, well, of course, that’s rather important because that’s the first time. I remember peace groups coming into the office in early ’65 and my not knowing what to say to them because the Senator had been so silent, even to us personally. They were being rather mean about it, which they, retrospectly, had every right to be. But my thinking at the time—remember that my own political revolution is only beginning—was that they were a little bit impolite.

So, it was very important, and I was surprised and delighted, of course, that he stood up. He worked with Arthur Schlesinger primarily in that draft. Adam and I had nothing to do with it.

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Again, I emphasize that that’s the kind of indication that shows that he was really not completely accepting of Adam and me yet at that point. It was sometime later in the year that we begin to evolve into having some more firm relationship with him: Maybe even around the end of the year around those speeches that I talked about before, because we certainly participated very heavily in the process that led to and the process after the power and responsibility speech of February 1966.

So, all I really know is that he was with Arthur Schlesinger that morning; that there was going to be a debate on the floor about, I believe, the supplemental appropriation; and that all of a sudden he had a statement that was mimeographed and he got up and give it. He said a short amount about the Dominican Republic. Which way does it go? He begins about the war doesn’t he?

HACKMAN: Right, it was the Vietnam first.

EDELMAN: It was Vietnam first—very short, but very pithy, very to the point—saying, “There are only three possibilities: Get out; that’s wrong. Win; can’t do that.” Which was an important insight at the time. “Can’t bomb our way to winning. Or negotiating; we ought to damn well get started

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negotiating," and making, as he said, sort of euphemistically, "more of an effort in the diplomatic, economic, and political areas than we are, and less in the military." Yes, I was impressed with that.

Well, then came—these were the other things that were going on that were more Adam's area in '65—the first nuclear proliferation speech which Adam worked on and which there was help from Roz Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric] and a little bit from Foster [William C. Foster]. I don't know who else. I guess Carl Kaysen. There was the second speech later in the year on the same subject, and the International Policy Academy speech only July 9th of 1965 was quite important, which Adam also worked on. So, you have some evolution going on, some interest in foreign policy that is developing from the first four months of complete silence on foreign policy then only really that little statement in that indirect speech in July on Vietnam, then he begins talking about it more, talking about the Christmas truce in late '65. He gets to the full-blown speech in early '66.

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Another major issue in '65 that he worked on was water. There was a tremendous water shortage in New York, as you recall, and again the thing about being a good Senator from New York. Wendell Pigman worked on that. He gave two very detailed speeches about the water shortage which were extremely impressive. One of them was scheduled the day after Adam's anniversary. The draft was unsatisfactory. Poor Jane [Jane Walinsky]! Adam and I stayed up all night rewriting it for which we were not too grateful to Wendell Pigman.

But they were good speeches, and he did begin from that—the water shortage ended and he never went back to that—an interest that stayed on water pollution, which Wendell always worked on. He would go to the various conferences about Lake Erie and the Hudson River. He was, indeed, very responsibility for focusing interest, particularly on the Hudson River. Lake Erie, the interest had been focused by others, though he helped. He would take tours around New York harbor to comment on

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how polluted it was.

Then he also got interested in air pollution, enough so you could say he contributed something in that field.

I've talked a couple of times about the interest in planning and rural development in '65. Have I gone into any detail about Orville Freeman?

HACKMAN: No.

EDELMAN: Let me do that then. Freeman, I think, had come to him. He was having trouble with the rural community development ideas. Jamie Whitten [Jamie

L. Whitten] didn't like it, was slicing all the money out. He thought that if he could make an alliance with some urban Senators about it, he might get some help. Kennedy was his friend. I worked closely with a fellow named Jim Thornton. For a total of over a year we were in the process of setting up a trip for Kennedy and Freeman around New York State that never, in fact, happened.

In anticipation of that trip, the Agriculture Department set up three experimental projects—one centered around the Extension Service [Federal Extension Service], one

centered around the Farmers' Home Administration, one centered around the Soil Conservation Service—in three multi-county areas in New York—one around Syracuse, one around Binghamton, and one in the Catskills—each of which was directed to multi-county planning and rural development.

The Syracuse one was the Extension Service, and it was an urban-rural kind of thing, just a general urban-rural fringe planning and working together to make sure that you don't get suburban sprawl and that the green lands are preserved and so on.

The Catskill one was around housing, multi-county effort to get better rural housing. The Binghamton one was around the special programs of the Soil Conservation Service in helping to take land out of cultivation and create various things, recreational facilities and so on.

They really did make a special effort about these things. They were always giving us opportunities to make announcements that we'd gotten this done and we'd gotten that

done. I assumed that Freeman was playing both ends against the middle, preserving his friendship with Kennedy for the future, and at the same time probably he was protecting his own interest, as I said, with the Whittens and so on—or as against the Whittens, really, those kinds of people.

So I at one point made a tour myself with Jim Thornton of a number of areas. Indeed, the first time I ever came in direct contact with poverty was on that trip. We went into a shack that was situated on the beautiful rolling hills in the Appalachia area around Olean. It was a shack that could have been in Mississippi or Eastern Kentucky—a falling down, wood, long since painted thing where you had that unmistakable stench that's associated with housing that's rotting away. That was the first time I'd ever smelled that. It made a rather strong impression on me. I couldn't quite see why there was the stench as it was quite clean inside and the mother was dressed rather nicely and so on. That's what

happens when that kind of a house falls apart. There is nothing you can do to fix it except get into a new house.

