Charles Spalding Oral History Interview—JFK #1, 3/14/1968
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note
Charles Spalding (1918 - 1999) was a personal friend of the Kennedys who worked on the campaigns for both John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Robert F. Kennedy (RFK). This interview focuses on the inner workings of the Kennedy family, JFK's early political career, and several of the key decisions that JFK was confronted with upon becoming President, among other issues.

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Charles Spalding

Charles Spalding—JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

CHARLES SPALDING

March 14, 1968
New York, New York

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we just start out by my asking you if you recall the circumstances of your first meeting with President Kennedy and what your impressions were at that time.

SPALDING: Yes. Well, I had a friend by the name of George Meade who lived -- in the summer his family had a house in Great Island which is right across from Hyannis. They were great friends, Jack and my roommate George Meade. So one day we were playing golf and at the end of the day he suggested that I come -- he said there was somebody that I really should see, a friend of his. We went by the Kennedy house there. It was rather unusual because as we walked up to the house almost the whole family leaned out of the window, all the kids. It was just before suppertime. I guess my friend had made a habit of coming over around dinnertime and they didn't let him forget it because they all yelled out of the window and urged him to go home, that there was not enough food. Anyway, we walked in, and Jack was downstairs with a whole pile of the books of his, *Why England Slept*. It was just a wonderful disarray of papers, letters from Prime Ministers and congressmen and people you've heard about, some under wet bathing suits and some under the bed; his grandfather,

Honey Fitz [John F. Fitzgerald], bursting into the room periodically complaining about some detrimental press he was receiving, and then dinner.

STEWART: That Fitzgerald was receiving?

SPALDING: He was there. Yes, there'd been some Boston paper wrote a scathing article about his days as a mayor. So he raced in the room to show this to Jack and complained bitterly about it. Jack said, "Well, grandfather, let's be honest about it, you're really lucky to be here." He teased him back about his days as mayor, in an amusing way. That was the first time I… I remember I asked him about -- I was introduced and I said, "How's the book going?" His eyes lit up and he said, "Oh, very well. I'm seeing to that."

STEWART: What did he mean by that?

SPALDING: He was seeing that the books were handed out and he was really moving the books. He was getting the books out. It was just a sort of amusing pragmatism that he hadn't just written the book and then he was going to just disappear. He was going to see that it got sold. He was just laughing at his own success.

STEWART: How seriously did he take this whole effort?

SPALDING: Very. There was a layer of amusement over the most serious things that he did, which made him such remarkable company. I mean no matter what the situation was it always was handled, depending on what it was, with degrees of humor.

STEWART: Did he seem surprised that it achieved the notoriety that it did, the publication of his book?

SPALDING: No, I don't think so. It was the perfect time to publish the book, and he aimed at that. He

was just pleased that it was being accepted so. He was doing everything he could to promote it. And he was good at that.

STEWART: What other things, or what exactly, do you know, was he doing to promote the book?

SPALDING: Oh, just the usual thing. The interviews, radio programs, answering letters, autographing copies, sending them out, checking bookstores, tie-ups. It was

just thoroughly covered, all the possibilities, which frequently -- lots of books don't get that kind of attention. Lots of authors aren't in the position to give them that kind of attention. A lot of them are either unable to, or out of temperament don't.

STEWART: And after that initial meeting just how did your relationship develop with him?

SPALDING: It was a remarkable day because after that we went to dinner and everybody was at the table. Mr. Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] was there and he directed the conversation toward the areas in which he hoped the children would be interested, government and what was happening. Those were just the days before the war and still much of the early Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] reorganization in which he played a major part. The excitement that was generated in this house where one boy was going to Spain and another was taking a trip to South America and the father was involved with SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] and there was the ambassadorship. This whole family was in turmoil and moving in every direction, and vitally involved and interested in what was going on. I had never seen anybody like that, or any family like that. Even other people at work occupying similar positions weren't so excitingly involved. They didn't transmit this sense of interest and excitement and commitment. These were still days not too far away from the depression, you know, when most everybody was more or less pretty well depressed about what they were going to do. And so here you see people who weren't worried at all. There just suddenly seemed to be a million things to do. And since

these were people that you knew a bit they didn't seem so far out of reach -- in this case, just coming to know. But then I thought to myself, "Well, this is really the best possible way to approach life." I'd never had a meeting in my life that impressed me as much as that day did, all of them -- and particularly Jack with his sparkling personality and tremendous humor and restless mind.

STEWART: This now would have been in the…

SPALDING: It was the summer of 1940.

STEWART: Do you recall…

SPALDING: … excuse me, the summer of 1939. I take it back, the summer of 1940. 1940 is what it was, right.

STEWART: So Ambassador Kennedy had returned by that time.

SPALDING: Right. And that trip was still fresh in his mind. His opinions were being challenged sometimes by one of his kids, which he welcomed. There was a

tremendous amount of exciting discussion about everything that was going on.

STEWART: Do you recall them really seriously disagreeing with things that he had said or done?

SPALDING: Well, in a circumspect way. There wasn't anybody who was prepared to say, "I'm going to march out of the house because you don't accept our position here." They just discussed these things back and forth, and he encouraged it. I mean, there wasn't any question about his own view. He stated that, as you can imagine, extremely powerfully. And they were a happy family and nobody…. In a sense, they were sensible kids. Nobody was unbalanced or anguished or determined to prove him wrong or upset by it. They were all proud of him and they wanted to talk with him. They were not afraid to disagree, but they weren't insubordinate about it.

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STEWART: Do you recall in that summer and the month immediately preceding it much discussion with President Kennedy about the future, about what the war was going to mean as far as his life and so forth?

SPALDING: He always had a disbelief about war. He wasn't a -- it wasn't something that appalled him; you know, he could see that you might not be able to avoid it, but he never had a…. He accepted his father's point of view originally, thought that was the sensible point of view. And in politics he always set himself to try to adopt what was the sensible point of view and he was suspicious of emotionally founded positions. And he was totally suspicious of war.

STEWART: Suspicious in…

SPALDING: …in what it accomplished and what its stated aims were. The romanticist point of view about war was just stupid as far as he was concerned. He had a high regard for courage and what you inescapably have to do, but he was no romantic about war.

STEWART: Let's see, in the summer of 1941, around there, the draft was initiated and I assume it became very immediate to people of his age and your age that they were going to have to enter the service in one aspect or another. How did he approach this whole problem, originally, do you recall -- as to what he was going to do about it?

SPALDING: Well, there was some doubt about it because in the first place he opposed entering the war. Once that was over he put it all out of his mind. Events were sweeping at such a pace that opposition was pointless and he didn' propose to burn his draft card or carry on. I mean once it was done, it was done. Then for him he

pursued it in two veins. He still was distrustful of everything that was being said about saving the world for democracy. He used the phrases in a chiding and humorous way, never convinced by them at all. Then for himself it was a problem of doing something that he wanted

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to do because of his physical disabilities. For a while he was down in Washington and he had no intentions of being down there. At this point he much preferred something that really interested him, and what interested him as a young man was where it was more active -- going and seeing some part of the war. He had a great knowledge of boats and eventually that's what he wanted to do. And he had a natural flair for command and he could exercise that in small boats. So eventually he got himself into PT's, not without a certain amount of difficulty.

STEWART: Just how did this occur, do you know?

SPALDING: Oh, I don't know. I suppose he plagued everybody. By this time he had known a great number of people in government and he just bothered everybody until he got assigned to it.

STEWART: Do you recall him talking about what his eventual career plans…

SPALDING: No, he never thought about it at this time. I mean, it may have been way in the back of his head. But I think that because Joe was alive and because Joe was the one who the whole family -- well, you know, there had been a great deal of discussion about the place that the older children played in this family. It was sort of tacitly understood that Joe was going to go into politics. Well, it was openly understood that Joe was going to get all the support from his brothers that Jack eventually got from his after Joe's death. But at this point he didn't have any idea of going in and competing with Joe. And he didn't think much about it at this point because the war was involving everybody and his nature responded pretty actively to the atmosphere that, you know, that there's the war and there's not too much point in thinking about tomorrow. When you weren't working at learning how to handle a PT boat there was a certain amount of diversion and disvertisement, and he threw himself into that.

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STEWART: Then you can't remember, in this period between the time that he graduated from Harvard and the beginning of the war, you can't recall any serious discussions as to what kind of a career he wanted to lead?

SPALDING: Well, he thought he might write, he thought he might write. Perhaps that's the first thought he had, he was having a success with his book. Then of course as

always happens things changed so violently in the course of the next five years that that was all altered. But perhaps with a quieter time, without the war, he might very well have written or been a teacher. I don't think that's possible because he had too active a nature. But it seemed, at that time, because Joe was above him that that's what he…. You know, but supposing Joe had succeeded, which he probably would have if he had had the opportunity, then Jack would have fitted into Joe's plans in some way and he would have played his part that way. But at this moment he thought he might write.

STEWART: During this period just before the war, basically what kind of a person was he; what kind of a person socially, for example, what types of people did he…

SPALDING: He was the kind of person that he remained all his life. I mean he was the most engaging person that I've ever known. I was lucky and knew a lot of people myself. But I've never seen any company in which he wasn't the brightest and most entertaining, and the most -- he had this great Irish sense of fun and also it was heightened because he had had such bad health. He wasn't literally -- incapacitated isn't true, but he didn't have the luxury of feeling well day after day. There were stretches of times when he was just out of commission. So that when you did see him or when he came to his friends, he was in an euphoric state and he was always the greatest, greatest company; so bright and so restless and so determined to wring every last minute that he just set a pace that was abnormal. He had this sense of not being well

and how much time is there. I don't mean -- people have mentioned the sort of feeling that he thought he had a short life. I don't think it was that so much. It's just that he wasn't out every day. It's like people who live in California, they take the sun for granted. But on the other hand, if you're going to the lake periodically and sometimes you feel so badly you can't get out of bed, when you are out, when you do feel well you just live at a higher rate. And he gave you that feeling, and that's an exciting feeling if you can put it across without boring everybody. He did just the opposite. You know, most of us don't realize how fast time is passing, and he did.

STEWART: You're speaking now about this period just before the war.

SPALDING: You asked me what sort of person he was during this period, and I…

STEWART: During the period before the war?

SPALDING: Yes, I don't think that ever left him. That became a part of his nature. But it was very unusual, I think I'd only seen a couple of people in my life who gave you that heightened sense of being. I can think of a lot of people who live at a terrific pace and who have the high blood pressure point of view toward life. That wasn't his.

He just had this, he gave you a pleasant, heightened sense of being. And he did that with everybody, which accounts for that remarkable attraction he had to people.

STEWART: Was he ever at all moodly, or did his emotions change from day to day?

SPALDING: Well, not in the sense of -- you know, he could be irritated and he could be disappointed and he could be even frivolous or interested or bored, like anybody else. But he had an underlying resilience which was -- I mean, he fell back on his humor

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whenever things got terribly bad. Whenever it was, when his ailments held him up or when anything disappointed him or set him back he was always in the mood of -- it was always amusement or his humor that carried him through.

STEWART: Did he, during this period, consider himself an intellectual in any sense of the word?

SPALDING: He never considered himself as an intellectual. That's kind of a pompous assumption to make, and he never made that assumption. But he was always interested in intellectuals. He was fascinated in Laski [Harold Laski], he was interested in Keynes [John Maynard Keynes] at the time, Judge Landis [James M. Landis] was one of the brightest fellows he thought he'd ever seen -- he was fascinated in Judge Landis and what he had to say. He was eager to talk to everyone. He had friends, initially through his father and quickly on his own, in every area. Clare Booth [Clare Booth Luce] used to be around the house at the time, and she was writing. I think at that tie her plays were accepted. Other writers, other politicians, other economists -- all of that interested him; anything that was being said or written or thought about. And I would say in that sense he was perhaps as hundred percent intellectual as you can be. But he never detached himself in a scholarly way from life. That didn't get in his way. But he was terribly intellectual, yes -- if what I've said is a definition of an intellectual.

STEWART: Are there any political personalities that stand out in your mind as having been regarded by him as really outstanding people, people who he tremendously admired as political figures during that period?

SPALDING: Of course nobody could ignore Mr. Churchill [Winston S. Churchill] at that time. He was the one who attracted everybody. I remember when Churchill, before our entrance into the war, and Churchill had come to this country and made the speech in front of the joint session of Congress in which I think he said something to the effect that since his mother was American and his father was British he couldn't help but think that if things had been reversed he would have been sitting amongst the assembly.

And his language -- he was at the peak of his power that day. It was a brilliant speech and Jack was tremendously impressed by his language. He took that as a model. He never was able to develop a style individually his own. He got a style which he was able to repeat after a while, but it was heavily influenced by Churchill. He could always speak quickly and glibly and amusingly at any time. But the style of writing that he enjoyed most, and the style of Churchill's speech was always impressive to him.

