

**Edmund G. “Pat” Brown, Oral History Interview – 7/29/1964**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Brown was District Attorney of San Francisco from 1943 to 1950, Attorney General of California from 1951 to 1958, and Governor of California from 1959 to 1967. In this interview, he discusses the California delegation of the 1956 and 1960 Democratic National Conventions, as well as his impressions of John F. Kennedy’s intelligence and skill as a politician, among other issues.

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Edmund G. "Pat" Brown

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Oral History Interview

with

Edmund G. "Pat" Brown

July 29, 1964  
Sacramento, California

By Donald C. Swain and William K. Coblentz

For the John F. Kennedy Library

INTERVIEWER: This interview is being conducted on July 29, 1964, at the Governor's Mansion in Sacramento, California. The interviewers are Donald C. Swain and William K. Coblentz. We are interviewing the Honorable Edmund Gerald "Pat" Brown, Governor of California. Governor Brown was District Attorney of San Francisco from 1943 to 1950; Attorney General of California from 1951 to 1958; and has been the Governor of California since 1959.

Governor, under what circumstances did you become well acquainted with Senator Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

BROWN: Well, I've been searching my memory to find out when I first did become acquainted with Senator Kennedy and I cannot recall the time that I first met him. I remember at the Democratic Convention in 1956 that I was driving in a car from the Convention Hall back to the California Headquarters at the hotel and I heard someone in an automobile going by me say "The first one we've got to see is Pat Brown," and with that I leaned out the window and I said "You've got him right now" and it was Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] and two or three others, and I can't recall who it was. So I invited them up to my suite—I can't remember the name of the hotel—it was the Morrison Hotel in Chicago. It was the Morrison Hotel and they told me that they intended to make a real fight for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination and asked me whether I would assist as chairman of the California delegation. I told them that I would

make an inquiry of the leading delegates and see what could be done. I then called Elly Heller [Elinor Rass Heller] and Bill Malone [William M. Malone] and they came to the room and they immediately decided that they would canvass the delegation and find out how many they could get for vice-presidential candidate Kennedy. I myself did not make any commitment as to the vice-president, although I told him that I was very friendly to his candidacy, but that as the chairman of the delegation, I wanted to remain neutral for the time being.

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The Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] forces then moved in later on—again I have no clear recollection of the event—but President Kennedy developed a substantial number of the California delegates.

INTERVIEWER: Were Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] working with Bob Kennedy at that time?

BROWN: I have no recollection of ever meeting Larry O'Brien and Ken O'Donnell until after the President became a candidate for the President of the United States.

INTERVIEWER: Who did you support for the vice-presidency finally?

BROWN: I supported Kennedy for the vice-presidential nomination over Kefauver. But, in my own mind, I did not think that Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] could defeat Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] at that time and I felt that Kennedy had great possibilities for the years ahead and I didn't want them hurt by the vice-presidential nomination. So on the floor—when we were trying to conduct the poll on the floor—during the convention I could have voted the delegation for Kennedy, and in the bedlam it would have been impossible for anyone to question the vote. But I decided that I would vote it as closely as I could. What I'm trying to say is this—that it was impossible to get the vote and I could have made the vote go either way I wanted and there was some urging upon the part of—not the Kennedy people—but the California delegates for Kennedy, that I announce the vote in favor of Kennedy but I refused to do this and counted them accurately as I possible could, and I reported that at the time of the polling of the delegation.

INTERVIEWER: The California delegation was split between Kefauver and Kennedy.

BROWN: They were split and it was really bedlam on the floor of the Convention at that time. But my great recollection is that at that time, even though I was for Kennedy over Kefauver, I really didn't feel that it would be good for him to be the vice-presidential candidate at that time.

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INTERVIEWER: Do you have a recollection about how the Kennedy organization, if you can call it that, operated? Was this an expensive operation or just a last minute...

