

Edward J. McCormack Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 09/25/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: Edward J. McCormack

Interviewer: John Stewart

Date of Interview: September 25, 1967

Place of Interview: Boston, Massachusetts

Length: 38 pages

Biographical Note

Edward J. McCormack (1923-1997) was a Massachusetts political figure and a candidate for the United States Senate in 1962. This interview focuses on John F. Kennedy's time as a senator from Massachusetts, the inner working of Massachusetts politics, and the 1960 Kennedy campaign, among other topics.

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Edward J. McCormack, recorded interview by John Stewart, September 25, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Oral History Interview

with

EDWARD J. McCORMACK

September 25, 1967
Boston, Massachusetts

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we just start by your telling me how you first got involved in Massachusetts politics, and particularly what was the situation as far as John Kennedy's campaign at the time.

MCCORMACK: Well, I was raised in politics because of the Speaker and my father, who was very active in local politics. I really had no association with President Kennedy in his initial political endeavors. I became active in his campaign, and in politics generally, in 1952 when he ran for the United States Senate.

Well, I graduated from law school in '51. That's why I wasn't active. I graduated from the Academy, the Naval Academy, in '46, and I was at sea until '49. Then I went to law school in '49 to '51, so that I wasn't around to be active in politics in that period. And in '52 I just gravitated to politics. I did a lot of work in the campaign when Paul Dever was running for Governor and Jack was running for the Senate and Adlai Stevenson was running for the President.

STEWART: Do you remember any real problems between the Dever and Kennedy campaigns?

MCCORMACK: Well, it goes back to prior to 1952 when Jack Kennedy was going to make a decision as to whether to run for Governor or Senator. He had [Anthony] Tony Galluccio go around to the different cities and towns and do a political analysis to : (1) determine who the leader would be, who Jack Kennedy should cultivate for his campaign, (2) how the politics of that community would shape up in a confrontation with Jack Kennedy and Paul Dever, whom they would favor, and (3) whether they felt that Jack Kennedy should run for Governor or Senator. The decision was made that he would run for the United States Senate. I wasn't privy to it; I don't know how the decision was made. I did see the works of Tony Galluccio, which I thought were very thorough. He was the forerunner of the advance man, which has since become very popular in politics.

Jack Kennedy, in running for the United States Senate in '52, formed the Kennedy secretaries. He deliberately avoided naming as a secretary anyone who had prior political involvement, anyone who was considered a political hack. He got the people who were either nonpolitical or apolitical and tried to designate them as the Kennedy secretary. He had many people who were well versed in politics advising him. [Joseph P.] Joe Kennedy at that time was very active, and he really was calling the shots for Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: Was this the general assumption among political people around Boston at the time?

MCCORMACK: Well, it was not only the general assumption, but I'm basing it upon conversations I've had with people Joe Kennedy called in to talk to and tell them what to do. I think [Robert F.] Bob Kennedy was the titular campaign manager. [Kenneth P.] Kenny O'Donnell and [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien were retained--I believe they were on a salary--to do work in the campaign. The Kennedy girls were going around to teas and what-have-you. But the man who was basically calling the shots, if my information is correct, was a fellow named [Lym] Johnson--I believe his name was Johnson--who was a very bright fellow from Joe Kennedy's Merchandise Mart in Chicago. He was brought in here for this purpose. He was an organizational man. The political people, in the political power structure in Massachusetts at the time, were called in by Joe Kennedy individually and severally, and either asked or were told what to do.

STEWART: Who would you say some of these people were?

MCCORMACK: Well, it's hard to say who.

STEWART: No, I mean of the major people in the Massachusetts . . .

MCCORMACK: You had at that time, and you have to a lesser degree today in Massachusetts, not a party in the true sense of the world. The Democratic Party in Massachusetts is made up--it's a federation of the followers of individual officeholders or candidates. It's difficult for people from other states to understand because they have a strong state organization or a strong county organization. Here, we're the closest thing to a pure democracy since the days of ancient Greece. We have no party, as such, so we federate. At least at this time, we would federate. You would have Democrats who would be [Maurice] Tobin Democrats, and Dever Democrats, and [James M.] Curley Democrats and [John W.] McCormack Democrats. Name the individual; he had his following. And any one of these individuals were spoken to by Joe Kennedy. I don't mean that he was like a puppeteer pulling the strings, but he had a very significant influence in Massachusetts at the time, and through the people that he put into the campaign and made available to Jack Kennedy, he had a voice, we'll say, if not in the policy then at least in the implementation of the policy.

STEWART: Was the resentment strong as far as them using so many amateurs and new people, as opposed to people who had been traditionally active throughout the state?

MCCORMACK: That was very strongly resented by the professional politician, resented by the old party loyalist who felt that we should work through the party organization. The appeal that Jack Kennedy had and created, and wanted to create, in a state where there was no strong party organization really was an appeal as a personality, because we were and we are a personality state. So I believe Jack Kennedy came to the conclusion that to be just a party man was to limit your appeal to the electorate. The electorate

would not vote on just straight party lines, so he appealed to the independent and to the Republican as well as to the Democrat. He would deliberately, in some cases, pick as his Kennedy secretary someone who was either an independent or, in some cases, even a Republican. And this gave him an appeal as a new, a fresh face with no political alliances, no involvement. And he represented really what he was: He was the all-American boy; he was the war hero; he was the athlete; he was the student; he was the savant; he was the intellectual. He was all things to all men. At that time he was a bachelor, and so he was even more importantly all things to all women. The young girls dreamt of making love to him or marrying him and the old women wanted to mother him. It was a fantastic charisma that Jack Kennedy had.

STEWART: There was no real opposition to his nomination to run against [Henry Cabot] Lodge was there, to your knowledge?

MCCORMACK: No, not to my knowledge, because at that time there were two major forces at work, the Dever and the Kennedy forces. I suppose you could include Maurice Tobin, who was a strong personality.

At that time he was Secretary of Labor, and he was not acting as a candidate. John McCormack would not seek state-wide office, and Jim Curley, who was on the scene, had passed his peak. Others had not risen to a point that they could challenge. So that you really had constitutional office-holders who were not sufficiently heavy to challenge for either Governor or Senator. When you avoided the head-on collision between Dever and Kennedy, all the pieces fell into line, with the result that there was no serious opposition.

STEWART: You weren't at the 1952 Democratic National Convention, were you?

MCCORMACK: No. No.

STEWART: Were you involved at all in the [Adlai E.] Stevenson campaign of that year?

MCCORMACK: Well, actually I did my work in '52 for Stevenson.

STEWART: Oh, did you? What generally were the relationships between the Stevenson campaign and the Kennedy campaign?

MCCORMACK: Well, there weren't really relationships with the Stevenson campaign with any campaign in the state; everyone was running their individual campaign.

This gets back to the fact that we didn't have any party organization, so that each camp had to raise their own money; each camp had to determine what its advertising campaign would be.

I became very active in the campaign of Governor Stevenson, first, because I was a great admirer of his and second, because the Kennedy people and the Dever people had a built-in organization. It was a question of whether you would go into a campaign for Governor or for Senator where you would be one of the troops, or go into a campaign where the candidate was running for President where, almost by default, you became a person of some importance. I was just out of law school, and it felt that this was the way to try to move into the political arena in a position of responsibility.

[Stephen A.] Steve Moynahan was the campaign manager in Massachusetts at the time, and Paul Smith, a lawyer in Boston, was with Steve running the campaign. I was, at that time in that campaign, directly under Smith and Moynahan, so that I had a pretty good spot; whereas, if I went with the Dever and Kennedy camps I would not be in the same position.