That was what all the speeches were on if you look back—the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce and the Long Island this and the greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. There were six or seven speeches like that—the New York County Association and so on. But that's an effort—you could make that speech ten years from now and twenty years from now and it'd still be—you know, that's a thing that's hard to deal with. He was interested in that, it's just that other things took him away.

The New Haven Railroad [New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad] we've talked about to some extent. We stayed with that throughout the course of '65 and really until Penn Central [Penn Central Transportation Company] merger went through and the New Haven Railroad included, we would make a statement whenever there was an event on it.

Veterans' hospitals. We've talked about the Cold War G.I. bill which he spent some time working on during the course of that year. The Willowbrook [State School for Mental Defectives] situation which he got into and really made a major different on getting those conditions changed at Willowbrook and Rome State [School for Mental Defectives] Hospital and some of the other facilities for the mentally retarded. So, those are some of the things, I think, he was involved in in 1965.

HACKMAN: What are the things in '66 that you personally play a major role in that we should talk about next time?

EDELMAN: Well, we had the subway strike at the beginning of '66 which I dabbled in—we dabbled in together. We have Social Security legislation early in '66 that gets introduced. We have the whole Medicaid controversy which goes on through the spring of '66. We have the minimum wage bill and the migrant labor parts of minimum wage which go in the summer of '66. We have the trip to Delano, to California in March of '66. Those handicap hearings and the LSD hearings are in '66. The Levitt Commission on Revenue Sharing begins in '66. Those, I guess, are the main things that I recall. I'll go through my stuff, but...

HACKMAN: You didn't get involved at all in the....

EDELMAN: Oh, nursing home legislation is another one.

HACKMAN: Beame [Abraham D. Beame]-Lindsay [John V. Lindsay] thing, did you?

EDELMAN: Yes, I did. I was up in New York for three weeks in the fall of '65 on the Beame campaign.

HACKMAN: I thought it was just the O'Connor-O'Connell....

EDELMAN: No, no. He sent me up there in the fall of ’65 as well for the last three weeks of the campaign. I helped. I’ve repressed it, but I helped by putting together some advertising. Oh, yes, let’s take a minute on that.

I was the Senator’s liaison. They wanted him to make some commercials with Beame. I guess, you can get some sense that there is some feeling of trust developing at that point because at that point I’m the person who makes the arrangements. I go around with him. Now, that’s something that would have, simply not have occurred as late as July or August. In fact, I think I was a little in the doghouse in July, at least in June and July, as a result of the imbroglio over the narcotics legislation. My recollection is that from—now, I may be exaggerating—June

6th when we introduced the narcotics legislation until the middle of July when we won the Puerto Rican amendment, I was in the doghouse. The Puerto Rican amendment sort of rested me.

Then we mentioned the voter registration thing that I organized that we did in September of ’65, which was rather successful.

But one day we went to a studio to tape some commercials with Abe Beame. Beame had gone through a lot of stuff about how he had been a poor immigrant boy and all this stuff—I’d say fairly attractive. Then the Senator said, “Okay, now Abe, I’m going to ask you why you want to be mayor.” Beame said, “What should I say?” So, the Senator paused and then told him what he ought to say. On the way out, they were walking out together and Beame said, “Senator, thank you very much for coming and doing this with me. I really know better now why I want to be mayor.”

Then I remember sitting in Schrafts having breakfast with the Senator and Tom [Thomas M.C. Johnston], and his asking us who we would vote for. Tom said frankly

he would vote for Lindsey. I said I guess I would vote for Beame but only because I’d been working on the damn thing.

Steve [Stephen E. Smith] was involved in it and Dall Twego was the advertising agency. I don’t remember what else I did during those three weeks, but I was there.

HACKMAN: What did Smith do? Was his role very quiet?

EDELMAN: Yes, just giving advice, what appearances should be made, what issues should he try to say more about, what kind of television spots should be made and used. We spent a lot of time on the television spots, going to screenings of them and tapings of them and so on. I spent quite a bit of time on that.

HACKMAN: What kinds of things does he look to Steve Smith for, particularly for advice on?

EDELMAN: You know, I don't know that. I suppose again a lot of different things, but I would think specifically political and probably family financial too, which I would never know about.

He must have talked to him about Manchester [William Manchester] and all that stuff, too.

One other thing in the fall of '65 which I might go into. It was during a period of time in which, since I was up in New York anyway, I did a number of speeches. There was one to the American Friends of the Hebrew University about Israel. There was another one to somebody else which Adam got very angry at. It had a bunch of stuff about Lin Piao who the Senator was very fond of, and at the time I didn't understand why it was so awful to say that Lin Piao had said that there was going to be urban areas of the world against rural areas of the world. Of course, it was seizing on only one side of the things that the Chinese had said, but I was still acquiring my sophistication at the time, shall we say.

