Peter B. Edelman Oral History Interview – RFK #7, 2/13/1973
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Biographical Note
Edelman, legislative assistant to Senator Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) (1964-1968), discusses the 1966 New York transit strike, the 1966 minimum wage bill, and reflects on his work for RFK, among other issues.

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Peter B. Edelman—RFK #7

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Seventh of Eight Oral History Interviews

with

Peter Edelman

February 13, 1973
Newton, Massachusetts

By Larry J. Hackman

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

HACKMAN: Why don't we start off by talking about the transit strike, the New York transit strikes, since that comes early in '66, right off the bat.

EDELMAN : Oh, yes.

HACKMAN: And here are a couple of things that you might find useful from your folder on that. Can you just remember how this thing first came up? Were there any efforts ahead of time to avert the strike or people coming to you to get you or Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] to take action before the strike was actually announced, I guess, on January 1, midnight, or whatever New Year's Eve?

EDELMAN: I'm not aware of any pressure on the Senator before the strike took place. You know

the history of these strikes is that old Mike Quill [Michael J. Quill], I suppose every two years when the contract would expire, would go through a posture—going back

years and years and years—and then somehow they would always come to an settlement. I'm not sure whether it was that he was going to test Lindsay [John V. Lindsay] or probably more that Lindsay was not going to wink. Lindsay was going to be on his white horse and so on. And you know, Robert Kennedy did not like John Lindsay so that I think probably from his point of view he would just as soon let Lindsay come into office with the strike going on and have that be the first thing he would have to confront. So I have no recollection of any prior pressure or suggestion that Kennedy should be involved.

My recollection is that.... In the materials I notice that Kennedy made some kind of statement about the seventh day of the strike about its being a catastrophe and urging that negotiations go 24 hours and saying at that time that on January 4, which would have

been the fourth day of the strike, that he informed Lindsay that he was prepared to assist him in any way. And then there's a telegram to Dr. Feinsinger [Nathan P. Feinsinger], who's the chairman of the transit strike panel, on January 10th. I take it we don't need to into the details of these because things would be available.

HACKMAN: Right.

EDELMAN: At some point along in here we began talking to Ted Kheel [Theodore Woodrow Kheel], sometimes the Senator himself, sometimes I. And it's interesting in retrospect. I guess Kheel, being a very, very good politician, and Kennedy, obviously being a United States senator, if there was an inquiry from a United States senator, then Kheel would just take the time to talk. Having seen a little bit of the other side of the telescope since that time, it undoubtedly required a tremendous effort on his part and he was probably having to keep an awful lot of people briefed as to what was going on and wasn't
getting much sleep.

But in any case, Kheel was telling us on a sort of day-to-day basis how he thought it was going and basically saying that we ought to stay out of it, that other than this kind of public statement calling for an end to

the strike or calling for 24 hour negotiations there really wasn't much Kennedy could do to help bring the strike to an end. And my recollection is that we probably talked to Archie Cox [Archibald Cox] once or twice during that period too to just get a general sense. And I'm fairly sure that we talked to Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg]. And when I say "we," sometimes it was Senator and sometimes it was me. I note on something here that there's reference to Burke Marshall and Roswell Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric]. Of course Kennedy talked to Marshall about anything and everything, so that might have been as well.

The basic thing that I remember is that sometime after the tenth day—probably about that time, I don't know how long that strike lasted, but close to the end of it as it turned out—

Kheel finally said one day, “I think you could help.” And I said, “Oh?” And he said, “Well, I think if the Senator would come up to see the mayor and to urge the parties to do whatever to come to an agreement,” and one would have to look back at the end clips of what he said publically and that would be it. He said, “I think that it would

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probably advance the settlement by as much as two, three, four days. So I went to Kennedy and I said, “Now he says you should do something.” So Kennedy said okay and got on the phone and he talked to Lindsay, and of course Lindsay was about as delighted to see him come in as he was to see a case of the plague strike New York City. So we flew up and I remember we flew in a helicopter down somewhere, I guess probably the West Side Heliport which is down in the low twenties, and drove in a car from there to Gracie Mansion. Since it was a subway strike the traffic was rather tied up. Lindsay received him coolly, correctly, briefed him as to how negotiations were going. They went out together to see the newsmen and Kennedy made his statement—whatever it was, it was a simple formulation—urging the parties to come to an agreement. And lo and behold, that night the strike was settled. So somebody, some newspaper had a straight-faced headline that Kennedy had settled the strike. But there was a great deal of even editorial comment and certainly insinuation in some of the

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reporting and just the general rumor mill that Kennedy had waited until the strike was going to be settled and then come in and grandstanded. And I never quite—of course you never did.... Sometimes you knew just exactly where he stood on things and sometimes you didn’t. And this was a case where I never could tell whether he was pleased or irritated, probably say some of both, that he felt that he had done something good but that he hadn’t gotten credit for it and indeed was taking a small licking over having done the very grandstanding, being accused of the very grandstanding that had kept him out of it for the first ten days of the strike. Of course, again, an astute politician.... When I say “grandstanding,” if he had come in on the third day of the strike in a heavy way to see Lindsay and had his picture and nothing happened (which would have been very, very likely), obviously that wouldn’t have been satisfactory either. So the long and short of it is that he came in that day and it was settled, and if one looks at the clips the general sense was that

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he’d been grandstanding.

HACKMAN: But the reliance on Kheel for the cues here comes out of an earlier confidence on something that Robert Kennedy has in him or that you have in him or why?

EDELMAN: Well, Kheel was the mediator, yes, and it comes out of an earlier confidence in him. I don’t know the basis of it.

HACKM4N: One of the statements, one of the phrases that is in the letter to Feinsinger, I believe is a call for the panel to make public the exact differences between the parties. Do you remember anything at all about where that came from?

EDELMAN: That would have come from Kheel. There's no question about it. Anything that's substantive in these kind of messages was there because Kheel said he thought it would help.

HACKMAN: The would apply when Robert Kennedy says in a statement—well, he doesn't say it in a statement; he says it in this draft which I don't think was ever issue—that says that he has investigated the situation and under the Mass Transit Act a study could be done

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regarding the unification of New York area transportation agencies so that this couldn't happen, or something.

EDELMAN: Yes. Well, that may or may not come from Kheel. That is somewhat different. The Feinsinger thing urging the differences between the parties should be made public, that's obviously a mediating issue and something Kheel wanted pressure to do. I don't remember where we got the idea that the Mass Transit Act could support a study on unification. It might have been from, you know, some of the people at one of the committees in.... Very likely—I see the Regional Plan Association is mentioned in the draft statement and it might very well have come from them. We had continuing relationship with them.

HACKMAN: I don't really have anything else on that unless you can remember anything.

EDELMAN: No, no. The main point on that is the irony of his probably having contributed to the settlement and to the fact that he got knocked for it.

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HACKMAN: Okay. Here are some materials on the airline....

EDELMAN: And also that it was the first taste between Robert Kennedy and John Lindsay in John Lindsay's official capacity as mayor did a lot, I think, to set the tone of coolness for their relationship. I mean it was already there to some extent but there's no doubt that Lindsay felt the whole thing was quite an irritation.

The airline strike, yes. Gosh, it's actually wonderful to recall all these things. Well, wonderful to recall all these things. Well, the main thing about the airline strike, before we look through this, is that it was an instance of real Senate action where the Senate behaved

the way it is described in the textbooks, in the civics books—because nobody could leave town. So the senators all had to sit there. And of course they were terribly concerned about it because they couldn't leave town, and therefore they wanted to do something about it, even though the airline strike only affected less than 5 percent of the people in this country—and indeed it wasn't every airline, although it was most. Hardly the kind of—not like a railroad freight strike

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which gets to the life blood of the commerce of the country or even a subway strike which gets to the lifeblood of a metropolitan area. The airline strike wasn't an emergency for anybody. But the senators took it very seriously and the thing went in exactly the textbook way, telescope timeframe. Committee hearings, my recollection is that the Labor and Public Welfare Committee sat as a committee of the whole; they didn't do it in sub-committee. But every senator seated around the long table, all 15 or 17 of them and all showing up, all questioning the witness and, you know, perfect for a movie, for a staged movie. And then after the committee action, which I'll come back to, every senator sitting on the floor and really waves of... They were a little bit timid about actually declaring it a national emergency in the sense of Taft-Hartley because of the fact that it wasn't and they were looking for some other way to formulate it, which my recollection was they finally left it up to the President [Lyndon B. Johnson]. But you could feel the waves of persuasion and counter-persuasion back and forth on the Senate floor

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because they were all there listening to the debate. And that happens very seldom. You know, as everyone knows, most of the time floor debate is conducted for the benefit of a handful of senators who are talking to themselves. So that was the first thing, that it was a text book situation of real senatorial deliberation where there really was thinking going on and decision making about without preconceived notion which way they should go. Should I stop? I've got two or three other points to make.

HACKMAN: No. It's okay.

EDELMAN: A second point about it was that in the hearings—and perhaps we might stop in a minute. I can look through the papers. In the hearings it was very clear that the Administration didn't want to be tagged with calling it an emergency either. So that they would keep on marching Willard Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz] kind of up the figurative hill and say, "Now, Secretary Wirtz, you say that this has this and that effect on commerce and so many people are disrupted. "Yes, yes, yes. Are you therefore recommending this legislation?" And he'd say "The Congress will have to make the finding that it's an emergency." And they got quite angry at him. Of course Kennedy, the combination of being quite angry and not wanting

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to miss the opportunity to embarrass Lyndon Johnson a bit.

