

Jacqueline Kennedy Oral History Interview – JFK#4, 3/23/1964
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy was the wife of President Kennedy; First Lady (1961-1963). In this interview Kennedy discusses the formation of the Cabinet, life in the White House, John F. Kennedy's [JFK] plans post-presidency, and her White House staff, among other topics.

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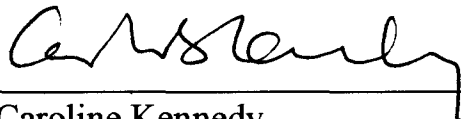
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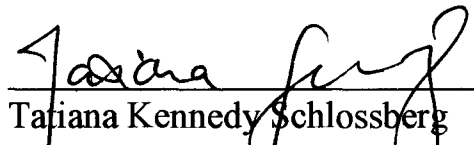
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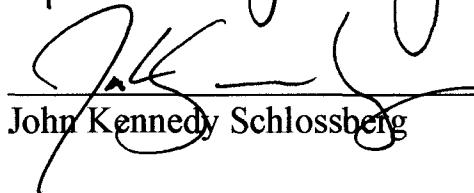
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Jacqueline B. Kennedy – JFK #4

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Fourth Oral History Interview

with

JACQUELINE B. KENNEDY

March 23, 1964

By Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

For the John F. Kennedy Library

SCHLESINGER: I think we stopped last time at Hyannis Port on the day of the election. You stayed there for a couple of days, as I recall. I know Mary and I came down for a luncheon on the Friday after the election.

KENNEDY: I didn't realize that was after the election.

SCHLESINGER: And then I think on that afternoon you went to Palm Beach.

KENNEDY: I guess Jack went to Palm Beach and I went back to Washington because I was going to have John any minute.

SCHLESINGER: That's right.

KENNEDY: So, he must have gone to Florida for a couple of days for a rest, then he'd come back to Washington. Yes, and then when he came back Thanksgiving, he was back and forth all the time, and then Thanksgiving he came back. We drove all down to the country that day around Middleburg to look for a house to rent and then he went back that evening and I had John late that night.

SCHLESINGER: What was the date of John?

KENNEDY: It was November 25th -- it was Thanksgiving Day. So then he came back that night -- you now just turned around his plane -- and then he stayed at our house in Georgetown all the time sort of forming his Cabinet and everything and marching over to the hospital about three times a day.

SCHLESINGER: What do you remember about the formation of the Cabinet?

KENNEDY: Well, it's rather difficult because I was in the hospital all the time so I'd just see, you know, all those people, pictures of them all standing in the snow outside our house and he'd come over and tell me about some of them -- McNamara and everyone. I remember when we went down to Florida December 20th, Dean Rusk came that first night. It was just Jack and I there then. We had dinner alone with him. And then I think Jack was either trying to get him then or had Dean Rusk accepted and they were talking.

SCHLESINGER: The President was for a long time uncertain as between Rusk and Bill Fulbright.

KENNEDY: That's right and I remember the -- yeah. Then that conference in Florida where Caroline walked in with her shoes on. That was when Senator Fulbright was there, I suppose to tell him he couldn't be or something?

SCHLESINGER: I think that Bobby was opposed to Fulbright on the ground that Fulbright -- because of his position on segregation wouldn't be hot for Africa.

KENNEDY: What do you think? Do you think it's too bad Fulbright wasn't chosen?

SCHLESINGER: My personal view is yes.

KENNEDY: Me too.

SCHLESINGER: How did Rusk strike you? The President had not known Rusk before.

KENNEDY: No. Well, he struck me -- he was very quiet -- you know, they were talking -- I just sort of stayed for dinner and then went back to bed. You see, that's the time that I won't be very good on because I was really quite weak and we had one little bedroom in the back of the house and then the Kennedys all came back and then you know, it was just a madhouse. So, I'd really see Jack in our room -- I was really in bed most of the time. Dean Rusk, he just struck -- you know, I thought he was -- he seems to have -- be a rather compassionate man. I've always thought that about him and I didn't -- I don't know. When you meet him you think much more of him than when you know things he could have done and wasn't doing.

SCHLESINGER: That's absolutely right because he gives the impression of great intelligence and he's always awfully good in just finding a situation but much less good in saying what should be done about it.

KENNEDY: He was terribly scared to make a decision. This sort of -- you know, I think what you really need is a strong Secretary of State. I can't remember, we did speak about that in the tape before -- but how it used to drive Jack crazy in the White House -- how he'd ask for some routine answer to something the Russians had done -- I think this was after Vienna. It was taking six weeks to get it out or eleven drafts and he used to say, 'Bundy and I do more work in the White House in one day than they do over there you know, six months. Dean Rusk seemed to be overtaken by that apathy and fear of making the wrong decision that so many people of the State Department have. So, he really turned out not to be so satisfactory. But -- Jack he was loyal, and you know, Jack just felt a terrible guilt -- I mean, he wondered -- I know I told you this before, how he could get him out the next time without hurting him.

SCHLESINGER: No, you told me, but not on the tape, so go ahead.

KENNEDY: Well, he was always wondering who he could have a Secretary of State the next time. You know, he was toying with so many people in his head. McNamara was one -- but that wasn't really definite -- Bundy -- but just someone strong there. And then he would feel so badly about Dean Rusk and I'd say, 'Couldn't he go back to the Rockefeller Foundation,' and Jack would say, 'No, no, you know, he's really cut his bridges there.' And he felt so -- you know, he was so kind he didn't want to hurt the man but he just knew something had to be done there. And now, I keep reading in the papers -- I don't know if it's true or not -- that Lyndon loves Dean Rusk, so.

SCHLESINGER: I think Johnson will find the same thing that -- the trouble is the contrast between Rusk and McNamara, because McNamara always has the capacity first to control his own department and then to make recommendations, speak about things with clarity, come up with ideas and get things done. I think the President used to feel if only he had a McNamara instinct.

KENNEDY: There were so many things he was going to do. I was just thinking, he was going to get rid of J. Edgar Hoover -- who's just been signed up again. The next tape we do I'll have a list because I wrote them down the other night -- about five, six things he was going to do this time and you know, they've all been done the wrong way.

SCHLESINGER: McNamara was absolutely new. I don't think the President ever had met him, had he before?

KENNEDY: No, and he told me McNamara asked him one thing. They came in for

their little conference in our tiny Georgetown house and the first thing McNamara asked him was, 'Did you really write *Profiles in Courage*?' and you know, Jack said he had and which again shows -- you know, that's why I told you I was so angry at Ted Sorensen, that just seed of doubt. And then McNamara really had this worship for Jack, and then he said, well fine, he'd love to be it.

SCHLESINGER: He was offered the Treasury, I think, originally.

KENNEDY: Was he? I know that Lovett was offered his choice between State, Defense and Treasury, and he couldn't take either and Jack said, you know that really is quite a tribute to a man to think that he could have any of those three, but he just was too sick. And then the big thing with Governor Stevenson wanting State but telling you that he had to have the U.N. That was rather -- I can remember Jack telling me about that.

SCHLESINGER: How was he -- did that give him a lot of difficulty? -- the President -- or was he rather amused by it all?

KENNEDY: You know, it was unpleasant. I mean, he didn't like it -- having to do it or anything, but he wasn't going to give him the State Department. I remember right after -- the earliest times when we spoke of it, you know that Governor Stevenson would get the UN and not State which he wanted. But it's sort of unpleasant to have to tell someone that. And I remember their conference on the doorstep was rather vague or Stevenson said he didn't have anything to say, or something funny -- you can go back and find out what it was. It wasn't -- you know --

SCHLESINGER: Why do you suppose he decided not -- against Stevenson for State?

KENNEDY: Why should he give him -- I suppose in a way it was partly -- you know Stevenson had never lifted one finger to help him. But yet it wasn't just bitterness or that because look at all the people Jack took who had been against him or for someone else. He knew -- he thought that man had a real disease of being unable to make up his mind and Stevenson irritated him. I don't think he could have borne to have him around every day coming in complaining as Secretary of State about something. I mean, it would have been an awfully difficult relationship and you know, I think it would have just driven Jack crazy -- I really don't think Stevenson would have been as good as Fulbright. I don't think he would be terribly different from Dean Rusk -- maybe he would.

SCHLESINGER: I think also -- I think one thing was in his mind was the purpose of having people who'd be -- who'd have strength on the Hill for the measures. I think that's the one reason why Fulbright appealed to him -- because he thought -- felt the Senate knew Fulbright would mean they'd have confidence.

KENNEDY: Oh, yeah. Poor Fulbright. If only he'd been there to -- then Lyndon would like him and everything. And Fulbright was -- yes, he was right. I remember he was the one -- probably the only person who agreed with Jack -- or who was against the Bay of Pigs?