One time I came down with the speech draft for the next day and went over to Teddy's house with it. It was the night before the Judge Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] thing was going to come up on the floor. We sat through an entire evening of "Do we have the votes?" and, "What is Claiborne Pell going to do, and what is Joe Tydings

going to do?" Calling up Senators, and, really, just a long strategy session of, "Do we have the votes, or do we not have the votes?"

Adam was there and I was there because we had both gone with speech drafts that we been working on, and the two Senators. I don't know who else was around; John Tunney [John V. Tunney] may have been around. At the end of the evening Milton Gwirtzman [Milton S. Gwirtzman] walked in with a speech draft. I guess Dave Burke [David W. Burke] was around—Teddy's people.

Milton Gwirtzman walked in with a speech draft. Lo and behold, it was handed around. What it said was, "And so I'm asking that the nomination be recommitted to committee." The whole evening had been sort of a ploy to work us up to this. Of course, we all said, "Well, now, that's right. Isn't that good?" Adam and I got such a big kick out of it. Clearly, our Senator had gotten his brother out of the mess.

You should have seen it the next day Joe Tydings, if you remember, was going to make his break with the Kennedys and prove he was an independent fellow. Of course, they were just.... Oh, they were so pissed off at him, even though he was absolutely right. They just felt that he owed them more. He had his speech in his hand, ready to stand up and say, “It’s a matter of conscience. I must oppose this nomination. This man isn’t qualified.”

They knew he was going to do it, so Teddy got up and gave his speech asking that it be recommitted. You could just see Joe Tydings’ face just fall, fall, and fall further, and jamming his speech into his pocket and just with his head between shoulders, go limping, trailing out of the Senate chamber. That was one episode in there.

Then another thing that I did in that fall of ’65 was that the Senator had made these arrangements to go to Latin America and was taking Adam with him because by this time Adam was pretty confirmed as the sort of major speech writer of the two of us. Also, he was pretty confirmed in the foreign affairs area where I was pretty much working on domestic affairs things. So, I think he felt a little badly that he wasn’t taking me with him. I guess this was the day after the election in New York.

I was just out at his house in the morning to talk to him about something or other—maybe to give him some speech drafts for California where he was going later that day for a dinner for George Brown [George E. Brown, Jr.] and Gus Hawkins [Augustus F. Hawkins], and Ed Roybal [Edward R. Roybal]. He said, “Why don’t you come up to West Virginia with me?” Somebody had brought in a plane for him so it wasn’t going to cost him anything which was typical. So, I said, “Fine, that’s nice.”

I went up, and on the way I was trying in a very hesitant and modest way to suggest to him he probably needed someone to take to California with him, too. Finally he said, “Well, if the dinner people will pay for another person to come out, you can come.” So, I got on the phone when we were up in West Virginia and asked Joe Dolan or Angie [Angela M. Novello] to check that. The answer came back, “Sure, if he needs another aide.” So, I called my wife and had a bag packed and delivered to the Baltimore airport.

We went out to California, which was nice

for me and turned out to be rather important because he went out—I have the timing mixed a little in my mind. I guess we went.... Well, we must have gotten there that evening, and I don’t remember what we did.

But in any event, the next morning we had a press conference. That’s when the fellow asked him if he would give blood to the Vietcong. He, said, “Yes, I would.” I don’t know that on the first time around he said anything else. The transcript of that, of course, is available. But then Carl Greenberg of the *Los Angeles Times*, who is a very good political reporter and was a plan knew that that was going to be a disaster so he came back to it. He said, “Senator,” as impartially as he could. He didn’t say, “Did you really mean,” but “Could you expand on that?” Kennedy—something clicked—said, “Well, I would do it solely for humanitarian reasons, only on the basis that did not contravene the laws of the United States, and only through an international agency, such as the Red Cross.”

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From that time on, through the rest of the day I ended up chasing the story. We had Wes Barthelmes [A. Wesley Barthelmes, Jr.] as the press secretary, at that point. Poor Wes is a lovely fellow, but he just wasn't very heavy and none of us relied on him. So, I ended up the rest of the day calling the AP [Associated Press] and the UPI [United International Press] and calling Huntley [Chester Robert Huntley] and Brinkley [David Brinkley] and saying, "Please, he didn't mean it. What he said was...."

But, he gave a speech on student dissent at the University of Southern California which was, when you look back to it now, such a kind of simple-minded approach. I mean, again, I'm a little ashamed of myself, although it said, "You've got a right to dissent but if you dissent, dissent and listen to the other side as well." But it was so weak in terms of saying anything about Vietnam policy. It was just such a kind of namby-pamby speech.

Then, he gave a reprise of his nuclear proliferation speech at town hall in Los Angeles at noon. Meanwhile, as I said, at everyone of those stops I'm out on the town pursuing the story.

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Then, we went out to Watts in the afternoon, which was very interesting. Again, just referring to my own development with him, I suppose that these times that we spent together along were some of the indications that there was some trust developing. That's where we saw the man who said, "Flustration."

But, we went around to various—to the Operation Bootstap and to various teenage centers. We went out and saw the Watts Towers, which he had never heard of. I was very proud because I had read Bud Trillins' [Calvin Trillins] piece in the *New Yorker* about the Watts Towers so I knew about them.