I, at the time, was very idealistic. I hope I haven't lost all my idealism, but at the time I was very idealistic, and I thought that we were running one campaign for the Democratic Party. John McCormack instilled in me that the Democratic Party is the vehicle and the rest of us are just means of accomplishing the objectives of the Party through being elected to office. It didn't work this way in the campaign because there was, to understate it, a strained relationship between the three, we'll say three, camps--the Dever camp, the Kennedy camp and the Stevenson camp. And not so much really against Stevenson. Stevenson was, to a large degree, ignored in that campaign. The main thrust of the campaign was Kennedy and Dever. Kennedy people in

different parts of the state would tear down the Dever signs, and the Dever people would tear down the Kennedy signs. They were all supposed to be working for one.

STEWART: Really? It got that bad?

MCCORMACK: Well, it was particularly in western Massachusetts. There was a bitterness between the two camps, and, instead of running as a team, they were almost running against one another.

STEWART: Yes. Did Stevenson come here at all, and, if so, were there any problems in setting up joint meetings and joint appearances?

MCCORMACK: Well, Stevenson came. I'll get mixed up, sure as shooting, between '52 and '56 when you talk about this business. He came by train from Springfield, and he made a whistle stop tour across the state, and then went by car down to southeastern Massachusetts. There was really no great problem with Stevenson. Stevenson was not the most popular candidate in the state. You had some people, like the late District Attorney, [William J., Jr.] Bill Foley, who publicly disavowed support of Stevenson because he was divorced. This was an Irish Catholic community that Foley was representing and was talking to. But, aside from that, to a very large degree there was great enmity between the Dever and Kennedy people on the one side, and Stevenson people on the other.

The only problems we had would relate to: Who would sit where, who would be where, with the candidate; who would ride with him in the car; who would ride with him in the train; who would be seen with him on the platform; what would be the order of speaking, and so forth and so on. And, frankly, the problems that we had were not limited to the Kennedy, Dever camp; they were more with the local officials. [Daniel B.] Dan Brunton was then mayor of Springfield. We had a problem; Danny wanted to be with Governor Stevenson-- see, I get confused between '52 and '56. I'm pretty sure he was there in '52. I think it was in the '52 campaign he didn't want to get out of the car when they left the Springfield city limits to pick up the train again. Maybe that was the '56 campaign.

STEWART: It's often been said that Kennedy picked up a lot of anti-[Dwight D.] Eisenhower Republicans, [Robert A.] Taft Republicans. Was this at all a factor in Stevenson's campaign?

MCCORMACK: I think in this state there was a very strong feeling relating to the so-called conservative and, what they now call, moderate wings of the Republican Party. Then, to a very large degree, as it is now, your conservatives control the party machinery. They might not represent the majority in the state as far as Republican sentiment is concerned, but they did have a very large voice in party machinery. Lodge was most instrumental in getting Eisenhower, first, to run and, second, to be nominated. There are many people today who will tell you that if Lodge had spent more time campaigning for himself and less time campaigning for Dwight Eisenhower, then he would have been reelected, he would have defeated Jack Kennedy. But this is very difficult to assess. Without question, Jack Kennedy benefited because there were disenchanted Republicans and, without question, he took advantage of it. This is good politics.

STEWART: Was there any problem in raising funds for Stevenson because of the Kennedy efforts in raising funds, or maybe they . . .

MCCORMACK: You always have trouble raising funds for a candidate for president in a state where you've got a Democratic Governor seeking reelection who can potentially dry up the well and then a candidate for the United States Senate who looks like he's got a good chance of winning. And as I indicated earlier, the Democratic Party never raised the money, the individual candidates raised the money. And then Stevenson would get what was left. You would have some people who were interested in international affairs, but a deep pocket was not available for Stevenson, and it was a very difficult assignment to raise money for the Governor.

STEWART: Do you recall anything about Governor Stevenson's impressions of John Kennedy at that time?

MCCORMACK: No.

STEWART: This is always a problem with people who have passed on. We try to get as much as we can secondhand from people.

MCCORMACK: No, I think that, along with being a very brilliant man, Governor Stevenson was a very good politician, and if he had anything but favorable comment to make to someone from Massachusetts about Jack Kennedy, even if he would be closeted with him privately in a room, he would not voice it.

STEWART: Okay. Unless there's anything else about that campaign that you can think of. . . .

MCCORMACK: I think the only significant thing about the campaign, as far as I can attest to, not first-hand, but secondhand to a degree, is the involvement of the Speaker. And that relates to the fact that Jack Kennedy was not getting support from the Jewish community. It was considered at the time that the Jewish community felt that Jack Kennedy did not look with favor upon their situation in the new state of Israel. They did not trust Joe Kennedy. They felt Joe Kennedy was, if not anti-Semitic, at least not friendly disposed to Jews. And Jack Kennedy had made a motion on the floor of Congress, as I understand it--and this could be checked--to reduce aid, United States aid, to the state of Israel. This presented ammunition with which people could try to indicate that the hopes of the Jewish community vis-a-vis the state of Israel rested with Lodge and not with Jack Kennedy.

They went to John McCormack, who is looked upon very much with favor by the Jewish community, and John McCormack called a meeting of the leading Jewish philanthropists and businessmen and those whose voice would be listened to. At the meeting he told them that--let's use hypothetical figures; I don't know the magnitude of the thing so I'll use ten million dollars. There was ten million dollars in aid to Israel. There was probably a hundred million, but let's say ten million. John McCormack told this group that he felt that from his soundings, it was going to be reduced to five

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million dollars. So he told the Jewish community that he called Jack Kennedy in and said to him that, "We're going to lose five million dollars to Israel. I want you to make a motion to reduce it to seven million dollars to see if we can cut it down and save something." This motion was made; this motion was carried. Israel got seven million dollars. And instead of blaming Jack Kennedy for losing three million dollars, they should praise Jack Kennedy for saving two million dollars.

There was always the question of the accuracy of the Speaker's reporting of what happened, but, in any event, this was considered by the leaders of the Jewish community to be adequate, they would take John McCormack's word. And they then got on the line for Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: I don't know how much, in this, you want to discuss, the Speaker's actions or opinions of things. I know there's a problem. But what generally was his role in that campaign, other than that?

MCCORMACK: Well, John McCormack was--you've got to understand, he's a Democrat. He and Joe Kennedy were very close friends. He and [John F.] "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald were close friends. John Kennedy was the candidate, the Democratic candidate, for the Senate, and so John McCormack felt that he should do everything he could to elect Adlai Stevenson, to elect Paul Dever, and to elect Jack Kennedy. He was not aligned with any camp. He was friendly with the principals involved, and he was first and foremost a Democrat. And he enthusiastically supported all the Democratic candidates and couldn't understand why other Democrats wouldn't do the same.

STEWART: Of course, there had been some problem when Jack Kennedy was a member of the House, this well known story about . . .

MCCORMACK: Well, Jack Kennedy took the other members of Congress over to the President and complained that, because John McCormack was the Speaker, he was getting all the patronage and they should share in it. But they had a very good relationship, Jack Kennedy and the Speaker, despite this. As a matter of fact, the other

members of the Congress didn't know what they were being called over for. And after they left, the President called the Speaker. The Speaker had a private conversation with Jack Kennedy about it, but there was nothing dramatic about it.