SCHLESINGER: That's right. The only one who spoke out against it firmly at one of the meetings.

KENNEDY: Yeah. Though apparently at the second meeting he thought it might be all right but you know, he sort of agreed at the end. But still -- I think a lot of Fulbright.

SCHLESINGER: When did Dillon come into the picture?

KENNEDY: Sometime around then -- but again, I was in the hospital.

SCHLESINGER: But you'd known the Dillons in Washington.

KENNEDY: Oh, yes.

SCHLESINGER: But not terribly well, I gather.

KENNEDY: Not terribly well, but as well as we knew anyone, I mean, we'd been to their house for dinner a few times and you know, I knew Phyllis Dillon. They were one of the few people whose house we went to dinner to -- occasionally, a sort of friend, but never terribly close. And now I'd say of all the Cabinet once we were in the White House they were really our best friends. The only ones we really saw in the evening or at our private parties were them and McNamara -- the McNamaras. But we just -- the Dillons were the only ones we ever had dinner with -- just the four of us -- and McNamaras and the Dillons would come to the private parties -- dances and things.

SCHLESINGER: Did putting Bobby in the Cabinet cause all of --

KENNEDY: Oh, that was awful because -- I suppose that was Mr. Kennedy completely. Bobby told me that once after November, weeks before we left the White House. He said it was Mr. Kennedy who really did it and he said that Bobby didn't think it would be good for Jack and Jack could see the problems it presented though he never would say that to Bobby. And Bobby really went into this sort of slump that people say he was in since Jack's death -- he didn't know what he wanted to do and again he wanted to go away and teach. He just didn't want it. Finally -- he'd keep saying no, he hadn't decided -- or this or that -- finally one day Jack just called him in and said you have to or something and it was decided. Then Eunice was pushing -- you know, that's very nice of -- that shows you what Bobby is like and how he was doing everything he could to

get out of it whereas Eunice was pestering Jack to death to make Sarge head of the HEW because she wanted to be a Cabinet wife. It shows you -- you know, some people are ambitious for themselves. Bobby wasn't.

SCHLESINGER: What do you think the President would have had in mind for Bobby if not the Justice -- bringing him into the White House in some way or --

KENNEDY: I don't know. But I mean, he was so used to working with Bobby and having him just sound out decisions with so I suppose it might have been on that -- you know, some way -- domestic -- sort of like Bundy only not -- I don't know. I think he always wanted Bundy for Bundy's job, didn't he? Or did he decide that after?

SCHLESINGER: I think he must have always had it in mind. He decided it sort of in December. He was absolutely definite that he wanted Mac down with him and I think in the first of December down in Palm Beach he decided he would be the man for that job.

KENNEDY: And -- oh, but that job really changed completely the way Jack and Bundy made of it, didn't it?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, it was much more. It had been a rather routine job with people like Gordon Gray and so on. It became, partly because of Mac's ability and partly because of Rusk's weakness it became --

KENNEDY: Jack saw he needed that?

SCHLESINGER: It became much more of a job.

KENNEDY: And just the way he saw he needed to get General Taylor there after the Bay of Pigs, he sort of created this job. One other thing I was going to tell you -- oh, one thing in Florida that I can remember about the interregnum that was rather a painful day. It was when Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. came down and Franklin told me Mr. Kennedy met him at the airport and said, 'If it wasn't for some Italian in New York, we'd all be working for you now,' meaning Carmine. You know, again Mr. Kennedy's charm -- oh, no, no, no, that was before West Virginia -- sorry. That's what he said to Franklin to get him to help in West Virginia. But Franklin wanted to be Secretary of the Navy and McNamara said that he couldn't have him. Franklin always thinks that Henry Ford told McNamara he couldn't have him -- some convoluted reasoning there -- I don't know what it is. So it was very hard for Franklin, you know, to tell him that. But he took it so sweetly.

SCHLESINGER: I wonder why Bob had that feeling?

KENNEDY: I do think it might have been -- Henry Ford or McNamara saw -- you know, had a meeting with Franklin -- his mind was sort of set against him a bit before. I think Franklin would have been all right.

SCHLESINGER: I think Franklin would have been a very good Secretary of the Navy. Franklin is bright and is capable of hard work and I think he's -- all I hear is the good job in Commerce.

KENNEDY: And that job that Franklin got -- so Jack felt terribly about Franklin. He offered him Ambassador to Canada, Ambassador to Italy, every time anything -- this was in the months after the Presidency and before, anytime he could think of anything, because he knew he really owed so much to Franklin and Franklin said, no, he just would use these years to make some money and keep his Fiat -- and then one -- I guess it was last winter -- we were at the Roosevelts for dinner and I guess this Under Secretary of Commerce job had come up because after dinner Franklin and Jack disappeared into an upstairs bedroom about an hour and a half and Franklin had been, I guess, telling Jack how much he wanted it. So, on the way home in the car Jack was so happy to see -- you know, at last there was something Franklin wanted. Then he was made it.

SCHLESINGER: How about Udall? Had you known him at all?

KENNEDY: No really. You know, just the way I knew all the Senators. But I know I think he was the one Jack always wanted for that, don't you?

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

KENNEDY: Because Jack owed him a lot for Arizona which he took away from Lyndon and brought to Jack. And he was bright and he really was -- I mean, Jack said he was one of the best Secretaries of the Interior. You know, he really cares about conservation and all that. So I knew he was always planned -- oh, yeah, who was it for Agriculture? There were three people -- Herschel, does that make sense?

SCHLESINGER: Herschel Newson?

KENNEDY: Herschel something, and Docking was it?

SCHLESINGER: Docking was the Governor of Kansas.

KENNEDY: We knew him, we'd stayed with them. And some Her -- well, Herschel Loveless, is that it?

SCHLESINGER: Herschel Loveless, yes, the former Governor of Iowa.

KENNEDY: Yeah. But Jack didn't like him much -- I don't think. Anyway, he made things rather difficult. Oh yeah, when he came, you know, when Jack interviewed him, I guess he just had no ideas or was just -- I know Jack was really depressed after that. And he loved Orville Freeman. I don't know if he was always wanting Orville Freeman or how Orville Freeman came up?

SCHLESINGER: Orville gave the nominating speech in Los Angeles.

KENNEDY: But I mean, I wonder why Jack just didn't make him that in the beginning.

SCHLESINGER: Orville didn't want it. Orville wanted to be Attorney General or to be Secretary of the Army for some reason and he just had the sense that the agricultural problem was insoluble and I think that was, to my recollection, that was the last Cabinet office filled.

KENNEDY: I know at the Convention Jack was promising everyone Agriculture, wasn't he? I mean a couple of people like Loveless and --

SCHLESINGER: I think he was -- particularly Middle Westerners.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: To sort of flourish before them.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: Hodges?

KENNEDY: Well, I don't remember any problem or anyone else they were considering besides Hodges. Who found Hodges? I think it was Sargent. I don't know, it didn't set your mind aflame. I think maybe Jack thought he needed someone older.

SCHLESINGER: Nice old man, a Southerner --

KENNEDY: A Southerner -- business would trust, or something. So -- and I can't remember any comments he ever made on what kind of Secretary of Commerce Hodges was.

SCHLESINGER: And then Ed Day as Postmaster General.

KENNEDY: Oh, yeah. I don't know why he was chosen either, do you?

SCHLESINGER: They wanted a Californian.

KENNEDY: Oh, yeah. Well, he was the one Cabinet member I really thought was third rate. I mean, I don't know about being Postmaster General, you know, just corny -- I don't know. I never thought much of him.

SCHLESINGER: Now, all the members of the Cabinet, really the only ones the President knew moderately, besides Bobby, were Douglas, and I guess, Stewart Udall.

KENNEDY: And Freeman.

SCHLESINGER: And Freeman. But Rusk and McNamara, Hodges, Day, of course, Arthur Goldberg.

KENNEDY: Oh, yeah.

SCHLESINGER: Goldberg was an old friend.

KENNEDY: Yes, and I think, you know, he knew Goldberg -- I mean, there was never any doubt in his mind that he wanted Arthur for that job. And, I remember how sad he was when the appointment came for the Supreme Court, though he thought Wirtz was wonderful -- a wonderful man. It was the sort of the way McNamara and Gilpatric worked together in Defense. You know, he really hated to lose Arthur in Labor but he really cared about his appointments to the Supreme Court and he said, 'Oh, God, I'll hate to lose him.' Now Arthur just thinks he's -- I don't know -- just the way all the Supreme Court Justices get to think of themselves. I was so amazed that Arthur would rule that way -- and that bill that just came -- that thing that just passed where you can write anything about people in public office. And Arthur would even say you could do it with deliberate malice -- he was one of the three who were for that. When you think, ads like that in the paper was partly what killed Jack. They get so detached from life up in the Supreme Court. It's just this atmosphere of just reverence. But still, Arthur Goldberg's brilliant. But he talks more about himself than any man I've ever met in my life.