Of course, we went down 103rd Street and up and down Central Avenue and saw all the burned out places. At that time, that seemed liked a very unusual thing. Now, all you have to do is go over to 9th Street or 7th Street or 14th Street and it's right there. At that time, it was like seeing a war torn area in one's own country for the first time.

We went to the office of the local news

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paper in Watts, and there, in 1965 in the heart of Watts, was a big "Robert Kennedy for President" poster, which he got a kick out of and which kind of surprised me a little.

We got back to the hotel, the Ambassador—looking, back to that is sort of sad—and Billy Williams [William J. Williams], who was Gus Hawkins' AA [Administrative Assistant] confronted him in the lobby and said, "Senator, you went into Watts this afternoon and didn't tell us." Kennedy had heard in the course of this visit various people complaining that Gus Hawkins never serviced them and was never there—and hadn't been there since the riots, indeed, some people said; I don't know if that was true. Kennedy, in front of fifteen people standing around, said, "when was the last time your boss was there?" Billy Williams was rather unhappy.

Well, then he gave a speech that night. At the end, we drove him out to a plane. He was going down to fly to Palm Springs. So must be compressing two days into one because sometime in there he also taped a sort of local "Meet the Press" type show out at the NBC [National Broadcasting Company] studios at Burbank. That by the way, was the first time he met

Andy Williams, which Andy Williams recounts in an article in *Ladies Home Journal*. He said to me, "Gee, I didn't know Andy William is taping a show." I don't know how he knew that. He said, "Let's go by and see him. We like his show." So, I was in on the beginning of that.

The other thing that happened was the Barney Ross [George H. Ross]—this is indicative of some of the real beauty of the man—had gotten into a terrible motorcycle accident that day. Somehow, somebody reached us with word of the fact that he had, and got a message to us. I got on the phone in somebody's dressing room for the Andy Williams' Show and placed a call to McNamara [Robert S. McNamara]. I got McNamara on the phone in about ten seconds. I mean, it was just one of those [knock, knock] things with, of course, Robert Kennedy calling. He asked McNamara to send over the team of surgeons from Walter Reed [Army Hospital] to G.W. Hospital [George Washington University] where Barney Ross was. That was what saved Barney Ross's life. You

know, just the idea that his instinct was absolutely right, to do that and to do it and drop everything else and do it without.... All he knew was that there was a serious accident. He didn't know the extent of the injuries; he just knew there was a lot of broken bones. But the instinct was that you'd better do that I would have said, "Well, Senator, to get Army doctors and so on.... Do you really want to?" But it saved Barney Ross's life. That was just the vignette that I remember.

Then he came back from the Latin American trip. In the meantime I'd been working on the civil rights things as I mentioned. We had a long one of those meetings out at his house about what we were going to do and talked about some of these matters, the kind of speeches he'd be giving, legislation—talked about the Social Security legislation which I was working on at that time. I guess that was about if for 1965.

HACKMAN: It sounds like so much took place. I just can't understand the pace. I don't see

how you could keep up with it.

EDELMAN: I don't know. I mean it just loved it. I loved it and I didn't know any better. I just don't have any answer to that. Adam and I both had such a complete enthrallment with it, an immersement in it, enjoyment of it. Every day was exciting. Looking back on it, it does seem unbelievable that we were able to have some involvement in that many issues. Of course, we used to get—I don't know if I said this before—terribly upset when people would print about that vast team of experts that Kennedy had, that he could call on the brain trust and network and so on because essentially all this stuff Adam and I and, to some extend Wendell, did ourselves.

BEGIN TAPE II SIDE II

These are going to be kind of random recollections because I'm going through a pile of speeches from '65, but they may be helpful to some extent. For example, I come to a statement that he made when Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor] resigned as Ambassador to South Vietnam

on July 8th, 1965. When you remember what a great friend of his Maxwell Taylor was and the fact that Taylor was involved in the policy up through half of '65, it does make it all the more understandable that he was slow to come to criticize it, if full scale criticism by early 1966 constitutes slow. In a way, it's all the more to his credit that he was able to break away from people who were his friends and people whom he deeply respected.

HACKMAN: Was that his own statement? Did he put that together on his own?

EDELMAN: I would think so, yes. It sounds like him. "He played a major role"—that's a typical Robert Kennedy phrase. It's the kind of thing that he would have written himself. It's a very, very glowing statement.

We were talking about the Senate joint resolution on Presidential inability. I find a statement from June 30th where he talks about Lansing. This was a statement on the Senate floor about Lansing, President Wilson, and so on, and the question of the Deputies or Under Secretaries that I mentioned above. I guess there's nothing to add about that.

And the same day was the statement about Gerry Lindgren. Again, you look back at this, "Why did he get into it?" He points out that to prevent the dispute between the AAU and the NCAA from ruining the team that was to represent the U.S. in the Olympics, President Kennedy had to exert considerable pressure to persuade the leaders of the AAU and the NCAA to sit down with General MacArthur [Douglas MacArthur]. You know that he had some tie from the past that made him sit up and take notice when the issue came up.