STEWART: Were there any American political figures that you recall…

SPALDING: Well, the only ones that we all know, that he'd written about, that he admired in *Profiles in Courage*. But he didn't seem to be under the influence of any political figure at the time. He admired Forrestal [James Forrestal] tremendously, at the time. I think maybe because of Forrestal's approach -- I didn't know Forrestal, but I get the feeling he had a similar approach to things, a sensible approach, free from bigotry or isolated interests -- but an overall sensible approach which was running into all kinds of opposition, as you know. And that approach appealed to him a great deal. Outside of that then he had this suspicion about everybody else's motives, especially the people who might be close to being zealous. The more excited they were the more suspicious he became.

STEWART: Really?

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: What about someone like Henry Cabot Lodge? Do you recall -- Henry Cabot Lodge was elected to the Senate I believe in 1938. Do you recall any…

SPALDING: Well, there was the natural antagonism between the Kennedys, which they fostered long after they -- they didn't foster, but they just reacted

that way long after it had ceased to bother them because they were…. I guess they had taken their time arriving socially at the spot the Lodges had occupied for so long. They just didn't see eye to eye so I think that in the early days, that Lodge seemed an obvious antagonist. He must have seemed stuffy and arrogant. But I know that when he became President he was most congenial with Lodge. And again, those irritations were so minor because his own life was so pleasant that he couldn't really seriously…. I mean he just enjoyed the antagonism, the irritation that the Bourbons presented to his fresh, Catholic Irish family. There wouldn't be much enjoyment in life without any obstacles, not that he didn't have his share. But this was one obstacle that he recognized and enjoyed and talked about and criticized humorously and laughed about.

STEWART: What about Franklin Roosevelt, what…

SPALDING: Senior?

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: Well, it must have been colored there by the relationship that his father had, and that was full of ups and downs. I think that they had a respect in general for him, first as a politician. No question about that. Then perhaps they had their differences in other areas, those were over policy and then just their relations.

STEWART: But as a political figure, as a successful politician, do you think President Kennedy had a certain admiration for him in that period around 1940?

SPALDING: Yes. I think his spirit, in spite of his pragmatism, inclined to romantic figures, to people like Churchill, to people like Byron [George Gordon Byron], to people who had been under stress. I don't think that somehow, for a reason that I can't put my finger

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right at the moment, that he would have automatically inclined to President Roosevelt. And perhaps it might have been because of Mr. Roosevelt's handicaps -- I mean the polio -- that sort of removed him from a younger man, in a way. There was never any…. But just as a figure I think the thing that must have overwhelmed him was his political success, which he studied carefully. But I don't recall that there was any idolatry on the part of President Kennedy for President Roosevlet, as a young man, the way there was for so many people. There was a great enthusiasm on the part of Kennedy for Mr. Roosevelt's point of view about the people who he felt were getting the short end of the stick in America. And he picked that up and he espoused that, thoroughly. There just wasn't anything about President Roosevelt that stirred President Kennedy emotionally, as there was about Churchill. Churchill stirred him thoroughly, and he didn't find anything mock-heroic about him. He found him, I"m sure, an emotional figure. But he did accept and he was enthusiastic about the New Deal, what the New Deal was trying to accomplish and that that was what government should do where it could.

STEWART: What about his attitudes about wealth in general, about his own wealth and about the wealth of others and obligations and responsibilities of people who were wealthy? Let me ask you the first one, about his own wealth, was he at all concerned or involved in…

SPALDING: No. It was one of the things that Mr. Kennedy never talked about at all. He'd done so well that he didn't see any reason for anybody in the family

continuing -- there was a certain amount of storekeeping to be done, but there wasn't any more acquiring necessary. So he never, ever, ever talked about it. And I don't think that he felt, although I'm certain he probably would have said so, that -- perhaps he did feel this way, that the acquisition of this amount of wealth put a burden or a requirement or an obligation. But I think really what he really thought was that it was the best thing you could do. And the other thing was that as an

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Irishman he liked politics. And the next thing was he probably thought it was -- I know he thought it was more interesting than business. I'm speaking about Mr. Kennedy, Senior. I think that what he thought was well, now, if you don't have to worry about your day to day problems as 99 percent of us do, the greatest career that you could possibly have is politics. So let's use the money. We've got to take care of our daily problems and everybody apply himself to politics, which is a great calling. I think he really felt that. He could be passionately absorbed in politics. It was never a chore for any of them. You see reluctant politicians. People who were in it and found it a chore as some people find what they're doing a chore, whether they're clergymen or brokers or bankers. But these were people who really enjoyed their work. Mr. Kennedy enjoyed politics, and every one of the kids does.

STEWART: But he, President Kennedy had no real concern about where his money came from or did he have much of a concern about how he was spending it personally?

SPALDING: No, he never had…. It's interesting, I mean that -- he was a little interested in it. But it was something that he never understood very well. And he didn't want to. It isn't that he couldn't. Obviously he knew where it came from, how it was handled, where it was invested; but as far as getting any deeper involved then that, he wasn't interested. It was one of the few subjects on which he wasn't connected and which he didn't….

Perhaps it may account in some ways, though not essentially, for one of the reasons he never particularly got on with the business community. He just didn't have any great interest in a businessman's main thrust, which is making money. But on a broader scale, he used to always talk to them and say that obviously the government can't succeed unless you can succeed, so I'm not opposed to you. But there was basically a barrier between them and some of that barrier existed from the fact that he didn't talk easily to them as he might talk to a political figure or

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a boss or a writer of current events. So he had no guilt about where the finances came from, none at all. And he didn't have any greed that it be more. He was quick and generous to give what he could. He really just handled it sensibly. It was there and…. He never had any money as a kid. It used to be a standing joke. He was always, not that he borrowed his way --

if he did borrow he always paid it back -- but he just never had any money. It was never of any great concern to him. The other thing is that they were brought up to do -- it would have been intolerable in that family to have squandered your money or squandered your time. So there was no inclination to do that.

STEWART: Did you do any traveling with him in this period before the war?

SPALDING: Not in the sense of having taken a trip to South America, just purely visits or paths crossing. I didn't travel much with him until after the war.

STEWART: To pin down a little bit your relationship with him in this period before the war, from the time you met him, from the time you went into the service, how frequently would you see him or under what types of circumstances?

SPALDING: I first saw him in that summer of 1940, and then our paths just, oddly enough, crossed as acquaintances. And they continued to cross right straight through -- by the time the war had commenced we had become pretty good friends. Sufficiently so that when he got back from his tour of duty when he was hurt and when he returned I met him in Palm Beach at the airport. I was training down in Fort Lauderdale and he was getting back. But that was the natural thing to do at that time. So by that time we were fairly close. But it became a much closer relationship after the war. It just would happen that I'd be stationed in San Diego and he'd be coming to Los Angeles, you know, either -- by this time that I'm

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thinking of he was mustered out of the service. He'd be coming for some other reason. We'd see each other. He'd write occasionally and I'd write back. It went along like that.

STEWART: Did he have any very, very close friends in the period before the war or was there ever any feeling that there was a certain reserve in him as far as becoming very intimate with…

SPALDING: Oh, no. No, I don't recall that anybody -- it was a pretty outgoing group of people and nobody thought much about the intensity of their relationship. They just either liked each other or didn't like each other. And those that did saw a lot of each other. But he had a very close friend who remained a terribly close friend of his all through his life, Lem Billings [K. LeMoyne Billings], whom he roomed with and traveled with. And he was a great, great friend of the family's. From the point of view of time and acquaintanceship he must be considered the best friend he had. He saw him constantly all his life. He was extremely loyal to -- you know, not with any difficulty, just the people that he liked early he always managed to stay with.

STEWART: Were there any people around who didn't take to him, who for one reason or

another just didn't meet on a good basis with him?

SPALDING: Well, I'm sure so -- I don't know who they were. I don't remember any incidents. But I can't imagine anybody who was particularly vivid and who had a strong and developing point of view that could hope to go through youth or young manhood without crossing swords with somebody.

STEWART: But you can't…

SPALDING: I just don't remember any incidents. By that time…. I mean, but the incidents that we all recall were all political because they were all acted out in front of everybody. But I just think that

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was just all fairly normal. Arguments that occurred in anybody's youth occurred in his youth. But that's just general, I can't recall the day when he stood toe to toe on the jetty and fought it out. I just don't remember.

STEWART: Can you recall any females whom he may have been really interested in who, for one reason or another, didn't take to him?

SPALDING: Well, no. He had his fair share of success with girls, as he did with men. He had just a general acceptance from everybody. And I'm certain that nobody's come along yet who has batted a thousand percent. He must have run across people who -- well, there were girls he didn't like just as there were men he didn't appreciate or didn't like. He was totally normal with the normal reactions of dislike. But again they were always, you know, reasonable. He was never passionately set against anybody. Women can do as foolish things as men and he observed it in both of them.

STEWART: Do you recall anything about his attitudes towards religion or towards the Church or clergy?

SPALDING: Skeptical. But he went, and he always went. I think it was more or less the point of view of somebody who -- and this may be…. It wouldn't be where his intellectuality stopped. He wouldn't be prepared to spend his life in a Cardinal Newman [John Henry Newman] - like examination of his spiritual ties. I think he might have more quickly said, "It's something, with my equipment, that I'm never going to be able to solve anyway, and I can't see that anybody else has. There doesn't appear to be any final answer about this. I'm brought up with this background and it means something to me." I don't know exactly what it meant to him. But I think he just stopped thinking about it. I think he had a spirituality about him that you could observe in his life. I don't think he went to Church -- obviously in his position he didn't

go to Church just for politics and he kept on going to Church. It may or may not have been an… It was just part of his life. You know, we all have certain things that you have no control over, that are just brought to you.And that was one of them. I'm not able to answer that any better than that. I think the essential answer to the question that you've asked me is that I think he accepted it rather than wrestle with it.

STEWART: You don't recall, then, any sustained discussions of the subject?

SPALDING: Oh sure, but they'd always get to this point: "Who's going to answer?" Beyond this point… You know, he might remark on the fact that Einstein [Albert Einstein] said that one of the indications of God would be the incredible order of the universe. But beyond that statement he wasn't prepared to take it, or to examine what that order exactly was. Or is it disorder after you get beyond a certain point? Is it all ordered? You know, he just simply said, "There's and awful lot of pressing things going on around me, and I just accept the fact that I'm a Catholic and live by their rules."

STEWART: So he did make this sort of accommodation fairly early in his life and it satisfied him throughout?

SPALDING: Yes. I'd say that was so.

STEWART: During the war you say you saw him off and on and you corresponded with him occasionally?

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: Do you recall, did you correspond with him, for example, when he was in the South Pacific?

SPALDING: No. We corresponded when he got back and I was in the South Pacific. And again, those were terribly amusing. I'd written a book at the time and so he was interested in that. He used

to write back and forth about that. But always there was an extreme humor about his letters. They were determinately amusing. Sadly, I never kept them. But they made me laugh a great deal when I got them. I think most of them were poking fun at my own, what he considered unfortunate, position -- how long, he would explain, he'd think that I would have to be out there defending democracy. He thought it was all very worthwhile that I was there and he knew that I would leave no stone unturned until we had settled that whole area. In the

meantime he was going to be down in Miami, he said, seeing that the home….And then it would continue in this sort of mock vein. They were amusing letters.

STEWART: Was this his general attitude about the war and the military life throughout the whole…

SPALDING: No, I think the operations that he was involved in he obviously approached with a real seriousness. He was an exceptionally fine skipper of his boats, as all the fellows that have served with him have attested. And the way he handled the crisis that he found himself in when his boat was cut in half is typical of the seriousness and preparedness with which he handled all his crises. He might have, before he went out there, made some extremely funny remarks about where they were going, and under the cover of darkness and the boat making all the noise it did and the fact that Barney Ross was color blind. But when it got down to saving his crew and getting the word -- he was the one who swam that distance and made their survival possible.

STEWART: Did he talk much about the possibilities of dying during the war before he went over?

SPALDING: Oh, never. No, never. No, I think that it's more typical of his kind of nature that he would never talk about it or never discuss it and perhaps hardly ever think about it. The only time that I knew him was when we were playing golf down in

Florida, some short time after he had been President and the Secret Service was with us and it came up. The Secret Service man had said to him, you know -- I think he had asked a question about what degree of safety did the Secret Service man think was possible. And he said, "Well, obviously there are plenty of loopholes if anybody wants to do it." I remember the Secret Service man saying, "If anybody wants to do it, he can do it." And that's the only discussion that there ever was. I'm sure he knew that then, just as most people know it about the war. The ones that know it best just are able not to talk about it or not to think about it. He was able to do that.

STEWART: What else about these war years do you recall? Was there any discussion of what he was going to do afterwards?