SCHLESINGER: Has that always been so or is it --

KENNEDY: Well, in the early days when he used to come for breakfast all the time the labor bill -- they were obviously talking about the labor bill. But ever since -- I really started to see much of Arthur Goldberg was after the Presidency. And I was really horrified. But I mean, I know he's brilliant. I just think it's such a shame to be so pleased with yourself.

SCHLESINGER: Apart from Rusk and from Day the President was fairly well satisfied with the Cabinet.

KENNEDY: Yeah, I don't think he cared about Day one way or the other because I don't know -- is the Post Office Department a big problem?

SCHLESINGER: No, I think Day ran it perfectly competently.

KENNEDY: Yeah, Day was just sort of a -- I don't know -- he was always being in little skits at the Multiple Sclerosis Ball. I just thought he was silly. But, that was me and I never really discussed him with Jack. I don't think he thought much of him.

SCHLESINGER: One of the interesting things is the President's instinct for people because his capacity to pick people whom he knew rather slightly. Even Loveless and McCloy, for example, he hadn't known them much more before, had he?

KENNEDY: I don't think so. I mean, he'd obviously known them, but not terribly well, I know, and he could tell so much by talking to them though I guess -- I guess -- well, Dean Rusk he made a mistake but as you say, Dean Rusk comes over so marvelously when you're talking to him. You think he can save the world.

SCHLESINGER: That would be his -- how would he go about sizing them up? He'd talk to them, that would be the main thing, of course, then he would get a lot of reports from Sarge.

KENNEDY: Yeah. He'd have all these reports and things and things that other people would say about them and then they'd come. It's like an interview if you're going to be accepted in a school or something. I mean, he'd be in that living room with them for a couple of hours and they'd just talk.

SCHLESINGER: Did he ever describe what they talked about?

KENNEDY: Well, it was such a hard time for him, those busy days. And then when he'd come over to see me in the hospital, you know. Sort of, he would -- Later, I told you what he said about McNamara and I know how disillusioned he was -- I told you -- with Loveless. Just certain -- you know, who had no solution to the farm problem, no original thoughts. The others, I should have asked him all that. You know, it'd be -- it's when you live with a man who's so busy and everything, you don't want to just question him, question him, at the end of the day. So you pick it up by what he's telling someone else or what he wants to tell you -- though I might have been dying to know. I'll remember more later. Now my mind has gone so blank about so many things that I know I remember before.

SCHLESINGER: It'll come back. What gave him the most trouble besides Franklin and Stevenson in that period? Do you remember anything else in which he seems to have had a problem?

KENNEDY: No. I remember, did I say it before about him getting Clark Clifford to do that reorganization thing? He was very -- it wasn't trouble -- that was something he was very pleased with. Did I say that in the tape before?

SCHLESINGER: No, you haven't.

KENNEDY: Well, right after he was elected he got Clark Clifford. I think he asked Clark way before election, saying, if I get elected you must be prepared, you know, right away to do this transition thing. So, Clark had been looking into it, you know, making great things so that everybody who was appointed to something spent those months between November and January literally at the desk of their -- of the man they would succeed. And he said that that -- there'd never been such a, you know, well done transition. He was thinking about that way before he was even elected.

SCHLESINGER: What were your own thoughts about getting in the White House?

KENNEDY: It's funny, I used to think -- I used to worry about going into the White House. This was before the campaign started or it got so close. You know, thinking all the things anyone thinks. It'll be a goldfish bowl, the Secret Service, I'll never see my husband. Then once Jack was nominated and everything then you were so happy for him. And then once you got in it, I mean, you were just so happy for him, and then you find out -- then you found out that, you know, it was really the happiest time of my life. It was when we were the closest -- I didn't realize the physical closeness of having his office, you know, in the same building and seeing him so many times a day. There was always a great tension living there but I used to -- I remember thinking in the White House what was the matter with me that I spent so much time worrying, would it ruin our marriage to get in the White House. And here it was so happy. And then I thought you never can know what will be the best for you. Then once we were in the White House I used to worry all the time about getting out of it. I mean, I used to think, what will you do with Jack who will be 51 when he leaves. This caged tiger who's, you know, such a young age still able to do so much. And sometimes I used to ask him about that and be worried. And he'd always soothe me and say, no, it won't be a problem when it happens.

SCHLESINGER: What did -- did he ever talk about what he might do after the Presidency?

KENNEDY: Yes. In the beginning he used to sort of treat it as a joke and didn't like to talk about it and he'd say, oh, I'll be Ambassador to Italy, or

something. And that would get -- but he was just teasing. And then I'd say, oh, you have to run for the Senate. And -- again, this shows something wonderful about Bobby. Once I told Bobby that I was so worried and that if only Jack could run for the Senate, you know, have Teddy's seat, 'cause Jack said they wouldn't take two brothers from there. So Bobby went and spoke to Teddy and came back and told me that Teddy said that he would not run, you know, when Johnny -- that's what the brothers always called him -- was out, which is so touching 'cause that was the highest thing that I think Teddy could ever have hoped for. And anyway, I told Jack that 'cause I always remember him saying how John Quincy Adams --

SCHLESINGER: Yeah.

KENNEDY: Came back and was Congressman all his life and I thought he could be a Senator and have a base and do all those other things from there? And Jack was really wounded when I told him that. He was touched that I cared so much to be so worried but he said, no, I never, never would do that. Take that from Teddy? How could you think I'd do such a thing. So you go back to Bobby and tell him. But I think that shows something so close about those three brothers --

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

KENNEDY: That each would, you know -- there is Bobby making Teddy give up his prize which Teddy does gladly and then Jack refusing. They all worked with such love for each other. And just towards the end Jack was thinking about being either publisher of a great paper or -- I don't know. Bundy said to me the other night that he thought he might have ended up in television or something. He was getting rather excited about it. Sometimes he talked to Ben Bradlee about it -- think we could buy the *Washington Post*, or something? -- rather jovially, but you could always tell when he was toying with an idea that pleased him in his mind. I think he would have gone around the world, written a book, done something with his Library, and then really entered into that.

SCHLESINGER: Where would you -- where would you have lived, do you suppose?

KENNEDY: Well, I just assumed we'd have lived in Cambridge, but maybe we wouldn't have. Or, then I thought we should still in Washington but now I know that would have been completely wrong. And Jack always said we shouldn't live in Washington and he was right. It would be too hard for an ex-President. So maybe we'd have lived in --

SCHLESINGER: He spoke to me about living in Cambridge part of the time. I got the impression he would spend three or four months a year there and whether --

KENNEDY: Sort of Cambridge, New York. I think that's what it sort of would have

been.

SCHLESINGER: The newspaper too he also --

KENNEDY: Yeah, that would have been --

SCHLESINGER: Considered as a possibility.

KENNEDY: Yeah, that would have been such a full-time job with him. And Bundy said to me the other night, it just made me so sad because Jack could have had his happiest years later. He said he sort of would have been the President of the West. And you know, anywhere he went he would have been -- and anything he said people would have listened to so. And then Bundy said, I don't know if it's true or not, that after a while there would have been such a demand for him to come back that they might have had to do something about seeing if you could have a third term, you know, not in succession, but later. Jack always said he never -- I used to say, if only they could make a rule to keep you here forever -- 'cause the one thing, you know, when you leave the White House -- and Jack always used to say this -- is that you just have cold fear going over you every day when you pick up the morning papers because you know how close it is -- how some man far down can make a plunder, like Sky Bolt, or something, and everything can blow up. And the President just has to be watching everyone everywhere, which only someone young, and brilliant like Jack could do. So you'd have been just scared all the time and knowing you had no power to do anything. But Jack always said, oh my God, no, I'd never -- eight years is enough in this place. Then you could see that it really did -- it is the burdens. The way you look at Lincoln's pictures over the years and how much tired and older he got. You could see that in Jack's pictures. Though he never spoke about -- he would sometimes speak of the cares of it, but he'd never, you know, moan or feel sorry for himself. But he'd just say, like a, you know, prisoner thinking of getting out -- oh, no, eight years is enough in this place.

SCHLESINGER: When you -- when did you begin to think about restoring the White House? Was that before?