Home rule, we haven't talked about which in 1965 was a very live issue. The 89th Congress was our best chance to enact home rule, and we flubbed it. He was on the District of Columbia Committee. Have I talked about why he chose that?

HACKMAN: Not why, you just....

EDELMAN: He had asked to be on it because he had been very interested in D.C. affairs. He had been responsible for getting the John F. Kennedy playground going. He had gone

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around and visited schools, urging kids not to drop out. There's a very beautiful scene when he left as Attorney General and the kids came and gave him whatever it was and told him how they loved him. So he asked to be on the D.C. Committee and was, I would say, reasonably conscientious about it.

In connection with the home rule bill he succeeded in amending it in committee to add at large membership to the council. There was some other thing that we added, but in the long run it made no difference. At the time we thought it was a constructive contribution.

Then the speech that he made on the Senate floor mostly dealt with the question of whether the automatic Federal payment would be in the bill or not. There were people who were for home rule as long as the District didn't automatically get any money to run itself. So, he contributed to that.

I might just continue on the home rule issue.

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As time went on, you remember, the.... Was it in the fall of '66, I think finally that it came to a head or was it the fall of '65?

HACKMAN: I would think that it was '66.

EDELMAN: It was passed in the Senate in the summer of '65 around July 20th. That's when the statement was and that was when it was considered in the Senate.

Then, I believe, it was in September of '66—no, it was September of '65—the House had a discharge petition which is very seldom done. This means that 288 members of the House sign a petition to force a bill out onto the floor. Very strangely, after doing that, they then passed not the administration bill, but the so-called Sisk [Bernice Frederic Sisk] bill, which provided only for the establishment of a Charter Commission [D.C. Charter Board Commission]. That commission would draft a charter and then there would be a vote on the charter. That would be the home rule.

The home rule strategists, who I should point out were entirely white, entirely liberals from the white Northwest section of town, still entertained notions that somehow they would get the Senate home rule version—

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immediate home rule—attached as a ride onto some bill that the House wanted passed and the House would have to take it up and pass it.

In retrospect, that was a major mistake. They would have accepted the Sisk bill and gone from there. We felt that we shouldn't go counter to that, that if we stood up and said, "Let's take the Sisk bill," that we would just be attacked as sellouts. I must say, in retrospect, I wish I had spent more time either focusing on whether we should have gone against them or whether we should have spent more time trying to convince them. Kennedy's attitude basically on that was, "Look, I don't have much time to spend on the District." These are the kind of things that we have to do what they want. The result was that in 1966—after this disaster in the House at the time of the discharge petition—it dragged on and on and on. It never happened. Various efforts were made and blocked one way or another and it never happened.

Then you have the 90th Congress elected which was far less sympathetic. Forty-seven seats were lost.

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Here you had in May '65 he is going down to Fort Bragg to talk to the Green Berets—again, the interesting vestiges of the past.

The water shortage speech which occupied eight full pages in the *Congressional Record* in August of '65. It was really a whopper. It's interesting when you look back on these things, because Senator Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] interrupts him and tells him what a great speech he's making about water and how much he's been interested in water all this time. Senator Anderson [Clinton P. Anderson] interrupts him and says that he's always been very interested in water, too, particularly in desalinization. Senator Mansfield interrupts him and tells him what a great speech it is.

Then Senator Javits walks in and says that he "welcomes Senator Kennedy's effort to the end of improving the water supply." Then he said, "The water problem and the drought in New York have existed for considerable time, for years before I came to the Senate, Certainly before Senator Kennedy came to the Senate. I believe my colleague from New York would not wish it to be understood

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that these are matters of first impressions, that the first we hear of them is this afternoon or that we have not been doing anything about them." That's a typical Javits performance—miffed, got to get his own word in there, and got to be snide and insulting. Then he tells, of course, all the things that he's done, all the things that the State of New York had done, all the things that Nelson Rockefeller is doing. "The junior Senator from New York is very much welcome to participate in the struggle, but it is by no means a matter of first impression. With regard to the matter of the desalinization of water. About a month ago I called attention to the fact that New York City has been very laggard in this matter." So, that's vintage Jack Javits.

The other thing that comes to mind when Senator Jackson and Senator Anderson talk about water and how big they've been, which none of us knew at that time because we were all sort of naïve, was, of course, not only have

they been big on water, but also in terms of what interest they've been representing, the major land owners and other interests in the West, and of course, they're always shafting the Indian—in the forefront of the process of shafting the Indian. But, of course, at that time we were all friends.

HACKMAN: Let me just ask you: Did he ever go back and talk about his whole involvement with the special group for counterinsurgency and his thought on that, his interest in that and how it had come about, what he thought his time passed about its effectiveness?

EDELMAN: Not directly. For a long time—when I say "a long time," at least until the end of '65—his position was sort of a John Paul Vann position. His position was "We can win this thing, we're just doing it badly." Not win militarily, but by use of effective dealing with corruption, land reform, all that stuff, we can really win the hearts and minds of the people—vintage counterinsurgency position.