It happened that at the time we had two Republican Senators and John McCormack was the Speaker. After Jack Kennedy got elected to the Senate, John McCormack felt that, as a Democratic Senator, the patronage should go through him. And it was only a matter of protocol. And the patronage that was concerned in the discussion that was had with the President had to do with patronage outside of a congressional district. In other words, John McCormack would never exercise the power of appointment, federal appointment, even though he was the Speaker, in a Democratic Congressman's district without the Democratic Congressman initiating or participating in that patronage. Where John McCormack had the total patronage power, at that time, was in a Republican district, because he wouldn't consult with a Republican congressman. And it was in this type of appointment and in the regional appointments that John Kennedy felt that the other members of Congress should participate.

STEWART: This, of course, all changed when Kennedy became a Senator, and there was no . . .

MCCORMACK: There was no problem.

STEWART: There was no problem after that.

MCCORMACK: John McCormack had the patronage. Again, he's a traditionalist. He feels very strongly about protocol, and he feels very strongly about party loyalty and this, that, and the other thing. And tradition and protocol calls for the Democratic Senator to have the patronage. So today [Edward M.] Ted Kennedy is relatively speaking, a young, new Senator, and yet anything outside of John McCormack's district, John McCormack insists goes through, will have to go through Ted Kennedy because he's the Democratic Senator. This is protocol. This is the way *he* and works, and you can't get him to change.

STEWART: Do you recall anything about the appointment or the election of Mayor Curley to be national committeeman in 1953? And, if so, was Kennedy at all involved in it?

MCCORMACK: No.

STEWART: I'm not even sure who had been the national committeeman before that.

MCCORMACK: I'm trying to think. Was it Tom Moriarty or. . . . I don't really remember. The only difficulty that presented itself with Jim Curley was when John McCormack asked the members of Congress to sign a petition for pardon for Jim Curley, and Jack Kennedy wouldn't sign it, and John thought he should. This was as close to a difference of opinion as could arise. I'm sure that John Kennedy was not a supporter of Jim Curley's for National committeeman. I doubt seriously, if Jim Curley sought the national committeeman, that they could lick him, because this would be a position that would be filled by professional politicians with whom Jim Curley had a rapport that John Kennedy at that time did not enjoy.

STEWART: What . . .

MCCORMACK: I'm not. . . . I'm not. . . . I really. . . . I suppose I could check it and find out . . .

STEWART: Well, that's all right.

MCCORMACK: But I don't at this moment recall: One, who Jim Curley replaced, and two, how he replaced him. In '53, I was a candidate myself for city council, so I'm sure I was not active in state politics.

STEWART: Were you elected to the city council in '53?

MCCORMACK: Yes. I was elected in '53, reelected in '55, and reelected in '57. I lost attorney general in '56, and I was elected attorney general by the legislature in '58 and by the people in '58 and in '60.

STEWART: What kind of contacts, if any, did you have with Senator Kennedy's office here in Boston when you were a member of the city council and during this whole period?

MCCORMACK: Never really had contacts with the office--contacts with Jack Kennedy personally because I was a city councilor. I was president of the city council for awhile, and we would be traveling in the same political circles, we would be attending the same functions and what-have-you. I was always a great admirer of his. He had that intangible something that all of us who are in politics or around politics or involved in politics wish that we had. But he had more than his share, and you wished that some of it would just rub off, you know. So that whenever Jack Kennedy would be in a parade, all of us who were lesser lights would always try to be a little close to him hoping that some of that charisma would redound to our benefit.

STEWART: That's interesting. That's something I was going to ask you later. I don't know if you've read [Theodore H.] Teddy White's book on the 1960 campaign, but he quotes [Richard K.] Dick Donahue, in describing the rally they had in Boston Garden the night before the election, as pointing to a number of politicians on the platform with John Kennedy and Donahue telling White that they all thought that Kennedy had a trick and that, if they too could learn this trick, then they too possibly could go far in politics.

MCCORMACK: Well, not a trick. I was on that stage, I was on that stage, because I was a candidate for re-election to attorney general at that time. I didn't consider it to be any kind of a trick. I traveled around with him. I suppose we'll get to this.

STEWART: Yes, yes.

MCCORMACK: He traveled the state with me in 1956, when I was unsuccessful, and then in 1958, when I had been elected by the legislature and was running for the election after winning the primary for attorney general. My wife, Emily, and myself were the only politicians that he would allow at his receptions. You go to a few of those receptions; you know there's no trick to it. It's the chemistry that he had; that is nothing that you're going to try to emulate. You either have it or you don't have it. He had it, Ted Kennedy has it, and Bobby has it. If you don't have it, that's it. But the point is that people were close to Jack Kennedy on the stage in 1960. I don't know as there were that many really. The only people that were close to him on the stage were the people who were running for statewide offices. We were the only ones who were allowed on the stage. And it was more that, by your proximity, by your association, you hoped that this electorate out in front of you would transfer some of the devotion and the affection they had for Jack Kennedy vicariously to you.

STEWART: Of course, Teddy White has some other pretty uncomplimentary things to say about Massachusetts politics and politicians, but I'll ask you about those later. Do you recall anything about the 1954 campaign and the furor with Foster Furcolo?

MCCORMACK: No. I, in '54, worked for Jack Kennedy and for Foster Furcolo. I recall the stories going around the night of the television endorsement where Jack Kennedy, who was then on crutches, in that campaign endorsed all the other candidates and pointedly refused to endorse Foster, and the rumors going around of the language that Jack used to describe Foster at the television studio. There's no question there was a very bitter relationship between Jack Kennedy and Foster Furcolo in that '54 campaign.

STEWART: What was the general impression as to how this originated? Or was there any . . .

MCCORMACK: I've been around politics, John, for quite a few years in this state, and I can't find anyone yet who can tell me what caused or what precipitated

the difference between Foster Furcolo and Jack Kennedy. You've heard various versions, depending upon whom you're talking to, whether they were pro-Kennedy or anti-Kennedy. The pro-Kennedy people will tell you that Foster Furcolo was too demanding, that he just pushed Jack too far, and Jack went beyond the point of no return and just told him, no, and then the Irish came out, as it comes out in all of us, the wild Irish I suppose, and he said, no. The anti-Kennedy people will tell you that it's because Foster was named one of the ten outstanding congressmen when they were both serving in the House down in Washington, and Jack resented it, or that he was anti-Italian, depending upon whom you're talking to and one thing and another. I really have no idea as to what caused the feeling between Jack Kennedy and Foster Furcolo, but I do know that it existed.

STEWART: [Theodore C.] Sorensen, in his book, says that Jack Kennedy preferred a Republican colleague in the Senate and that, in fact, Sorensen did some active work for [Leverett] Saltonstall in 1954. Was this common knowledge, do you recall?

MCCORMACK: I wouldn't say it was common knowledge. It was. . . . If it is a fact--and if Ted Sorensen said it was a fact, then let's accept it as a fact. It was always reported that Jack Kennedy was not anxious to have another Democrat serve in the Senate with him, that he had a good working relationship with Leverett Saltonstall, and that as the Democratic Senator he was the key Democrat in the state. With another Democratic Senator he would lose some of the patronage powers, that really were not of great interest to him except that he didn't want somebody else to have them, were uniquely the property of Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: I should think this would have caused a lot of problems with people who would have liked to have split with Kennedy or broken away from Kennedy but just didn't quite dare to.

MCCORMACK: Jack Kennedy had two things going for him: First, he had this charisma with the people and you couldn't be openly anti-Kennedy and, second,

he had the potential for national office so that there was always the feeling that you don't go against a winner.

STEWART: Do you think people really felt that, even back in 1954, that . . .