KENNEDY: Yeah, I think once Jack was elected or maybe whenever I thought I might be the President's wife. I just so knew that had to be done. And then in Florida between Christmas and Inauguration I had them send me a lot of books and things from the Library of Congress, you know, how it's kind of -- And then once I was in there I was in bed for about a week in the Queen's Room after Inauguration but I can remember seeing David Finley in bed and maybe John Walker, you know, 'cause it started right away. 'Cause just to look at that place! Maybe just 'cause I'd been to the White House obviously for some Congressional receptions and my little tour around with Mrs. Eisenhower.

SCHLESINGER: How was that?

KENNEDY: Well, this might be rather interesting but I'd read in the paper that it was customary for the First Lady to show the new one around. And it was the last thing I wanted because, as I say I was about to have this child. So I asked Tish to get in touch with Mary Jane McCaffrey, Mrs. Eisenhower's secretary. Mrs. Eisenhower told Mrs. McCaffrey not to give our people any help.

SCHLESINGER: What?

KENNEDY: That it was her -- and, but Tish knew her or somehow, so she used to meet Mary Jane, sneak away for lunch somewhere. Tish liked Mary Jane very much and she'd tell her, you know, things like you ought to know. And so when I asked if I have to, you know, if it's something Mrs. Eisenhower can do, could I do it soon, 'cause I don't know when I'm going to have this baby. And apparently when Mrs. McCaffrey gave Mrs. Eisenhower that message she hit the ceiling and said, this is my house, nobody's going to see it, and all of that. So the message was given back to me and I was just filled with relief 'cause how could I see anyway, make sense of walking around that enormous house, you know, in half an hour and a cup of tea. I was so glad I wouldn't have to do it. Then -- so then I was in the hospital and I had John and it was all rather dramatic. And then I think the press started building up on Mrs. Eisenhower. So she kept pestering Tish and everyone, could I come and see it before we went to Florida that day. And I got out of the hospital about noon, and we were to leave I think at 2:30 for Florida. And I didn't want to go. I'd never done anything but walk around the room -- just to be boring -- after a Caesarian it's very hard to walk and all that for awhile. Like a fool I'd said I'd go. I wish I hadn't. And then they said they'd have a wheelchair and everything. And there was never any wheelchair and you just were dragged around every floor, not even asked to sit down, and brought in and out of -- past all the press. And when I got back I really had a weeping fit and I couldn't stop crying for about two days. It was something that takes away your last strength when you don't have any left. So that wasn't very nice of Mrs. Eisenhower.

SCHLESINGER: A terrible thing. But why, do you suppose?

KENNEDY: She was very funny. She always referred to it as my house and my carpets and I guess -- didn't President Eisenhower say during the campaign, whenever Mamie thinks of that girl being in the White House she goes, sssssss, or a raspberry or some charming sound. You know, there was this sort of venom or something there. And then I guess people used to say she'd go crazy when she'd hear all the things we were doing. I suppose it's never nice to hear about a new First Lady who's doing things that you should have done, or something. But I hear the Red Room is purple, she'd say. I don't blame her for that but I think she might have been a little sympathetic before.

SCHLESINGER: Yes. How did the President and President Eisenhower --

KENNEDY: Oh, well, I know -- I guess President Eisenhower was fine when they went the first meeting. I don't know what they talked about but Eisenhower said had said, and then I want to show you how quickly the helicopters can come here to get you away. And he pressed a button and they were there in three minutes, and we flew away. So Eisenhower was fine with him.

SCHLESINGER: What did the President think of Eisenhower?

KENNEDY: Oh, not much. You know, what did Joe Alsop say to me once -- to us both -- Eisenhower is the worst President of the United States with the possible exception of James Buchanan. You know, Jack saw that all that could have been done, I mean, how really he kept us standing still and gave away -- I don't think he thought much of him. But he used to say, look at that man, half of his cheeks were as pink as a something, and he's smiling and chuckling away. Oh, and another thing we noticed that was really funny. In the White House in door of Jack's -- the sill to Jack's office in his bedroom, we thought there were termites. They were riddled with little holes. And so I asked the Usher, Mr. West, 'cause I thought, is the White House going to fall down again like it did under Truman. It was the cleats on his golf shoes. You just wouldn't believe! I guess he must have just walked all around the White House in them.

SCHLESINGER: The same thing in the President's office.

KENNEDY: Yeah. Now they're worn away, you don't notice them so much.

SCHLESINGER: Do you remember anything about Nixon's visit to Palm Beach? Didn't he come down in interregnum?

KENNEDY: Oh! Did Jack go to see him?

SCHLESINGER: No, that's right. He was nearby in Florida.

KENNEDY: In some hotel.

SCHLESINGER: That's right. The President went over to see him.

KENNEDY: I think that must have been when I was either in the hospital or -- No, no. That must have been before, right after the election.

SCHLESINGER: That's right. I guess before your baby had come.

KENNEDY: Yeah, when I was staying in Washington. I don't remember anything about -- did Smathers go with Jack? Or did Smathers go another time and say how exhausted Mrs. Nixon was and that she was just lying like a cadaver in, you know, this chair, not moving, and this bitter, desperate face and how terribly

bitter she was. Somebody told Jack that. That, you know, she'd say the most terrible things and, let's have a recount, and everything. I don't really remember about his conversation with Nixon. I mean, I remember him telling me about it but now I can't remember what he said. Which shows -- Mrs. Kennedy told me to write everything down the first year I was married and I did, which is all just nothing -- what Arthur Krock said to Dean Acheson, or something. And all the years when I should have been writing things down I wasn't.

SCHLESINGER: How did the President feel about the restoration?

KENNEDY: The restoration?

SCHLESINGER: Of the White House.

KENNEDY: Oh! Well, he thought -- you know, he was interested in it. He'd always get so interested in anything, you know, that I cared about, but then he was nervous about it. I mean, he wanted to be sure it was done the right way so he sent Clark Clifford to see me. And I knew you'd have to -- and Clark Clifford was really nervous because he tried to persuade me not to do it, which Jack never.

SCHLESINGER: Why? On the grounds of politics?

KENNEDY: He said, you just can't touch the White House. He said, it's so strange, everyone -- America feels so strangely about it, and look at the Truman balcony. And if you try to make any changes it will just be like that. And I said it won't be like the Truman balcony and then I told him all about Harry DuPont and all the people we hoped to get. And -- oh, yeah, when I have to make my little pilgrimage to Harry DuPont. So as it went along bit by bit and how you'd set this committee up and certain legal things and -- and Clark was very good about setting up the guide book. So once Jack saw it was going along with sort of good counsel, I mean, he was so excited about it.

SCHLESINGER: He was terribly proud of it. He used to love to take people around and show --

KENNEDY: You know, when I found him that desk so early? Only, that was about the first thing and then, he was really -- and, Oh, the White House television tour, he used to watch all the time and he was so sweet the way he was proud of me. And then the guide book was another thing. You saw that you could never get enough money to do it. You know, people weren't going to give up good pieces of furniture, or you'd have 99 cups of tea with some old lady and she'd give you \$50. So, I had always been trying to write this guide book. The Curator would never sit and work on it, Mrs. Pierce. She liked to have tea with other curators. It was very hard but we got that written. But then Jack McNally in Jack's -- who was sort of this happy little Irishman who was in charge of taking people through the White House on the tours -- said it would be an absolute outrage

and desecrate our nation's -- you know, the White House, to have money exchanging hands there and everything. And a lot of people said that -- that you couldn't sell a guide book there. And I said you could because it would be such a -- one of such quality. And so, when I told Jack that, you know, he'd had more opinions saying not to do it but he listened to me and said, all right go ahead. Which was nice of him and then it did turn out to be all right.

SCHLESINGER: Was there ever any criticism of the things you did in the White House in these years?

KENNEDY: Never -- no, the most incredible interest. And then the tours would start going. And every night he'd come home saying, we had more people today -- this would be after you'd found the Monroe pier table, or something -- than the Eisenhowers had in their first two years. And oftentimes he -- and then the guide book was selling and he'd always be teasing McNally about it. So, he was just so proud. I was so happy that I had -- could do something that made him proud of me. Because I'll tell you one wonderful thing about him. Because I'll tell you one wonderful thing about him. I was really -- I was never any different once I was in the White House than I was before but the press made you different. Suddenly, everything that had been a liability before -- your hair, that you spoke French, you didn't just adore to campaign, and you didn't bake bread with flour up to your arms -- you know, everyone thought I was a snob and hated politics. Well, Jack never made me feel that I was a liability to him, but I was. And then I was having a baby and couldn't campaign. And when we got in the White House all the things that I had always done, suddenly became wonderful, 'cause anything the First Lady does that's different, everyone sees -- and I was so happy for Jack, especially now that it was only three years together that he could be proud of me then. 'Cause you know, it made him so happy -- it made me so happy. So those were our happiest years.