SPALDING: I remember particularly the night he got home and that sudden transition and the fact of the great discrepancy between a battlefield and a home front just…. The minute he got off the plane he wanted to go back to some of the favorite haunts in Palm Beach that he knew. So we went to some place that everybody gathered to dance at that time. And he just couldn't -- you know, it was obvious enough that this was going on and he knew that it was one of those things that when he saw it, having so recently

been involved in such a desperate experience, he just couldn't get over it. The bitter reaction of a soldier to that he had. But again, he adjusted to that quickly because that's the way it was and that's the way it would always be. He took things that way. You asked me something that…

STEWART: Any discussion of what was going to happen afterwards.

SPALDING: That only came up, you know, with any degree of finality at the end of the war. I'd been on a ship that had been kamikazed and was in San Francisco for repairs. He was there for the drafting

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of the Charter of the U.N. He was there as a newspaperman. I remember in the center of San Francisco one day -- we were going someplace, perhaps out to Red Fay's [Paul B. Fay, Jr.] or some friend's, and we were waiting for transportation and he said, "You know, I just can't do what other people can do." He said, "The back bothers me and i"m sure now that Joes is dead that I'm going to go into politics." I remember that I said to him, "Well, that would be wonderful because who could do better?" you know, "You'd just be perfect for it. You'll have tremendous success." And he asked did I think that. I reassured him that nobody could approach it with a greater chance of success. That's the only time he ever talked about it and then of course he went ahead and did it.

STEWART: What about his career, his brief career as a journalist?

SPALDING: I think he was beginning to get a kind of a picture about himself. And he had gotten behind him something, in a brilliant way, something that he didn't care much about; that was the military. He couldn't have done it any better. So that was out of the way. I think he enjoyed writing a great deal, and I think the picture of a public figure who was interested and capable in this area added to the dimension of the successful politician. So many of his friends were writers and he was interested so much in what was being written that he was incorporating that into his makeup. He could see that -- perhaps maybe even he decided that he didn't have the ability to be a great writer of fiction, which I think is true. He never did have that quality. And I think to have just written for periodicals would have never satisfied him. But he found a way, and perhaps it was Churchill's example again that…. Although there were so many examples at the time of soldiers -- British generals particularly like Allenby [Edmund Henry H. Allenby] and others who had great flair. Buchan [John Buchan] was one who always appealed to him, and Lord Cecil [David Cecil], he had a great feeling for his ability and his books. So I think he had come at this point to figure out that this

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was a very good field for him in which to write, and maybe the best.

STEWART: Was he always fairly confident about his ability to be a successful writer, or to write well?

SPALDING: I don't think he ever reached it. I don't think he ever, ever seriously…. I mean, he wrote about things in which he had participated, originally, or in which he had some first hand knowledge. He either wittingly or unwittingly, began to write as a politician or write as a political figure involved in political events. Even though that was a thesis, he had been to England and he had seen firsthand why England slept. That was the form of writing that all his writing took, a kind of reportage. There wasn't any necessity to worry about his development as an artist the way maybe of Thomas Wolfe or Scott Fitzgerald or Hemingway. He wasn't concerned with that problem. He never got to it because he never wrote in that vein. He never attempted anything in that vein, ever. He just automatically thought of writing in terms of current events and that didn't require any attention to those other problems. He wasn't by nature given to that kind of prolonged introspection.

STEWART: So he was reasonably satisfied with his capabilities in a limited…

SPALDING: Yes. I think that these things also have an organized way of being put together. You know, his thoughts, and then he was able to find very capable people who wrote extremely well, some of them -- some of them like Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] and people who would help him; and Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] and Arthur Schlesinger. And then he was able to know what he wanted to say. For instance, when he was writing the *Profiles in Courage* he was sick in the hospital. When he was well enough to do it he spent a lot of his time organizing that book and writing it out. Then he got a considerable amount of help with it from Ted Sorensen and then he put his own stamp on the end of it. But they were collaborations, I take it, if you're still talking about

his…. And that's the way Churchill's books have been written, by dictation and organization and a group of people putting it together, and then finally he puts his final stamp on it. He must have said, "Well, that's the way for me to handle it," because these things and his speeches have that kind of sameness and the touch which he gave to them. They were all organized around material which he originally conceived of.

STEWART: You say your relationship with him in the period immediately after the war became somewhat closer. Could you, again, describe the circumstances under which you saw him, or…

SPALDING: The war just took everybody in directions over which they had no control. So you couldn't see the people that you wanted to see. You didn't give much

thought to it. Your orders read "Report to Palau," or they read report to wherever, and you went there. And when the war was over you had a chance to see the people you were interested in and the people you wanted to see, and he was one of the people I wanted to see the most. So we just saw each other increasingly when ever it was possible. He would come to the city, we often would go to dinner. Or if he was up at the Cape during the summer I'd get asked up there. Or frequently I'd get -- he'd be down in Palm Beach and I'd get an invitation to come down there. The meetings just increased in number.

STEWART: Would you say that the definite decision to go into politics was made at the time he was in San Francisco?

SPALDING: I don't know that that was when it was made. I'd say that that was when it was communicated to me. That's the first time he had ever indicated it. Always I think we had talked about it, and I don't think I ever had any influence on his decision, but I often -- you know, said that that's where he'd be so effective. And then I think that it was only the fact that Joe was in there ahead of him that kept him from doing exactly the same

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thing because all of the children having been brought up with Mr. Kennedy's desire for them to participate in this, all wanted to go in. It was just that it wasn't clear then how you should. Now when Joe, unfortunately, was killed Mr. Kennedy's desire dropped down one and fell on him and he responded.

STEWART: I think you've pretty well answered this question, but there was no other discussion or any other serious discussion of any other careers except politics and possibly writing?

SPALDING: In a way, a distant third might have been teaching. That's all.

STEWART: Never law school or legal work or anything like that?

SPALDING: No, it never came up.

STEWART: Then after the San Francisco -- let's see, where are we so we can get this straight. The San Francisco Conference was in 1945…

SPALDING: The spring of '45.

STEWART: How did the definite decision to run for Congress in 1946 come about, do you recall that?

SPALDING: I wasn't a part of it at that time. I was living out in California and I had no

connection with him at that time. In other words, I didn't help, as so many of his friends did in helping him get elected or doing the organizational work. I just wasn't a part of the group at that time. I was living in California, working out there. I used to see him when he came out there, but that was the extent of it at that time.

STEWART: In general, is there anything other than the things you may have mentioned that stands out in your mind as changing in him between the

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time before the war and the time after the war? Did his personality change drastically or substantially?

SPALDING: No, not a bit. Ever. Not a bit, in my opinion. I mean the only thing that happened…. I think the thing to remember in this area is how normal he was. I mean it isn't a question of walking along the road to Damascus and getting a sudden hot flash and then just turning your bc on it. He never did. All he did was develop extraordinarily. He had that capacity in spades, this ability to grow. That's what was such a crime about his early death. He just grew tremendously. But he didn't suddenly come back and say, "I'm so appalled by the injustice of it all." In fact, Cord Meyer did come back from the war with the loss of an eye and the loss of a brother in a similar respect to Jack and was so affected by the war. But Kennedy was never affected like that. He was never pushed off this hard, sensible center of his being. He just came back with the conviction that he wanted to go into politics, and went into it.

STEWART: But he certainly, excepted again for the normal growth, he wasn't a more serious person or anything like that.

SPALDING: Not a bit. I mean he was always a serious person. He was always a serious person. There are some interesting stories that I read before I knew him about his difficulty in some of his early days in school. It just seemed to be a kid having a hard time applying himself. He didn't know quite what to do. But he was always serious, in the terms that I've discussed. I always found him very serious, but extremely amusing. And nobody, you know, unless he's somewhat off center, wasn't affected by the war. But he was not altered. He was affected by every intense experience he had, I'm sure, so that the final result is the sum of all those reactions. But he wasn't altered by it. He didn't have to be.

STEWART: Did he ever give any indication in the period immediately after the war of wanting to settle down and get married, raise a family?

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SPALDING: No, he didn't give any indication of that at all.

STEWART: Was it quite to the contrary?

SPALDING: Well, yes, I'd say quite to the contrary. He was having an awfully good time along with his work. He was enjoying his life tremendously. And at that time he didn't think it was going to be improved by being married?

STEWART: Did he talk about not getting married for a few years or a number of years?

SPALDING: No, he just never talked about it. It just wasn't the time, and he was having too good a time. He just didn't get married. He hadn't seen anybody that he wanted to marry. He was having a success in everything he did and he was moving along perhaps at the reasonable rate -- certainly at a brilliant rate and maybe even fast enough to suit himself. Life was pretty good. He wasn't worried about the fact that it wasn't connubial life.

STEWART: To what extent did you see him during the years he was in the House of Representatives?

SPALDING: When I moved back here, which I did in about 1948 as I recall -- when did he run, in '46? Well, then I began to see him extensively, quite a bit. And I don't recall, if your next question is what were the things he was involved in. They were just the things that we know. He was really at this point not so much involved in changing procedures down there or occupied with -- contrarily, he was exposing himself to everybody. He was seeing everybody. He was talking to everybody. I had the feeling that he was just sponging up every ounce of information that he could get about the process and the method and the people that ran it. He was going out all the time down there, and he was just broadening every aspect of himself that related to Washington.

STEWART: Definitely with an eye toward doing something different in the future?

SPALDING: Well, I suppose. He never talked about it. He was just like anybody else in a comparable position probably -- they just wouldn't do it so well maybe. Some would, some have. But what seemed more sensible to him was to learn about this city, learn about the people who are in it, learn about the mechanisms of government and the people that ran it and learn all the could about it.

STEWART: To what extent, if at all, did he talk about the detailed things he was involved in on weekends or evenings?

SPALDING: Oh, a lot. That's what interested him, that's what he knew about. He talked about the figures that he knew and his reactions to them and what amused him

and what they'd said. He'd point up some of the foibles that he'd observed about this one and that one and situations. He just discussed it generally just as his father did and taught him to.

STEWART: Was there ever a sense of real frustration in his work in the House of Representatives?

SPALDING: Oh, I think a growing -- what he observed after sponging up all this knowledge was that there wasn't much power as he understood power unless he became President. I mean, that's really the only place he felt where you could accomplish much. He had a tremendous respect for what his father had accomplished. He often used to talk about it. And perhaps what he felt was that there was a lack of opportunity in our system to accomplish a great deal. [Interruption]

STEWART: Was there more you wanted to say about that?

SPALDING: No. No, that's about it. Just that the President's position was what would enable him to accomplish things in sufficient degree.

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STEWART: Was there talk in a light way, or half serious way about eventually becoming President?

SPALDING: No, never. Never. I don't recall it ever coming up until quite late. It came up by the time he -- obviously when he ran in the Convention in Chicago when his name came up for Vice President. By then it was apparent, but not before then. Now that's an inaccurate statement. I knew that he was talking about it with advisers and the thought had occurred to him. But it just seemed to him presumptuous and fatuous to discuss it seriously at that point. He was just letting time move him along and he was trying to move himself along.

STEWART: There was considerable talk in the period '46 to '52, every two years, and in '48 and in '50 about him running for Governor or getting involved in Massachusetts politics. Do you remember any feelings that he may have expressed about this?

SPALDING: Well, no. But the thing that I remember is a serious question as to whether he should run against Mr. Lodge when Mr. Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] went for the presidency. What was that, 19…

STEWART: …'52.

SPALDING: That was Eisenhower's first term.

STEWART: Right.

SPALDING: So that was a serious question. The polls had shown that he shouldn't do it. But he had a feeling that he could do it and could win. Occasionally that same situation would repeat itself. It repeated itself in the West Virginia primary when he would have a conviction against all the advice, all the systematic advice that he could get, and he went. A lot of people say that he -- perhaps that was the same sort of decision that motivated him to go along for Vice President, because you could argue pretty convincingly that it was awful lucky he didn't get it.

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STEWART: Do you recall his opinions of major political figures during this period?

SPALDING: If you'd name one, maybe I…

STEWART: Harry Truman.

SPALDING: He liked Truman. I can't beyond -- I mean he liked Truman in the way the people liked Truman. He liked Truman the way that those that do like him -- you know, there was a great deal of antagonistic feeling to him then - but the popular feeling that existed he had. He appreciated him and his humor and his approach and his dowdiness and his lack of overbearing qualities, his humility.

STEWART: As far as his fitness to be President, do you recall him ever talking about this?

SPALDING: I don't think he would look at it that way. If you're saying that the fellow who runs a business and runs it badly in Independence, Missouri and who was involved with the Pendergast gang and one thing and another; that never appalled him. I suppose coming from Boston politics it just doesn't occur. But he didn't think that those things necessarily were any badge of acceptance, but it's just that if the fellow was good and able and qualified and won. I mean that was the pragmatic thing about Harry Truman. When everybody said he couldn't win, h edid, and that probably just overjoyed him. Also because he was a member of the same party. But it was the sort of situation that I'm sure he enjoyed, that he found himself in several times, as when running against Lodge.