MCCORMACK: No, not necessarily in '54, but, when you go up to '56 and beyond, this certainly was present. Then you can't isolate the feeling because the anti-Kennedy feeling, if you want to call it that, the jealousy or the resentment of Jack Kennedy for not involving himself more in party politics, not concerning himself more with the state political problems--existed throughout his career from '52 on, once he got into statewide office. Without question there were people who would have liked to have challenged his inactivity in this regard, but they didn't have the political courage because they didn't want to have themselves counted out. And the one thing that was felt to be a fact in a relationship of a Democratic politician with the Kennedys was that, once you were against them, you were never back in with them. You're either with the Kennedys in every effort, on every issue, or you're drummed out of the regiment, so to speak.

STEWART: What about the 1956 fight for the chairmanship in the state Democratic committee? How were you involved in that?

MCCORMACK: Only involved as part of the so-called McCormack element in the Democratic Party, and a principle part of it, I suppose. This was one of these things that was brought upon Jack Kennedy and John McCormack, and to a much lesser degree myself, by others. Sometimes you get involved in these contests when you don't really want to get involved, but you have loyalty to your friends, you can't walk away from them, and they get you involved. This was a contest between [John M.] Pat Lynch and [William H.] Bill Burke. John Kennedy went to John McCormack to try to avoid an open break and said anyone but Burke was acceptable to him. "John McCormack, you name the chairman. I don't care who he is so long as it's not Bill Burke." John McCormack asked Bill Burke if he wanted to step down. Bill Burke, said, no, he wanted to fight for it. John thought that he would

that he couldn't turn his back on a friend. Jack Kennedy visited every one of the eighty state committeemen and committeewomen personally. John McCormack did not. This does not mean we didn't make a fight on the thing, because my father and myself were trying to get votes for Bill Burke. Jack Kennedy was successful. Perhaps if John McCormack had not been engaged in his activities in Washington and made a personal visit, he might have been able to elect Bill Burke. But, to be frank with you, John McCormack never felt the state committee meant anything in a state where party organization doesn't mean anything. He didn't want to turn his back on Bill Burke, but at the same time he didn't want a break with John Kennedy, that could never be healed, to develop, which would develop if he had personally gone in the way Jack Kennedy was personally going in. It was one of these things that John McCormack didn't want to lose but could afford to lose and didn't want to support Bill Burke, but could not afford not to support Bill Burke; whereas, Jack Kennedy had to win it, because he was emerging as a national leader at the time and couldn't lose a fight, even though it was for an inconsequential office as far as this state is concerned. Maybe in other states the state chairman is a terribly powerful position, but in this state it was not.

STEWART: So it was your impression that the Kennedy people went into this almost strictly as--just to get Burke out or . . .

MCCORMACK: Well, I say this only because I know that Jack Kennedy, in an effort to resolve this thing--once there was a confrontation between the McCormack and Kennedy forces, so-called, Jack Kennedy went to John McCormack and said that he would accept anyone that John McCormack would name. And it wasn't that he was so much against Bill Burke, it's just that the issue had been drawn. Now for Jack Kennedy to accept Bill Burke would have been a defeat. And Jack Kennedy really, I don't think, was that concerned about who the state chairman was, except for perhaps the naming of the delegates to the national convention and things like that. But he had to save face, and the way he felt he could save face was for John McCormack to name somebody else. It would be not considered a loss for Jack Kennedy or a win for John McCormack, because Bill Burke

became a symbol, not the individual. He was a symbol, you know. And Bill decided he wanted to make a fight for it.

STEWART: To what extent was all this related to the upcoming Convention and probably the Speaker's-- the Speaker wasn't too enthused with Stevenson at that time, was he? Stevenson for a second nomination?

MCCORMACK: I don't think he was terribly enthused for him. I don't think he was terribly enthusiastic for anyone else. I think that John McCormack was a very practical politician. He was an admirer of Adlai Stevenson's, but he didn't think Adlai Stevenson could win. And to this extent he was not enthusiastic. He was looking for a winner.

STEWART: Some people have, of course, blown up this fight in 1956 and tried to pin all kinds of implications onto it--for example, that it was a [Joseph P.] McCarthy, anti-McCarthy, thing and that there was a real attempt by the Kennedy people to get some control so that they could reform the Democratic Party, things such as this.

MCCORMACK: No, I think that's reading a great deal more into it than could be read into it, and I think that's placing emphasis on party machinery that has had and still has very little power. The chairmanship of the Democratic State Committee, as far as reforming the Democratic Party in this state, was not a terribly important post because the Democratic state organization itself was not terribly important. We had a Jefferson-Jackson Day Committee which was separate from the state committee but which raised all the money and dispensed all the money. We had the patronage dispensed by the individuals and not through the Democratic State Committee. And so the organization, the Democratic state organization, really only had a voice in the method of electing or selecting delegates to the national convention, and when you've got a state convention, the method of electing delegates to the state convention (which we had at that time) but, beyond that, it had no voice. It was not a part of the Kennedy organization; it was not part of the Kennedy team or the McCormack team.

STEWART: To what extent did President Kennedy or any of his followers take a part in the 1956 state convention in which you ran against [Joseph D.] Joe Ward, I think, and [Endicott] Peabody for the attorney general nomination?

MCCORMACK: I don't think he took any part in the convention. They took no part in the primary. Joe Ward was endorsed at the convention, and I beat him at the primary. In the November election, then Senator Kennedy made a tour of the forty senatorial districts with the then Senate president, John E. Powers, and took me along with him. And we visited every one of the senatorial districts together, in part to help try to get me elected and in part to show that there was no difference between Kennedys and McCormacks in Massachusetts.

STEWART: So, as far as you're concerned, there was no problem of his full support or his total support of you?

MCCORMACK: I was the only candidate for constitutional office that he did actively support. Of course, I think Foster Furcolo was running for Governor in '56.

STEWART: Right.

MCCORMACK: And I forget who our other running mates were at the time. Maybe it's because of the feeling Jack Kennedy had for Foster Furcolo that he did not have for me. But I suppose he wanted to be involved in the state campaign, but did not want to be totally involved. So, he involved himself first in trying to elect Democratic senators at the local level. He felt this was terribly important because this is the way you get legislation passed, to have the right people serving in local office. And, second, to show that he was supporting statewide candidates, he singled out Eddie McCormack and we toured the state. Bob Morey was then driving the car, and [Francis X.] Frank Morrissey was in the car with us and John Powers and Jack Kennedy and myself. We spent the better part of a week visiting every one of the forty senatorial districts.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

STEWART: Were you at the 1956 Democratic National Convention?

MCCORMACK: Yes.

STEWART: Could you describe briefly what role, if any, you had in the whole vice presidential race.

MCCORMACK: No, I was an observer. I really had no role. I think that the best thing that ever happened--I'm sure everyone says this--the best thing that ever happened was Jack Kennedy coming close and losing. He himself used to make a joke of the fact that, had he won that, he'd have been dead politically. But from some defeats come victory. No, I think the papers, or at least Time magazine stated that John McCormack was responsible for Jack Kennedy not getting the nomination. Bob Kennedy sent a telegram to John McCormack, after this appeared, stating that this was an error and this was an untrue statement and so forth and so on, because in point of fact he had helped get the Texas delegation and he helped get the New York delegation. It's unfortunate that people can use this as a continuing pattern of feud, if you will, between the McCormacks and the Kennedys and say, "Here's another little illustration of it." That's not so. I talked to a very prominent Democrat from New York state just this last week, and he said that at the '56 Convention he called John McCormack and said, "What do you want me to do? I can control some of these delegates. Who do you want me to have them go to?" And John McCormack said, "Everything else is the same. If there is a candidate from Massachusetts, I am with the candidate from Massachusetts. I would like you to get them for Kennedy." Now this is totally unrelated to our conversation. It was totally unrelated to anything that has gone on in the past. This just came up in a conversation when I was in Washington last week. This individual (Averell Harriman) still is quite prominent in politics. It was just a little anecdote he was telling me.