SCHLESINGER: He was terribly proud. I mean, he was proud of the knowledge that he got from you. He liked to sort of talk about furniture and paintings which are things that he didn't -- had not known a great deal about at one point in his life.

KENNEDY: I know, and he really started to know about them. And he started to -- he got interested in sculpture. I forget how. Oh, Stash had given Lee a Roman head one Christmas. And then it was the first thing he saw that he really started to care about himself. And he used to go into Klegeman, opposite Parke-Bernet in New York -- opposite the Carlyle whenever he was there -- and look, and he started to buy all the Greek sculpture that you see in this room -- all the Egyptian sculpture. It got -- and then he really knew his field. Of course, he loved it because anything that old he'd say, think, this is 500 B.C. But he had such an eye. A thing about his taste -- when Boudin the French, you know, much more than decorator, he's really a scholar from Jansen would be around, so many things -- he'd say how to arrange a room or hang pictures. I'd be in doubt about that. Then I'd ask Jack what he thought without telling him what Boudin thought. And Jack, about five or six different times, which I have written down, would say the same as

Boudin. He had -- I was so disappointed in the Blue Room when I first saw it. He really had this eye and he'd pick out the best things. He just had taste in every, you know, facet of his character -- for people, for books, for sculpture, for furniture, for rooms, for houses. He bought our house in Georgetown 'cause the door knob was old which he liked, and he liked the sort of old look of it. What else did he -- Oh! for our tenth anniversary, he was so sweet. You know, after dinner was the time for present giving. And suddenly into the room comes Provi, our little maid, with about 30 different boxes. They were all from Klegeman, except for one -- he knew I used to collect drawings so he had gotten a couple of drawings from Wildenstein. And, when I think that when we were first married he always used to give me things he liked, like a letter of Byron or a letter of John Quincy Adams, or something, which was fine. And I could see the present that he wanted me to choose the most was this Alexandrian bracelet. It's terribly simple, gold, sort of a snake. And it was the simplest thing of all and I could just see how he loved it. He'd just hold it in his hand. So, that was a special present and he wouldn't say which one he wanted to give me, but I could tell so I chose it.

SCHLESINGER: How would he have selected those? Catalog -- he wouldn't --

KENNEDY: Oh, I think he had Klegman send him -- he'd talk to him on the phone and had him send up a lot of things. And then he had about 50 things up in his room 'cause he'd been through -- all through dinner he was locked in his room. And he sifted out about the 15 he thought I'd like. And one of them was this Syrian horse bit 'cause it so fascinated him that -- you know, it had been used in the, I don't know, the war against the Persians, or something -- Persian horse bit, maybe. But I -- you know, Sylvia Whitehouse was there that evening and she laughed. It was so sweet to see how Jack loved it. I said, I do think we might have something a bit more sentimental for your tenth anniversary. But he wanted to take it down and try it on Caroline's pony the next day to see if it really worked.

SCHLESINGER: Do you remember anything about your first day in the White House?

KENNEDY: Yes, I do. Didn't I tell you about it?

SCHLESINGER: Not on the tape.

KENNEDY: Oh. With Doctor -- well, the next morning I was just laid out in the Queen's bed. We were living at that end of the house then 'cause our end was being painted.

SCHLESINGER: This is Inauguration Day -- or day after.

KENNEDY: The day after Inauguration. And she was -- had my leg up in the air trying to get some kink out of it. I just couldn't walk. And who burst in the door but Jack and President Truman, and poor President Truman just turned scarlet. I don't think he'd ever seen a woman but his wife in bed in a nightgown

before. And so they burst out and Jack stuck his head and said, can I bring him in? And, you know, then we had a very jolly talk. So then he also brought Robert Frost in that day. And then at night we'd have supper always in the little Lincoln sitting room on trays. You know, I loved those days.

SCHLESINGER: What about Inauguration Day? Do you remember anything about the few days before Inauguration -- about the speech and so forth. Was the President worried about that?

KENNEDY: Oh, I can remember him writing his speech in Florida. You know, all different yellow pages and then bringing in and reading you parts of it and crossing out other parts. All the -- I never heard him really read the whole thing until Inauguration Day but each part I remember listening, knowing that I'd heard it before. Well, we had this small bedroom in Florida and there were so many people in the other part of the house -- I was in bed most of the time. And Jack would come in with his cigar, you know, puffing away, with a big pad of yellow pages and he'd be sitting -- and he'd sit on the edge of my bed and he'd read me some things he'd written and then he'd flip them over, scribble something, and then he'd pile it on his desk which was just overflowing with papers, and papers were just all around that room. Then he'd go out and have a meeting. Sometimes he'd play golf. He was just so happy then, he was -- he looked so well, he was -- you know, they were such happy days for him.

SCHLESINGER: Did he worry at all in the interregnum about anything as far as you could see?

KENNEDY: No, what he was doing then is solving -- you know, everything that was coming up he was dealing with it. And that was always when he was the happiest. He never was worried 'cause he always said, you know, someone has to do this job, what is it, and it's always been done with humans. I mean, I -- there's a very good quote of his there somewhere. But he knew he could do it as well as anyone else. And so he was just delighted at last to be being able to. But then at night we'd get up for supper and then he might read some part in the library or ask his -- rest of his family or whoever was there.

SCHLESINGER: Who were around then?

KENNEDY: Well, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy and I suppose Bobby must have come in or out a couple of times. There was always someone, then Sam Rayburn and Lyndon and Lady Bird came down once. I tell you, you go in the bathroom and you'd forget to bring your wrap and you couldn't get out because Pierre Salinger would be having a press briefing in your bedroom. You'd just go mad. So, but -- yeah, then Jack would grab up those big pages and stuff them in his briefcase, I guess, when he went back to Washington. I don't know when it was written.

SCHLESINGER: He came back early that week, as I recall, and you came up on Wednesday, probably.

KENNEDY: Yes, I came up the day of the Gala, whichever day that was.

SCHLESINGER: The day was Thursday.

KENNEDY: That's right.

SCHLESINGER: How did you like the Gala?

KENNEDY: Oh, it was all right. You know, it was such a festive evening and I thought that snow was so pretty. The Gala -- I didn't really -- and I had to leave part -- halfway through it. I remember one -- parts of it I liked -- I remember one thing I thought was so awful, was a man named Allan King? He was telling all these horrible jokes about marriage -- I mean, the wife is a shrew, and the -- I just thought that's so sad when comedians do that. But otherwise, you know, everyone was excited. And then --

SCHLESINGER: Where'd you sleep that Wednesday night?

KENNEDY: At our house, 3307 N. And then the next morning --

SCHLESINGER: Was that hard? Were you all excited?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes!

SCHLESINGER: Did you sleep all right that night?

KENNEDY: Well, it was like children waiting for Christmas, or something, you know, that night. It was really -- 'cause I was awake when Jack came home. And I think there'd been a dinner that his father had organized at Paul Young's, or something, later? Some -- but you know, I couldn't go to sleep, I was awake when he came home. It was just such a night to share you know, together 'cause that night we were, you know, in the same bed. Then the next morning getting up and getting dressed, and the snow storm, all the excitement, leaving our house -- I never thought then that I was leaving it for the last time. I mean, I never thought of -- you know, being -- sort of saying goodbye to it. And then going to the White House, and we all had coffee in the Red Room before. I remember sitting on that sofa next to Mrs. Nixon who looked really pretty that day. I thought if she -- you know, you could see she could really be rather New York chic when she wanted, in sort of a black Persian lamb coat and hat. And Mrs. Eisenhower -- it was very nice, you know, everybody was there drinking coffee and things. And as we left, I rode with Styles Bridges and Mamie Eisenhower to the Capitol. And as we were sitting in the car, Mam -- I guess the President -- President Eisenhower and Jack came out after or something

and she said, 'Look at Ike, Ike in his top hat. He looks just like Patty the Irishman.' And then I think she reali -- And then on the way to the Capitol she said it would be the first time in her life, tonight, which she would dial the wrong telephone number 'cause she'd had a switchboard for 30 years. So that was her -- You know, I kept thinking how those people have been taken care of all their lives -- but anyway. You know, it was rather making conversation up there. Then, oh, you know, all the Inauguration and Cardinal Cushing and the lectern burning, and then poor Robert Frost.