The speech in February of '66 doesn't really represent a change in that because all—it's a major departure but all that speech says is

an elaboration of what constitutes a negotiated settlement, that is, an elaboration of really what he said back the previous May: That was should not be pursuing a military victory, that that was insane, that it was unattainable, that it was damaging, that it risked a wider war, and everything else. All he was saying was, "Look, guys," in February '66, "if you want a negotiated settlement, the idea of that is that you have to give up something to get a negotiated settlement. That's what a compromise is." That's all that speech boiled down to. That is not inconsistent with the classic things about counterinsurgency.

As that year wears on he's, as you know, quite quiet; he makes some very pointed comments about.... The elections are in '67, aren't they? I'd have to go back and look and see what else he says during '66, but it sure doesn't amount to very much.

HACKMAN: Are the elections in '67, September?

EDELMAN: Or are they in September of '66? Well, we could find that. In any event.... Then when he comes out in favor of stopping the bombing of March of ’67, which he really again has delayed far too long in doing, he even then puts rhetoric into the speech about the nature of our effort there and he doesn’t want to withdraw and all that. To some extent, by this time, he’s being a little hypocritical, because he comes in the morning of the speech—I’d been out with strep throat—and says to me with a grin, “Am I dove enough for you?” which I think your transcript reprinted in an earlier conversation as “Am I dumb enough for you?”

HACKMAN: Before it was corrected, I hope. Our girls....

EDELMAN: No, your girls are terrific. The girls are very good. I think they do a terrific job. But, anyway, that one was fun.

In any event, I think he still had a little clinging to—quite a bit of clinging—to the idea that, if it had really been done right, we really could have succeeded with it. When is that debate that takes place when he gets up on the floor of the Senate? I guess that is in early ’68, is it? Or is it late ’67 where

he says, “Who are we with the awful judgment of God to rain bombs down, protecting people who are twelve thousand miles away so that...?”

HACKMAN: Would it be in here?

EDELMAN: It might be.

HACKMAN: It’s probably not in here. It’s probably too late for this.

EDELMAN: Well, it’s probably in Jack Newfield’s book [*Robert Kennedy: A Memoir*] If you want to shut it off, I can go and get it. [Interruption]

Then you have the February ’67 business about when he takes that trip over to England and sees Manac'h [Étienne Manac'h] in Paris, which we can come back to in a minute.

By March of ’67 he’s talking about the real horror of the war, but still those defensive passages, I think it is mixed at that point.

March 7th, ’68 by that time, as Newfield says, he’s already decided to run for President. That’s where he said, “Are we like the God of the Old Testament that we can decide....” I believe it was in the same colloquy on the floor that he talks about.... No, I guess it was on “Meet the Press,”—

perhaps earlier than that, late ’67—where he talks about the purpose of it has changed. “Now it seems to be that we’re fighting over there and killing them and killing our boys. So the Communists will not be eleven thousand miles away instead of twelve thousand miles away.”

He gets to talking about the fundamental purpose, as opposed to just how you get a negotiated settlement.

So, I suppose the answer to the question is it's clearly just an evolution. You can see the evolution and it's probably not totally complete until maybe the Tet offensive, but it's probably substantially complete by the end of '66, anyway.

I think that March 2nd, '67, speech, despite the defensive language in it, was a major break. Partly, he was pushed into that by the way Lyndon Johnson treated him and by the real duplicity with which his genuine efforts to relay a signal were treated. Of course, he had information about Lyndon Johnson's failure to settle the war on a number of occasions or to get genuine negotiation started which went all the way

back to '64, which was documented later in other books and so on—Stuart Lorry and David Kraslow's book [*Secret Search for Peace in Vietnam*]. I guess we talked about this in another conversation.

HACKMAN: Yes, I was trying to remember. I talked about this with two or three people and I think we did go through that.

EDELMAN: In any event, did I tell about what Lyndon Johnson said to him in that? I'll say it; if it's duplicating, all right.

So, he came back from that trip and he went to see Lyndon Johnson. Lyndon Johnson was furious. He said, "All you dove politicians are going t be dead in six months,"—meaning he still thought he was going to win the war.

Well, I guessed you'd have to say that after being subject to that kind of stuff, if Kennedy still entertained any notions that the war would be succeeded in by the way he would have done it, that he would have pretty much given up the idea that anyone was going to follow that policy. It's not too far a step from there to finally begin questioning the

premises as well.

It's interesting to look back at his set speech which he gave a number of times in '65. This was a commencement speech at Queens College. He's talking about the pace of change. It's very general. He talks about "the dispossessed people of the world demanding their place in the sun" and a "revolution that's in progress there." What it amounts to is being a kind of an argument for foreign aid. It's a continuation of the American University sort of thing of John Kennedy, which is fine. "We should understand that legitimacy of these ideals. That is what the people demanding freedom and social reform are asking around the world; they're only what our own forefathers sought," he says. Then he talks about "You shouldn't be comfortable with the status quo." It's all sort of very general and seems curiously dated, I think, now. He talks about...

Well on the other hand, here he talks about “the sit-ins and the teach-ins, the summer projects and the civil rights vigils, civil liberties protests, organizing the poor, marching on

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Washington.” All these may be helping to return us to a politics of public participation. So that’s good stuff.