And that brings me to my third recollection which is in the executive sessions of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee marking out the bill after the public hearings. My recollection is that it was Luci Baines [Luci Baines Johnson] who was about to get married—in any case one of them.... And Kennedy had done a good lawyer's job in the committee in convincing them that the Senate or the Congress ought not to make this finding that it should be left to the President. And finally there was either a break in the action or anyway some opportunity for him to make a crack of, he said, "Let's give it to him for a wedding present for Luci Baines." [Interruption] I don't think there's too much to add.

I think that you pointed out, Larry, that my position changed in the course of this in terms of advice I was giving him. I think his did too. I don't know that he had any great instinct to intervene in the beginning. But certainly as he listened he evolved a position. And he does say in his floor statement on August 4 that his initial position was in favor of

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intervention. I think what happened was, number one in a political sense he was irritated by the Alphonse-Gaston act that the President and Secretary Wirtz put on but then substantively it was really saying, "If the President doesn't want this legislation, why should we be considering this very stringent proposal that Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse] was evidently making to put a freeze on the situation and force them back to work for a period of six months to a year?" And there was—as my notes point out, it was an anomaly in a number of ways. It was not a national emergency in the Taft-Hartley sense and to get into a specific labor dispute and tell a specific group of workers to go back to work in this kind of situation really we were quite worried, might just have very unfortunate implications for a lot of labor negotiations, being as this one was not any more particularly obstruction of commerce except insofar as the disruption of senators lives was involved. This was not more a disruption than many other labor disputes. So that's about it. My recollection is

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that the Senate came out in the way that we regarded as right, that the result of the committee's work and the debate within the committee and then the same thing on the floor really produced a rational result. And I think that for many senators it was the same as it was for Kennedy, an instinct to intervene. It shows you something, I might say parenthetically, if the strike were affecting an equal number of poor people and the senators were moving freely, obviously they wouldn't be concerned at all. So it's a really graphic illustration of how senators are very good at legislating about that which they know personally. In any case, perhaps an initial instinct on the part of many people to intervene and then this process of consideration. And it's interesting to note that the committee action, the so-called least common denominator position which would have passed legislation giving the President power and discretion to extend the Railway and Labor Act cooling-off period for three

additional 60 day periods if you wanted. But this was offered up by Senators Javits [Jacob K. Javits] and Griffin [Robert P. Griffin] and Griffin was

new on the committee at that time. He had.... Pat McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara] had died just a short time before and Griffin had come over from the House and of course had a reputation as being knowledgeable about labor—the Landum-Griffin bill, he was the Griffin of that—and indeed showed himself to be extremely bright and knowledgeable. We were very impressed with him in that situation and found him later on, on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee to be decent and moderate. And he's a man who is probably better than his voting record in terms of how he behaves within the committee and his work in the Senate. In any case, they were the ones who developed this idea and I think, however, that it was Bob Kennedy who had an impressive effect on the Democratic side: Yarborough [Ralph W. Yarborough], Clark, [Joseph S. Clark], Randolph [Jennings Randolph], Williams [Harrison A. Williams, Jr.] of New Jersey, Pell [Claiborne Pell], Nelson [Gaylord Nelson] and of course Ted Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy]. Eight democrats, Javits and Griffin being joined by Prouty [Winston L. Prouty] of Vermont. The process in the committee where Kennedy just kept asking over and over again and getting to the salient point about "Is this an emergency? What would the implications be?

Who's really being disruptive here? What kind of precedent are we setting?" He just had a very, very persuasive effect on his fellow senators.

HACKMAN: What do you remember then about your own efforts to do something with the whole issue of emergency strikes? I find in the folder that includes the New York transit strike material—the title of the folder is just called "Emergency Strikes." And then you start writing to people.... A fellow by the name of Bill Gould writes a memo and Archie Cox and David Truman [David B. Truman] and Clyde Sumner from Yale.

EDELMAN: Clyde Summers [Clyde W. Summers].

HACKMAN: Summers, right. Respond to that. Where does that all go? Where does the impetus come from? Directly out of this?

EDELMAN: Yes, I think it came from the New York City transit strike. This is a good illustration of how a senator's office works, or at least ours. You're always looking—and it's a combination of politics and substances—you're always looking for things to do that will be good for the Senator and contribute something. Well, it was clear from the New York City transit strike that the Taft-Hartley concept of national emergency simply was inadequate to deal with that

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sort of local emergency, and that you could have a highly crippling strike in one tiny area of the country and there was nothing that you could do about it. Clearly it affected interstate commerce just in terms of people who cut cross state lines to work in the city and everything else, but the legislation, the Taft-Hartley legislation, was not adequate to handle it.

So we commenced to get some advice from leading labor experts and to see whether there was some formulation that Kennedy could propose that would contribute. And essentially the burden of the replies is no. My recollection of the Cox letter, or the Cox position if it wasn't written down, was that he had quite an elaborate thing that he was suggesting and then at the end he said, "But I don't really suggest that you should do it."

HACKMAN: Right. And you suggested that he should.

EDELMAN: But I think the history of this issue since then shows what a knotty thing it is; Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] has tried to play with it, Lyndon Johnson has tried to play with it. The basic point is that unless

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you get into compulsory arbitration, that is unless you get into some point at which the actual decision is forced, as long as you are just setting up some set of mechanisms which essentially delay it in some way or force people back to work in some temporary way, the thing gets regularized. My recollection, some of the proposals would have that before they could go out on strike, not a cooling-off period but certain mediation would have to take place in more formularized way than exists in the Taft-Hartley law. And what those experts said, and I believe it's true, is that any one of those ideas, as shiny as they look, all you have to do is enact it and go through it a couple of times so that the bugs get worked out and it will become a ritual just like the Taft-Hartley 80-day cooling-off period is a ritual. So we ultimately never did anything because we weren't really sure we could prove the situation, and as I say, I think the history since then bears that out.

HACKMAN: Was it anything that Robert Kennedy kept after you about, or was it something that is pretty far down the list?

EDELMAN: Pretty far down the list. Another point about that is I would be.... I can't recall exactly where

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those names came from, except to say that they were undoubtedly an amalgam and this is the way we often did things. Kennedy may have said to write to Cox or we may have just known it because Cox has been Solicitor General. But Clyde Summers had been Adam's [Adam Walinsky] professor at Yale Law School, and I don't remember where Dave

Truman came into it. But generally these lists of people we write to would be an amalgam of what the staff could come up with and what the Senator could come up with. And, in any case, now being at the other end of the pipeline on these things, even if it comes to nothing you've touched some people who are flattered that they've been touched, and that's worth something in itself.

HACKMAN: What are your recollections of his opinion of Archie Cox in these years after the Justice Department experience? Does he rely on him?

EDELMAN: Not a lot. He certainly always would go back to him on labor questions, and I think he had general respect for him, but I think that probably temper mentally he found Cox a little bit difficult to take and.... No, my recollection is that he did not

speak with him a lot. We may have talked to him some on the question of the constitutionality of.... No, was he still Solicitor General in 1965? On the constitutionality of the voting rights act.

HACKMAN: My impression is that he didn't stay around.

EDELMAN: There was some constitutional issues, is what I'm saying, that we may have spoken to him about. But I don't think Kennedy spoke to him at all frequently. And again now that I'm on the other end of it, there are very few people that a senator, particularly Kennedy, would have time to talk to frequently. You know I find that I don't talk to Ted Kennedy frequently. I don't know whom he does talk to, but he's probably got, really, a handful of people who he touches all the time about things.

HACKMAN: Did the Navasky [Victor S. Navasky] book [*Kennedy Justice*] has an interesting section on Cox where Cox always sort of appears to resist initially and then people sort of just wait him out and he always comes around.

EDELMAN: Yeah, I think Archie's a lot more decent then he lets on. And that's not to say that was always the case in terms of the issue involved, but he…. His instincts were Frankfurterian. His instincts were, you know, you don't get into this

reapportionment business because Felix Frankfurter had written in *Colgrove v. Green* that you don't do this. And I'm sure others in both the JFK [John F. Kennedy] and the RFK tapes know this in much greater detail than I, but basically the others in the Justice Department were saying, "Why not, it's an injustice. And he thought about it and finally came around. There were a number of instances like that. No, I have great respect for him. I think he's a

very, very sensible man but as Solicitor General he did have a.... I know because I was clerking on the court. Justices all felt he talked down to them, that he would come in and lecture and that he was really looking down his nose. And I think Kennedy had some of the same feeling about him, that it was just a little bit too much baggage to have to live with to really be close to him.

HACKMAN: Something generally related to the transportation issue, the New Haven Railroad. I was not able to find any folder in your records that has anything on it. Maybe there is someone somewhere...

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EDELMAN: Gee, there should be, yes. Because in 1965 I spent a lot of time on the New Railroad, and the very first thing I ever did in the Senate was the New Haven Railroad. I showed up to work in—whose office was it? It was over on the third floor of the Old Senate Office Building, whoever's offices we inherited.

HACKMAN: He inherited Keating's [Kenneth B. Keating] old office.