SCHLESINGER: There's a marvelous picture with the expression of anxiety on your face in solicitude for Robert Frost. What happened there?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes. Well, you could see him, there was such a glare from the snow that he really couldn't see what was written on the paper. And then Lyndon got up and held his hat over it but the poor man still couldn't see. And he looked like he was going to cry, he just sounded so sad, but then thank heavens, he knew, you know. He said that this is a gift outright and everything. And, oh, and watching Jack when he said that and everything. And then I never had a chance -- you know, as I was sitting about three away and everyone said, why didn't Jack kiss you after, which of course, he would never do there. But you had to march out in such order that I was about eight behind him with women, or something. And I so badly wanted to see him before the lunch, just to see him alone. I went to a room with all the ladies where they had sherry and coffee and he was with the men. And I caught up to him in the Capitol and, oh, I was just so proud of him. And there's a picture where I have my hand on his chin and you know, he's just looking at me and there really were tears in his eyes. And that picture was in the -- suddenly a flash came 'cause I didn't think there was anyone there. In the papers it said, wife chucks him under chin. I mean, that was so much more emotional than any kiss 'cause his eyes really did fill with tears. [Whisper] Just say, oh Jack, you know, what a day. And then the lunch in the old Supreme Court chamber in the Capitol. Then where everybody was sending their little menu card around to be autographed, it was very jolly. Truman -- I sat next to Warren. Then we got in the car for that parade, you know, sort of not quite knowing how to wave. And then when we got to the White House, I guess we went in for a minute and walked out to the stand. Oh, Jack was just so happy. They had hot soup or something at the stand, and him to stand -- he wanted to see every single bit of that parade. He was just so proud and he would -- they'd keep telling us how it would be running late and I left after a couple of hours 'cause again, I was really so tired that day. And, but he stayed until just nightfall -- I think he was the last person there. You know, and came in and all -- everybody -- there was a big reception downstairs and I was in bed. And that night he was to go to a dinner for all the Cabinet at Jane Wheeler's and I was to stay and have dinner in bed and everything and he would come back and pick me up to go to the first ball. And about 9 o'clock or something, when it was time to start getting dressed, again, I couldn't get out of bed. I just couldn't move. And so I called up Dr. Travell just frantic and she came running over. She had two pills, a green one and an orange one and she told me to take the orange one. So I did and I said, what is it? And then she told me it was Dexedrene which I'd never taken in my life. But -- and that I never have again. But thank God, it really did its trick

'cause then you could get dressed and then Jack came and he came upstairs and he brought me down to the Red Room. There were a few people, the Foleys, I remember. We all had a toast of champagne and he did -- he liked how I looked and he said something so nice and we went off to that ball. And the old -- it was so funny with the Aides, 'cause the old Aide, the head of the White House Aides, kept trying to be with Jack all evening and the other three were jumping in and out. And then to come into that ball, that was exciting. You know, there's that wonderful picture of him sort of pointing. I mean -- then we went to one at the Mayflower. Lyndon was right next to us at that one. Then we went to his third one at the Wardman Park and just on the way it was like Cinderella and the clock striking midnight, I guess the pill wore off 'cause I just couldn't get out of the car. And so Jack said, you go home now and he sent me home with that Aide. And I guess he went on to all the other balls and then to Joe Alsop's.

SCHLESINGER: I was staying with Joe then.

KENNEDY: And I was so happy. Sometimes I thought later I wish I'd been able to sort of share all that night with him. But he had such a wonderful time and then he must have gotten home about 3:00 or 4:00 but he came in and woke me up? And -- I slept in the Queen's room, he slept in the Lincoln Room then, so that was his first night in Lincoln's bed. And -- well, he was just so happy. Then the next morning when he woke up, very early, I was awake too, and so I went into that room and it's the sunniest room. You know, we both sat on that bed, I mean, you did again feel like two children, think of yourself sitting in Lincoln's bed. I don't know -- and he went off with that wonderful springy step to his office and then again, I told you, he'd come crashing back with Truman and Robert Frost. They were such happy days for him. He couldn't wait to get the children back and all that end smelled so of paint but he'd keep saying, you got to bring them back soon. He really missed them. I guess they came back about two weeks later.

SCHLESINGER: What was your theory of sort of, relaxation and entertainment at the beginning at the White House?

KENNEDY: It was really what it had always been. Jack was so like his father in that he hated to leave his house, whether it was Georgetown or the Cape, whether we had my mother's house in Newport, and even in the White House he hated to go out.

SCHLESINGER: He always hated to go out.

KENNEDY: Yeah, you know, his father loved to stay home and he thought he had the best food and everything that's best in your house. So Jack was brought up, you know, as long as everything was nice at home. He loved to go to Joe's because the food was always so good. So, it was exactly as it had been in the past. You have the Bartletts, or David Gore, who was -- David Gore was around just after

inauguration, he wasn't Ambassador yet. Or Max Freedman once, or, you know, any -- it was just suppers on trays then. If any of his family were down or --

SCHLESINGER: You went out more that first winter than later.

KENNEDY: We only went out about twice that first winter. But everybody -- because -- three times. Once to Lorraine Cooper's because Jack -- it was the first time we ever went out and Jack loved Cooper and, you know. You didn't really want to go to that dinner 'cause Lorraine's dinners were always so big, it really wasn't much fun for him. I mean, we went once to Joe's when Jack -- and once to Rowlie's. Jock Whitney was at Rowlie's and everybody -- they found out about that because the snowplows came and scraped off Rowlie's street before, or something. So, because those three things caused such commotion, you'd think we went out every night. Those were the only three times. And -- I forget what we went to Joe's for. Then we really stopped -- oh, maybe once in the Spring again we went to Joe's. But we hardly ever went out after, you know, it proved such a production and everything. It was really more fun to have people come to you. He left also -- you know, he'd always work very late and you'd always have to juggle the children's naps or something so they'd be there when he came home. He liked to see them for about a half an hour before dinner. And, if you were going out and you went to take a bath and change and leave, it was just a nuisance. So, that's one thing that you never missed, being in the White House.

SCHLESINGER: How about -- how often would you have movies, for example?

KENNEDY: Not very often. Gosh, we didn't -- I don't know, maybe four times a year or something? I think --

SCHLESINGER: Oh, more than that, surely.

KENNEDY: Well, the first winter we might have had a few. Really, not very many, 'cause I can only think of about four or five we saw the whole time there. I think in the summer you might have some.

SCHLESINGER: It seems to me, I'm sure I've seen that many with you or him.

KENNEDY: I think I can --

SCHLESINGER: None of which he ever stayed for more than a half an hour.

KENNEDY: I remember the French -- oh, *The Last Year at Marienbad* -- how he hated that. Yeah, or sometimes there'd be a USIA thing he'd want me to see or something, you know, something he'd done. But really not so many.

SCHLESINGER: How would he begin the day? What time would he get up?

KENNEDY: He'd get up a quarter of eight and George would come knock on our bedroom door and then he'd get up and go into his bedroom and have breakfast there. And if I was -- you know, sometimes I'd have -- I'd ring for breakfast at the same time or I'd sleep a little later. But -- and then the children would come in and it was so incredible 'cause they'd rush to turn on the television set and you'd hear this roar, full blast, or cartoons or that exercise man. And Jack would be sitting there, he had breakfast in a chair with a tray in front of him, you know, reading the 50 morning papers or sheafs of all those briefing books to go over with Bundy, and this racket around. Then he'd take a bath. And I always thought it was so funny for people who used his bathroom -- guests -- it was the bathroom you would have to -- that men could use after dinner? 'Cause all along his tub were all these little floating animals, ducks and pink pigs and things? 'Cause he said, give me something to do to amuse John while I'm in my bath, so John would float all these things around. You know, he could just have those children tumbling around him. And he'd always come in before he went over to the office, you know, come into my room. I mean, I'd only be half asleep or else I'd be having breakfast, and see me. And he used to take Caroline over to the office with him every day --

SCHLESINGER: That would be about 9:30.

KENNEDY: Yeah. Quarter of eight -- yeah, maybe a little earlier, I suppose. He'd be, I guess, over an hour read -- having breakfast, reading the papers and taking a bath. And later on it used to be John's treat to walk to the office with him every day.

SCHLESINGER: Had George always been in the White House or did you -- or had he always been with the President or what?

KENNEDY: George had been with Jack when he first came to Congress.

SCHLESINGER: Oh, he came in --

KENNEDY: He found him -- he was with Arthur Krock before and Arthur told Jack about him. Then he left for a couple of years and worked for Ethel's mother. Then he came back to us -- he wasn't with us at Hickory Hill, he came back '57 and he was with us ever since.

SCHLESINGER: Where is he now?

KENNEDY: Oh, he's -- oh I don't know, he's somewhere, I mean he lives where he -- in Washington. He comes to see us a lot. I mean, we'll always take care of him. But poor George, he really got the shakes, I mean, he couldn't -- I asked him if he wanted to work here, but he's just too old, he dropped -- And in

the White House you know what he'd do that used to amuse Jack so? He'd open the door so that some other slave could carry in Jack's breakfast tray. The only thing he did was pull open the curtains and then turn on the bath and then he'd go up and all the little White House mess boys were shining his shoes and everything.