BROWN: It was a last minute operation. I don't think they went to the Convention thinking of the vice-presidential candidacy at all. But we were all called over to the Blackstone Hotel by Adlai Stevenson during that evening and were told that he intended to throw the vice-presidential nomination open to a floor vote by the candidates and from there on out they all started to go to work. I think it was—I'll never forget returning from the Convention—returning from that meeting with then-Governor Coleman [J.P. Coleman] of Mississippi, whom I knew as the Attorney General in Mississippi and he and I both agreed that we would be for Kennedy. Governor Coleman and myself agreed that, in our way and as we would, we would check one another out. I have no idea if Governor Coleman later voted for him but I have a distinct recollection of riding back in a cab with Governor Coleman and discussing this at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Senator Kennedy came to...

BROWN: But the organization—to answer your question—was, in California, handled by Bill Malone in the North and Elly Heller. I can't remember who in the South. Then Southern delegates were supporting John Kennedy for vice-president at that time. But I do recall on the floor of the Convention the organization, and it was pretty good. They put it together very, very well in very, very short order and John Kennedy made such an excellent fight and then after the nomination went to Kefauver and I'll never forget the very gracious speech that John Kennedy made asking that the nomination be made unanimous and the warm feeling of all of the delegates for John Kennedy by reason of his obviously good spirit in defeat at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Was it your impression at that time that he would begin campaigning for the presidency four years hence?

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BROWN: I couldn't say that but I did feel that a new star had come upon the horizon.

INTERVIEWER: Senator Kennedy came to San Francisco to speak at a party fund raising dinner in 1958. Did you talk to him then privately about his candidacy for the presidency? Or what I'm really getting at also is between 1956 and 1958 did you have occasion to talk to him?

BROWN: Yes, I did. I talked to him on two or three occasions. And although he never told me that he was intending to be a candidate for the

presidency in 1960, it was obvious to me that these trips were not made because he enjoyed making speeches in California, but that he was pursuing a course that eventually led to the presidency. I have no recollection of any independent conversations, but I do recall inviting him to come to California and I told him that I would try to help him meet some influential people in our state; when in 1958 I cannot recall. I was instrumental in having him invited to the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in Los Angeles and I think that was on March 17 of 1958, although it may have been March 17 of 1959. I did try to arrange for him to meet influential people in California. One time I gave a luncheon at Perrino's where I invited approximately 100 people. I recall, too, that at that time I didn't feel that he was a particularly good speaker and that he spoke much too fast—that he spoke very quickly and with some nervousness, I thought. And I was somewhat disappointed at the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick speech which was a good speech but I thought not too well delivered. At the Perrino luncheon I didn't think that he made the impression on the people that I had invited that I really wanted him to make. I recall, too, at that time that he was in quite severe pain. I thought he was holding his back and whoever accompanied him told me that the President was in real discomfort the day he spoke at Perrino's at the luncheon with the group of influential people that I got together. I haven't had an opportunity as yet to check those

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dates. If its important you can probably find them.

INTERVIEWER: In your mind, is it true that the Wisconsin primary in 1960 became an important harbinger of events to come?

BROWN: I don't think there's any question about that. I think the Wisconsin primary was—gave his campaign a tremendous lift when he was able to defeat Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] in an adjoining state—in a state which throughout the country was not thought of as an Irish Catholic state. I think this indicated that this man had real possibilities.

INTERVIEWER: Then after that primary you had occasion to talk to Jack Kennedy or to Kennedy's representatives on the telephone quite frequently. What did you talk about in these calls? Do you remember that?

BROWN: I can't recall the telephone conversations that took place after the Wisconsin primary. But I recall a meeting that I had in February of 1959. No, in February of 1960 at his home in Georgetown, I went there for the purpose of trying to discourage him from entering the California primary. When I went in I did not know whether or not he intended to enter but I knew that he was being urged to enter the California primary because polls that were taken had indicated that he would win rather decisively over me if he entered the California primary. When I went there that day, I told him about the fact that there was strong Humphrey support and that there was some Symington [Stuart Symington, II] support and some Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson]

support. I told him very frankly that my political stock was not high and that I thought that he might be able to defeat me but that I thought that it was inadvisable for him to enter that primary because it would have a divisive effect and that I would guarantee him that he would have a substantial number of delegates on the California delegation if he entered but that I would have to put delegates representing all of the other candidates. He told me at that time clearly and unequivocally and without too much argument upon my part that he wanted one commitment from me and one commitment only. And that commitment was that I would under no circumstances become a candidate for the vice-presidency