EDELMAN: Keating, yeah, Keating. And Ed Guthman [Edwin O. Guthman] said, "There's a meeting of all the senators from New England on the New Haven Railroad crisis, you know the 82nd New Haven Railroad crisis. And the Senator's going to go, and you have to prepare a statement for him. And I went, "Ahh!!" And of course I had, and I went through this, already worked in the campaign so I had—and I was a realist. But the person who was a great informant on this Bill Tucker [William H. Tucker], who was a commissioner of ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] said, "Call Bill Tucker." And another person was Barrett Prettyman [E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr.] who had been in the Justice Department, Barrett Prettyman, Jr., for a year working on transportation matters. And there may have been one or two more. But I called Bill Tucker and Barrett Prettyman and said, "What should the Senator say about this?" And if you look into the

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mimeographed stuff, there's a statement where he calls on—oh, I don't know what the hell it was; it was the state should put up money to shore it up and pay the thing and the government should be putting in more capital for new cars but at that point we were all against an operating subsidy from the government to the New Haven Railroad. Of course, things have changed since then although not all that much. The Amtrak thing is very ambivalent. The government is not at all sure that it really wants to be in that with both feet. And so there ensued thereafter a whole series of, you know, it was a thing that you had to do as a senator from New York. If the papers said that the New Haven was going to shut down you had to be in there fighting for your commuters. And I mean I just—it's hard to know what would have happened if the politicians hadn't been so interested but repeatedly he would go to a hearing of some kind, a ICC hearing in New York on abandonment or a Senate Commerce

Committee looking into the situation in one way or another. And I must have written, oh, gosh, in the course of the first year I must have written

half a dozen press release-testimony type statements on the New Haven Railroad. One of those times, I remember in New York City the hearing was somewhere near Grand Central Station and after that we went up to see Jackie Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy]. That was a great moment in my life; I had never met her. We walked for awhile and it was getting late and so we rode a New York City bus up Fifth Avenue and people looked at us. And he didn't know me very well, of course, at that point and so he asked me how I had done in school. So I said I was whatever, twelfth in my law school class and that there was this fellow who had been first, a fellow named Jack Levin who's a lawyer in Chicago. I said there's this fellow who had been first whose average had been five points better than the next person—no, three points better than the next person. But that meant three points better in every course. And he just looked at me and said, "Where is he now? In a mental institution? which told you all kinds of things about his hang-ups and his attitudes and everything else. And indeed, while Jack Levin was not and will never be in a mental institution,

Jack Levin, it turns out, is a person who while he does an 81 average in law school has fairly lousy judgment. And so Kennedy's dubiousness about people who had high grades is perhaps, or the highest grades, is perhaps somewhat justified.

The other part about the New Haven Railroad that is important is that very early Stuart Saunders [Stuart T. Saunders] began to visit us regularly. He was the president, he was a lawyer, he had become the president of the Pennsylvania railroad. And we never saw Alfred Perlman [Alfred E. Perlman], the president of the New York Central. Saunders was designated by them to be the chief lobbyist. Maybe he thought he had some connection with Kennedy; I don't know. And there had been.... Kennedy had, probably on political advice before he left the Justice Department, probably after he had decided to run for senator, he had put a memorandum into the Justice Department files suggesting that it would be worth, that it would be appropriate for the Justice Department to reconsider its opposition to the Penn Central merger. And Saunders perhaps saw us as potential allies because of that memorandum. And Kennedy either was being cagey with me and never would explain what he

had in mind, or possibly really didn't know possibly really it had been something that he had been advised to do by Barrett Prettyman or someone else and simply had taken their advice and never paid any attention to it, which was quite possible. So that I think of it now because of all of the terrible, terrible results of the Penn Central merger. But Saunders used to come along regularly and urge Kennedy to call Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach], get after

Katzenbach, you know, indicate his support of the merger. And Kennedy did to a certain extent. I think with some reserve. And of course when the merger finally was allowed, when the—I don't remember the exact sequence there was an ICC approval and some court action....

HACKMAN: Right, in about spring of '66 it finally goes through.

EDELMAN: We, of course put out a statement heralding as the greatest advance in transportation, in rail transportation since the invention of the Pullman car. Well, history proves how wrong we were.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Do you remember much about the back and forth with Rockefeller [Nelson A. Rockefeller]? Were there personal contacts with

Rockefeller on this?

EDELMAN: Oh, yes, that's good. We went to a meeting, at one point, at Rockefeller's apartment, on a Sunday; I remember flying up with Kennedy. On a Sunday he called me up and asked me if I'd go about the New Haven Railroad, and I remember the Picassos [Pablo Picasso] and whatever else, and Georges Braques. They were very cordial about this one. I don't remember that we may have taken a knock or two at Rockefeller along the way—we probably did; we always tried to—about state inaction or whatever. Maybe you've looked at the stuff.

HACKMAN: There are some statements but no speeches. But as I say couldn't find the folders.

EDELMAN: Okay. Well it's not important. But general recollection is that there was not the kind of hostility between him and Rockefeller over this that there was, say, over the Willowbrook [State Hospital] issue. Yes, we met with Rockefeller, I would think.... I remember at least that once, and were certainly in touch with his people from time to time.

HACKMAN: Was Tucker very helpful within the ICC on this? How do you talk with him other than just trying to find out...

EDELMAN: He didn't ever say exactly what he was doing. He was just sort of saying what he thought that Kennedy might be doing. And I suppose, you know, it was probably improper for him to be telling Kennedy what might make some sense. But at least he was careful to be the commissioner about his own business. So that the

only thing that you could tell is that you had to assume that he was giving you advice that was consistent with what he was trying to accomplish within the commission. Of course, the fact that he went to work for the Penn Central Railroad later on raises some question about his impartiality and so on. That's not just ole poor Bill Tucker's fault; that is what everybody does. And we ought to do something about it, not just about him but more broadly. But, on the whole, his advice in the short run always turned out to be good advice. As I say, in the long run it was probably a disaster. But then, I don't know if one could have foreseen or could have known

or with different advice might have taken a different position.

HACKMAN: Another thing I have is the minimum wage thing in '66. I don't know how much you remember about that.

EDELMAN: Wayne Morse was against treating farm workers like other workers; kept talking about those strawberries and oranges.

HACKMAN: Right. He and Edith Green [Edith S. Green]. This is part of a memo—a long memo—that you wrote to Robert Kennedy when he was coming back from Africa, and there's a long section in there on the minimum wage.

[Interruption]

EDELMAN: The major issue of concern to us on the minimum wage in 1966 was with regard to farm workers. My recollection is that there were certainly some other issues in the bill about coverage of other kinds of workers and...

HACKMAN: There's the Puerto Rican thing. There's nothing.... One of the things I wanted to ask you, there's nothing in your memo at all on Puerto Rico, but there's loads of material in your folder on how to deal with Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

EDELMAN: Yes. No, there is a paragraph here in the memorandum on the Puerto Rican problem about the review committees and so on.

HACKMAN: Right. And this is where you get into the whole thing with the ILGWU [International Ladies Garment Workers' Union] and what's her name...

EDELMAN: Evelyn Dubrow.

HACKMAN: Evelyn Dubrow.

EDELMAN: I was going to tell you about her. And I don't remember how that one came out. The considerations that I noted in this memo were that organized labor wanted to end this review committee system and just have the minimum wage and the government of Puerto Rico was against it. I don't think we did much about that. I think his basic position was to lie low on that one. The farm worker thing is interesting. It's not terribly important in any historical way but it's a kind of an example of how you can be boxed in, and with all the kind of goodwill, you just can't, you know, there's certain things where there's no point in arguing because you're going to lose. The proposal in the bill was that the minimum wage for farm workers would start at a buck and go to a buck thirty

at the same time that the minimum wage for all workers was going to be up to a buck sixty by the end. And there was a question of how many farm workers would be covered. The bill provided the so-called 500 man-day test which would have covered about one hundred percent of the nation's farms and I don't remember what percentage of the farm workers that was, but in terms of numbers it was 430,000 to 485,000 farm workers. What organized labor wanted was a 300 man-day test which would be about twice as many farms and would cover about another hundred and some thousand farm workers. So that the difference—it was twice as many farms, but the difference of number of workers was maybe 25 percent additional farm workers. In some sense, it was not the kind of issue that in the first place one would really want to fight and die over. The main thing was getting the farm workers covered by the minimum wage. And the level of the wage was somewhat more important than the coverage, because the difference in what labor wanted and what was actually in the bill was that the House passed

it, as I say, and the number of workers covered, wasn't that huge. In any case, he tried in committee and nobody was buying. You know, he had probably Nelson, Pell, and Javits; and others who were liberal on other issues, like Yarborough, Morse, and Randolph, simply were not interested in this issue. They felt they were doing enough by bringing farm workers under and they just wouldn't hear of either taking the wage rate all the way up or covering more workers. So it was a case where I had done all this work talking to organized labor and it was clear in about five minutes in the committee that it wasn't going to go anywhere. Well, now you don't just walk out of the committee and say to the people, you know, I'm not going to do anything for you; you tell them it's awfully tough and you're doing the best you can. But the fact is that the contrast between what was outside the room and what was inside the room was rather marked. Because every day we would be confronted by Evelyn Dubrow, who has to be one of the most ridiculous lobbyists I've ever seen. I mean the

full extent of her lobbying was to come up to you—hang around outside the committee room and come up to you on the way in and say, "you're going to be with us, aren't you?" Now in Kennedy's case maybe there wasn't anything more to do. And maybe she was doing something on some other senator, maybe getting some pressure from Oregon on Morse that I didn't know about, but I frankly doubt it. I think she was a pain in the tail and not an effective lobbyist. Certainly her idea that the way to lobby was to confront the Senator in public and try to embarrass him into a position when in fact he already agreed with her in front of the press, he didn't think that was very constructive either—nor did I. And I just had the sense all the way through that that what was really happening was that labor had come around, told us what they wanted and gone back to suck their thumbs.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

EDELMAN: And indeed, in general, I had the sense and guess I still do that the labor lobbies aren't worth a damn; that Kenny Young, who is a guy I like very much personally, I will say

that I have never seen—hardly ever seen—the consequence of his lobbying. Now, whether it is that they assume that all they need to do is say that they represent labor and therefore they will get whatever they are going to get; whether it is that they do some homework in terms of generating—being in touch with their locals and so on and generating telegrams.... And I never understood the connection; I don't know. But I never found the labor lobbyists to be effective and this was one instance of it. They were absolutely wasting their breath. And to have come in and wasted all of my time on this—witness the amount of time I spent putting this into the memo. Of course, the reason I had time for them was that he was out of the country. If we had been up to our usual pace, I wouldn't have spent this much time on it—so there is a self-correcting thing in it. And then to go in and have only three or four votes in the committee, it really was rather fruitless and rather silly. There just, in short, was never any chance that the labor position on farm workers was going to be adopted.