SCHLESINGER: Then the President would always come back for lunch.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: In fact, I don't think he ever had lunch in his office.

KENNEDY: Never, unless he had a business lunch in the family dining room downstairs. He always kept our floor, we put in the dining room -- you know, he'd keep all his business lunches downstairs. I mean, he knew that that was our private place. It's so different from now where everyone gets the tour to the bathrooms and things. Maybe 'cause Jack had young children.

SCHLESINGER: And he very rarely liked to have -- he didn't like business lunches, did he? It seemed to me that he was very -- he much preferred to see people in his office rather than have luncheons.

KENNEDY: Yeah, they were really heavy. Then he'd come up, you know, they were hard for him. And you know, you're always awfully tired at the end of one of those White House mornings in your office and your nerves are on edge. And so to have to go through a long lunch and wine and everything. And then he'd come up afterwards and still try to take whatever little nap he could. He never took a nap before but in the White House, I think he made up his mind he would because it was so good for his health. Something was always cracking up before. And that really kept -- and he always said that Winston Churchill used to do it and he'd often say how much more, you know, staying power it gave him. But his naps, my Lord, did I tell you about them? Well, it would be 45 minutes and he'd get completely undressed and into his pajamas and into bed and go to sleep and then wake up again. And I often used to --

SCHLESINGER: And he can go to sleep -- puts himself to sleep --

KENNEDY: Yeah. I used to think for a 45 minute nap, would you bother to take off all your clothes? It would take me 45 minutes to just snuggle down and start to doze off. And I often used to -- sometimes when he had lunch in his room, in bed he'd have it. I'd have lunch in there with him and then I'd close the curtains and open the window for his nap and then I'd wake him up from it. And then I'd sit around while he got dressed. That was my hours instead of the children's. You know, but it would just be like clockwork -- 45 minutes -- and he'd be back in his office. And then he'd always work until, well, after 8:00 at night.

SCHLESINGER: Would he swim every day or was that only the later part after you --

KENNEDY: In the beginning, you know, his back -- he came to the White House in the best physical condition that he was ever in in his life. He had muscles and everything. He played golf, sort of 18 holes, all these things he hadn't been able to do for a long time. And then he sat in his desk without moving for six weeks, he didn't walk around the driveway, he didn't swim, and suddenly his back went bad. He'd lost all the muscle tone. So then it was awful because he was really in pain. Dr. Travell would come and fill him with Novocain and finally we got -- Oh, (Out! Young voice: Why?)

SCHLESINGER: Really the fact he wasn't exercising --

KENNEDY: Yes, you see, he'd never done much exercise anyway, but as he said, the campaign of jumping in and out of cars, walking, you know, kept him fit. And then, for the first time in his life he'd really had from election to Inauguration a lot of it in Florida, to play golf, I don't know, twice a week or three times, to swim, to walk on the beach. He never had such a long period, you know, daily of some kind of exercise. And he just lost it all sitting at his desk. And then he went back to Dr. Travell, but all that Novocain, it didn't do any good anymore. You know, it wasn't until the next October, I got so mad at her because then other doctors were trying to bring in Hans Kraus who could build you up through exercises. All these doctors are so jealous of each other and she wouldn't let Kraus come in. And finally, I'd sat by so many times while doctors did things to Jack. You know, well doctors just pushed Jack all over the place that I really got mad and got in there and got the back surgeon and other -- everybody and just forced her to have -- him to have Kraus. Kraus started these series of exercises which he did every evening with the Navy Chief. You know, like lift -- trying to touch your toes, or lying on your stomach and trying to raise one leg. And you could just see -- I mean, he still was in pain a lot that winter -- oh, and it went out really badly you remember in May in Canada. But by the next October when he started to do these, after awhile --

SCHLESINGER: But he was weak before he went to Canada? In other words, it wasn't the planting of the tree in Canada which caused it all, it was really the lack of exercise that really did it.

KENNEDY: Yeah. And --

SCHLESINGER: How long a day did he exercise?

KENNEDY: Oh, well these exercises with the Chief would just take about fifteen minutes. You know, sort of setting up exercises or then they'd hold your legs so you'd have to try to lift it up against it. But you know, Jack could never touch his toes, he couldn't get his hands down any farther than his knees standing up. He couldn't put on his shoes before -- sort of bend over that far?

SCHLESINGER: Oh, really?

KENNEDY: Well, he could if he'd lift his foot in his lap, or something. So, as I say, he wasn't a cripple, it sounds funny, he could do everything but you'd just notice when you'd see him trying to reach for something he'd dropped on the floor how stiff he was. My Lord, at the end, in a couple of months, he could touch his toes, he could do all these things he had never been able to do. Do knee bends -- so, when once Krause started -- then that was, you know, encouraging, 'cause he'd get so discouraged. That's when you'd see him in black periods. And he'd tried and he had every doctor and Dr. Travell had given him the tenth treatment and before she always helped. And now there just seemed -- there didn't seem to be any answer. So then Kraus then helped him and that cheered him up.

SCHLESINGER: The White House parties -- the best parties I've ever gone to -- were they --

KENNEDY: Oh, well, I'll tell you why I thought of having them. The one thing I noticed was that I could get away from the White House and I could go to New York and see a play or go to a restaurant. And that's -- Jack never liked to go out before when he was in his home but he had liked to stop in New York a couple of days, see a play, go to Pavillon, you know, see some different people. And you can't be cut off from -- I mean, we were young and we were gay and you couldn't cut all that off from him and just leave his life full of worry. So the first one I thought of having, it was when Lee was over. I thought that would be an excuse to have one? And I thought of all these people from New York -- everywhere, the people he wasn't seeing -- that's why so few people from Washington -- sort of came to them in a way. And it turned out -- well, he loved it. And, you know, so then he'd say well, let's have -- every now and then -- I think we only had about five in all. But after maybe after three or four months when there'd been sort of a ghastly month and you -- everyone had stiff -- I had such a stiff neck from being tense, or he'd been having a bad time, he'd say, let's have another one of those parties. And, well, he just loved them, 'cause then he was -- sort of a way to renew yourself. He'd always tell me to go visit Lee or go to New York, or something when he could see the tension of there was getting me. 'Cause you see, when we came in there, I was very weak and plus all the thing of the campaign, plus the baby, plus -- and to hit that palace running and start to do all the work of running the house, getting a chef, doing the food, the flowers, the reconstruction, the restoration, whatever it is. You know, sometimes at the end of the day you just feel one jump away from tears but you wanted to be so cheerful for Jack when he came home, which I nearly always was but he could see when it was getting to be a bit much. And that first -- I remember I couldn't sleep very well. He'd always send you away and -- when he knew you were tired. And then you'd come back happy again. I always think our whole married life was renewals of love after, you know, brief separations.

SCHLESINGER: Where would you go on the weekends in that first --

KENNEDY: Glen Ora.

SCHLESINGER: Glen Ora.

KENNEDY: We didn't use -- it's funny, he never thought of using Camp David, either. I sort of had this thing about having to get a house in the country and he hated Camp David when he went there with Eisenhower. He said it's the most depressing looking place which it is from the outside. And Tax Shepard, his Naval Aide, kept pestering and pestering him to go there. And Tish used to say to me, the Navy's so hurt and demoralized he won't go there. So finally, one weekend, he said, all right, let's go to Camp David. And he got to rather love it 'cause it is comfortable, and those cabins and -- you know -- you could -- and then we'd go there a bit, but go to Glen Ora mostly on weekends which he didn't like really, at all.

SCHLESINGER: Why didn't he like Glen Ora?

KENNEDY: Well, you know, there's nothing for him to do. Camp David, I suppose you could have a movie at night. And it's just a rather small, dark house. He liked to see me ride -- you know, be happy being out in the air all day, 'cause he always said Daddy told him, 'Keep her riding and she'll always be in a good mood.' Well, in a way, the thing that that means is exercise and fresh air which is true. You make an extra effort every day to go out and play tennis though I couldn't play. Just get in the air, walk ten times around the South Lawn. 'Cause if you just stay indoors and smoke cigarettes and work at your desk and talk on the telephone until you know, your throat is all tight, you can't be gay for anyone. Then we started to go to Camp David that Spring. But, you see, he'd always come down, I think rarely he came Friday evening, he'd always come Saturday, sort of at lunch time. And then he'd sleep all Saturday afternoon and then he'd watch all the afternoon, television or something from his bed. It was just a letdown for him. And we'd always have a friend for the weekend, have dinner, go to bed early, church the next day, papers, another nap. You know, 'cause he said, I don't really care about Glen Ora 'cause all I use it for is to sleep.