Then he talks about the need to be informed. He says that in the free speech movement in Berkeley, “When a few students turn free speech into the scrawling of dirty words on placards, they discredit not only themselves but the initial protest.” If a politician of our tripe got up today and said that, we’d say he was trying to discredit the whole movement. “It is not helpful. It is not honest,” I’m quoting, “to protest the war in Vietnam as if it were a simple and easy question, as if any moral man could reach only one conclusion. Vietnam admits no simple solution, but the complexity and difficulty of any question should not keep you from speech or action.” Well, see, he doesn’t have it, doesn’t have it. He goes on to just talk about they’re fortunate to be educated and that they have to participate.

HACKMAN: That’s probably Adam’s draft?

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EDELMAN: That’s probably Adam’s draft, a very heavy speech. Anybody who tried to get up and give that speech at a commencement today would be booed down, just hooted down. So, maybe that’s more a comment on where we’ve come in four years than it is on Robert Kennedy. I suppose for that period of time it was a reasonable and worthwhile speech.

Oh yes, now we’ve got the Appalachia one, February 1st, 1965. It doesn’t really tell us anything.

He gave a speech at the Lexington Democratic Club on February ’65 that Adam wrote. We always felt it was kind of worthwhile in terms of seeing the Democratic Party as a non-governmental community action program. He tried very hard. He ever quite succeeded in making the Democratic Party into it but they did have that community service thing that they tried to do in New York which has since fallen apart.

Here is an article which he wrote in *Nation’s Business*, called “Government and In Justice to Business,” which Barrett Prettyman [E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr.] had written, which just infuriated us because it just such a transparent effort to get business on our side. _______

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in things that take up a lot of time and effort is not the point. The point was just the opposite. So, there were always things that we weren’t totally happy with. But Barrett Prettyman is responsible for that bit of idiocy.

Then the immigration bill, which we haven’t talked about at all, went through in ’65.

HACKMAN: I had thought that was completely Adam's since he'd worked that issue in Justice.

EDELMAN: Yes, it is. And the testimony the Senator gave on March 4th Adam had drafted.

Here's the mental retardation speech that of course, because of his sister [Rosemary Kennedy] and because of Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] and the foundation [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation], is something that recurs throughout his Senate term.

HACKMAN: Who would he look to for a speech draft on that or for materials?

EDELMAN: Either Adam or Milton Gwirtzman. Milton Gwirtzman has got a whole library of mental retardation speeches in his head.

I've run into various statements here on those veteran's hospitals. It was that burning issue that we discussed. Here's another mental retardation

speech.

Here's the great walnut log statement, March 31, 1965, asking the Secretary of Commerce [John T. Connor] to reconsider his decision not to extend export controls on black walnut logs.

HACKMAN: Were there phone calls back and forth to Connor and Trowbridge [Alexander B. Trowbridge] and these people on that?

EDELMAN: I don't think so. I don't think Kennedy, apart from telling me I could go ahead and do it, ever even focused on it. No, just as I said, it's one of those things we should never even have done. It just wasn't worth the trouble. I don't know to this day who was right. You know, you just shouldn't get into things where you don't know if you're right or not, unless it's vote where you absolutely have to vote.

The reapportionment testimony in the speech before Columbia that we talked about before. Here's the May 6th speech on Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. "We cannot hope to win a victory over Hanoi by such remote and antiseptic means as sending bombers off aircraft carriers."

HACKMAN: That's the best part of it.

EDELMAN: And, "The course of enlarging the war would mean a commitment to Vietnam of hundreds of thousands of American troops. It would tie our forces down in terrain far more difficult than that of Korea, with lines of communication and supply far longer and more vulnerable. It would risk the entry of the Chinese Communists and their inexhaustible reserves of ground troops. It would force the Soviet Union, now engaged in a bitter contest with Peiking for the leadership of the world Communist movement, to give major assistance to Hanoi; and it might well temporarily revive the relations between Peiking," he always saying Peiping "and Moscow. It would lead to heavy pressure on our own government by thoughtless people for the use of nuclear weapons. It might easily lead to nuclear warfare and the third world war." Well, that's pretty good stuff.

HACKMAN: That's clearly Schlesinger, as far as you know?

EDELMAN: Yes, and him, I suppose. Let's give him credit because I think they worked it out together.

You asked about the Congressmen on the narcotics bill. Some of them: Celler, Harris [Oren Harris]—that's Harris of Arkansas who was chairman of the interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee at the time and is now a Federal judge—Wilbur Mills,

Delaney [James J. Delaney] of New York—who's a very conservative fellow—Farbstein [Leonard Farbstein], Ryan, Ottinger [Richard Lawrence Ottinger]. Republicans: McCulloch [William M. McCulloch], Springer, Reid, Lindsay—the very same, John—Bell [Alphonzo E. Bell, Jr.] and Mathias [Charles M. Mathias]. He had Sam Ervin [Sam J. Ervin, Jr.] on the bills—those different days.

We had the perennial fight in the district on overextending the program of Aid to Dependent Children [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] of unemployed parents of the District. That's worth stopping for a minute over.