STEWART: I've heard it said that there were some people in the Massachusetts delegation who were less than enthusiastic about John Kennedy as a vice presidential nominee.

MCCORMACK: Well, I suppose you continually had the feeling on the part of the professional Democrat in the state that Jack Kennedy did not involve himself in state matters, that he went outside of the party machinery. But they were not that unenthusiastic that they wouldn't give him all-out support, because he was from Massachusetts, and, if you could get someone from Massachusetts on the national ticket, this would be terribly significant.

STEWART: You wouldn't happen to know precisely what happened with the Texas delegation to cause them to vote for John Kennedy.

MCCORMACK: No.

STEWART: Again, I've heard all kinds of stories as to what motivated Sam Rayburn to do it. I'm not sure . . .

MCCORMACK: No, I heard the Speaker make the statement when this thing appeared in Time magazine that, "How can they say this when I got him Texas, and I got him New York and I helped get him so many other states." You know, this is just a conclusion. What he did, if anything, I don't know. The corroboration on New York came to me last week. I've never pressed it because this is yesterday's news, and who's interested in yesterday's news? I've never pressed the Speaker for an explanation of what happened or how it happened, but he did specify New York and California. And this individual that I talked to last week gave corroboration of New York, in the sense that this individual controlled some delegates in New York and John McCormack told him to go with Kennedy.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the Stevenson campaign in '56?

MCCORMACK: Not really, as such, because I was running for attorney general myself. I was running against an incumbent, George Fingold, and I had a tough fight, tough enough that I lost. Out of two and a half million votes, we lost by thirty-eight thousand so that it was a very close contest. I was supporting Stevenson, as we were supporting all the Democrats.

STEWART: To your knowledge, did Kennedy people have any opposition to Mrs. [Elizabeth A.] Stanton as national committeewoman in 1956?

MCCORMACK: No. I wouldn't think so. I would think that to the contrary he would have been active in her selection.

STEWART: She replaced Mrs. [Margaret M.] O'Riordan.

MCCORMACK: Margaret O'Riordan. Margaret O'Riordan was close to the Kennedys, but John E. Powers pushed Betsy Stanton. John Powers was very close with Jack Kennedy, and I don't think John Powers would have pushed Betsy Stanton if Jack Kennedy opposed it. I don't think Jack Kennedy involved himself because while Margaret was a beloved figure in the Democratic Party, this was part of an effort to get some fresh, young blood in the party organization. He couldn't have been terribly opposed because Betsy got appointed as a postmistress. This had to go through Kennedy. I've got to assume that he wasn't opposed to it.

STEWART: Okay. In 1958 you had another race for the attorney general nomination with Governor Peabody and Joe Ward. That was the year they had the riotous convention, I think.

MCCORMACK: Yes. We had to recess convention, as I recall.

STEWART: Again were the Kennedy people at all involved in one side or the other in this?

MCCORMACK: No.

STEWART: In any discernible way?

MCCORMACK: No, I don't think the Kennedy forces were active at the convention. You have to understand our state politics to appreciate that there isn't a great deal at that time that Jack Kennedy could have done other than an open endorsement, which would be ridiculous, a pre-primary, pre-convention endorsement. We were successful in the convention in '58 and had a primary fight with former

Governor Peabody. I had defeated Chub Peabody in '58, and in neither campaign was there evidence of Kennedy support. And in both November election campaigns Jack Kennedy publicly supported me. In '56 he took me around to the senatorial districts, and in '58 my wife, Emily, and myself were invited to every one of the Kennedy receptions, where Jack and Jackie Kennedy and Emily and myself were the only political figures present. Then, he would have us stand in the receiving line consisting of himself, Jackie, myself and Emily. So that I couldn't have asked him to do more.

STEWART: I've heard stories about a certain amount of friction over the dinner that was held at which former President [Harry S] Truman came. I don't know if this was primarily your dinner in 1958 . . . ?

MCCORMACK: This was a dinner for me. But I don't know of any friction. Jack Kennedy was there.

STEWART: Yes, I know. Afterwards, so the story goes, President Truman had an interview with some newspaper people and told precisely why he couldn't support Kennedy for president. It was mainly because of Ambassador Kennedy.

MCCORMACK: I don't think at that time, John. I don't think he had an interview at that time. You know, maybe if you've seen clips. . . . I think that he supported Kennedy for reelection to the Senate at that time.

STEWART: Yes. Yes, but I mean they were talking about President in '58.

MCCORMACK: Yes, but I don't remember any friction. It was, as a matter of fact, very harmonious dinner. Harry Truman was the principal speaker, and Jack Kennedy was there. All of the political figures were at the affair. It was as close to having harmony in Democratic politics in Massachusetts as you could come to have it. But I do recall President Truman saying that he couldn't support Jack Kennedy for President, but I didn't think that he said that here at that time. I think that was later.

STEWART: Oh, really?

MCCORMACK: I think he said it out in Missouri.

STEWART: Well, yes, of course, just before the Convention he very, very strongly . . .

MCCORMACK: Before the 1960 Convention, but not before the 1958 election.

STEWART: No.

MCCORMACK: When he was here, he endorsed Jack Kennedy for the United States Senate in rather glowing terms.

STEWART: Well, I think the story was that the Kennedy people weren't too enthused with having Harry Truman come here because they knew he didn't have that much support in Massachusetts and it would be of no real value to them in their campaign.

MCCORMACK: Well, this could very well be, but it wouldn't be for that. It would more be for the reason that Jack Kennedy in 1958 was looking upon this as the vehicle to project himself into national politics to an even greater extent than he had been in '56. And Jack Kennedy was looking for Democratic and Republican and independent votes. Harry Truman is, like John McCormack, a dedicated Democrat, and he believes in giving the Republicans hell. Jack Kennedy didn't want this, because he didn't want to alienate Republicans. This was never expressed to me, but, I mean, assuming that there was some resentment to Harry Truman being present, it would more be because he was such a partisan rather than because he was not popular, because Harry Truman was popular here in the state. You know, whenever someone is out of office, particularly someone like Harry Truman, the people love him. Not drawing an analogy or comparison, but they loved Jim Curley. They wouldn't vote for him, but they loved him. I think Jack Kennedy, if he had feelings that Truman should not be invited, had these feelings basically because he wanted Republican votes and he wanted independent votes.

He was running against a fellow named [Vincent J.] Vinny Celeste, and he had a chance of winning big, and he won big. At that time he won by eight hundred thousand votes. This was unheard of. It was the biggest plurality up to that period. The only reason I say this--and I'm supposing; I don't know this to be a fact--the night before the election, we were on TV with John McCormack, and Jack Kennedy, myself, and Jack Kennedy asked that I talk to the Speaker and ask him not to be too violently anti-Republican. And Jack Kennedy asked this because he did not want to totally alienate the Republican voter. He said to me, "We want to get some Republican votes, too."

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

STEWART: Moving on, then, to 1960. What role, if any, did you have in Kennedy's campaign before the Convention, in the nomination campaign.