Now you could say that—and there

may be some truth in it—that just by taking that position and by getting someone to expouse it—and Kennedy did expouse it, although as I say inside the room he saw very quickly that he had no leverage on it and so that part of it never got discussed very much, it was just kind of assumed that that was lost. It may well be that that helped preserve the House version, at least what the House had passed with the dollar, up to a dollar thirty and 500 man-days became noncontroversial because there was pressure from the left to pull it over even further. And so in that sense it may be that I'm unduly harsh on the labor lobbyists. It may be that tactically they knew exactly what they were doing.

HACKMAN: As I remember your memo recommends that he spend some time with Randolph and with a couple of the other people that you mentioned. Do you remember if he made that effort or not?

EDELMAN: No. I don't think that he did. I think, as I say, I mean, I remember this reasonably well that he came back, you know, read my memos, was very impressed that I had done all this work on so many things, certainly came to most of the subcommittee

mark-up sessions. I don't remember exactly what else was going on at the same time, but my recollection is that he was reasonable regular in his attendance of those sessions. But on that issue it was just very clear that so what if he used up some tickets and convinced Randolph? So what? Then he had four votes, five votes. You know, it wasn't going to go.

HACKMAN: You remember anything at all about a sort of a mix-up where Dubinsky [David Dubinsky] got upset, maybe because Evelyn Dubrow—a conversation you had with her about what she interpreted as an offer for a quid pro quo if Dubinsky would use his influence to get support for Silverman [Samuel J. Silverman] against Klein [Arthur G. Klein]. Silverman would support their position on something on this thing, the Puerto Rican, I think it was the Puerto Rican aspect for some reason.

EDELMAN: Oh, yes. Yea, I made some.... That's right, that was the other thing he was doing at that time because the Silverman primary was in June 20 something. But generally speaking, he was going up to New York in the evening and coming back to

the Senate in the morning. No, I don't remember the exact details but my recollection goes something like this: that he said to me jokingly, "You tell her that if she wants us to help them on whatever"—and I agree with you I think it was the Puerto Rican issue—"that they should get out and help on the Silverman thing." And it was very clear to me that he didn't mean that. That is, that he didn't mean it as something that was to be done in a hard political way. But, you know, I interpreted him as wanting it said. So I said it, and my recollection is that I tried to say it in a way that was sort of joking, you know, "If you folks would get off your duff and really help out it would be a lot easier for us to help you," or something like that. In any case, she interpreted that as some kind of a threat—deal sort of thing and got terribly upset. And Dubinsky called the Senator and the Senator said, "What is this?" And that's right, that is very important because that's exactly why on that particular occasion when she was standing out in front of the

committee room, why it's so much on my mind, because he was especially pissed off at her, seeing her standing there after she caused all this irritation. They smoothed it out; you know, he said he wasn't asking for any deal and so on, and it didn't come to anything.

One other small aspect of the minimum wage was that there was a question about processors and canners. And under the minimum—gosh, all this detail which I really haven't thought about in a long time. Under the law as it was, processors and canners of perishable fruits and vegetables were given two funny exemptions: one fourteen week period when they didn't have to pay overtime, the theory behind it, this is when people worked a long time; and another fourteen hour week when they only had to pay overtime after a twelve hour day or after a 56 hour week. And the House had made it one 14 week period where overtime had to be paid over a ten hour day or 48 hour week. And we had had a visit from New York constituents. There's a reference in my memo to Joe King [Joseph P. King] from Rochester. Now Joe King wasn't just a constituent. When Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman]—he and Kennedy were friends in

those days—had come to Kennedy in early '65…. Did we talk about this on the other tape?

HACKMAN: No.

EDELMAN: Well, we ought to spend a few minutes on this; maybe when I finish this would be a good time. Freeman really, I think, wanted in good faith to help Kennedy be a good agricultural senator from New York—and after all New York is an important agricultural state, even though it's not usually considered that way. So he had arranged for Kennedy to meet with a number of the important agricultural interests in the state. Among them was this man Joe King, who managed the Genesee Valley Marketing Authority near Rochester. And Joe King, whenever we wanted advice about farm subjects—I mean he obviously had interests, although I'm not sure about how sophisticated I was about appreciating it at the time—he spent lot of time to be helpful, and I think he was undoubtedly a Republican, he liked Robert Kennedy a lot. So when Joe King showed up in June of '66, he was by this time kind of a friend. "Good old Joe," I'd been up in staff capacity and had dinner in Rochester with him and his friends, to talk about farm problems (meaning the farmer) and talked to him on the phone a lot. Kennedy knew him, knew his face and name and so on

and at the same time it was very, very clear that we would never vote his way. So how do you handle these things? My recollection is that the issue probably never came up on the floor so he never had to know, and certainly in the committee Kennedy's position was the liberal position. But that was a mildly, uncomfortable moment. And I rather think that I did not have the guts to say to Joe King, "there's no way in the world that we'll be with you." I probably

said, “Well, thanks very much. We certainly will take it into consideration,” and certainly didn’t make any commitment. But, that’s one sidelight.

Should I go on into the.... Is there more on the minimum wage?

HACKMAN: No, there really isn’t. The Puerto Rican thing, all I remember is that, again, it seemed to me that there was shift in your position away from early support of the ILGWU position and than sort of turning around.

EDELMAN: I missed that. And just by the by.... Oh, yes. On the canners and processors, it looks like the Senate did play with it on the fourteen-week thing we were talking about before. In the committee they had made it two ten-week periods instead of two fourteen-week periods. And there was no.... They both referred to

a ten-hour day, overtime afterwards. One a 48-hour week and one a 52-hour week. And here I have a statement, an argument that I was urging him to make in which he was saying he supported the House version. And it goes on and one here—I’m sure he never read this in the committee. There’s about six or seven or eight hundred words of argument here about why the House provision was better. And then finally he says, “If you’re not going to do at least put the House version into effect in two years.” And one reason why we were very strong was because the Amalgamated Meat Cutters [and Butcher Workers’] union was on that side, and that was Arnold Meyer who really was a very, very near-sighted man—I mean physically myopic—who everybody kind of loved. It was the sort of, you know, where he kind of walked around having to peer at everybody. And somehow when Arnold Meyer was for something you tried to help. And that’s an interesting contrast with Evelyn Dubrow because his style was so different that somehow just the respect that one had for him and the knowledge that he had or whatever he was arguing for, made an awful lot of different. Looking back there

a number of other issues, and I just don’t remember how they all came out: nursing homes overtime exemption, automobile overtime exemptions, logging exemption. I remember that one because that was a Wayne Morse. You know, here was Wayne Morse who was the great friend of organized labor except when it came to anything in Oregon he took care of his own. He was out there arguing that the strawberry workers really loved it and didn’t need more money and you know, you were going to eliminate the tradition of the individual loggers who were out there if you extended it down to firms that employed as few as two loggers or whatever the issue was and it was something like that. And now I see that we had, as I look at this file more, we actually had amendments that Pete Williams and Kennedy had together on the agricultural minimum wage. And of course that was not only because of the labor generally but because by this time we had some ties with Cesar Chavez and so on. So we had

actual amendments which were offered and they relate to the same things that I was talking about. They are variations on them. Some of them were packages of the 300 man-day and the

dollar thing. Some of them were just the 300 man-day alone. There were fallback positions in here. My recollection is that we probably lost all of them. If we got anything they would have been some of just the minor ones about [inaudible] or whatever. For example, one minor one was about workers subject to the Sugar Act of 1948. There was a provision in the bill as the House passed it that field workers whose wage rates are fixed by the Secretary of Agriculture under the Sugar Act would not be subject to the minimum wage. We wanted that out. We might have won that one. I don't know, it's just interesting to recall.... Here are some committee documents listing all the amendments that people had, and again the Kennedy and Williams amendments are listed here. Basically the 300 man-day test of $1.60 and also something about students. But I don't think we were very successful.

Now on the Puerto Rican situation…. Oh yes, I indicated that I was inclined to support the ILGWU and then I had learned a whole lot of

stuff from the Puerto Rican government in which.... I don't remember how it came out but....

HACKMAN: I think what happened was that they simply added language to the report so that the review system would be used with great restraint.

EDELMAN: Yeah, changing the definition of an industry that can apply for relief from a review committee.

HACKMAN: Promising that the problems won't reach the Secretary of Labor.

EDELMAN: Oh I see. And I was finally urging him to be with the House bill, whatever that provided. I don't know whether it's worth—I just don't think that I can really unravel it. I don't think it's terribly important, except insofar as it shows how you can get into a tangle between liberal friends. Because the Puerto Rican government he felt greatly loyalty to, felt great loyalty to Munoz [Luis Munoz Marin] and great loyalty to Dave Dubinsky. And not just loyalty but friendship to both. And it's the kind of issue where because, from his point of view, it really didn't seem to be the kind of thing one would live or die over and that his predilection would have been to just, you know, not to have to deal with it at all if possible. So it was one

where we were being mildly tugged on both sides by friends. I suppose the way we came out of it is probably that we forgot about it after awhile.