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of the United States because he stated that if I did become a candidate for the vice-presidency, being a Catholic, that he felt that I couldn't be for him because my chances for being vice-president became absolutely worthless in the event he received the nomination for the Presidency. So at that time I made a firm and specific commitment that I would not become a candidate for the vice-presidency of the United States at the 1960 Convention. I said there is one exception to that. I said, "If you would release me, if you would tell me that if you have no chance to become president and you would release me and that in that event I would then become a candidate for the vice-presidency and that I had no commitment." But this didn't satisfy him. He wanted a flat unequivocal commitment. That I would not become a candidate for vice-president. Realizing that I really had no chance for the vice-president anyway, I had no hesitation in making that commitment. He then made another statement that was very, very interesting and I will never forget it as long as I live. He then stated to me "I've asked you for only one commitment but there is something I want to tell you." He said, "If I win in the New Hampshire primary"—and this was before as I'm giving you this conversation—I can only recall it because it was before the New Hampshire primary. He stated to me "If I win in New Hampshire, and I win in Wisconsin, and if I win in West Virginia, and I run second in Oregon, and I'm leading in the Gallup Polls, I think that I'm entitled to the support of the president of the United States"—no he said, "I think I'm entitled to the support of the Governor of California." I said to him, "As long as you're not asking for any commitment, I won't make it." "But," I said, "if you win in New Hampshire, Wisconsin and West Virginia and you're running second in Oregon, and you're leading in the Gallup Polls, I can assure that the Governor of the State of California will be for John F. Kennedy for the presidency of the United States." As a matter of fact, I had had a breakfast with Bill Green and Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley]

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of Chicago and Governor Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence] of Pennsylvania and I think Bob Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.] of New York. All of us were Roman Catholic public officials throughout the United States. And I recall at that meeting we discussed all of the candidates—all of the possible candidates—Johnson, Symington, Stevenson and Humphrey and Kennedy. And under my analysis at that breakfast, I thought that in spite of the fact that he was a Catholic, and that there had never been a Catholic president, and there was Catholic prejudice, unquestionably, that we should forget about that because this man had the best

chance of being elected president of the United States. Seems to me that Governor Lawrence, at that time, told me that he had been elected Governor, but he had lost in counties where he felt that he was strong and that he had lost only because he was a Catholic. And he felt that the Catholic religion would be almost a bar sinister. All the others were open-minded about it and the only thing that they did tell me was that all of them felt that it would be an absolute mistake to run Adlai Stevenson again, that he had made such a bad showing in New York and eastern states, and that they just could not go again with Adlai Stevenson. I think that Dave Lawrence felt that he was the only one that entered any dissent on this one. But this was a very interesting breakfast, and I would like history to record that I was the real protagonist of John F. Kennedy at that time amongst these Catholic public officials. They may not remember that, but it would be interesting to see if they remember that breakfast. Some of us had been to mass together. I think it was Governor Lawrence and Mayor Wagner and Bill Green and myself. Or it might have been Mayor Daley of Chicago.

INTERVIEWER: Where was this, Governor, and when?

BROWN: This was in early 1960 and I think it followed a big dinner—a fund raising dinner in Washington, D.C., and the meeting was held in my room at whatever hotel was staying at at that time.

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INTERVIEWER : Governor, did you ever have any subsequent discussions and conversations with either President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy or member of his staff regarding the interest of Senator Kennedy in the California primary?

BROWN: He told me that he would not enter the California primary in view of my commitment. And I relied upon that commitment. And he subsequently lived up to it completely. I tried to live up to my share of it by putting together a delegation representing all elements. It should be obvious to everybody that in a delegation put together in that way, there is no chance of anybody controlling it because everybody that went to the Convention was committed to either Symington, or Humphrey, or Johnson, or Kennedy and there wasn't much chance for even a strong governor, let alone a governor suffering from a wounding of an execution to do anything about it.

INTERVIEWER: Prior to the primary in West Virginia, apparently you made a telephone call or Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman] in regard to Senator Humphrey as a candidate for president in the West Virginia primary. Do you remember that call?