STEWART: Do you recall him expressing any general opinions about his ability to get along with the typical Massachusetts politician as, for example, John McCormack or any of these…

SPALDING: No, I think again this is just a similar -- I wasn't there on a day-to-day basis so that I'm not aware of and can't make sensible statements

about whom he liked and why and to what degree. I just think that as I watched him he was able, again, to get along with almost anybody in any area, which stood him in good stead. His inclination was to get along rather than to quarrel. But he had plenty of quarrels up there. He just followed the same pattern of his earlier life.

STEWART: Do you ever recall him commenting on the difficulty or on the problem of having to force himself to get along with some of these people when he didn't want to or didn't feel like…

SPALDING: No, I don't think it ever bothered him, not a bit. He was never that far outside the people that were in his business, politics. Jackie used to comment on that all the time and laugh about it. he would laugh at her discomfiture and her sometimes bitingly amusing remarks about the people she had a tough time getting along with. But he never felt that at all.

STEWART: It was just a natural thing.

SPALDING: Yes. I'm sure there were people in that area that bored the life out of him and whom he would have liked to escape from. But it was his business and he loved his business and that was the overriding factor.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the 1952 campaign?

SPALDING: No, not at all. Unfortunately. I wished I were, but I didn't have a chance.

STEWART: Again, during this period that he was in the House of Representatives what were this general attitudes as far as the people who were around him? Was there, in fact, a different group of people…

SPALDING: No, not to my knowledge. I mean some of them came and went because they had temporary ties in Washington, like the Brands, the Brand

family from England. I remember some South Americans who came and went just because time passed and their duties were over. But the core of friends that he had had in school he still saw up on the Cape or occasionally down there or whenever he had a spare moment. His friend Torby MacDonald was in [Torbert H. Macdonald] was in politics. They were seeing each other. Then he was making a lot of close friends with people like Smathers [George A. Smathers], whom he'd known all his political life down there. I suppose it was quite normal, a man picks up acquaintances where he's working. Some of them became his friends like Benny Bradlee [Benjamin C. Bradlee] and people who were working down there,

Charlie Bartlett. He just slowly accumulated a large circle of friends, most of whom were living down there.

STEWART: Again, was there any basic change in his attitude, say in the late 1940's, as far as settling down and getting married was concerned?

SPALDING: No, I don't think it ever occurred until finally he was thirty six and thought he was practically dead, you know. He enjoyed his youth and perhaps he just hated to see it disappear. He probably thought thirty six was a lot older than it actually turned out to be. But, anyway, by that time -- I think by the time he was thirty six…. When did Churchill get married? Wasn't it somewhere around in that area?

STEWART: I'm not sure.

SPALDING: Well, it wasn't early, as I recall.

STEWART: No.

SPALDING: I don't mean that he decided he'd get married when Churchill did, but I know he had decided he wasn't going to get married terribly early. But by thirty six he should be thinking of getting married, if he was going to get married, and he definitely wanted to have a family and have kids. It was a perfectly, natural, normal thing to do.

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STEWART: Do you ever recall him commenting or complaining about any conflicts he may have run into between his social activities and his obligations as a Congressman? Again, of course there have been all kinds of stories that at times he didn't take his duties that seriously or didn't devote that much time to his work in Congress.

SPALDING: Well, I think it was because either -- perhaps knowing what he wanted to do ultimately he managed to keep himself from being identified or involved with any of those conflicts that periodically come up down there and leave a scar on you one way or another. Even if you win, you lose, because whatever the issue is it has proponents and opponents. So he just consciously stood aside from all of those in the early days so that he would have fewer enemies when it mattered. And as a result he wasn't involved the way he was later when he became totally involved. I don't know, I think perhaps that's what people are saying when they criticize that. He just stood aside from as many of those as he could.

STEWART: I think in addition there have been people who have concluded that he was somewhat of a, quote, playboy during this period from '46, so, until '50. And

there was a certain amount of productive…

SPALDING: No, I don't think so. I don't think that he was, as I said a minute ago, totally committed to different causes. I think that was probably for a reason. And then, as I say, he was enjoying himself and he did enjoy himself with such zest that it may have stood out. But I know that he -- at least my recollection is -- that he never was absent for any periods of time or any…. I think the criticism that could be made is a carping criticism and it's, you know, like the people who say that Churchill was opportunistic or that he was too pushy. But I don't -- certainly he was interested and involved and working hard and productive during that period. But he was not involved with the controversies of the period whenever he could avoid it.

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STEWART: By design.

SPALDING: I think so because I think it was one of the things that worried him when finally it became such a criticism that he had to put his name on something. So it came on the labor act. And that was a trying time, for just that reason. He didn't want to offend more people than he had to.

STEWART: By design.

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STEWART: In the period, say, in the time just before he decided to run for the Senate do you recall if he had any great fear or what his attitude was about the possibilities of losing, the possibilities of suffering a setback in his career?

SPALDING: Oh, yes. Sure, all of that. And it usually involved the taking of several polls. When those polls were taken they always showed that he would be set back. He canvassed all the opinions that he could get, and he just couldn't get any good news at all of a statistical nature. That was when he finally, he would make -- this, I think, is kind of a typical decision. He would simply feel that he had gone as far as he possibly could in the House and that it probably would bore him more to stay on there. He felt that no matter what the external circumstances were, if he was going to get anywhere there probably was a certain fate about it; he'd have to be able to beat somebody like Lodge under the circumstances that he could see with Eisenhower running way ahead. He had to be able to -- if he wanted to get where he wanted to, he'd have to meet those situations and overcome them. I suppose it's almost like somebody, youknow, I suppose Lombardi's [Vince Lombardi] thesis that you don't beat teams by attacking their weak spots but by playing right

over their strong points. And he frequently would do that. So I think he made the decision, "I've been long enough in the House, it's time for me to move ahead. If I'm going to do it I've got to take this much of a chance," and then he would do it anyway. And he took that, I think opposed to his father's opinion who was much more inclined to wait. He saw great disadvantages to going at that time. That was the decision in West Virginia when, you know, all

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the advice was, "Don't go into West Virginia. The religious problem will be overwhelming and a defeat at this time will set you back." Well, instead he went in there and won this overwhelming victory. Those two decisions I always remember because they were typical and they were pivotal in his own career. He just went when he felt that he, himself, that that's what he ought to do, even though the obvious indicators were otherwise.

STEWART: As far as his early years in the Senate were concerned, do you recall any changes or what basically was his attitude about being a United States Senator? Was he determined to do a better job than he had done as a Congressman?

SPALDING: I think that the job as a Congressman after he had it for a little while began to look like a Three I League job to a major league ball player. He understood it and that's where you had to start, but it was still a long way down the ladder. So when he got to be Senator it was heightened. There was a heightened sense of responsibility and the committees and responsibility you had were heavier and the people he came into contact with. He had more influence. What he had to say was beginning to be noticed and he was beginning to be noticed, as a political figure rather than just somebody around town. So that all just was a natural development. And then I think that quickly it began to dawn on him that there wasn't even enough power there. But by this time he was organizing his office and people who were pretty good were now in regular positions. The Myer Feldmans and the Ted Sorensens and the people that stood him in such stead all through his later career were beginning to gravitate and to settle with him.

STEWART: But was there from the beginning of his time in the Senate a feeling of confidence that he could do the job and do it very well?

SPALDING: I don't think he ever had any doubt about it, that he could do the job and do it well. Again, it seems to me the perfectly normal

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response of somebody who is reasonably gifted. I say reasonably gifted -- he was extraordinarily gifted, but he must have considered himself reasonably gifted because he was never conceited or overwhelmed by his own abilities. He was tactful and considerate and

underplayed all his advantages, I always thought. But he must have early in life realized that he did things well and that he could do anything well. I don't think he had to worry.

He knew Washington extremely well by the time he became Senator. He knew lots of Senators. He must have been able to gauge himself against most of the ones that were there. There were some undoubtedly whom he had great admiration for, and others, whom he obviously didn't. But I can't imagine that he was overwhelmed by the prospect of the job. And I think that that showed up completely when he because President. Even in the Inaugural speech there's some line, I think, that says, "I don't shrink from this. I welcome it." That's the way he went about it all, with the same real worries that something might go wrong. that something might -- which can happen to anybody. I mean the concern that any attentive person has to his work, to events that may sink you, untoward things. You can't calculate the unexpected, the disaster that you don't see. He always considered those. But I think as far as going out and giving it a try, he never had any worries about that. I can't imagine him ever making Mr. Truman appealing speech when he found himself in the position and said, "Pray for me, boys." Kennedy never asked the boys to pray for him, in that sense.

STEWART: The whole issue of Senator McCarthy of course came up quite early in his senatorial career. Do you recall him discussing that?

SPALDING: Sure.

STEWART: What do you recall as being his basic attitude about McCarthy?

SPALDING: I can recall an incident. By this time it was apparent that McCarthy was a disaster. And, again, it was an involvement which through

Bobby and indirectly himself because of his vote, was going to cause him some embarrassment. This is a good example -- I'm not very much at remembering stories and incidents, but this is sort of an interesting story that indicates what I tried to tell you earlier. He was up in the hospital getting his back operated on and was just about to be moved up in the hospital room as they were preparing to take him downstairs and he was looking, sort of tapping his tooth with his finger and he said, "You know, when I get downstairs I know exactly what's going to happen." He said, "Those reporters are going to lean over my stretcher. There's going to be about ninety-five faces bent over me with great concern, and everyone of those guys is going to say is, "Now, Senator, what about McCarthy?" And he said, "Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to reach back for my back and I'm just going to yell, "Oow," and then I'm going to pull the sheet over my head and hope we can get out of there. That's the sort of way he would talk to me about the things that concerned him deeply.

STEWART: Would you conclude then that at that time there was a definite conscious attempt to escape the matter, escape making a commitment on it?

SPALDING: Well, what could he do? He'd ducked the vote. When the censure vote came up he was in the hospital so he didn't vote. He had a little luck there. And he didn't have to make a vote so they all wanted to know how he would vote. All he could think of was he was going to avoid it by not saying anything. Eventually he made a statement about it, and I don't remember what it was. But they forced him into where he had to say something. But I think it was typical of his thinking, "Now, how am I going to get out of this? Here it is, and…" So he was just going to just yell, "Oow."

STEWART: But again, there have been all kinds of criticism that he should have risen above, so to speak, the possible problems that would have been encountered in Massachusetts and have taken a stand on it.

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SPALDING: Yes. But it's like living in Hollywood. If they don't get you for one thing, they'll get you for another. Being in politics, they're going to always criticize you so half of the time you try to avoid it or cope with it. And he was extremely good at coping with it, and amusing in the way he went about it. He just took it as a -- he didn't worry about it in idealistic terms so much. Not that that was totally lacking because in the last analysis it is quite clear from *Profiles in Courage* everybody is stuck with a moral decision one way or another. But still, practically, you've got to figure out, "What am I going to say to those reporters when I'm going down there on this stretcher?" And I thought it was a rather temporarily amusing way of how he was going to get himself out of it even though he felt like hell at the time. That's what occurred to him.

STEWART: Did he ever indicate that he was upset or disgusted with what McCarthy was doing?

SPALDING: Well, yes, because it was an extremist position that he never could accept. That there were three hundred Communists in the cloakroom of the State Department. He just could never find any sympathy for these wild zealots. I don't recall that he ever endorsed anybody on those terms. I don't recall…. Even when he was President during the hottest periods of integration when he went on, I thought, so effectively and spoke about what had to happen in the schools down in Mississippi, he was always temperate and it was after a tremendous amount of thought and concern and wait. But it was never, it was never emotional or extreme. He was interested in McCarthy as a phenomena, but it wouldn't be like him to endorse that.

STEWART: What were his feelings about McCarthy personally?

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SPALDING: I don't know enough to answer that. I can only gather from what others have

said that McCarthy was fairly appealing. I mean, he was destructive and anathema as a figure and as a thinker, but apart from that I gather he had a certain appeal as a person. But I don't recall that he was ever close with him. He didn't occur in his conversation the way others did.

STEWART: Let me ask you a few general questions about his intellect, about his capacity as a thinker and as an intellectual person. Did he always have a good ability to remember facts, remember names, addresses, phone numbers and this type of thing?

SPALDING: Yes, he did. I can't cite a lot of examples, except that in discussions that would come up then about integration, about the Far East, about the Chinese, he was interested in a sensible approach. You know, how many people were involved, how many people felt this way, how many people felt that way. What backgrounds did they come from, what accounted for their point of view, etcetera, etcetera.

STEWART: Did you ever recall any subject that he was frustrated over his inability to really get on top of it, or to really conquer it to his satisfaction?

SPALDING: No, I don't. Sure I do. I mean, Cuba was the one that I remember most. That was a terrible blow to him. That's the only one, and it came after such a flush of victory and there was beginning to be such an enthusiasm about his presidency. I should say -- I said no originally, but I should obviously say Cuba. That wasn't so much a frustration in not getting on top of it, but it was just initially an agonizing realization that it had happened and that it was a mistake. But after that he was able to get on top of it all right.