I see here that Evelyn Dubrow was saying Stulburg [Louis Stulberg] was going to try and call him, try to call Kennedy. The House bill must have not gotten rid of the review system entirely. Oh, I see. Yes, this year's bill in the House committee eliminated the hardship review committee and imposed automatic percentage increases of 12 percent in '67 and 16 percent more in '68.

HACKMAN: That was Powell's bill maybe.

EDELMAN: Powell in '68 successfully proposed putting the review committee back in on the floor. And what the ILGWU wanted was to take the review committees out. These were committees that could let—to which an industry could petition to let industry out of percentage increases that the 1961 amendments had acquired. And the Puerto Ricans had an economic study done which showed that just having automatic percentage increases in the minimum wage pursuant to the '61 law would drive 27,000 workers out of work. I rather think what happened is that probably he did tell Stalburg, as this memorandum suggests, that he would make the effort.

And he probably did make the effort in an unenthusiastic way and it probably failed. And I suspect that if you looked back at—it would be interesting if anybody listens to this and does any work on it—you would know by what came out of the committee, but I suspect the committee provision was probably the same as what the House had passed.

Tape I, SIDE II

This is about Orville Freeman and Robert Kennedy. And it has some importance historically, I suppose, in the contest that later on Kennedy became quite hostile to Freeman around the question of getting food to Mississippi and generally the food stamp and other feeding programs. But 1965 Freeman had a man called Jim Thornton who was himself a little bit of a hustler and may well have—the story I'm about to tell may well have been as much Thornton's doing as Freeman's. Thornton thinking as some fellow, as some people did, that Kennedy might be president some day and that he would have made a rather good investment. That may be too mean. In any

case, Freeman offered that we were going to make New York State a show place for all of his rural development ideas. And he had gotten some legislation out of the Congress called the rural community development service, which ultimately came to naught because Jamie Whitten [Jaime W. Whitten] kept denying any appropriations to run the thing. But the idea was that they were going to take the Farmers Home Administration and the extension service and the Soil Conservation Service and the 4-H and they were going to combine them into a massive rural community development thing. That's nice stuff. There's a question of whether

it really could be done and pulled off. And their idea was that in New York State we would have four pilot projects in which a variance on the way in which the combinations could be done with different ones of those agencies I mentioned being the lead agency in different regions of the state. So we had around Syracuse a very elaborate worked up seven

county model in which the extension fellows were taking the lead in the Catskills; a four-county grouping in which the Farmers Home fellows were taking the lead. And in each case the lead agency was instructed to involve the other agencies in developing a panoply of activities for rural non-farm development, which would do everything from help homemakers, to build houses, to deliver social services of various kinds of whatever. There was another place over in sort of Appalachian part of New York State where there was a demonstration pair of counties. And Thornton proudly flew me around New York State one time to see what was going on…. These were all, these were nothing that we had had to work on. I mean I had spent a fair amount of time with Thornton just trying to come to understand it, but these were Agriculture Department things and they were things that USDA was ordering these people and working with them in the state to do. And they were trying diligently trying to give Kennedy credit wherever they could; when they

would announce things and when they made grants and so forth.

And on that trip, which must have been sometime in ’65, there were a couple of events that were significant in my personal life. The first one was that we went to the home of some poor people in the Appalachian part, and it was the first time in my life that I ever saw poor people close up; you know, that I looked at people and said “Those are poor people.” I'm sure I’ve seen poor people on the street many times. And so you think about how recent my education is; 1965 was the first time I had ever gone into the rural shack of a chronically unemployed person who had worked in the mines or who had a small farm where they were barely eking out an existence. And where I smelled for the first time that characteristic stench there is in dilapidated houses: I don’t know exactly why it is because it was clean, but it’s something about rotting wood or rat feces or god knows what it is. But it’s an awful smell that I have smelled many times since then. The first time I just

didn’t know what it was.

The second thing was that another stop on the trip was to.... To back up a minute, one of the other reasons why there was interest in Freeman and so on was that the Cornell agriculture people had a superb lobby and had been down to see us very, very early, so we had sensed some reason to kind of try and know something more about agriculture. One of the things that they were interested in was some research money from USDA to deal with the poultry waste problem; that is to say, the chicken shit problem. And this was a very serious

problem in Sullivan County. Sullivan County is the location of Grossinger's [Catskills Resort Hotel] and all the Catskill resorts, the Concord and so on and also happens to be the largest egg farming area in New York State. The egg farmers are all Jewish by the way, which always struck me as amusing. And it seems that poultry wastes is a liquid substance which cannot be buried, it comes back to the surface, and cannot be used for fertilizer because it is liquid, and really

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cannot be stored. And a farm of twenty thousand chickens produces about as much feces in a week as a village of two thousand people so that there is a lot of chicken shit. And it happened there is that one time the previous summer a farmer had a whole barn full of chicken shit and the wall gave way and it rolled across the countryside and the people at Grossinger's and the Concord all smelled it, so it was urgent to do something about the poultry waste problem. And I worked with—I don't know, the Senator ever focused a great deal on this personally—the people from Cornell and the people at USDA to help them lobby to get their research grant to work on the poultry waste problem.

The other thing that was interesting, you get these rituals. Every year the Johnson Administration would propose to cut agricultural research money, and every year in fact it would be restored. But every year there was a ritual that had to be followed. The ag people, ag-school people would have to come to you and say, "This is

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terrible. You've got to help us." And the Senator would than write a letter to the chairman of the agriculture committee, the appropriations committee and say, "This is terrible. The people in my state are being hurt." And every year just at the right moment it would be restored and he would be enabled to call back people and say, "Look what I've done for you." Well, everybody knew it was a charade. I don't know why they went through it every year. I think finally o about the third year I was around I stopped playing the game, and of course the cuts were always restored anyway. But the first year I felt terribly virtuous and thought as if we had really affected the course of legislative history. So that's about all on.... Well, no let me just tie the loose ends. I don't know what those projects ever came to. For one thing the Agriculture department did run into money trouble with Jamie Whitten and just really never had any funds to pour into. For another thing, I suspect they found as time passed that

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it was rather hard to get their line agencies to work with one another and so we began to hear less and less about it as 1966 wore on. And then of course in April of '67 Kennedy went to Mississippi. Have we ever told that story for the tape?

HACKMAN: No, we talked about doing it. I really planned to do it next time. If you think you can do enough off the top of your head...

EDELMAN: No, we can wait until next time. But I'll just say to complete this one that starting at that point I remember quite well Kennedy coming out of Freeman's office and saying to me "You know, I really like Orville Freeman, and I don't understand why he gets so mad." And I don't understand why when we've seen hungry people why they can't be fed." And he got progressively, really until the end of his life, progressively more and more hostile to Freeman. And it gradually got to the point where he really would get after him in hearings.

HACKMAN: Okay. This is insanity bill material. You want to take a minute to go through some of that?

EDELMAN: Oh, yes. Well, there isn't much to talk about here. The Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and I think Irving Kaufman [Irving R. Kaufman] wrote the opinion...

HACKMAN: Right.

EDELMAN: ...wrote a decision earlier in 1966—I don't remember what month but...

HACKMAN: It was very early.

EDELMAN ... in which they broadened the standard for criminal responsibility that would apply in criminal trials in the federal district courts in the Second Circuit, which is really, you know, kind of like the so-called Durham rule that Judge Bazelon [David L. Bazelon] had adopted in the District of Columbia. And Kaufman pointed out—I assume his law clerk had found this—that this left a little lacuna, a little hole in the wall that if a person was committed for.... I guess the hold had always been there, but now there presumably were going to be more people acquitted on the grounds of insanity, and there was no provision in the federal law that if a person were acquitted on the grounds of insanity, and there was no provision in the federal law that if a person were acquitted on the grounds of insanity that anything could be done about it. If they could

be committed, it would presumably be left to the states to take action to find the guy, now who otherwise literally would be walking back out on the street, and take action to find him and commit him. So all this bill provided was that people that were acquitted in federal courts on grounds of insanity could be held in custody for a further time so that a hearing could be determined on whether they were dangerous to society and ought to be put away.

And that was really the whole thing and I spent, I would say, an inordinate amount of time on it in retrospect. And the only thing that can be said about the value of it was, in

addition to the fact that the bill was clearly something that should have been enacted, was that we then commenced to send the bill around to literally hundreds of law professors and law enforcement officials and judges all over the country for comment. And you know, I think that was the real value of it, is that in political terms of all these people thinking, “Gee, he’s a serious legislator.” Otherwise, the amount of time that I spent on it was simply the issue did not deserve it. Really, particularly

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as I look back on these statements and so on, it really just not worth it.

This illustrates another point. This bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee$_s$ and we were not on the Judiciary Committee. I suppose it may well be that since that time legislation along these lines have been enacted; I don’t know. I suppose. It’s the kind of issue that really is rather mechanical and if one simply waited the Judiciary Committee probably would have gotten around it on their own. But under the circumstances introducing legislation into a committee that we were not members of, that meant that we had to go and beg the subcommittee chairman to hold hearings on the bill in this case I believe it was Joe Tydings [Joseph D. Tydings].

HACKMAN: Right.

EDELMAN: And it turned out that Joe Tydings had ideas of his own. He wanted to get credit for it. He was not particularly responsive to the fact of our bill. And if I remember, it turned out that all of a sudden the bill with his name that did much the same thing

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appeared.

HACKMAN: Yeah. I think what happened was you co-sponsored his bill with him and he co-sponsored your bill with you.

EDELMAN: Oh that’s right. The next year in the Congress that began early in 1967 we did that. But the point is that it’s hard to have leverage over legislation that’s in a committee your not a member of. And really I think in retrospect it was probably a mistake for us to bother about this.