BROWN: I remember making a call to Orville Freeman who was then Governor of Minnesota and...

INTERVIEWER: Did you ask Senator Humphrey to withdraw?

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BROWN: I think that I did.

INTERVIEWER: Can you explain your motivation?

BROWN: Well, I can't remember now why I did it. I have no recollection, but I remember distinctly making the call and asking—telling him that I didn't think that Humphrey could be elected. I thought the Wisconsin primary would be indicative of the fact that the man—that Humphrey—could not get the support outside the State of Minnesota. But I can't tell you my motivation. I have no recollection. If you have any further information on that telephone call, it might refresh my recollection on it. If you talk to Orville Freeman he could tell you what happened.

INTERVIEWER: In June of 1960, Joseph P. Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.], father of President Kennedy, flew to Sacramento from Lake Tahoe for a private conference with you. Could you tell us about that conference?

BROWN: Get the book out of that drawer. There's a little book in that drawer right there in the hall. Get that out for me. Yes, I remember that meeting very well. Joseph Kennedy came down for—to Sacramento (yes, let me have that) and we had a very pleasant meeting with Joseph Kennedy and he wanted me to—the first conversation that he had—he wanted me to release the delegation and come out for Kennedy immediately. I told him at that time that I would. I said if you want me to, I'll come out tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock and release the delegation for President Kennedy, but I think it will be a very serious mistake. I said I thought if I held the delegation together for three or four more weeks that we only had 31 or 32 votes at the present time—or even less than that. I think I told him we only had 21 or 22 votes and I thought that the delegation would resent my releasing the delegation so much that it would hurt the Kennedy campaign and the Kennedy delegation fight in California and I said to him, "You go back and check it out and if you don't agree with me I'll change my position." And he said to me, "No you just hold it but I want to know whether you're for Kennedy or not." And I told him emphatically and without equivocation

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that I was for John F. Kennedy and nothing would change me at all, but that I did feel that it would be a mistake to come out at that time. This conversation took place on June 16, 1960. And I have in my hand the register of guests—Joseph Kennedy, Palm Beach, Florida, and Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin], Chicago, Illinois, and Hy Raskin will remember that conversation. It would be of interest from my own standpoint. There has been some question as to whether or not I could make up my own mind between Stevenson and Kennedy. But I

think that Hy Raskin and Joseph Kennedy, if he could speak, could tell you that I was for John F. Kennedy at that time and told him so very emphatically.

INTERVIEWER: During the Democratic Convention in 1960, can you describe how the Kennedy organization operated. Was it a high pressure, well oiled, monied operation?

BROWN: Well, as I remember the Convention and the events of that are unclear to me because I was really trying very hard to get the California delegation to go for John F. Kennedy. We were holding meeting in our room but very strong members of the delegation were fighting me on it. Members like Chet Holifield [Chester E. Holifield] and Cecil King [Cecil R. King] and Ed Pauley [Edwin Wendell Pauley] who were for Lyndon Johnson. Then we had Lieutenant Governor Glenn Anderson [Glenn M. Anderson] and a group of the CDC people and the representatives in Congress from the *Sacramento Bee* territory who were for Stevenson. And then we had some Symington delegates on there. Most of the delegates were almost immovable—you couldn't do anything with them at all. The strategy of the other forces were to keep the California delegation pledged to me through the first ballot. I remember that Jesse Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh] and Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] were really the representatives of the Kennedy forces on the California delegation, although neither of them seemed to participate in the urging that the rest of us were making for the California delegation. I can't recall them participating in the meetings that Elly Heller and Bill Malone and Gene McAteer [J. Eugene McAteer] and Tom Lynch [Thomas C. Lynch] and others met in order to form a strategy. I can't recall the—