STEWART: I was thinking more of academic subjects, such as economics or…

SPALDING: Oh, no. I think that anybody in politics has to deal with so many things that he's not an expert on that he just doesn't have time. But I think he must have felt that he had as good a grasp on the general subjects as one could. I'm sure he was never satisfied and I'm sure that there must have been times when he wished he knew more about any number of subjects. I remember we had a businessmen's meeting during the campaign in '60 and he had said that to them. He said, "As a Senator I'm forced to deal with a lot of things that I don't know enough about. But that's the inherent problem with the system. I just have to do the best I can with the limitations of time," because everybody was pressing at this dinner, was honing his own axe. The fellows from the utility group had one point of view; the oil group had another point of view; the railroads had another point of view. So what he was saying was, "I have to integrate all this. I have to have some concept generally. And I can't know all of these things as well as I'd like." But I don't think that he ever felt other than a normal frustration, again, about not knowing more than he did and

being…. But usually it was more than compensated by finding somebody who knew a great deal and then listening to that person.

STEWART: I was thinking, for example, of scientific matters and matters of medicine or body chemistry or something like this that people encounter all the time but they never fully understand.

SPALDING: About his own physique, you mean?

STEWART: About finding out more and more about these particular areas that he may have…

SPALDING: Don't you think, though -- I just think as a politician that if he decided he wanted to go into politics he would have had to quickly realize that he couldn't specialize. So again, the sensible thing wouldn't be to worry about that. The thing would be to find out as much as you could in what you were

involved in. But he wouldn't have worried about it. You couldn't be a politician and be a specialist if you wanted to be, broadly, a leader.

STEWART: A lot, of course, has been written about his lack of appreciation of theories and speculations and abstracts of one type or another. Would you say most of what has been written is quite accurate or that this is a…

SPALDING: Well, as you put it I don't think it's very fair because I think that he -- it indicates a kind of a lack of appreciation or a lack of sensitivity. I don't think there was that about him in any field. But, again, you can't be all things at all times. Any choice you make eliminates a certain number of other things. So he made a choice to be a popular leader, and that covers a great number of fields. So he couldn't have worried a great deal. He just couldn't have had the time to absorb theories. Where would he have been? He would have been a great theorist perhaps, but he wouldn't have been President of the United States.

STEWART: But you wouldn't say that, in fact, theories and speculations of one type or another left him cold or didn't…

SPALDING: No, I don't. If you're talking about practical theories, about theories of relativity and theories of diffusion of uranium or re-energizing or facts that were practical, those kind of theories I'm certain would have interested him. But if you're saying would he have liked to have theorized on how many angels can dance on top of a pin, he had no patience for that kind of speculation. Just speculation for speculation's sake was of no interest to him. I think his mind was sufficiently developed so that he would

have been a success in any field he'd have gone into, whatever it would have happened to have been. Obviously there were certain areas in which he was better suited than others and he picked one for which he was ideally suited. But I

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never found that he -- I'm certain that people who are by nature speculative could have run into him and said, "Hell, he's not interested in speculation," but I don't think that's an accurate appraisal.

STEWART: What would you say during his senatorial years were his major weaknesses as a Senator or as a public figure?

SPALDING: Well, as a close friend perhaps I'm too biased to…. But more than that, I'm not a student and I think that requires a historian's knowledge and any answer I could make to that would only indicate an amateurishness on my own side. I mean, I'm not prepared. That would have to be specific. You'd have to say, "I think he made a mistake here and here and here." And I'm, frankly, unequipped to do that.

STEWART: I was thinking that possibly over the course of this period there may have been recurring things that people around him would bring up as weak points that he should probably try to rectify.

SPALDING: I think that, again, you'd have to talk to somebody who was in touch with him on a day-to-day basis and of course if I had been, which I wasn't, I would have had a point of view about which things he should attend to and which ones he didn't. You know, you just simply have two different points of view from people who were involved. I just wasn't.

STEWART: Briefly, how often did you see him during this period? Say, first of all, in the period before 1956, or from 1952 to 1956?

SPALDING: I can't recall how many times, but I just saw him constantly on a social basis. He would come to town or all up and say he was coming down and we'd have dinner, just as I've described it to you previously. It was in spare time.

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STEWART: What do you recall about the decision to make a try for the Vice Presidency in 1956?

SPALDING: I just recall how spontaneous it was, that he had gone out there and had made the seconding -- did he make the nominating speech for Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] or did he second it? Did he make the nominating…

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: The first nominating speech? I'm not sure that he did, but I believe he made one of them at any rate.

STEWART: I believe so.

SPALDING: I think he made the nominating speech.

STEWART: Right.

SPALDING: I'm almost certain he did. That was, at that time, a great step forward and it was a chance to see what…. You know, television now had become a factor, really almost for the first time. But now it was definitely established as a factor in politics and you could see he had a chance here to demonstrate how effective he could be on it. So you saw that. You're asking me, I think, my responses to that period.

STEWART: I was thinking more in terms of anything he may have discussed or talked about before this…

SPALDING: I was not at the Convention, and I don't recall anything?

STEWART: I mean in the two or three months that preceded.

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SPALDING: Yes, but I don't recall that there was anything. Other interviews may point out that he went out there with an idea of being Vice President, but I didn't know about it, if that were the case. It seems to me from the way it developed it was pretty spontaneous. Mr. Stevenson decided not to endorse anybody, but the Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] candidacy was so far along that it must have been pretty well planned. His own seemed to be spontaneous and cause a great temporary or momentary wave of excitement and then fell short. Then he made his very graceful speech in favor of Mr. Kefauver and that was it. All I'm doing is reciting what I saw and how I reacted to it. But I just remember thinking at the time how obvious it was that he stood out head and shoulders, I thought, above the people that he was, in a sense, competing with.

STEWART: Were you there?

SPALDING: No, I wasn't. I was not there.

STEWART: I assume you saw him shortly after the Convention. Do you recall what his feelings were?

SPALDING: I think that it was just a feeling of elation that it had gone so well. I mean there had been such a response that he was now firmly established as a figure, as a serious political figure. Millions of people had seen him on television. He had done it brilliantly. And he was a fact. He had established a reality about himself that couldn't be denied and that only grew from that point on. Probably that's the moment that he became a major figure.

STEWART: Was there any talk, or do you recall discussing at all in, say, late 1956, early 1857 – say late 1956, exactly what this meant or what he would do in the next four years to capitalize on what he had done at the Convention, or to carry this forward?

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SPALDING: Yes. I think that the reaction was so effective that everything…. You know, it didn't suddenly occur at this moment that now he should go for the presidency because it had been talked about before. And Mr. Kennedy had had it in the back of his head. But it became perfectly obvious at this point that it was possible. I meant to people – it didn't become obvious to people who ran against him right up practically until the time of the Convention – but to people who had followed his career and who were close to him it was perfectly obvious that he had a real chance; that it could be done; that he had the equipment to do it. I think that's the way all the people around him felt. It was an exposure to the delegates and a chance to find out who they were and where they were and then to go start organizing. I think it crystallized the opinion that in the next four years was the time to try it.

STEWART: Let me just turn this tape over.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

STEWART: Was there anything in general that you can think of that he thought he would have to do or change as far as his basic image was concerned between 1956 and 1960, other than the fact of exposing himself and organizing his approach to a lot of delegates?

SPALDING: No. No major change. The Catholic problem he knew existed, but he put that off as long as he knew he possibly could. He didn't worry about that initially. I'm certain he did in talking to advisors. But he waited through the Wisconsin primary and I don't think it was until almost the latter part of the primary in West Virginia that he went to Houson – I'm not sure of my dates there, but I think it….

STEWART: That came in September?

SPALDING: The Houston speech?

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STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: September of what?

STEWART: Of 1960 during the…

SPALDING: During the campaign. But there was some speech during the primaries relating to it. I'm sure there was. It was a speech that…

STEWART: Well, he spoke to the newspaper editors in Washington.

SPALDING: Basically it was the same speech, wasn't it? The gist of it being, "I hope that you don't deny everybody an opportunity just because…." But he hadn't even formulated that. He was going to let that crystallize until it was absolutely necessary to deal with it. But you speak about whether there was any great change. By this time I began to be closely associated. I was beginning to see a lot, and then very quickly everybody was involved in the primaries in one place or another. But he had a remarkable ability not to change his image so much, but to grow. He'd sense what was required. In other words, what a younger person with less experience had to do to compete with Nixon, what you had to do to cover up these weak spots. He'd make these assessments and then he'd apply himself in that area. He was amazing in what he could accomplish because in short order those vulnerabilities would disappear. But that would be the way he would approach it. Usually it would take some criticism or some problem to bring them before everybody, other than the very obvious ones.

STEWART: Your mention of the putting off of any serious consideration of the religious problems, is that what you…

SPALDING: Well, I always thought – the feeling that I had andI suppose that almost everybody

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certainly most people around him had, was that if he could come to grips with him; if he could meet him just head-on. And similarly with any problem or any prejudice. If he could just pit himself against it, he would win. But he was usually, I'm sure, wise. But in my opinion it would take a long time before it would develop that way. He'd deal with it obliquely for the longest time and then finally come to grips with it.

STEWART: He certainly must have recognized in, say '57, and from '56 on that religion

was going to be his major problem.

SPALDING: Right. But it wouldn't be typical of him to jump right up with that knowledge and then deal with it right away and then tty to get it out of the way that way. He waited and waited and waited,as you say, waited as late as September. Well, that's quite far along in the game. My memory is that it was somewhat earlier because it related to a primary. But it didn't even come up then until the primaries were quite well along. It was an issue that everybody was discussing and talking about, and everybody was convinced was an impossibility.

STEWART: What I was getting out is trying to really pin down how he thought of the problem in say '56, '57 and '58; if he, in fact, recognized it was going to be as big as it was.

SPALDING: Well, I think he was probably relating himself to it. Perhaps I would over evaluate the criticism or I wouldn't come to the same

evaluation of the criticism as he would. He would think, "Well, we're doing well enough as it is without bringing it up to win in Wisconsin. Maybe we won't win all the districts, but we'll win eight or nine of them." And, "We won't get all the delegates, but we'll get most of them and that's enough. I wouldn't be wise to bring the thing before everybody at this point, so let's delay it."

STEWART: As far as his personal life, what effect or were there any major effects as far as his personal life was concerned because of his marriage and settling down and starting to have a family? Did he change as a person drastically?

SPALDING: I don't think he did at all. Again, it became a very, as with anybody, a very….. He was married and he was going to have a family and he was crazy about his wife. And he was absolutely crazy about his kids as they came along. He had all the happiness of a happily married person.

STEWART: Again, the stories are, or the opinions have been expressed that he either changed somewhat drastically because of his marriage or during the late 1950's when he really started to take the presidency seriously. People have said that he matured greatly, that he became a somewhat more serious person and so forth.

SPALDING: It seems to me that it's just, again, a natural consequence of events and time. He always was growing. Again, I don't find anything abrupt or alarming about it. I don't think he suddenly was like Prince Hal, and, you know, decided to change completely when the moment came. It just was that at thirty-six that he found somebody that he was crazy about and it was time for him to get married. He was different to

that extent because he had these additional responsibilities, just as he was different when he was a Senator than when he was a Congressman, because the responsibilities are bigger. And of course he was bigger when he was

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President than when he was Senator. I think that all people are noticing when they say that is they're observing the events. He got married, and when he was married he was somewhat different than he was as a bachelor.

STEWART: What about his illness in 1954, '55, did you see any change in him as a result of that? Again, as people have often stated.

SPALDING: Well, I never did. I mean other than what you would expect if your friend was terribly sick. He was different in that he – you're speaking now of the operation?

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: Well, you know that wound was a savage wound, a big wound. It went maybe eight inches or so down his back. It never would heal and it was open and painful. Again, one is altered by pain. But determination on his part to make a kind of change. They were simply the impact of events on – and they're predictable. I think that's what's so underlyingly sound about him. He just reacted the way you would have thought he would have. I don't recall ever – I mean he often surprised me, but he never surprised me in his behavior or in the way he reacted to things.

STEWART: Was he usually willing to openly discuss and totally discuss his ailments with you?

SPALDING: I think they were so pressing that if I said, "What the hell are those pills for?" he'd say, "This is what I'm taking them for." And either, "They're doing me no good," or "They aren't worth a damn." But he just wouldn't talk about it because it was an effort to get it off his mind. I think the pain was constant and he had to literally fight against it; he had to fight to get the back healed and I would walk up the beach with him with the back, still

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open and, he'd say, "How is it now? Is it open?" or "Is any stuff running out of it?" The thing to do was to get his mind off of it. I think that people who could help him do that were people that he chose to see a bit. Anything to get your mind off it, not to think about it. It's tough enough to sleep and sometimes you can't do that. Anything to take your mind off it. It was severe pain and severe discomfort and just, you know, real pain.