HACKMAN: When you say it didn’t merit the attention, do you mean it didn’t.... If it didn’t merit the attention on its own merits, did it merit the attention because it was something that he was pushing you on or that he was very interested in?

EDELMAN: Well, you know, let me answer the question this way. Irving Kaufman was a old friend of Joe Dolan’s [Joseph F. Dolan]. Irving Kaufman regarded himself

as terribly well connected politically. So after this decision when Irving Kaufman had made this marvelous, fantastic discovery that they left this great hole in the wall, he called up his friend Joe Dolan

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and said, "You must legislate to keep all these terrible, sick people from being left out on the streets." And Joe Dolan went to Robert Kennedy and said, "Well, what do you think?" Kennedy probably said, "Oh, well," or "Kaufman's okay," mumble, mumble, and told me to do it. And without any conception, I'm sure, of the amount of time that would be involved, and I'm sure that in retrospect if you look at the quality of the material that I prepared to go with it, I over killed on it. I spent more time than it deserved. And the thing that I should have done is I could have just taken it to legislative counsel and said, you know, "Here's this decision. Draft a bill," and, you know, and get the draft of the bill back and even if it was a crummy bill, drop it in with a couple of paragraphs. And that may have been all Kennedy had in mind. But he told me to come and go on this and I took it terribly seriously. And it probably took a week or two of my time to get the whole thing together and certainly later on. And then Kennedy would say, "Gee, you ought to get that bill around so that we can get some comment on it, get some interest on it

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so we can get it going." And I probably overreacted and spent a lot of time getting lists from places and so on. And just in terms of other things that there were to do and also places where he could be more effective, what we should have done what just take the whole thing in the first place that Joe Tydings and said, "Irving Kaufman sent this. Wouldn't you like.... Here's a nice one for you. Now you owe us this one." That's what I mean. I got drawn into it because Dolan without thinking, Kennedy without thinking and me without thinking—and at any point along the way it could have either not been done or done in a way that would cause much attention as it deserved, which was a lot less.

HACKMAN: A couple of other things that came up in '66 that again there's no folder on and I don't know if you're involved in at all. Do you ever talk with him about the dispute with Hoover [J. Edgar Hoover] over the wiretap thing? I know a lot of other people were sort of working on it for him.

EDELMAN: No. I talked with him some in '68 when it came up again but they never told me the truth about that one. They.... I guess it's in Victor Navasky's book; at least as close as anybody know what the truth is.

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HACKMAN: Yes. He's missing a few pieces but most of it's there.

EDELMAN: Okay, well, you've probably heard on a confidential basis, or at least until these things have been released, some more facts. But I have nothing to add.

HACKMAN: The Manchester [William R. Manchester] book [*The Death of a President*] suit. Any conversations at all on that at all?

EDELMAN: Peripheral. Again, if that's the sort of thing that maybe three years ago—but even then I doubt—I might have remembered something anecdotal.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Do you remember anything about trying to avert a newspaper strike in New York in April of '66? He makes a statement on it, I think.

EDELMAN: No.

HACKMAN: The power dispute is in '67. That's really all I... There may be a couple other things I find on '66 but may be the best thing to do—I don't know what your time schedule is today—is to just start talking from this list and see what else comes to mind in '66.

EDELMAN: Okay. Did we ever talk in these things about these three speeches in January of 1966?

HACKMAN: Yeah. One of them being the Ellen—no it's not the Ellenville [New York] speech. It's the three...

EDELMAN: Yeah, it's the three speeches.

HACKMAN: You wrote one and Adam wrote two. Yeah, we talked about that.

EDELMAN: Okay. Now, here you see January of '66, and I told

you on the New Haven Railroad that we started, the first thing I did in '65. So here a year later we have "ICC, New Haven Railroad, ICC delaying decision on New Haven Railroad," a thing that kept coming up. And it got to be it was one of my sentimental favorites; I would get to do something on the New Haven Railroad. Narcotics legislation. Did we talk about narcotics legislation?

HACKMAN: We talked about that.

EDELMAN: Okay. "Resumption of bombing of North Vietnam, Senate." That would be more Adam. The New York States Association of Towns, February 7, and

New York State Society of Newspaper Editors February 7. Did we ever talk about things like that?

HACKMAN: No.

EDELMAN: Okay that's worth a minute. There was—and that's a little bit like the Orville Freeman game that I mentioned a few minutes ago. We worked up and got to be very good at it after a while a kind of a rural development-suburban planning type speech which had in it the stuff about how at that time it was thought—of course, it's not true. But at that

time it was thought that the population of the country would double by the year 2000 and we would have to build—you've seen this many times—as many schools and hospitals and clinics in the next third of the century as we built in the entire history of this country; and ho it was necessary to plan, plan, plan. And there were always three or four proposals about how there should be multi-county planning and how if people would just plan they could reduce the number of units of government and reduce the fragmented—and we always had some good stuff that we got from, I guess, that Maxwell School or one place or another about how many units of government here were, how everybody always said the factory ought to be in the next town and we'll have the houses in our town. So these speeches on Feb. 7th were examples of that genre. And it was one that simply had to have that in your kit because you were constantly being invited to speak to the association of counties or you know, the association of towns or whatever it

was. I may be wrong about the Society of Newspaper Editors; he may have had something else for them. But that speech is one we worked over lots of times. I say lots of times probably you'll find some variant on it twelve or fourteen times during his Senate years.

Clark-Kennedy-Holland [Elmer J. Holland] Employment Service reform bill, February 24. I doubt I spoke about that before. Okay, that's another interesting one. That's how for no work you can piggyback on something. That's probably the first time that we discovered that Bill Smith [William Smith] was our friend. And of course, he got to be personally my good friend and certainly very close to Robert Kennedy too. He worked in the campaign as you know. But I don't remember exactly how it came up. I guess it was that Adam and I had had some ideas about changing the mission of the [United States] Employment Service and that we had gone to Clark's staff, Clark at that point in time being chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment,

Manpower and Poverty, and given him these ideas. And they have said, "Well, the Administration has this idea for an Employment Service reform bill, and we're rewriting it anyway. We'll put your ideas in it and you can be a major co-sponsor of the bill." And they did. And it was just Bill Smith being a nice guy, as he is, and also thinking they were good ideas. But being unlike most other people in the Senate, having enough lack of ego to be willing to say, "You know, those are your ideas. And I'm putting them in and you can have credit for them." So the bill got introduced and there was some attention to it as the Clark-Kennedy-Holland—I guess that's Spessard Holland [Spessard Lindsey Holland] of Florida. No, it's Elmer Holland, representative from Pennsylvania—Employment Service reform bill. And, you know, we got it on the cheap for absolutely no work at all. So sometimes you put in too much work, like the insanity bill, and sometimes you get equally as much attention for something like that. It turned out that that legislation went to hearings and so on—and it's not worth

spending a lot of time because it's there in the *Congressional Records*, but that's a good example of how even in the midst of the 90th, the great 90th Congress, admittedly the second year—no, 89th Congress, right?

HACKMAN: Right.

EDELMAN: 89th Congress. There were still some old way of doing business. That legislation came to the floor in—one of the salient aspects was to create a great deal more federalization of the employment services, more federal standards to govern state employment services and much more federal regulation. In the Senate, the more liberal body, everyone of those amendments was gutted. And the bill became meaningless. They dropped it; they didn't even both to take it to the House because they thought it was so silly. So that was not a happy ending to the story. But it just shows that state employment service people had tremendous sounds like varieties....

It would be interesting to check what this constitutional amendment testimony is

on March 9 in the Senate subcommittee. I just don't remember what that would have been about. Whether it was electoral reform....

HACKMAN: I don't know. I could check.

EDELMAN: You might, because that might be worth a minute. Now then, March 10, '66, he introduces the Hudson River legislation. That was a bill to create a Hudson River national waterway, which was kind of interesting, which Dick Ottinger [Richard Lawrence Ottinger] had worked on. And I guess it never went into effect. But it's just worth noting. I wouldn't know that much about it.

HACKMAN: Do you remember problems with Rockefeller on that?

EDELMAN: I guess so, I guess so. But I don't know the details well enough. It was something about he had his own commission that was come out with a recommendation.

HACKMAN: I used to have a friend in the general counsel's office in the Department of Transportation. He used to tell me the Rockefeller family, money or land was mixed up with there.

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EDELMAN: March 18, 1966, he goes to the University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama. We did talk about that? Oh, that's right. Most of these things are very piddling. He made an auto safety statement before the Senate Commerce Committee, but of course, that was after the—I'm quite sure it was after the whole Nader [Ralph Nader] bit so the major thing had happened; it was really no crisis. Ansley Wilcox House in Buffalo, making an historic museum out of it. Then we put in a—this one's kind of interesting. April 1st, introduction of the extension of dependent's medical care to cover mentally retarded dependents of servicemen. [Interruption].

HACKMAN: And I can't remember how much detail we went into.

EDELMAN: Well let me just do… if it's repetitive, so be it. That was known as Margo's bill. Margo [Margo Higdon] was Margo Cohen, now Margo Higdon who had worked for Walter Sheridan [Walter J. Sheridan] through the Hoffa [Jimmy Hoffa] period and who was a young woman intensely loyal to Robert Kennedy, and a case worker in the office. Certainly very bright but at the

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time not terribly sophisticated, since then much more so. And it the course of her case work she had discovered that military personnel couldn't get decent care for mentally retarded children. Of course, Kennedy had a great interest in mentally retarded children. In addition she discovered a man who really is one of the marvelous people that I met; a little old man in the Defense Department named Malcolm Warno and—have I talked about him?