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any meetings except with Bobby Kennedy at the hotel where he demanded I release the delegation. I think this was on a Friday at the Biltmore Hotel, but I had already received a telephone call from Clair Engle who had indicated to me that he would be for John F. Kennedy but told me that he wouldn't be for him if I released the delegation before Sunday. So I told Jesse Unruh and Fred Dutton who were urging me to release the delegation as early as Thursday that I would not do it until Sunday and I think this caused a great deal of furor amongst the Kennedy delegates. But I remained adamant and would not release it until Sunday at a meeting of the delegation. But I can't remember any particular well-oiled operation. It was my impression that the Kennedy forces knew exactly how many votes they had on the California delegation and that they knew that they didn't need any more than 30 or 31 delegates to carry the nomination so they didn't particularly work on any of the California delegates other than those that they had. I think their principle trust was to be sure that California did not—that I did not—hold the California delegation to the first ballot. They wanted to win on the first ballot and when they were assured that I would release—if they had 30 to 31 to 32 delegates votes, that's all they were interested in because they knew how many votes they had in the other delegations. That is my impression at this time. In everything I'm saying here today, my recollection could be refreshed by conversations with any of the other participants in these things.

INTERVIEWER: Once the nomination had been secured by John F. Kennedy, how was the campaign organized and what role did you play in that?

BROWN: As I recall, I was the chairman of the Kennedy campaign and I placed Jesse Unruh in charge of the southern California campaign and I can't remember who handled the northern California campaign. Do you remember?

INTERVIEWER: Gene McAteer, Governor.

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BROWN: Gene McAteer and Tom Lynch, wasn't it? I felt that the campaign in California was in good hands and I participated in speech making throughout the state for President Kennedy. The national committee then called me and asked me to make speeches and I went back and made speeches in New York, New Jersey and Maryland for the President in those three states.

INTERVIEWER: Did John Kennedy consult with you personally by telephone and at conferences throughout the campaign?

BROWN: I can't recall the President ever calling me during—after he was nominated. I do recall, of course, meeting him when he came to California, and being with him in the cavalcade and discussing the campaign very much. The only real recollection I have is from the last trip that he made—a trip he made nearly at the end of the campaign and he showed me a poll and the Harris poll indicated that it was neck and neck with Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] leading slightly and rather jocularly he asked me whether he thought that he would still win by a million votes in California—whether I still thought he would win by a million votes in California and I told him no, that I didn't, but I didn't think it would do this campaign any good if I made such a statement even though I wanted to protect my reputation as a prognosticator. And I can remember very well both of us laughing at that. But he knew in our conversation—he knew that California was very, very close state.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have a good working relationship with Jesse Unruh in that campaign?

BROWN: I think it was an excellent working relationship. And I can't remember ever even discussing the campaign with Gene McAteer in the north. I knew that they were out working and I spent most of my time in southern California and making speeches throughout the state.

INTERVIEWER: After John Kennedy was elected president did he normally consult you about Californians appointed to federal posts? What about J. Edward

Day in appointment as Postmaster General?

BROWN: I knew nothing about that at all. I didn't know about it until—but

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right after the President was elected—between November and January I went to Washington and I met with Clair Engle and we went to his Georgetown home and we told him that we felt that California was entitled to some representation in the Cabinet and we recommended James Carr [James K. Carr] for Secretary of the Interior and recommended Libby Smith for Treasurer of the United States. He was immediately impressed with the recommendation of Libby Smith and we felt when we left that she was a cinch to be appointed Treasurer of the United States. We told him too that we would like to have a Postmaster General and it seems to me—I can't remember if it was that meeting or whether Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] called me and asked if I had a recommendation for Postmaster General and I recommended Hugo Fisher [Hugo M. Fisher]. And I felt that Hugo Fisher was going to get the nomination and the next thing I knew, J. Edward Day had it and to this day I don't know how Ed Day was appointed or who recommended him, although I understand it was Jesse Unruh that made the recommendation to Larry O'Brien, but the President did tell us that he would find a place in the Interior Department although he already indicated that he was going to make Udall [Stewart L. Udall] Secretary of the Interior. We then told him about the water fights between Arizona and California and we felt confident that he would take James Carr as Under Secretary of the Interior, which he subsequently did. But those were my two recommendations and we had a very, very pleasant meeting at his Georgetown home.

INTERVIEWER: Did O'Donnell and O'Brien tend to speak for John Kennedy on the matters of patronage?