STEWART: What about the other illness that became such an issue at the 1960 Convention, the charge of…

SPALDING: I'm not saying anything or you're not asking me anything that I won't answer. I just don't know enough about it. I'd heard that he had these problems and we'd never discussed it. I never asked him. Sometimes he'd say, "Come on up to the hospital with me. I've got to get an injection," or, "I've got to get this." But as to just exactly what it was for, I never bothered to ask him. I mean that sounds like – that's just exactly the way it was. I just didn't ask him.

STEWART: Again, of course, there had been all these wild stories that there was a time as far as his illness was concerned that he was seriously ill.

SPALDING: From Parkinson's disease?

STEWART: Addison's disease.

SPALDING: Addison's disease. Yes, I'd heard it. What always seemed to me a more reasonable explanation is the fact that there are varieties of Addison's disease and that also you can control it, you can bring it under control by drugs It's possible that that's what he had. I know he was sick. I mean, he was good and sick. And so sick that it was an irritation for both of them, for his father and for himself. It threatened to get in the way of everything they were trying to accomplish.

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SPALDING: What about his opinions of doctors in general and of specific doctors? It has been written that from his experiences in the Navy he developed a somewhat negative attitude about the capabilities of many doctors. Was this…

SPALDING: No. I think, again, it's just somebody who was sick so long that it was just an irritation. It's darn hard to embrace the profession if for years on end you don't get any better. Perhaps you always have had the same experience. I know I had when something you pick up that you can't get rid of and you see five doctors and they give you five different opinions. But, again, it wasn't anything violent. He just realized that this was a limit to what doctors knew and he had something that didn't respond easily to treatment, and it was damned irritating not to be able to cure it. But there it was.

Finally he found somebody who gave him some relief for his back in Dr. Travell [Janet Travell]. So it was only natural that he would have the highest regard for her until perhaps sometime late in his presidency when even her treatments didn't help so much. But it was no irritation with her personality or anything, it was just…. I've had a bad back, so – I mean it was a joke between us. I might have had the same operation and I suppose when I saw him floundering around I never did. And I did some exercises that helped me, but I know

what it felt like. But I didn't have other complications. So when you put everything else on top of it you know what he had to deal with. I mean I don't think any discussion that doesn't consider this properly understands his character. There's no question that this was an outsized factor in his life and it had a shaping effect on his personality. We talked about it earlier, but it comes up again now. In summation, that's the way it seems to me; it was a sizeable factor.

STEWART: Do you remember any fairly specific discussions, say, in late 1958 as to what he felt, what his attitudes were on going forward toward the nomination – what he felt were the absolute

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things that he had to overcome?

SPALDING: I think what he had decided early, maybe as early as after that vice presidential incident, as early as '56, was that what you had to do in this was, if you're somebody like himself who has certain religious problems and is young and somewhat controversial – however he might have interpreted himself – what you've got to do is to go out in these primaries and win. I don't guess too many people had thought about it in that manner before. Nobody had said, "Look. There are so many delegates. We'll go in to so many of these primaries. We'll win them and nobody can do anything about it," because it was quite open at that…. And people didn't even think he could. It wasn't accepted that that was the way to go out and do it. So he, to that extent, I think he really considered it a specific problem. "There are so many delegates. We've got to get so many of them. Here's how we do it. Let's cope with it."

STEWART: How confident would you say he was in, say earlly 1959 or late 1958 that he could do this?

SPALDING: Again, we touched on this earlier before and how confident was he that he could do the job. I don't think he was confident in that way. The sensible thing would be to not be confident until you had that many delegates. I don't think he was ever confident. He could see his position improve as he went from New Hampshire to Wisconsin to West Virginia to Oregon and he could see himself build up and he could see people who opposed him give way and he could see his strength gather. But I don't think he ever felt confident until Wyoming said, "Here they are."

STEWART: Was this ability as is often mentioned of his, the ability to look at himself and his own situation in a very objective and almost detached way, was this always something that was a part of him?

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SPALDING: Yes, always. And, again, we've touched on it before. It always was. There was

always this ability to look at himself and anybody else in humorous terms.

STEWART: You were involved in the Wisconsin-West Virginia primaries to a certain extent. Could you briefly describe what you did in Wisconsin?

SPALDING: Well, just what so many did. There were, what, nine districts out in Wisconsin. I think just a lot of people who by this time… A lot of friends realized that they were involved in something that was unusual, but mainly because they had a friend that they thought a great deal of, decided that they didn't want the opportunity to have passed without having made every possible effort to help him achieve what he had set after. There wasn't any organization out there so they were needed. But I don't think most of them were even asked. I think they all came forward. I remember seeing Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] one night in a restaurant. I knew he was going over there so I called him up and he said, "Meet me over here." I said, "I can do anything at the moment that you need me for. I'm willing to take the rest of the year out and would like to, if I can help."

They needed everybody they could get at that time. They were just beginning in Wisconsin and there wasn't any organization out there at all. That's the remarkable thing. There wasn't a soul. So the organization was developed by a group of amateurs, augmented by some professionals that were turning – like Pat Lucey [Patrick J. Lucey] and other people out there who were moving toward his candidacy. But the area itself, the nine different districts, were all manned by friends who'd never had any experience in politics at all. Of course a group of them, Bobby and others, had had experience in the campaigns in Massachusetts so they knew how to organize. And it was a relatively simple matter to set up a central organization and tell these people what was required of them. The rest was just a lot of hard work. It's not very complicated.

STEWART: But you had never been actively involved in local politics or…

SPALDING: No. And of course at that time I was working in an advertising agency. So it looked good to me. I thought it would be exciting along with every other thing I felt about it. And I remember getting on the train with Bobby and we got into a terrific snowstorm, just a blizzard. The train stopped and we had to get out and walk about five miles from where the train was stopped to where we were going. By this time he'd been through an awful lot and he was already getting a bit tired. And he said, "Now aren't you really glad you came?" It wasn't that much fun. It was a lot of hard work and that's about all.

STEWART: I don't think there's any point in going into the Wisconsin primary.

SPALDING: It's too well detailed. Everybody knows everything about it. White [Theodore H. White] has written it so well.

STEWART: Is there anything about it that you recall that hasn't been…

SPALDING: Well, it would just be general. I can't recall any specific that – again, you noticed then the religious opposition. It was a tremendous experience to be involved in that, and to be in touch with people in a way you never would have been before. It is, I suppose, one of the most exciting things I ever did and it will relate to some remark that may come up later because it was the chase that was so exciting – the business of chasing the job.

I can just remember one thing that typifies it, though so many things come flooding back to my mind when you ask me about him. But I remember being in the streets of Eau Claire one day and we were just walking down the streets. It was a long tiring day and he didn't deem to be getting particularly anywhere in this district,

which was right on the Minnesota border. Some lady came up to him, a sweet old lady, and said, "You're too soon, my boy. It's too soon." And he said, "No, this is the time. Right now. This is the time for me." And he just passed it off. But he just felt that he was ready and primed and ready to go. There was that, again, that general excitement about accomplishing it.

STEWART: In general, could you see a change in the basic attitude of both the President and the people around him as the campaign went on, a greater amount of – did they become more tense or more irritable?

SPALDING: No.

STEWART: Was it always a relatively relaxed atmosphere?

SPALDING: I think everybody when they're terrible tired are more prone to be irritated. But his resistance to fatigue was fantastic because I don't think any – in spite of what's been written about it, I doubt if anybody understands the energy and the exertion that goes on in this thing. It was really not a rare thing for us to drive the whole length of Wisconsin in a night, back and forth, and he would make all of these trips and more. But in all of that he never lost his composure. I never saw him irritated at all. But again, the thing that I recall is his terrific interest in it and the fun of it, the enjoyment of a campaign. It becomes a very elaborate thing when you campaign for the presidency; the flying, the organization, the corraling of people, the meetings. There's nothing like it.

STEWART: Just one question. It was charged by the Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] people, and it's since been written aobut, that there was some attempt to capitalize on the religious problem, even to the extent, again, of a charge by some Humphrey people of sending out some violently anti-Catholic literature to Catholics..

SPALDING: And then making a point of it?

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: You mean, that the Kennedy people did…

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: That's an obscure charge and so far as I'm concerned I never saw a single bit of it. It's possible that it could have happened. It's highly unlikely. I don't know that anything would have been accomplished by it. It wasn't, so far as I know, used as an effort to get his views…. It certainly doesn't seem to me that he needed to do that to provoke it. There was an antagonism to him on that count, as a Catholic. But I don't recall any effort of that kind.

STEWART: Well, the charge was that this was, of course, an attempt to get Catholics irritated.

SPALDING: No. I just don't recall it at all. I don't think that anybody thinks, anybody thought Humphrey would have done it, and I had never heard the charge. The thing about a campaign is that it's so undisciplined and there are so many people free-wheeling around and doing – that it easily could have happened. But I don't recall it. As far as I know it never occurred at all.

STEWART: Okay, what about West Virginia? What basically was your role there?

SPALDING: It was different because there was a highly organized group in West Virginia. West Virginia, for all its problems, is a political state and it's so different from Wisconsin, say, in that they're all passionately interested in politics. I mean if you walk down the streets of Charleston you can't

take a step without talking to somebody who's got an opinion about the campaign and how it's going. So what happened was that people who had learned something about the business in Wisconsin, many of them went along to West Virginia because there's never enough people to do all the things that should be done, and help them coordinate it. They really did the same thing that they did in Wisconsin except because you have to deal with and not tread upon the local people who are highly interested and very concerned about their own positions and their own notions and their own political…. They were all professional politicians and you couldn't get in their way. There's nothing that irritated them more. But that was the most

interesting, I suppose, because of the people and because the candidate was able to turn what looked like maybe a loss into the most overwhelming victory.

STEWART: What was your role? Were you in charge of a county?

SPALDING: Of a county there. There's some cigarette box here that represents…. What does it say? "Charles Spalding wanted dead or alive in Monongalia County." It seems a little extreme.

STEWART: What about the spending of money? Again, this is one of the major issues that was raised then and is discussed now. In your own circumstances, how…

SPALDING: In my own circumstances I spent my own. I don't mean by that there was so much. But it was something that I could exist at, that I could handle at that point. In other words, I could afford to take the year out.

STEWART: No I mean as far as money spent to run the campaign and money on election day, this type of thing.

SPALDING: I don't quite know what you're talking about.

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You say money on election day. You're talking about buying votes or something?

STEWART: The so-called walk around money. I guess they don't call it that.

SPALDING: Well, that's such a special thing. I'm sure you know, West Virginia is known for that sort of – the interesting, the bag operation supposedly. I didn't have anything to do with it. It takes place down in the southern part of the state, I believe. I was up in the northern end of it. And if there was any of it done I suppose it was done by people who traditionally do it all the time whenever an election comes up in West Virginia.

STEWART: Do you remember any major goofs that you made or major mistakes that caused any embarrassment?

SPALDING: No. I just remember – no, I guess fortunately I didn't make any great goofs. Or maybe I did and people were kind enough not to tell me. But I remember one that was debated by…. We had to do some ads to dramatize, hopefully, the difference between Kennedy's candidacy for West Virginia and Humphrey's. I, having been in the business, got ahold of some people and contributed some myself. And one was somewhat extreme. It was a voter dropping his ballot in the ash can with Humphrey on it, the

implication being a vote for Humphrey is just down the drain because he isn't going to get it anyway, and West Virginia was in such bad shape…. There was some discussion as to the questionable taste of that ad, but I don't recall anything else. Do you have some information yourself? I'd be interested.

STEWART: Oh, no. Although there might be a…. Was there anything similar to that as far as the use of the comparison of the war records?

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SPALDING: Oh, you're talking about – well, that wasn't my problem. But of course that came up with Franklin Roosevelt down there and that's…. If you'll tell me what your question is, I know something about it.

STEWART: You mentioned the problem, the little story about the ads and not wanting to be that extreme. In any of the literature was there any implied comparison of the war record in…

SPALDING: Oh, no. None. But it was made so straightforwardly by Mr. Roosevelt that there wasn't any need for it. That also came so far, so near the end of the campaign. And it wasn't an incident other than Mr. Roosevelt brought it up and caused a severe breach between himself and Mr. Humphrey. That was the extent of it. Beyond that it was never a cause celebre other than between the two of them,

STEWART: And it certainly wasn't a thing that anyone else was openly talking about or…

SPALDING: No. And he didn't – it came right at the end. It came virtually the day or so before the voting commenced.

STEWART: Do you know whether this was totally on Roosevelt's own initiative, the mentioning of this – was this totally his own?

SPALDING: He had a lot of good ideas, and this might have been his own. But it's more likely – I'm only speculating – it's more likely that there was perhaps some discussion about this.

STEWART: Okay. Is there anything else unusual or exceptional that hasn't been written about that you recall about the West Virginia primary?