HACKMAN: Yeah, you talked about how we kept supplying the stuff.

EDELMAN: Yeah, well than I've probably been through it. In any case, he really supplied all the stuff for this bill and did it all for us and he used to bring it on up. I don't know if they knew he was doing it or not—I guess they did know he was doing it. He was just so sweet and so wonderful, and of course it was good legislation. And

we got much of it—again it's that same point about not having control in the committee, but it was.... He kept us well enough informed and the timing was such

that when the Administration bill came up and we went and testified before John Stennis [John C. Stennis] and the Armed Services Committee, they took some of our stuff and put it into the bill.

HACKMAN: Yeah. There were even some that I think the Administration accepted ahead of time maybe even before it made its presentation to the committee.

EDELMAN: Yes. I think that's right. April 1st, '66, cigarette smoking, Senate. I don't know. Did we talk about cigarettes ever?

HACKMAN: We talked about cigarettes, but we didn't talk about it…. This is the second time it comes up, isn't it? Or is this the first time and it comes up again in '67? This is the first time and then it comes up again in '67, I believed.

EDELMAN: No, this one is actually an interim one. The first time it came up was in '65. Was that the cigarette labeling. Do you want to do that, talk about the later part or wait until you've had a chance to check into it?

HACKMAN: Why don't I wait and see what I can find in the folder on it.

EDELMAN: Okay. Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act of '66. I assume this relates to repealing the "Christmas tree" bill, doesn't it? Have we ever talked about that?

HACKMAN: No, we've never talked about that at all.

EDELMAN: No, that's not right. That comes in '67. Because we were arguing about that on the floor. The "Christmas tree" bill was at the end of '66. Yeah, and we were arguing about that on the floor. I remember I was out at poverty hearings in Albuquerque, and one reason why he didn't make the trip to Albuquerque was something about the dollar check off. I'm pretty sure that' right so this much have been an early statement on that.

HACKMAN: April, '66.

EDELMAN: Dirksen [Everett M. Dirksen] amendment. Bombing of North Vietnam. Oh, see here we come: ICC announcement of the Penn-Central merger, April 27,

1966. "Announcing hearings on federal programs for the handicapped," here we talked about that? That was one of our less brilliant ventures.

HACKMAN: This is the one that you warned him about, that the hearings would be dull hearings. It was the one that what's-his-name put together.

EDELMAN: Yeah. Frank Moore [Frank C. Moore].

HACKMAN: That's all you said.

EDELMAN: Well, he was, I think, relatively hot to have some hearings of his own. And Frank Moore was our APSA [American Political Science Association] fellow for the year. Adam and I interviewed a number of the possibilities and he seemed to be the best, and he had this interest in the handicapped, and Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] was willing to give us the subcommittee—we could be the acting chairman for holding these hearings. We had so few friends, and Ribicoff—like Joe Clark, Ribicoff was one of them and very, very nice. And his staff guy, Jerry Sonosky [Jerome N. Sonosky], who I have talked about in other contexts. So Frank Moore got all this stuff together and we held enough hearings so that there's a book somewhere, one of those green hearing books that's four or five hundred pages thick. But they were a crashing bore. We really did prove that

the vocational rehab agency was a mess and that handicapped people get shunted from one agency to another. But it didn't hold Kennedy's interest. We held the one set of hearings, he drifted away from it, nagged me for awhile about writing a report, I finally got Bob Wager [Robert Wager] on the Ribicoff subcommittee, between other things, to write a report. And that was the end of the matter. It's too bad; it could have been something. I mean it really was a kind of thing that's going to become an issue more and more now with things like the suits on the right of the mentally retarded to treatment. I think that people weren't ready to talk about the handicapped as a real issue at that time, except for a few professionals.

There's a May, early May, a bill discharging the state's obligation to repay dollars deposited under the act of June 23rd [1836]. That was something Arthur Levitt pointed out to us where they had had revenue sharing in effect in 1830's where there had been federal surpluses that they gave

away to the states.

HACKMAN: Sam Beer [Samuel H. Beer] tries to do something with that in his seminar on

state government.

EDELMAN: So we had a bill that was going to forgive the states. I must say that one thing I never learned was why bother to introduce a bill into a committee where you're not on the committee. If I ever have a reincarnation in the Senate, I'll understand that. I don't remember.

Judy Holiday memorial dinner was a health speech, which I wrote. LSD Senate Subcommittee Executive Re-Organization, that was the next thing we decided to do. The handicapped was boring, so we were going to get into narcotics. And in fact, we had some elaborate justification why narcotics was just part of our series of hearings on the handicapped—because people who take drugs are really handicapped. And if you look back at the statements that he makes at the beginning of the hearings, he really has to go in there and do that piece of gymnastics. Tom Dodd [Thomas J. Dodd] was furious because he regarded himself as having all turf over

drugs. And so we set up our hearings and announced the days and had the witnesses; and lo and behold, Tom Dodd announces hearings starting the day before and then going through the same days as our hearings, having many of the same witnesses that we were having only having them the day before and also trying to blanket us out during the days that we were having hearings. It was not, again, one of our better experiences because there wasn't a heck of a lot we could do about it, except that we got a fair amount of press with it. And I must say we brought out some interesting information about LSD long before anyone else did in terms of, you know, what the dangers were and weren't. And the major achievement was.... There was only on company, the Sandoz Pharmaceutical Company, that made LSD legally, I mean, manufactured it and put their name on it, and they had stopped. And LSD did have at the time a certain legitimate uses on schizophrenia and experimental uses with reference to personality disorders. And they

had stopped and so there was no legitimate source of LSD. And a lot of researchers were quite upset about that. With Jerry Sonosky's help, Kennedy extracted a promise from Sandoz that if the government would promise, to leave them alone they would undertake the manufacture of LSD again. That was the achievement of those hearings. But the substance of the hearings was well done in terms of saying things that you didn't hear said regularly about drugs for three or four years after that.

"Appointment of Frank Mankiewicz [Frank F. Mankiewicz], May 28, 1966." Did I ever say how Frank Mankiewicz came to us?

HACKMAN: If you did, I don't remember.

EDELMAN: Well, a word on that. He had been in the Peace Corps and had been one of

those who briefed Kennedy for his trip to Latin America, which of course was almost a full year earlier. And Kennedy had been very impressed with him and Adam particularly, very, very taken with him and kept on talking with him as he was writing that long Alliance for Progress speech. And so we were looking for a press secretary, and I think it was really Adam's idea. He brought Frank up and the Senator liked him. And Adam and I—I remember a long conversation—

really sold him on the job to be a press secretary. So he was hired.

Oh, gosh, it seems to me through all of this period we were having—it's not really reflected here; there's just a couple of statements where there's.... "Introduction of legislation amending the social security act, wider state discretion in the administration," and then later on a statement on recent New York State medical care legislation. Did we go through that, how I was dispatched to Albany?

HACKMAN: Yeah. We talked about that in some detail. Travia [Anthony J. Travia] and all that stuff.

EDELMAN: Okay. And we talked about the Veteran's hospital controversy?

HACKMAN: Right.

EDELMAN: June 8th, 1966, is the release of applaud of GSA turning over the Sunmount Veterans Hospital in New York State. See, and here we have statement June 28th on the state employment services bill in the Senate—I'll bet that's from me—starting to cut those bills to ribbons. The west front of the Capitol, that was always an issue. Senators from New York sure do get into a lot of stuff. Then on July 28th, "introduced social security

legislation increasing benefits and new financing." Have we been through that?

HACKMAN: No.

EDELMAN: In very early 1965, Jack Conway [Jack T. Conway]—is this new ground?

HACKMAN: Yes.

EDELMAN: Jack Conway came too—I guess maybe Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] called up first. In any case, Jack Conway came with Leonard Lesser to see Kennedy, to get a speech to the National Conference on the Aging, and with the proposition that the aged could be a very good subject for Kennedy. And he was quite

right; he had it all worked out that Kennedy would give this speech and then a year later he would introduce major social security amendment legislation, that it would take a year for the proposals he made in his speech to percolate around. Leonard Lesser was the general counsel for the Industrial Union Department of which Conway was the executive director. So Kennedy went and gave that speech. I drafted it with help from Lesser and I don't remember what other people—probably some others who worked were not in

shown: the show. Which essentially called for 50 percent across the board increase in social security benefits and a $100 minimum payment, $150 for couples, and a number of other reforms. And sure enough the old people loved it and we developed a certain constituency about it. It was very, very wise—very, very wise because the, you know, you always had, from a political point of view, from his earliest time in the Senate, he had a strong old people position. And a lot of this I didn't really understand at the time, but it was an important building block for a presidential run. Very important.

And then when we came to introducing the legislation, I started working on it in early '66, I sort of literally looked through my notes from the past year and found the tickler that it was time to start work on this point again and said, "All right, you made the speech last year. Do you want to go ahead and do a bill?" And he said yes. And I worked very closely with a man named Alvin David at the Social Security Administration.