BROWN: As a matter of fact, I didn't pay any attention to patronage other than the appointment of—who did he put in some federal judge—was Herkley put in by Kennedy? Other than the—I left all of that to U.S. Senator Clair Engle. I had enough trouble with patronage of my own here in California so I didn't pay any attention to his. We did discuss

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patronage from time to time with Senator Engle who would ask me in California at various times and usually tried to make the appointments that he asked, but I'm afraid that Clair did not pay too much attention to my recommendations for judgeships. He and I, Senator Engle and I, did not agree upon people he recommended for judgeships in southern California. And I paid no attention to any of the other appointments such as Customs or Marshall or federal judges in either southern or northern California. I thought that was Clair Engle's prerogative and I didn't get into it.

INTERVIEWER: Governor, you said when you spoke to the President that he seemed to understand the problems of conservation when you spoke about Carr. From your point of view, did the President understand the peculiar problems of California today, namely water, dependence on the aerospace industry, just to name a few?

BROWN: Yes, I think he did. I think he—I was really surprised at his knowledge of conservation problems and the problems of public and private power. But I didn't get any impression that he was a strong crusader for public power or private power at all. I didn't feel that this was his great interest. He did have a real awareness of the effects of the state's industries in California and when we continued to urge him to see that California got its share whenever Clair Engle and I would see him about these things, and I always saw him with Senator Engle in Washington in the White House, he did indicate a great awareness, but he would chide us upon the fact that California was getting more than its share and we couldn't expect to do a whole lot better than we were doing at the present time.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that John Kennedy was a crusader about anything?

BROWN: No, I don't think that crusader would be the word that I would use to describe my impression of John F. Kennedy. I would describe him more as a person that had though his plans out very well and then with tremendous

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determination but calmness and coolness move to the accomplishment of that determination.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I asked that question is because he came to California in the fall of 1961 and made a speech—a rather forceful speech criticizing the extreme right wing—the extremists from the right wing in Los Angeles. What part did you have in shaping his ideas here—the planning of that speech?

BROWN: Well, I'd like to take credit for it but I really cannot say that I had anything to do with it at all?

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the circumstances?

BROWN: I remember the circumstances. It was a dinner at Los Angeles at the Palladium down there, I believe. He made this very strong speech. Is that the one you are talking about?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that's the one. Could you describe his speech and his approach to the problems of extremism?

BROWN: I'm afraid I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Did the President assist you in any way in your 1962 campaign for reelection against Richard Nixon?

BROWN: I can't remember that he did. I don't think he did. No, I don't think he did. When I'd go back there I can remember on one occasion when I went back there he described Nixon and he gave me some personal points on Mr. Nixon which were not at all complimentary. He thought he was a duplicitous fellow, to say the least, and he said he'd always get in the picture like he was pointing his finger at you and telling you what to do and when you get in any personal confrontations with him don't forget to get away from the picture or he'll look like he is telling you how to run the State of California which would not be good. He did receive me at the White House on two or three occasion and we had our picture taken together but I cannot recall him doing anything specifically for me. He didn't come out here for that.

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INTERVIEWER: Were you happy with the cooperation you got from Washington in the development of water resources and did the fact that Secretary Udall was in Arizona color your working relationship with him?

BROWN: No, I thought Secretary Udall worked very, very well with California. He and I got along very well. He had an understanding of our problems and I thought that Udall really has been a great Secretary and I'm sincere about that. But I really can't recall any quarrels we had involving Arizona at all. He worked with us, his staff worked with us, Jim Carr was magnificent and relationship with the State of California along with the Kennedy administration in every particular could not have been improved upon.

INTERVIEWER: What particular member of the Kennedy White House staff did you work with or were you impressed by?

BROWN: Well, I was most impressed with Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen]—Ted Sorensen. He came out from time to time and his decisive speech and ability to express himself was outstanding. I also was impressed with Larry O'Brien's work as the legislative lobbyist and I would see him whenever I went back there and I thought that Larry O'Brien did an excellent job.