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SPALDING: No. I can only give you personal things and small things that occurred to somebody working out there. But nothing – you're talking about an overall…

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: No. I don't think anything other than the fact that they just wore Mr. Humphrey out. He really was a gallant campaigner. And the night before the voting commenced there was a meeting, a short meeting supposedly, of the candidates in a labor hall. He was just given something like fifteen minutes so that he could wind up his campaign. I remember that he got started and literally couldn't stop. He talked for four hours in an almost desperate effort to fight off this…. He just was totally exhausted. And then the next morning the fantastic early returns of a hundred to one and eighty eight to three. I don't know that that sheds any new light on the – but I remember that vividly.

STEWART: A lot has been made of the fact that the President supposedly was shaken to a certain extent by his actual contact with all the poverty that he saw in West Virginia. Would you agree that that had a real emotional impact on him?

SPALDING: Well, sure. I think in the first place I think that, again, West Virginia as a political temperament interested him. The fact that they all were interested in politics interested him. That was interesting. I think he perhaps enjoyed campaigning there for that reason because they were so responsive. ANd then you couldn't help but be…. Again, that goes back to his early acceptance of the New Deal and those philosophies which…. It was obvious that something needed to be done desperately here because these people were in terrible shape, and then their pluck in hoping that they'd back him and something would happen.

Of course he made as many gestures to West Virginia as he could. I don't think anybody – I don't think he was any more moved. He knew about it, obviously as a Senator he knew about the problems in West Virginia. But if you go into a coal miner's town or into his house and you see the condition his kids are in and what he's living on you can't help but be moved. If you're a politician I'm sure you want to do what you can about it.

STEWART: Again, the implications of some of the stories are that he wasn't fully aware of this type of poverty until he got down there.

SPALDING: I think that's possible in the sense that he probably wasn't fully aware of the war until he got shot at. He wasn't fully aware of, as all of us, until you run right into it. Then you see it and it makes an impact. But again, it wasn't a question of somebody who didn't know about it suddenly coming down, you know…. I mean he wasn't that kind of a Senator. He knew the problems down there. But when you're a candidate the campaign brings out these things. You have to go into the miners' quarters, and you have to sit with them, and you have to talk with them. What was so effective was the fact that he could bring all that out. I think those spot commercials that were done right on the

spot when he was there, talking to those people and their reactions, and what he had to say, helped him a great deal.

STEWART: Did you work full time from then on?

SPALDING: Yes, I did.

STEWART: What were you doing, say, between the time of the West Virginia primary and the Convention? Where were your efforts concentrated, what types of things were you doing?

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SPALDING: There just was an endless amount of things to be done. Some things to be written, some…. I don't even remember how much time there was. Certain delegates to follow up on. You asked me between the Convention and that time?

STEWART: Between the time of the primaries and the time of the Convention.

SPALDING: Well, there probably was a hiatus where you weren't so involved. After Oregon there wasn't – which was the last, wasn't it?

STEWART: Right.

SPALDING: And then there wasn't much to be done until July when you went – but that would give you what? A month or a couple of weeks. When was Oregon, June?

STEWART: Yes, I think so.

SPALDING: The end of May or the first week in June, somewhere in there. So there wasn't a great deal of time. There was maybe four weeks or something like that. But I don't recall that there was too much activity then.

STEWART: You were in Oregon?

SPALDING: No, I wasn't. So I had a hiatus in there.

STEWART: Were you involved in the Maryland primary?

SPALDING: I was down a couple of days, just on details and things. But not – because I think it overlapped. I think West Virginia…

STEWART: There was only a week…

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SPALDING: Yes. But there was an endless amount of detail to be done.

STEWART: Contacting of delegates and this type of thing?

SPALDING: Yes. Or I had tried to do some work in organizing business people, business groups. And then other groups. There just was a tremendous amount of – constant visits to be made to governors and states and parades that were being organized. I remember one about this time, I think, in New Jersey.

STEWART: As far as the total structure of the organization at that time, who were you working most closely with?

SPALDING: I think I just assumed always that it was Bobby because he was running the overall campaign. And whenever he had something to do he usually would call you and work it out that way. It was a pretty loose, I mean nobody felt any highly structurized setup, other than that Bobby was running it and he was the campaign manager and he usually called.

STEWART: Do you recall any serious tensions within the whole campaign organization during this period?

SPALDING: None. No divisions of…. There were, later on in the races itself. Not in the primaries. I'm sure there'll be divisions about what one should do. But they were so minor. Absolutely no defections or anybody saying, "Well, if you're going to go this way I can't follow you." None at all. None at all.

STEWART: I was thinking more in terms of people trying to get themselves in a favorable position?

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SPALDING: I think the further along you went the more of that occurred. But it wasn't apparent and it didn't seem to…. I think really perhaps the reason I'm saying this is that most people like myself didn't expect to – didn't want anything out of it. So we were wanted. We weren't in the way, they needed your help and you weren't any threat to what they might be doing, to the Jesse Unruhs. I think that all of those fellows realized that they were getting some people that had some experience – because by the time you've gone through two or three of these – they were, the people that were involved were better than the amateurs which bother the pros.

STEWART: What about the Convention, what was your major function in that?

SPALDING: We all had delegates to keep in touch with; the ones that were committed, to see that they didn't go any place else and then to try to round up some others that we still felt we needed.

STEWART: I won't ask you to go into any detail, but which states – in case I later want to ask you some questions about which state were you most concerned with at the Convention, or were there any group of states that….

SPALDING: Well, I don't recall. I just would get spot assignments, and most of them happened to be in the western states, Colorado and Wyoming and through there. And individuals, I'd get a call to go and see So and So.

STEWART: But there would be nothing about the internal situations within these states that you would have been really aware of?

SPALDING: No, because I think that that was better handled by other people who either came from those states and who were more involved

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politically than I was. It didn't start in that way, so I….

STEWART: How much did you see of the President at the Convention? For example, were you with him during the balloting or at any of these crucial times that you can recall?

SPALDING: Yes. Mr. Kennedy had a house in Beverly Hills and a great deal of activity would center around that before actual balloting started. The key figures would appear there and we all -- I suppose you might call it…. Some circles of friends usually went over there for dinner, almost every night. So we ran into each other quite a bit.

STEWART: Is there anything general as far as his emotions or his attitude that stands out in your mind?

SPALDING: Not really because it was so much the culmination for everybody. Everybody was anxious. They had put in a tremendous effort, everybody involved and nobody wanted to make any mistakes or…. It just hadn't been accomplished until the votes were counted so everybody was of the same frame of mind. It was just a question of corralling everybody.

STEWART: What I'm getting at possibly, was there any sense of the real historical significance of what was going on?

SPALDING: I honestly don't think that most combatants have that point of view. They may, but it just seems to me that when you're -- you may look at it, you know, I can think back on certain events that I was involved in either in the war or otherwise which did have some sort of historical importance to them, but you certainly don't think about it. I mean, if you're racing down to the Roosevelt Hotel to try and

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get a hold of a couple of delegates whom you have heard changed their mind and may sway others. No, I just don't think so.

STEWART: I mean during the evening or at meals when there was a certain amount of relaxation.

SPALDING: But there never was. There never was any relaxation. I mean there wasn't any. It was just total exposure to people coming and going and talking and trading in politics.

STEWART: What type of a role did Ambassador Kennedy play as far as getting delegates?

SPALDING: I think he played a great role. You asked me what kind of a role did he play. I can probably answer that better than what he did so far as the delegates because he worked by himself and you could tell what he did. I think in the first place he gave the whole operation a certain solidity that it might not otherwise have had. I mean there was always the -- he never involved himself directly, but everybody knew that Mr. Kennedy was there. I think that was a tremendous help to have had a major figure involved on your side, just a stabilizing effect. Then he did contribute a great deal because he knew so many of those people. Mr. Green [William J. Green] from Pennsylvania and Daley [Richard J. Daley] from Illinois and all the others. He was terribly influential and helpful in that way. But he managed to do it all on the side and really to direct other people to it. But I do remember one thing about the way he handled himself which really touched me. He worked as hard as anybody, but he had to make it obvious that he had separated himself from his son, that this wasn't a puppet. That probably was something that for somebody with his temperament was a difficult thing to do. It was something that probably Jack had to establish himself, early in the game -- that as his son he was going to do it his own way. So that they

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did arrive at a wonderful relationship, but there must have been some rocky moments for each of them because they were both very strong. But the night, well just right after the nomination I remember I went back to the house to see him and congratulate him because I

hadn't really had a chance to -- he'd been so helpful and so nice in California and made things as pleasant as he could. So I went up to congratulate him and he was packing his bag. I couldn't believe it. By midnight he was on his way to New York. He didn't even stay for the next morning. When I walked in the door he was talking ahead to somebody, "No, here's what we have to do…" So you can see from that there was no relaxation. Nobody sat down and talked about the history involved. He was thinking -- the nomination must have occurred somewhere by around a quarter of ten and he was packed and on the plane by midnight. It's incredible.

STEWART: You say that there undoubtedly were some rocky moments as far as deciding exactly what he should be doing?

SPALDING: No, no. I just mean as a father, if you've got a son who's out there seriously contesting for the Presidency of the United States and you say, "Why don't you wear the green tie?" He's obviously got some sort of conflict. It just has to be established pretty soon that if he's going to be effective as a national leader he's totally on his own. And I think it's hard for a father to let go of his son, just out of habit. They had to establish that between themselves and that's always a little awkward.

STEWART: You said before that there never was any real confidence until they actually got down to Wyoming.

SPALDING: Certainty is the word I should use.

STEWART: Certainty. All right. But were there any single factors or any group of factors that

they were most worried about that might happen?

SPALDING: Yes. I think the most major one was Mr. Stevenson's behavior, because Mr. Stevenson had originally said -- I think he might have even suggested that he would support him in Wisconsin and then had retracted it. No, he said he would support Kennedy after Wisconsin should he win up there. And then he got through that and still Mr. Stevenson said it wasn't clear cut enough. But he said, "Let's see what happens after West Virginia." So he went down to West Virginia and he won in landslide proportions and still he couldn't get a commitment out of Stevenson. Then he came back for the famous Al Smith Dinner and he did so well there. Still he couldn't get a commitment. Then he got out to the Convention, "Well, all right. You haven't given me any support all the way along. But will you nominate me?" And then he wouldn't do it. So there was always the threat behind scenes that Mr. Stevenson might make some move. Then when he walked down on the floor of the Convention and there was that organized rally and everything, that was

the…. Those sort of things were of great concern. How much strength would it have? Would it upset the applecart? Would the delegates be swayed by a former idol?

STEWART: But the President himself was concerned about this?

SPALDING: I can't tell you how concerned everybody was. But that seemed to be the only way to approach it, that this was an uncertain business and you just have to be -- you took nothing for granted and you worked right up until the time you won, hopefully.

STEWART: Do you recall any extended conversations with the President during that Convention period, anything…

SPALDING: Yes. But they're all again…. In other words, it would be much easier for me if I

were Byron White and I would have been called in for a discussion of some specifics. But I wasn't. We saw each other at a couple of parties that were given out there just before the Convention and I'd see him under those circumstances. We might talk about something that was happening or goin on. But he didn't call me in to decide any major problems about a speech, about an acceptance speech or about how to approach…. That wasn't the level on which I was operating. I wasn't at that high a station.

STEWART: What I was getting at was any moments when he might have said or talked about…

SPALDING: Well, I'm sure it all is…. It was all in the vein that I mentioned to you before. Sort of a…. But he was so involved and so committed and so wrapped up, perhaps so tired -- he didn't show it, but he must have been -- that there wasn't the time to consider anything else other than what we were about. And we all had something to do.

STEWART: Is there anything about the selection of Lyndon Johnson that you know that anyone else doesn't know, or that isn't generally known?

SPALDING: I think maybe the only thing that I know is the confusion of it. My own opinion, for what it's worth is -- and it's somewhat backed up by what I'll tell you -- is that, I've spoken of this tremendous concern and desire that nobody let down. So that when one did win and there wasn't anything else to do there was a tremendous letdown because theory'd been such an effort not to. So that everybody literally went through the whole operation right up until the time that the votes made his candidacy possible without any letdown at all. But then once it happened there wasn't anybody to see

and there wasn't…. I think that affected everybody. I think that even that suddenly because everybody worked so hard, even the candidate didn't

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really realize for the moment that he won. He let down and Bobby let down for the first time -- for myself, in about a year and for them much longer. They just suddenly found that there they were. So that they weren't at their best when they approached -- they didn't approach the selection with the same…. Nobody had given it a thought, which wasn't true about anything else. Everything else had been thought about. But to think about the Vice Presidency would have been to acknowledge a kind of overconfidence that everybody was fighting against. So was the thing that they were the least prepared to handle. I say that not because of the choice that was made, but because of the way the choice was made. So that when it was finally done and there was this awkwardness…. I remember that night and there was a party given in a restaurant called Romanoff's and Bobby came up the steps and just said, "We weren't at our best for that." But again he wasn't talking about the choice. He may have felt that personally then. But I think what he was talking about was the matter in which it was handled. There just was a colossal letdown, a natural let down. A mistake from the point of view of how it was handled about who was going to get it and take it away from so and so and go back and see so and so. That wasn't typical of the way they were coming to handle things.