MCCORMACK: I think just like other Democrats in the state we were strong for Jack Kennedy. I was more active only because of a proximity with the Speaker. We were all pushing for John Kennedy in '60. And my role, as far as traveling around the country, was only as someone who was an Attorney General going to, for instance, the National Conference of Attorneys General from different states to support Jack Kennedy. I was a Jack Kennedy enthusiast, and I think I helped him, but I was not out on the hustings in Wisconsin, West Virginia, or up in New Hampshire, and the like. And then at the National Convention I think I helped because of the contacts I had with other state officials that I had met because I was an Attorney General. I was present when John McCormack was moving for Jack Kennedy and saw some of the things that had been done.

STEWART: Can you recall any examples of states and/or people that either you or the Speaker particularly contacted or had an extensive contact with.

MCCORMACK: Well, he had many contacts with people in Southern states who were not too happy, particularly after the platform was drafted. I think that John McCormack's chief role in the Convention came, one, behind the scenes talking to people (I wouldn't want to quote him in this type conversation), and two, after John Kennedy got the nomination and the effort was made to have Lyndon Johnson be the number two man. Then I think John McCormack was helpful in two ways: One, with the Southern conservatives; and two, with the Northern liberals.

The Southern conservatives wanted to bolt the party, basically because of the platform. They felt it was something they couldn't live with. To just give one illustration, John McCormack talked to a Southern Senator who said he couldn't hold his delegation in check, that he had to walk out of the Convention. I don't think people realized how close the Southerners were coming to walking out of the Convention. John McCormack said to him that the National Convention passes on platforms, but the Congress of the United States passes on legislation, and that the Senator should bear this in mind and not destroy the chance that was theirs to win a national election, which he would do if he walked out.

Then, you had trouble with delegations like California and Minnesota and Michigan, where they were going to walk out of the Convention because Lyndon Johnson had been put up as a candidate. Michigan was the classic illustration where John McCormack, as in the case of the Southerner, was trying to persuade them with logic. He called the leader of the Michigan delegation out of the caucus. They were having a caucus. And I was there. He called the leader of this delegation out and told him, not in sweet, honeyed words, that this is something that was not going to happen and that he should go in and tell them as plainly as that, that this was not going to happen. And then they were talking in the California and in the Minnesota delegation, particularly, about putting up other candidates to run against Johnson. John McCormack talked to the parliamentarian, talked to Bob Kennedy, and talked to Governor [LeRoy] Collins, who was then in the chair as I recall, and said that after Lyndon Johnson's name had been put up into nomination, that the chair would recognize John McCormack

and John McCormack would make a motion that the nominations be closed, and said in a diplomatic way to Governor Collins that, "When the votes come, don't count the votes in the gallery that you will hear that will be opposed; count the votes on the floor," and that "You can do this if you try to direct your attention." He was very nice; I thought he put it very nicely. And so that, if you recall, the chair did recognize John McCormack. He had cleared this with the parliamentarian and with Bob Kennedy. He made the motion. The motion carried.

We had a direct line in our delegation from the Kennedy headquarters. The Speaker was in constant touch with Bob Kennedy, who was at this juncture playing a very important part in the campaign, and with John Bailey there were people like [Hyman B.] Hy Raskin and others who were, at that time, very active in this phase of the thing. These are the professional pols who knew how to move, and Jack Kennedy had them moving well. And then there would be trouble in the delegation, they would call on this phone. They had an elaborate communication setup. And John would know where to go to put out a fire. And so that it was interesting. You almost had walkouts in that Convention, first, from the South and the conservatives, and second, from the North and the liberals--in the same Convention, over different issues, but. . . .

I don't say John McCormack did it by himself--that's to overstate it--but he did play an important role. I just was a witness to it. I didn't have anything to do with it really.

STEWART: I've heard that there was some grumbling within the Massachusetts delegation that everyone was taken for granted by the Kennedy people, a lack of attention, which naturally people were looking for.

MCCORMACK: Well, you're always going to get this because everyone likes to think that he's important. Everyone likes to think he's a big man. And when you are not, when your favor is not curried, why then your nose gets a little bit out of joint. But most of the people who were Kennedy people in the delegation had assignments, and they were being used. The people who were not (quote) "Kennedy people" (close quote) would feel disturbed

that others in the delegation would be assigned to Ohio or to New Jersey or to Mississippi or to Oklahoma or, you know, Illinois or what-have-you, and perhaps they should have been assigned. But Jack Kennedy, perhaps, in his best judgment felt that they were not the type that he wanted to go to these delegations. And he had them well spread out. Those of us who were participating in putting out these fires--and I say "those of us," really not that I was participating to that extent, I just happened to be there. I was like a coat holder for the Speaker. He was the one who was doing a great deal of work. As a matter of fact, I think he was designated as the floor manager for the Kennedy operations at the 1960 Convention. Yes, we were active, but others were not, because if he didn't have the Massachusetts votes, then he didn't have any votes. And I suppose you're going to have some people say, "Well, why isn't he asking us?" This is just petty.

STEWART: Was there any criticism from any of the Kennedy people--not necessarily from the President--that the Speaker wasn't doing enough or wasn't 100 per cent enthusiastic?

MCCORMACK: I can't see how they could have, to be honest with you. They wouldn't voice it to me.

STEWART: No, I know that but, I mean, you might have heard . . .

MCCORMACK: I never heard of it. I've given you two illustrations of scenes to which I bore witness where, one, he was cajoling Southerners, and two, he was threatening Northerners. And I say threatening, I mean, you know, I use it advisedly. He just was pointing out the facts of life, and he was in constant communication. If he did nothing else but talk to these two states--and it was not limited to that--plus the fact that he closed off the nomination for Lyndon Johnson, then they would have no complaints. But in point of fact, he did a hell of a lot more. He did a great deal in that Convention. I was with him, and he ran my legs off, and I'm considerably younger than he is.

STEWART: As far as the 1960 Massachusetts campaigns were concerned, there was, of course, a fight for the Senate nomination between Foster Furcolo and . . .

MCCORMACK: [Thomas J.] Tommy O'Connor.

STEWART: O'Connor, and then another one for Governor between [Robert F.] Murphy and Ward and Peabody and [Francis E.] Kelly, I guess. Again, were Kennedy people involved one way or another in these, to your knowledge?

MCCORMACK: No, to be very honest with you, it was the one campaign I've had where I didn't have a primary. As a matter of fact, I was the only candidate that didn't have a primary. Even [Thomas J.] Tom Buckley, who was our perennial state auditor, had a primary opponent, and I think it was a Kennedy man, as a matter of fact.

STEWART: [William] "Doc" Bill Hartigan, wasn't it? Yes. I don't know if he ran in the primary. He opposed him in the convention . . .

MCCORMACK: Well, he opposed him in the convention. Doc Hartigan opposed--and I'm sure that was not with Jack Kennedy's blessings, but he did it, and he was identified as a Kennedy man. I say I'm sure because Jack Kennedy's got more sense, had more sense than to try to beat Tom Buckley, who was unbeatable at the polls. But, frankly, I stayed out of the state in the primary because I didn't want to get involved. There were about eleven candidates running for Governor that year. You had a tough fight with Foster Furcolo and Tommy O'Connor. Tommy O'Connor was successful in the primary on an anti-Furcolo vote. Then he got buried in the final election in a contest that we could have won if we didn't have this intra-party strife.

STEWART: You really think they could have beaten Saltonstall?

MCCORMACK: I think Saltonstall's political strength has always been a myth. He beat Foster Furcolo when Jack Kennedy was openly against Foster Furcolo in 1954. He beat him by twenty-five thousand votes. Now that's a difference of twelve thousand five hundred votes out of two and a half million. That's a very small margin. He won in 1948 against a fellow named [John I.] Fitzgerald that he picked and he . . .