SCHLESINGER: He preserved his weekends very faithfully, almost every weekend he went off.

KENNEDY: Practically every weekend except the -- which is the -- '62? You know, there'd be some weekend, election things he'd have to do, or a couple of fundraising things in New York or something? And then this Fall, we did have two or three weekends at our new house in Virginia --

SCHLESINGER: He was off on trips a couple of times --

KENNEDY: Tampa, Dallas. You know, 'cause it was a campaign year, you didn't

expect to have many.

SCHLESINGER: Had you always known Tish? Is she an old friend?

KENNEDY: I'd known Tish when I was at school in Paris, she was with Mrs. Bruce at the Embassy there and then when I was in Rome she was with Mrs. Luce. And she was just such a mountain of energy. But I remember just thinking, I can't go in there unless I have Tish, and calling her up right after Jack was nominated. Nominated or elected? I guess it was elected. And, well, Tish is great and I love her but, so much of her energy was rather extra that I -- now that I think of it, she really made me tireder than I'd have to be. 'Cause she'd send you so many extra things that you really didn't have to answer. And on weekends she'd keep sending folders down until I stopped it. Or as I'd be sitting with Jack in the evening, some messenger would come flying in and throw a folder in my lap. You know, it began to drive me crazy and then Jack told me I must stop using my desk in the East Hall -- in the West Hall where we sat? He said you can't have your desk in the room where we sit, you know, where we live. So then he made me move it down to the Treaty Room. And it was so good 'cause often when we'd be alone in the evening he'd be looking at a book or doing some of his papers, and I'd go grab a folder off my desk and try to check off all the little things I had to do. But it would just put you in not the right atmosphere that you should be in when your husband comes home. And you know, so he arranged that part of my life. And once it was in the Treaty Room you could let Tish's things pile up for days, and then go do it all in one big session.

SCHLESINGER: Nancy was much closer then?

KENNEDY: Nancy was my roommate and ever since she came the difference that life was. How much more time there was to be able to enjoy -- to make yourself, so that Jack would enjoy you more. I tried to get her sooner but she wouldn't come.

SCHLESINGER: Nancy is the nicest girl, she's also a very funny girl and a very sharp one.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: Underneath the surface, shy --

KENNEDY: And she's feminine, I mean, Tish is sort of a feminist, really. She loves -- she used to tell me she loved to have lunch in the White House Mess so she could argue with men. She just -- she's great, but she's so different from me and just exhausted me so.

SCHLESINGER: How about Pam?

KENNEDY: Pam is fantastic because in the beginning I didn't think I'd need a press secretary and a -- you know, every -- other people, the one person had done them both. But when I saw what Tish was like about the press, Jack got so mad. Tish had her own press conference before Inauguration at the Sulgrave Club, she was coming there to speak. She got television and everything there. She was laughing and saying, yes, we're going to hang pictures on the walls upside down, modern, this, that. And, you know, it really caused trouble. It was the first set of bad, sensational headlines, and Jack said, not one of my Cabinet officers has had an interview, would you mind telling me what the hell Tish Baldrige is doing? She just loved the press so that I saw that if I was to keep any privacy of our life -- and she was always saying, we go to have Betty Beale to the first state dinner -- I must get someone who had the same reactions I did. And little Pam had been a friend of my sister's, they'd all -- Jack had gotten three of them, Lizzie Condon, who is now in my office, Pam and Mimi, jobs in the Senate one summer, and Pam had been in his office. Pam had stayed, the others had gone away and gotten married. And I just knew that she'd have all the same reactions I did. She was going over to work somewhere in the White House anyway, but I asked her if she'd be my press secretary and she was terrified and she didn't want to. And I told her if she did a good job -- if I thought she was doing a good job, the press would always think she was no good, and if they thought she was good she wouldn't be helping me the way I wanted, so it was very difficult for her -- she's very sensitive. But she's just been ideal and it's been hard for her.

SCHLESINGER: She's a great girl. West was -- you inherited.

KENNEDY: Yes, J.B. West, the Chief Usher at the White House. He came there under Franklin Roosevelt as an Usher. I guess he got to be head Usher under Truman. And, well, he just made -- he runs that whole place, you know. He was one of the people who contributed most to be happy in that place. He just did everything. I'm running out of superlatives now, and energy.

SCHLESINGER: Mrs. Pierce.

KENNEDY: Oh, Mrs. Pierce. Well, she couldn't have had better credentials as a Curator, you know, everything from Winterthur, and this bright, bright little girl. And Mr. West explained to me what happened to her. Here, this young little girl came and so excited about what she was doing and suddenly she stopped working and letters wouldn't be answered, someone would have given her \$50,000 or something, or someone would have written six months ago, or six weeks ago, and had not gotten an answer, and she was always having tea with other curators. And Mr. West said to me, there's something I think I ought to tell you Mrs. Kennedy. There's a disease around this place which we call White Houseitis and it hits more people, some of them the ones you least expect. And it really hit Lorraine Pierce. One day I found her in Jack's bedroom with Mr. Ginsberg and Levy, the -- who run a very good furniture -- American furniture store in New York. But there in Jack's bedroom on our private floor, on the floor looking under his table or his bed. And I said, Lorraine, what are you doing bringing these men up here? Well, she'd get

outraged and she'd say, unless she could have them inspect the marquetry or something she was going to write to the President himself. She just got so grand, that after a while she stopped being useful and you'd have to get rid of her. She told me it would take ten years to write the guide book and I said, I'm sorry, we don't have ten years, you know, the President can do all he's doing. So then the little timid mouse registrar, Bill Elder, came as Curator and he was very good as Curator. He never wanted any publicity, to see anyone, but he was also so in love with looking at the bottom of furniture and stuff that he never answered a letter or the telephone either. But he was much better, he got all the -- But finally Lorraine with me pressuring her got things together and I suppose, she and I wrote the guide book. She'd send a batch of illustrations and do part of the text and I'd pick all the ones I wanted in. You know, it was just like drawing teeth and Jack used to say, 'What is wrong with that girl, she has the chance of a lifetime, the best job in America for someone in her field, to have that now with all this interest.' And White Houseitis just went to her head. And then Tish got it. Pam never got it. I think very few of the people on Jack's side got it. I don't know, you'd know more about that. Tish loved to pick up the phone and have 'White House calling' or 'send all the White House china on the plane to Costa Rica and tell them they have to fly string beans in to a state dinner.' And oh, she sort of arranged Ireland, when they said well, we grow wonderful peas here. You know, just anything that was sort of this power thing. And White Houseitis -- it's fascinating, you can see which of your friends it affects and suddenly start to treat you differently. I used to think that if I ever wrote a book it would be called, 'The Poison of the Presidency,' 'cause it poisoned so many relationships with people outside.

SCHLESINGER: How would that happen?

KENNEDY: Well, some people who don't see you as much as they'd like would say terrible things about you? Or, some that were your old friends would always be the same but others would be so excited about being known and then they'd go tell, just little tidbits like, I don't know, 'Caroline said this or that.' They'd make up something just to show that they'd been there. Or the other people who suddenly never spoke to you before, start calling you up or trying to send you some marvelous present, I don't know. One person, Andre Meyer, who was the first person to give to Jack's library, who's this very crusty man, head of Lazare Freres in New York, who didn't want to give to the White House, he's sick of being dunned and touched and I told him I didn't want him to. Then I think he got to like me and he was the biggest help of all. When Jack died he came ten days later with a check for \$250,000 for the library, before we'd even almost said anything about it. But he said to me once, I used to see him when I'd go to New York because he had the apartment under ours at the Carlyle, and I'd be tired up there and I'd just like to go down and have dinner with him and he said, you will see, when you leave the White House many people who you think are your friends will no longer be. But I will always be your friend because -- and I see it now so well, I don't know --

SCHLESINGER: Oh, really?

KENNEDY: You know, you always knew which ones. Everybody's still a friend but

you see the ones who get so excited about power and go over to the new, which is fine. You see it in what some people write, or give par -- you know -- and you know, you always know -- Mr. Kennedy always said, you can always -- if you can count your friends on five fingers of one hand, you're lucky. And I have the friends I always knew I'd have, which I --

SCHLESINGER: I met Andre Meyer the other day in New York. I was having dinner with Mendes France who was also staying at the Carlyle. They ran into each other in the elevator. A very nice man, he spoke with affection of you.

KENNEDY: I sort of think he's rather a misanthrope --

SCHLESINGER: He's crusty --

KENNEDY: Until he loves you and then -- and he loved and admired Jack so, without hardly ever knowing him. He always said he was the only -- he said I'm so ashamed of my colleagues in Wall Street. They do not see what this man is doing, you know.

SCHLESINGER: I think that's enough for the day.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]