INTERVIEWER: Ken O'Donnell was uniformly nice to me. I would never enter the White House with or without an appointment that he didn't make arrangements for me to see the President, if only for a few minutes, and I'll never forget on Wednesday in April after the disaster at the Bay of Pigs I had an appointment early in the morning and they postponed it until eleven and I got there and I

waited about a half hour and they told me the President was in a serious conference and I could see Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy in there. He finally called me and the problems that I wanted to discuss were California problems and they were—I'll never forget the President taking me outside and we walked together for a little—for just a few minutes together. And I could see that he was not at all concerned with the purpose of my visit. And that he was deeply troubled. Immediately after he left me he went over and made his talk to the American Publishers Association or some

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newspaper group and he was working on that speech at the same time he was talking with me trying to indicate to me that he was interested in what I had to say. But it was so obvious that he was deeply concerned over the Bay of Pigs situation. But even at that, President Kennedy was calm and cool and in full possession of all of his faculties and I left there with a very distinct impression that whatever happened at the Bay of Pigs, that this country was in great hands. And I couldn't help but put my own nervous temperament against his and I don't think that I would have been as calm and cool under the circumstances in such an important event in history.

INTERVIEWER: What contact did you have with the Kennedy administration on such federal, state features as Medicare, federal aid to education, federal highways programs?

BROWN: Well, of course I met from time to time with all of the members of the Kennedy Cabinet. On everything affecting California, on roads, highways, industrial development. I met, of course, with the Secretary of Commerce [Luther H. Hodges] who had been a Governor of North Carolina, with Postmaster Day when I went back there during the inauguration, with Ribicoff [Abraham Alexander Ribicoff], Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and there was the closest kind of cooperation between not only the White House but every member of the Cabinet. It was a very excellent arrangement and I can say this not in a partisan vein but I've been Attorney General during the period that President Eisenhower was President and for a period of two years I was Governor when Eisenhower—during the second term of the Eisenhower administration—and it's well to have a governor and a president in the same party—I can tell you that.

INTERVIEWER: When is the last time you saw President Kennedy? Can you describe that in some detail?

BROWN: I think the last time that I saw President Kennedy was on the trip to the West. He and I traveled together in the plane and we spent the evening together at Lassen National Park. After dinner we went up and we had a short chat. I'll never forget him wanting to have pictures taken

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of himself and a deer. As a matter of fact, there were no photographers around and he was very chagrined and ordered a photographer from Redding and then that morning I had breakfast with him. We then traveled from there to Las Vegas, Nevada, where he made a speech and then on the plane I left him at Palm Springs, California. We got off the plane. There is just one other thing that I might want to add to this. I think that the time that he laughed the most—and I have a picture of it—was when we were out at sea on the Pacific on an aircraft carrier—when I was sitting next to him on the aircraft carrier watching maneuvers and the steward served us coffee. I spilled coffee on my lap and it was hot and in a bad place and there must have been a hundred photographers taking pictures of my discomfort. I don't think I've ever seen the President laugh with such glee as he did that day. As a matter of fact, I was very annoyed because I didn't think even the President should laugh at a governor under those circumstances.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any other humorous incidents?

BROWN: I remember this picture that was taken when he was pointing over at me with Ed Pauley who was calling attention to my greatness as Governor of the State of California and then he added "He's also a great predictor." And he added that I'd predicted we would win California by a million votes and that's what we're all laughing at in this picture that we're looking at as this interview takes place. This is November 19, 1961.

But I can remember too that in all of the conversations with the President he was always completely at ease. On one occasion I brought my daughter and her husband into the White House and he took time out to show them through his official office over through he had a very tight schedule. In my conversations with him I found him well informed on everything. I think the longest conversation that I ever had was an hour and one-half conversation of the problems of the cotton growers of California

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when four or five cotton growers asked me to arrange an appointment, which I did. And for an hour and a half he argued and debated with them on the merits of the pending cotton bill and this was a very technical thing but the President was well informed on the problems. I remember, too, very distinctly a conversation we had on foreign policy and he was very regretful in giving foreign aid to France when we hadn't demanded some sort of a *quid pro quo* from them. I can't—I'd have to refresh my own recollection by reference to dates and places and purposes of visits, to give you any more detail on it.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe his actions on a typical visit, when you went to his office at the White House?

BROWN: I can only tell you that he was very informal and very pleasant. Never seemed to be in a hurry. As a matter of fact, I usually broke up the

conversation, because I thought that he was giving me too much time,  
and that's about all I can say.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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