And I must say that was almost the only incidence where we ever got major cooperation out of the government agencies in the time we were in the Senate. And I take it that's not usual; that Democratic senators, senators of the same party as the Administration, usually get cooperation. But clearly from a very early time the word was out from Johnson that agencies were not supposed to cooperate with us. At the time, I just thought well, they're just bureaucrats and they're busy. But it was so repeated and so regular that of course later on, by in fact close to this time in 1966, the break was quite clear and it was quite evident and understandable. But the Social Security Administration always took a very professional position about it. And they were slow, but they responded. You know, it was a combination of "We want this, this and this in the bill. Can you draft finally language that to deposit does it?" And, you know, "Do you think that's a good idea?" Which they would sort of respond to as well. Later on someone sent me a memorandum that Alvin

David, who was an assistant commissioner of social security had sent to somebody or other saying something like, "I know it's a great burden but we had better cooperate because this fellow Edelman is keeping on giving us pressure." I wasn't aware I was being such an effective nudge. So the bill was a very good bill. It was very competently put together because we had the government agency help. It was far—well, I won't say far and away, but

it was certainly one of the most sophisticated pieces of legislation that Kennedy ever introduced. In addition to providing a 50 percent across the board increase, it really bent the whole—it was rather ingenious—it bent the whole pattern benefits so that they were more skewed to the lower end. It was kind of redistributive as well. And we had spent a lot of time designing that, and this new minimum. And then there were other things, many of which have been enacted into law since that time: Making the widows' benefit 100 percent, Medicare coverage for disabled people...

HACKMAN: How much expectation then that it could pass? Any real sense in making a great effort at it, or...

EDELNIAN: No, the sense that the bill was deliberately five years ahead of its time and that it would be something we that we could keep on pointing to as the Kennedy bill.... Oh, the major thing, which I left out, was that it provides for one-third revenue financing of social security. And that's of course the one thing that hasn't happened. We said then that the payroll tax had reached a ceiling. And they have since raised social security benefits, I think if you include this past year, by close to 50 percent that we advocated, in the total increases since that time. The 20 percent increase this past year really meant that the social security increases have gone quite beyond the cost of increases in the cost of living and there really has been a tremendous increase in the real income of social security recipients. But the one thing we did was we said one-third of it would come out of general revenues. And if you look back, there was historical justification for it. The framers of the original society security at had said, had contemplated that after thirty years that system would be sufficiently loaded

up with beneficiaries coming in to collect that you'd have to have partial general revenue financing. That's the one thing that was really the biggest most visionary part and the one thing that hasn't come hear coming to pass. As I say, it was, certainly in the presidential campaign, all older citizen groups knew about the bill. I mean, he just had easy entre talking to older citizens. And also we had a built-in press release for every primary state because all we had to do was—you know, our old people's program was so well developed.

August 15, "problem of cities, Committee on Government Operations." Of course that's the beginning of the Ribicoff hearings.

HACKMAN: We talked about that.

EDELMAN: The Hudson River Compact bill comes up again September 7 and 13, which we talked about earlier that year. Turkey Day, Worthington, Minnesota.

HACKMAN: Now he is out campaigning, right, starting to campaign in the fall.

EDELMAN: Yeah. But doesn't Dean Markham [Dean F. Markham] get killed

somewhere there? Something happened there. There's a U of Vermont Burlington speech....

HACKMAN: I've got the date on that, let me just check.

EDELMAN: And my recollection is that that's when Dean Markham got killed.

HACKMAN: September 24 Dean Markham is killed with George Skakel [George Skakel, Jr.].

EDELMAN: Funny, the event sticks in my mind. I just remembered that Vermont speech was one that had never been given.

HACKMAN: Let's see, you're up working on O'Connor's [Frank D. O'Connor] campaign fairly soon, aren't you?

EDELMAN: Yes, indeed.

HACKMAN: And we talked about that.

EDELMAN: Oh, yeah, and then that nursing home bill. I had forgotten about that. October 14, 1966. Now I can't remember where the hell I got the stuff for that. I guess that was our Dr. Gene McCarthy [Eugene G. McCarthy].

HACKMAN: Yeah, we talked about that.

EDELMAN: Well, of course, you've got nuclear weapons. Oh, the California, Berkeley speech. Campaigning for Edith Green and so forth.

December 10, '66, Bedford-Stuyvesant gets announced. Yeah, that's about it on '66. You know, there are little things in here. December 18, '66, the D.C. General Hospital. That was kind of an ongoing thing; D.C. General Hospital is a relative hellhole. I was working with the committee staff from the D.C. Committee to go out there and try to stir up some embarrassment so that they would do something about it. We held some hearings at one point and Kennedy, you know, was his usual tough self at getting after them. St. Francis Hospital in New York City, there was some controversy about a hospital they were tearing down in the South Bronx.

HACKMAN: For somebody who does, we hope, finally read all these things, how do you think your own view of what you were doing on these days and what Robert Kennedy was all about, has changed in the last three years? Do you think there is any measurable change in that that will have much of an impact on what you are saying in the next couple of interviews as we wind this thing up?

EDELMAN: Well, I think in general I took myself a great deal more seriously about a lot of the smaller pieces than I do now in retrospect. Part of that is—I mean there were some things that I still think are important that were going on then which in retrospect I wish I had done more about. And I think that the Ribicoff hearings were very interesting. I don't know that there was much more I could have done: I covered them, I prepared questions for them and so on. But I guess I think that I didn't have as good a nose for the kind of legislative activity that he might have engaged in as I should have had or as I would have now. There is a certain sense here that kinds of legislation that I got drafted were all, you know, there was no particular theme or focus on them, a piece here and a piece there. I'm being a little hard on myself. That social security legislation was important, was very important, and I'm proud of that. The drug legislation in '65—of course I had great help from Paul Laskin [Paul L. Laskin] on that—was, I think,

important at the time in the sense it was ahead of its time. You know, with the nursing home construction bill, we knew that Teddy was carving out the health area; I don't know what business I really had spending a lot of time creating health legislation a lot of time creating health legislation for Robert Kennedy. He wasn't that interested in it. Sure, it did him some political good, and in fact I can point to—as I may have in another interview—I can point sometimes.... At least it was our committee, so on the partnerships for health amendment in 1967 we really could go in.... You know, with so little effort on those things, you could go in in the morning on the subcommittee markup and say, you know, "We'd like to do this, this and this." And as long as they were kind of word changes and so on, you get them. And I just don't think that I saw those kind of opportunities often enough. We really should have been looking at education a lot more. Adam got some amendment in the Elementary and

Secondary [Education] Act of 1965, which I don't even remember what it was. But, hell, I mean, we were on the education subcommittee and we should have been looking at the higher education legislation and the education legislation. We really should have said, "All right, what is the major jurisdiction of the committees that we sit on?" And I think another thing that was probably, from a legislative point of view, a handicap but not a mistake, was sitting on the Government Operations Committee, because he certainly got magnificent

exposure sitting on the Ribicoff subcommittee, the Nader hearings, the cities hearings and so on—So that he knew exactly what he was doing being on the committee. But that meant.... You know, if you're on that committee that means it has certain implications for your legislative record. And of course, all of that is by way of saying that, you know, he wasn't a senator that was particularly interested—I mean, he wanted to do it, sure, but he had other things he wanted to do—in getting 80,000 bills enacted.

Anyway, I'm wandering. I think in retrospect it's mainly that, gosh, I thought it was so tremendously every minute seriously important. And I just know that an awful lot of it.... I mean, now that I look through this list at some of the things, I just have to laugh at a lot of Mickey Mouse.

HACKMAN: How about your estimation of him?

EDELMAN: My estimation of him remains—not only remains high but, if it's possible, it goes up. It has to go up in the context of what has happened in the country since that time. And I'm just.... The more I see.... And the level of simple decency, that's a rare commodity now, certainly in terms of, you know, the insights and the talents that he had, but always because they were directed constructively. Everyday it's clear it's a greater loss to the country. Now in a somewhat more detailed way than that, I don't see him being to kind of cook—and mostly you have to understand, probably in talking about myself too—until he starts to hit it in late '66, somewhere maybe past the middle of '66. You know, you get—'65, he's felling his

way, he goes to South America, has triumphant—but to what end and to what significance; it's not clear. Early '66, those speeches where I frankly think Adam and I were way out ahead of him but he just went and delivered them. He was much more concerned with that, oh, I guess it was the first speech was inappropriate to the audience. Then you have the March '66, the Cesar Chavez thing, which I think had great effect on him; the South Africa visit, which I think had a great effect on him in June of '66. And you being to get this blossoming, this real connecting up in his head between the various kinds of oppressed people—which may have been there before latently, but now it connects up. And you get the profound effect of Newark and Detroit on him in the summer of '66. I remember sitting around the swimming pool discussing what he should do, at this house. And some of those speeches that he gave after that are far and away the classiest speech that any national politician gave in terms of understanding what

was on people's minds and why they did what they did. And of course that sort of rhetorical adventure being by capped by the Berkeley speech to some extent, which at the time was really fantastic, [inaudible]. And the Ribicoff hearings during that period of time were affecting him—people were coming in, Bob Coles [Robert Coles] and others. The negotiations around Bedford-Stuyvesant all fit in there. I mean all of these pieces come together so it's beginning to have some sensitivity for the urban poor. He's going around the country and seeing some of the rural poor. And then you get it all kind of—and of course the war is overlaid on here and he is becoming more and more and more.... He made that power and responsibility speech, the fox in the chicken coop speech, way back in early '66. But again it's building up and he's becoming more and more disillusioned about the whole thing and more and more ready to say, you know, not just the kind of restrained thing that, pointing out to the president of the United States that the negotiation means

compromies or settlement means compromise, but now beginning to question the whole moral basis. And then you know, you get '67 getting down to Mississippi and getting into the hunger thing and what that did to him and seeing those things he was terribly moved in April of '67 when you saw those starving children in America with protruding bellies and abdominal hernia and sores that wouldn't heal. And he said, walking from one house to another, "I've never seen anything in this country. I've seen it abroad but never in...." And so you just get—his stature coming up all the time and, you know, the identification with the oppressed.

HACKMAN: That's not inconsistent with the way you sort of summed it up a couple years ago, characterizing '65 and '66.

EDELMAN: Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW #7]

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