We thought we had that won. Ribicoff would do that fight every year. At the last minute, Byrd [Robert C. Byrd] stood and moved to tale Ribicoff's amendment so that a vote of "yes" was a vote against the proposition father than for it. Two or three Senators—I don't remember, perhaps Dodd and Randolph and so on, or maybe Hartke [Vance Hartke] but you'd have to look back—voted for the Byrd amendment, saying that they'd only given their commitment to vote for the Ribicoff amendment;

they had not given any commitment on how to vote on a motion detail, which is a marvelous exercise in that nature of the political promise.

Here's a typical New York State kind of thing. On June 24, 1965, he issues a release saying that he's urged Orville Freeman to offer livestock grazing and having privileges on crop land taken out of production in twenty-four counties in New York state. Wow! But, that meant something in those twenty-four counties.

Oh, here's another honey. This is a statement that he made in support of the confirmation of Governor James Coleman [J.P. Coleman] of Mississippi to be a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He should turn over in his grave about that one.

HACKMAN: Did he ever talk about the Federal Judgeship appointments that the Kennedy Administration had made and how they were working out, especially in the South? Some of the people had turned out very poorly.

EDELMAN: Not in any detail. He would sometimes just kind of.... Some one of those judges would come

up and he would sort of give a rueful look and shake his head as if to say, "Sorry about that."

I talked at great length with Burke Marshall about it one day. He told me that story in detail about Harold Cox [William Harold Cox], Gordon Elliott [J. Robert Elliott] in Georgia, and West [Elmer G. West] in Louisiana. In each case there was a reason. In the case of Elliott in Georgia, for example, some of the Negro leadership had actually been in favor of Elliott for some complicated reason involving a deal with Talmadge [Herman Eugene Talmadge] and so there was nothing they could do about that. The case of Cox and West, basically they had promised, you know, given assurances which they did not then keep. There's no real way to justify all that. And the Coleman thing: he should have voted against Coleman. He said he found he'd been able to deal with Coleman when he was Attorney General and that Coleman had kept his word. Coleman's been a terrible judge.

You don't know whether it was kind of naiveté on his part, or whether he really knew. I suppose it was probably naiveté because there was

no reason why he shouldn't have voted against Coleman if he thought he was going to be a bad judge, must not have.

HACKMAN: You don't feel that just the fact that he did feel that Coleman had been square with him during the Administration was enough to carry it?

EDELMAN: Yes, but that was naïve. It was enough to carry it. That's why I guess I can conclude that it was enough to carry it but that was really naïve. His sense of loyalty or paying a man back for in the past just being frank, not even being friendly, that's not enough.

I see what you were asking about on the Appalachia Regional Commission, now, because on August 18, '65, he issues this release saying, "We're in, but we could have gotten in sooner and more fully if New York had made its interest known at the appropriate time. Now we'll have to wait for a year probably to participate in the highway program." That essentially is what they suggested that we say. They finally came around and said, "All right, we finished the study. We're going to let you in, you could issue this kind of a release."

HACKMAN: Why is Sweeney so friendly? Is there a relationship there that goes back earlier?

EDELMAN: I don't know. I suspect that it's just politics, that he's just keeping his bread buttered on both sides. I'm always to cynical. Maybe he thought it was good to have those counties in and it was a straight Democratic-Republican issue, that it was a way to show up Rockefeller, which is undoubtedly part of it.

Here's a release where we tell what everybody in New York is getting under the Federal aid to airport program in September of '65.

Also, now, we're asking the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] to authorize a 25 percent reduction of freight rates on hay shipped into drought stricken farming areas in New York State. These things, I suppose, are important to understanding what a Senator has to do.

"Testimony in favor of adding the William Floyd estate as an addition to the Fire Island National Seashore."

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I'm skipping over all of these various regional planning features that we talked about.

Oh, here's a statement that he issues on October 25th, the meeting of New York City Congressman, the Congressional delegation, with Abe Beame. I wrote that. That was one of the things that I did, making the argument that because Abe Beame was a Democrat he could work better with the Administration. That's a marvelous argument.

Oh, then here's a speech that he gave. I remember this. It's St. Peter's [College] Nursing School in Albany. We flew up there in the evening and I got a bunch of statistics over the phone about nursing. It's a real potboiler.

HACKMAN: How useful did you find the Legislative Reference Service?

EDELMAN: Lousy. Legislative Reference Service is no big thing.

HACKMAN: Slow or just poor quality or both?

EDELMAN: Both, both.

HACKMAN: Did you almost jus stop using them after a certain point?

EDELMAN: Well, I would use them for, basically, was to get bibliographies put together on things. You know, to just send me lists of books that exist on subjects and then do my own reading. They're alright for that, although sometimes there would be some glaring omissions there as well.

Here's a long exchange of correspondence with Rockefeller about the mental retardation thing that he releases toward the end of December, in which he essentially says, "We've gone about as far as we can go with it." They really had quite a back and forth on that.

Just at Christmas of '65, he call for leaving the cease fire in effect in Vietnam. That's about it for 1965.

[END OF INTERVIEW #5]

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