STEWART: That Saltonstall picked?

MCCORMACK: Well, let's say political rumor has it that he picked his opponent. Fitzgerald was a political nonentity, similar, we'll say, to a Vinny Celeste. And let's say that the rumors had it that Saltonstall picked Fitzgerald, and the rumors had it that Kennedy had a hand at picking Celeste. I don't know as either one of them has any foundation. But it was not a Maurice Tobin that he was running against. It was not a Paul Dever that he was running against. It was not a John Kennedy. And he still barely won. And in 1960, I forget the plurality, he beat Tobin by. I think, let's see, three hundred and some odd thousand votes he beat Tommy O'Connor.

STEWART: Yes, I think so. I'm not sure.

MCCORMACK: With all of the bad publicity and everything else that Foster Furcolo had. In my opinion, Leverett Saltonstall was a candidate that could have been defeated at the polls with a good clean candidate who had some exposure. Tommy O'Connor was a good, clean candidate, but he beat Foster Furcolo. All the people who voted against Furcolo in the primary then voted against O'Connor in the final election, because they wanted to give Foster a little bit of a tickle but they didn't want to defeat him. And these same people who caused his defeat, these same people who voted for Tommy O'Connor in the primary, then resented Tommy O'Connor's beating Foster. They would never hold themselves accountable. And so they voted against Tommy O'Connor in the final election. So there was a bigger anti-vote against O'Connor in the November election than perhaps there would have been against Furcolo in the November election. No, I

think the best illustration of the weakness of Saltonstall's political vote getting, in my opinion, was the '54 fight. When Foster ran, Foster was not that well known. He was a former congressman, a state treasurer, but people really didn't know him. And Jack Kennedy publicly disavowed him; the press made a big thing of this. Still Saltonstall only beat him by twenty-five thousand votes. If Kennedy had openly supported Furcolo in '54, I think Furcolo would have won.

STEWART: That, again, is a question of whether he did support him in the Convention. Of course, there were many surprises. John Powers, I think, nominated Furcolo in the 1960 convention. Wasn't it assumed that this was because of Kennedy?

MCCORMACK: John Powers was considered a Kennedy man in the later stages of the Kennedy political life more than the early stages. In the early stages, I'm sure John Powers felt he was, on the state scene, more of a factor than John Kennedy was. And he did a lot of work for John Kennedy, don't misunderstand me. But in the '52 campaign, as an illustration, when you had this difference between Kennedy and Dever, John Powers was the Suffolk County campaign manager for Paul Dever, not for Jack Kennedy. John Powers was first a Dever man. Furcolo was a Dever protege. Furcolo was brought back from Congress by Paul Dever to accept the position of state treasurer. So that when you say Powers supporting Furcolo in the '54 convention, this was more because of his association with Paul Dever than Jack Kennedy. I don't know what role, if any, Jack Kennedy played in the '54 convention. I don't think he did . . .

STEWART: '60 . . .

MCCORMACK: I mean . . . I'm talking about '54.

STEWART: Oh, oh. Well, I meant in '60. Of course, the story is that Kennedy was worried about Italian votes and that this whole squabble with Furcolo might be a factor in the national campaign. Therefore he gave him some support against O'Connor just to show that he wasn't anti-Italian.

MCCORMACK: I really can't, I can't say. In the '60 convention, Foster Furcolo was an incumbent Governor; he had no problem. He didn't need any help from Jack Kennedy to win the convention endorsement. And Jack Kennedy and all the king's horses couldn't have helped Foster in the primary, because there was an anti-Furcolo vote.

STEWART: In your opinion, did both Joe Ward and O'Connor do as much as they conceivably could to get close to Kennedy in that 1960 campaign?

MCCORMACK: Without question.

STEWART: Again, I've heard that they weren't too bright in doing things that they should have done to identify more with Kennedy.

MCCORMACK: I really can't say. I didn't have a primary fight. I won my November election, I think, second only to Jack Kennedy in the number of votes I got. I don't think that Jack Kennedy was enthusiastic in his support for them, but this is really an unfair assessment because all of the Kennedy people were all over the country and there really were no Kennedy people working here. The only involvement Kennedy had in Massachusetts politics was the final night at Boston Garden where he endorsed all of the slate, and he went right down the line and named them name for name. People felt he could have done more for Joe Ward--he could have put his arms around him--could have done more for Tommy O'Connor. But he named them; he endorsed them. They had no complaints. He endorsed me. There were six of us on that stage, and he singled out every single candidate and personally endorsed them and asked the people to vote for them. And after all, he's running for President; he's not running for state office. Frankly, I don't--you know, they can say they didn't

attach themselves sufficiently to Jack Kennedy. If this was not done, it was their fault. This means that they didn't gear their campaign to a vote for Kennedy being a vote for me, and a vote for me is a vote for Kennedy type. And I really can't recall because I had my own fight at that time. We didn't do it basically, but I didn't have that hard a fight so I didn't have to do it. Maybe if I had a hard fight, I would have.

STEWART: As I said before, and as you may be familiar with, Teddy White has a number of somewhat unkind words to say about Massachusetts politics. He says, for example, that between 1958 and 1960 the party lapsed into its (quote) "normal, disorderly, and vulgar pattern," because Kennedy took so many good people away for his own campaign. What is your reaction to that statement?

MCCORMACK: Well, I think it would be, one, an oversimplification and two, inaccurate, because the Kennedy people that were taken away were not people who were active in party politics. I don't think there was anything dramatically different in '58 to '60 than there was in '56 to '58. We had a Democratic Governor in '58 to '60. As far as state politics is concerned, if there is a disintegration of party strength, it is laid more at the doorstep of the Democratic Governor than it is to a Democratic Senator, whether he's running for national office or not, because the people he would be pulling away are not the Governor's people, and the Governor runs the state, not the Senator.

STEWART: What's your usual rebuttal or reaction to all of the criticism that Massachusetts politics has received in the national press? Practically every article that appears in a national publication about Massachusetts politics decries the corruptness and the way things are operated and so forth.

MCCORMACK: Well, I feel very strongly that, in a system where you have no means of enforcing discipline, you're going to breed this type situation, because each officeholder is an island unto himself. He raises his own money. He conducts his own campaign. The only one he has to answer to in a vote on any issue is the electorate. How are you going to enforce party discipline with this situation? And how are you going to make it possible to enforce party discipline unless you have a strong party? Jack Kennedy, John McCormack, Paul Dever--you name them--Jim Curley, David I. Walsh, they all, for one reason or another, never built up a party in this state as far as an organization is concerned. Or they prevented it from being built up, depending upon how you want to look at it. And I could single out any one of them, Foster Furcolo included.

I always had very strong feelings that you're never going to get party discipline until you get a party. And when I was attorney general, I used to make it a point: Every appointment that I'd make, other than someone who was appointed for some unique qualification, each appointment had to be submitted to the local Democratic committee for its approval. That's not giving them the power of patronage, but at least gives them a voice so that the individual feels he has an obligation to the party. But when you've got a situation where the party does not raise its money--you've got a Jefferson-Jackson Day Committee raising money--when you've got a situation where the party has no voice in patronage, how are you going to say that that has any muscle or any sinew? And this can be laid at the doorstep of anyone who was a leader in politics during this period.

I think the reason we've had difficulties in Massachusetts in this period of time is basically because we had no party discipline and no means of enforcing party discipline. And so that each man was eligible to make his own deals. And they made deals. And I don't defend it. I think I had more prosecutions as an attorney general in my period than they had for the ten years before. And they had more after I left than in my period. So, you know, this is a cumulative thing. The only thing that has kept things in check really is fear. I drafted a conflict of interest law for the state that is considered the toughest in the country. This is a deterrent. This shouldn't be the means of bringing about good government.

You should have people voting on an issue because this is what the party stands for, this is what we represent, this is what we believe in. When you have them voting only because they're afraid their constituency is going to rebel against them if they don't, then really what does a party stand for? The only time a party means anything in this state is in a national election, because there you line up, to at least some degree, along the lines of "Yes, I am a liberal" or "I am a conservative," "I believe in these programs of this party" or "I oppose them." And therefore you go with the candidate who goes with these issues, and you can talk about party from the standpoint of national consideration and from the standpoint of international affairs. But not in the state. The state is still in terrible shape, in my opinion. It was in terrible shape when Jack Kennedy was the Senator. And the one criticism that is made of Jack Kennedy, really, is that he never involved himself in the state to try to bring about the formation of a party.

STEWART: This, I think, someday might be a very serious indictment of his total success as a political figure or as a political leader.

MCCORMACK: Well, sometimes it's difficult, John, you know, when you're looking at the big picture, to worry about the little picture back home. You know? Ted Kennedy has made a serious effort to do something about the party, and he's been criticized. Interestingly enough, Jack was criticized for doing nothing, and Ted is criticized for trying to do something. So, you know, you don't know what to do or how to advise somebody. But I think there is legitimate grounds for criticizing his lack of activity in the state. But he, really, was not the one who was in a position to do it. It's a Democratic Governor really that had the opportunity and should have done something about party organization, because the amount of patronage, which is a sine qua non to getting an organization going, the fund raising potential of a United States Senator as compared to an incumbent Governor is totally disproportionate. So if we're going to assess responsibility, let's also assess it in proportion to their capacity, because of the position that they held, to do something about it.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the selection of John Kennedy's successor to the senate, [Benjamin A., II] Ben Smith?

MCCORMACK: No. Only frankly that I tried to get it myself.

STEWART: Did you? I didn't know that.

MCCORMACK: Without success. In 1960, I was elected attorney general, and we had a Republican Governor elected and a Republican Senator. I was holding what was then the most important office in the state. I had a chance in 1960 to run for the Governor if I wanted, because Foster Furcolo was stepping out. Joe Ward got the nomination in 1960. I had beaten Joe Ward in 1956 in a primary. I gambled. I didn't run for governor on the basis that Jack Kennedy would be elected to national office, and, if elected, a vacancy would come up, and I would run for the Senate in '62. And so I didn't run for governor in 1960. And when he was elected, I tried to get the appointment, and President Kennedy, then President Kennedy, said that he wanted to put someone into the office so that, if his brother wanted to run for it, he wouldn't be running against an incumbent. When he said it, frankly I thought he was talking about Bob and I didn't think of Teddy as the candidate.

STEWART: I think everyone did. I've heard that many times. What about the handling of patronage during the Kennedy Administration? Was this all done through the White House, to your knowledge? Or did Ben Smith have a real hand in it?

MCCORMACK: No, I think Ben Smith had only the voice that he would as a conduit, people passing requests through him to the President, because after all this was the President's backyard. Larry O'Brien and Kenny O'Donnell, I'm sure, had a larger voice in Massachusetts patronage matters than Ben Smith did.

STEWART: Were there any real problems that you got involved in during those two years?

McCORMACK: No.

STEWART: That you can recall.

McCORMACK: Not that I recall.

STEWART: Did you have any part in any of the two, or maybe three, visits the President made to Boston for fund-raising dinners in '61 and in '63?

McCORMACK: No, other than selling tickets for them. You know, we were involved, both the Speaker and myself, calling people that were considered McCormack people to have them take tickets.

STEWART: Well, that's . . .

McCORMACK: More in '61 than '63.

STEWART: I don't think there's any need to go into the '62 race other than just a general question as to whether relations between the President and the Speaker were hurt because of that or not.

McCORMACK: No, I think that's it's perhaps an indication of the dedication of both to public service that John McCormack was an all-out supporter of mine and, despite disclaimers, Jack Kennedy was an all-out supporter of Ted. It would be unusual not to have it this way. I mean, John McCormack has no children, and I've been very close to him, and Ted Kennedy was a brother in a family that is a very close family. And despite the fact that they had a deep personal interest, each one of them, they worked very well together in the relationship between the White House and the Congress. They would meet at least once a week, every Tuesday morning. And the interesting thing is, in all the time they met, the only time there would be a comment would be when there would be some cartoon or something in the paper, and Jack Kennedy would say to John, "John, they're writing about us again," you know. But their personal relationships were harmonious. They, I think, got a lot of things started that became the ideas of the New Frontier, if you

will, and the programs of the Great Society.

STEWART: Okay, that's about all I have unless there's anything you want to say in conclusion.

MCCORMACK: No, I think that it's a question of how you view Jack Kennedy, whether you're going to view him as a local political figure, or whether you're going to view him as a national statesman. He's very hard to put into a very small capsule and say this was John Kennedy, the man, because he was a very complex individual. He was a fellow who loved the power of office, but if you were riding with him and in a car--as happened in 1956. When we were going to the senatorial districts and the police escort put on a siren, he would actually get down below the seat of the car so people wouldn't see him. He just hated the ostentation of a police siren going through red lights. He would insist that the car would stop at red lights. This is a man who is a--he must have wanted to have power to try to do things, and at the same time, these manifestations of power really didn't go with his way of life. He didn't like it. He didn't like the trappings, so to speak.

He was a fellow who was terribly concerned with the great problems of the world, and yet you get into a discussion with him on football or baseball, he knew as much as the most avid reader of a sports page, you know. So how you place a man like this in a category and say here he was. He was, on the one hand, a man from the ivory tower, full of great ideas and ideals, and, on the other hand, he was just the an average fan like the rest of us who had a great interest in sports and wasn't just concerned with statistics even though he could rattle statistics off.

He just in a way was called before his time and in another way perhaps couldn't have been called at a better time, because he was a man who was terribly concerned with how history would treat him. He had that term of office that could be classified as a honeymoon. He was coming into the stages of his political office where the opposition party would have started to try to tear into him. By being assassinated at the time that he was, he had the good without suffering the pangs of the arrows shot at him and the bad.

So that, I think it's a great idea to record thoughts of people, even those, like myself, who had such brief contacts with him, because maybe sometime in the future someone will be able to make a composite of all of these things. Because I can't assess Jack Kennedy. Someone once said, from another state, in every other state they refer to him as President Kennedy. And if you notice Teddy and Bobby always say "President Kennedy." But it's very difficult for the people from Massachusetts who knew him as a congressman and as a Senator and as a politician and as a friend to say "President Kennedy." And we lapse into this "Jack" Kennedy. And, throughout this thing, I've said Jack Kennedy, and perhaps I shouldn't. I know I shouldn't, but it's just hard to change old habits. If you were to ask anyone in Massachusetts, "Give me your impressions of the late President Kennedy," those who knew him will at some time, at some juncture, say "President Kennedy this," and then they'll slip in and say, "Jack Kennedy said this" or "Jack said that." This is perhaps with the exception of those who were most close to him like Kenny O'Donnell and Larry O'Brien. In their public utterances it's always President Kennedy. But even in this case, if you'd talk to them, it was Jack Kennedy. "When Jack and I did this" you know. "Jack and I did that." The only one I have never heard say Jack Kennedy is Ted Kennedy.

STEWART: Really?

MCCORMACK: Always President Kennedy.

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