STEWART: But you have no doubt that they sincerely wanted Johnson when they offered it to them.

SPALDING: I'm not positive that everybody did. I'm just…

STEWART: All right. Let me limit it to the President then.

SPALDING: Well, I am as sure as I can be that one of the people that we were considering, and based on what he knew about all of them from his knowledge of them in the Senate, that he thought that Mr. Johnson was by all odds the most capable. That's my own impression. And I once talked to Ted Sorensen about it and he said the same thing. So I don't think there's any question about that. Again, it was one of the least

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thought through matters on the whole agenda. I can't think of anything that came up so suddenly, and that's what happens.

STEWART: Do you recall the President talking about their failure to think this through before, or did he ever say that he thought it was a mistake that they hadn't thought it through before?

SPALDING: No, because I don't even know that at any time he thought it was a mistake. If you and I are agreed, and opposed to the present policies, they obviously weren't before him at the time. I think he perhaps thought that the most capable man -- I mean I'm certain that he thought that. But there just wasn't a chance to think through as to whether the most capable man was the man he should pick.

STEWART: Well, that's what I meant.

SPALDING: I just happen to recall Bobby's statement. They knew that they had made a decision that they hadn't had much chance to think about. And when you think about it it's so natural. It came so quickly on the heels of something, you see. Right the next morning, or even that night. And by that night, we're talking about two o'clock in the morning. Everybody was exhausted. Mr. Johnson was exhausted, if you recall he was in bed when the calls came. Everybody was tired.

STEWART: Look, it, it's getting on, do you have…

SPALDING: Well, we're getting pretty close to the end. Do you have much more?

STEWART: We've got the whole Administration to go through?

SPALDING: How long is that going to take?

STEWART: Well…

SPALDING: We better get something to eat.

STEWART: I've got a lot of questions left.

[BEGIN TAPE II, SIDE I]

STEWART: We were talking about the Convention, and I guess we just about finished it up. As far as the campaign was concerned, what was your primary role?

SPALDING: Well, let's see. Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] called and said, after it had been a bit under way, that there was some difficulty getting the regular organization and that group in California, the Young Democrats, together. And there was also another group out there of volunteers. The three of them were more or less at each other's throats. The professionals were led by Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh. The Democrats -- do you recall the name of that group, the other group, the liberal wing of the party? They operated under a banner.

STEWART: Council of Democratic -- I keep thinking of the initials CDC.

SPALDING: Yes, that's the CDC, that's what it is.

STEWART: All right, the Council of Democratic…

SPALDING: …action, I suppose. Whatever it is, that's it. They operated in committee form, and they were basically Stevenson's [Adlai E. Stevenson] people, and they were basically opposed to Kennedy. When their favorite was disappointed or didn't make any effort, or at least got nowhere in his attempts, to get the nomination, then they wanted to trade their position to get some active spot in the campaign. They were repulsed by Unruh, who was by far the most capable. And then, to a certain extent, added static was provided by the volunteers. So there was this difficulty out there, and I spent the entire period out there working on that.

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STEWART: Oh, really?

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: Just let me ask you this basically. Can you think of three or four people who you feel fully know the story of how that campaign, the whole campaign in California, was run whom we might talk to get all of the details?

SPALDING: Well, Unruh, obviously, would be the first. Pauley [Edwin W. Pauley] might give you quite a bit of information.

STEWART: Pauley was basically a Johnson man, wasn't he? Well, he had been, I guess.

SPALDING: Perhaps, but he was active as a supporter of the ticket. There's a man out there who was very active in the CDC group, Paul….

STEWART: Kent?

SPALDING: No. I don't recall his name.

STEWART: Ziffren.

SPALDING: Paul Ziffren is exactly who it was. He can give you a lot of information. Red Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.] had quite a bit. I guess he hasn't been approached for one of these things.

STEWART: Mrs. Wyman [Rosalind Wiener Wyman], do you recall?

SPALDING: Yes. And also the Harvey [Leo M. Harvey] people. One of the girls in the Harvey family was very active. But she was; Mrs. Wyman was very active.

STEWART: Is there anything outstanding as far as -- or what basically did you do to resolve…

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SPALDING: It was just a question of going and soothing people's feelings. They had no other way to behave other than…. One had to talk to them because Jesse was arriving at his power, and he used to just bulldoze over them. He would irritate them so that they wouldn't just be mad. They just wouldn't help in those thousand little details, you know -- organizing parades and dinners and funds and who gets this and who does that. It was just that, but it was incessant.

STEWART: But you were in California for the whole campaign?

SPALDING: Yes. Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] was out there a great deal. Teddy knows a great deal about that. And a friend of Teddy's from Honolulu.

STEWART: I never heard that. Well, did you see the President at all during the campaign?

SPALDING: Yes, when he came out. Of course, there were a couple of tours, one tour up and down the state. That was the only time because he was busy all over the country.

STEWART: Do you recall this tour? They had a train in the campaign that came down through right at the start of the campaign, and there were all kinds of problems, I think, as far as the scheduling was concerned. As the stories go, the President didn't do that well. His speeches weren't that good, and he hadn't really got into the swing of the campaign.

SPALDING: I think that's true, and that was even before the ebates, wasn't it?

STEWART: Yes.

SPALDING: That was the very, very first…. I remember that.

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STEWART: Do you recall talking to the President during this period, and do you recall any of his reactions as to how the whole thing was going? Was he aware of all of

these problem and disappointed by them?

SPALDING: I think all I would recall is that there was just the early getting started again. You know, the summer, after the Convention, he rested for quite a spell, and it was just getting back in the swing again. And that was the very first and wasn't particularly good.

STEWART: But you don't recall any specific conversation?

SPALDING: No, I don't. I haven't any light to shed on that.

STEWART: As far as this period between the Convention and the real start of the campaign, did you see him at all, do you recall?

SPALDING: I saw him -- there was another visit to California. I think actually two, the second one being a short trip down in the southern section just before the election, and the other was the more extended tour which was a large parade in Los Angeles and a speech. Let's see, perhaps these three meetings. I remember the speech that he gave in California because that again started the difficulty because the CDC group wouldn't operate unless Mr. Stevenson was on the dais or was going to introduce the President out there, which h edid. But I had to meet with them and agree that we would get Mr. Stevenson to make the introductions.

STEWART: Were you pretty much the contact person with the campaign as far as the California people were concerned?

SPALDING: You see, I'm only talking about Southern California. The state was separated into two areas. Actually, the lines were so

fluid that Bobby would have no hesitation about calling Unruh or the CDC or anybody he knew in that group right off. But if he thought it was something I ought to know about, he'd call me and discuss it with me. And the same way if there was an obvious dispute coming up. But I had to make some choice there, and Unruh was so head and shoulders above everybody else that it wasn't too difficult.

STEWART: Was it always recognized and discussed that the person who emerged as the top person during the campaign would, in fact, be the top person during the Administration?

SPALDING: Well, I don't think so. But in this instance it was no match. The CDC was so disorganized and so unprepared to do all the things that…. Unruh knew all the

pockets in the state, the old age group, the teacher's group, the firemen, the policemen, the labor groups. He knew them all, and he had contacts, and he knew when to go and see them. We had to see all those people repeatedly. And nobody else could give you that kind of work. The rest weren't in a position to do so. The volunteers, you know, they were only worried about insignificant things. But they could make a mass meeting a failure by not providing any people to collect the tickets or direct the traffic. They just muddy the water.

STEWART: As I asked before, did you see the President, for example, during the special session of Congress that came right after the Convention but before the start of the campaign? Do you recall anything about that period?

SPALDING: No, I don't. I don't. I remember a few things about the summer up in Hyannis Port, getting ready for the campaign. But I don't recall anything significant.

STEWART: As far as the President's feelings as to how well it was going or anything like that?

SPALDING: No, I really don't recall anything you could pinpoint. It was, again, just a building up. He was recharging himself and getting ready to start again and making his assessments of Nixon [Richard M. Nixon]. But I don't readily recall anything that he might have said about Nixon.

STEWART: You say you were at Hyannis Port the night of the election?

SPALDING: No. I was in California, as a matter of fact, the night of the election. But he called out there and said how it was going. It was so close that it really turned on the proxy votes that were cast by people outside the state. And those normally broke something like 70-30 for the Democrats. I think there were quite a few of them. There was close to fifty thousand, perhaps more, ballots. I don't recall the exact figure. But it was in that area. I believe that if the conventional breakage had occurred, Kennedy would have carried California. But instead it went the other way and Nixon, oddly enough, carried all the proxy ballots by a big score. I think California had a tremendous percentage of voters to go to the polls. It was something over -- close to 95 percent. And there was a great deal of effort in feeding that.

STEWART: Do you recall when you first saw the President after the election and what his feelings were or what had changed, if anything, as far as your relationship was concerned?

SPALDING: No, I just recall his calling the night of the election and asking how it was going and my saying that I thought we were going to carry the state because it

was so close and all that remained were the proxy votes. Unruh was there when I called and Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] was there -- or when I got the call. I just remember that there was that general feeling among them.

STEWART: But later, when did you next meet him?

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SPALDING: See him first after that? I can't recall. I don't remember.

STEWART: Was it before the Inauguration, or….

SPALDING: Oh yes, but I just don't remember what the situation was. I don't recall anything as I'm sitting here. I will, perhaps, after the minute we stop. But at the moment I don't recall anything up until the Inauguration.
Oh, of course I do. I recall a series of things after that, but they were all -- you know, then the preparation began to select the people who were going to sit in the Cabinet. Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver] did a lot of work on that. Everybody was asked to present names. I had this share of people that I was supposed to contact and present, or look up when I didn't know them. And suggestions one was supposed to make if you had some ideas. I'm just going over in my mind. It was undoubtedly in Hyannis again. I recall a weekend down there after the election, a beautiful fall weekend down there. Everything had been done, but still the same concern now about the people who were to make up the Cabinet.

STEWART: I think he made the comment that he had assumed this would be an easy time and it would almost be fun in selecting the administration, in effect, making all these rewards to people, but in fact it wasn't so fun.

SPALDING: Now I recall. There was this visit in Hyannis, and there also was a visit down in Florida. I saw him down there. I went down there with him for about four or five days. But he was occupied totally with selection of personnel. And then I saw him up here in New York several times.

STEWART: Do you recall him being surprised at exactly what was involved in selecting an administration, selecting people? Was there any…

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SPALDING: No. I just recall that he was adjusting himself to this position of tremendous authority. And I remember his father, particularly, noting that that was what he had to do -- to accept this power that he had and to use it -- because the role suddenly changed again as it has periodically in the course of our conversation. It's a long way from being a candidate to being the President. There he was, suddenly the President. There was a television program that I watched with his father when he went to visit Mr.

Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. And I remember Mr. Kennedy saying, "There. Now he's doing it. Now he's doing it. He's getting to look more and more like a President everyday." That was the thing I recall mainly, that he was suddenly aware of what he had won and how he had to behave. What I mean by behave is just the awareness of that power and making sure that others knew that he had it and was using it the best possible way.

STEWART: Do you think he was terribly surprised in this period when through contract with these things he found out exactly what it all involved, what exactly was involved?

SPALDING: No. But I think again it was the same violent switch in circumstances. As a candidate, he was forced to compromise with people and to adjust and to trade and to bicker and to cajole and trade for things that he wanted, that he needed with people who had them to give and who would exact some price. No it turned out suddenly the other way around. I mean, it certainly must have been a violent difference. Suddenly he had it all to give.

STEWART: Do you recall him mentioning anything about his meeting with Eisenhower?

SPALDING: Yes, I do. I don't…. I believe it just was a summary of the opinion that he had of Mr. Eisenhower which previously he expressed fairly clearly. You know, the sense of somebody being a non-president President and not being totally aware of his powers.

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STEWART: Did he actually feel that he'd found out something that he hadn't realized before or just confirmed…

SPALDING: No. I think it confirmed everything that he felt, that he'd charged.

STEWART: Could you describe briefly what his feelings were in the first -- well, I'm sorry, let's go through the Inauguration. I assume you saw him during this period for some considerable time.

SPALDING: Right.

STEWART: Could you briefly describe his feelings?

SPALDING: Yes. Well, that's interesting, only in an obvious way, I guess. But his jubilation that -- it culminated in that event. First, the evening before when they had the three different parties at the three different auditoriums. You know, there were no problems at the moment, and it was a celebration. It was a traditional celebration, and he was really moved by it. Of course, it was a terrible night that night. The storm held a lot of

people that he hoped would have been able to come and couldn't get here. But he thoroughly enjoyed that. His feelings were high, and they seemed to peak the next day during the procession and as he was reviewing the parade that went on. He was really, I suppose, as happy right then as any time I can remember.

STEWART: Did you see him that morning, for example, before he was actually sworn in?

SPALDING: I went to the swearing in ceremonies, but I didn't see him before that. It was impossible to get around. Then afterwards he asked us to come up for supper that evening, I think.

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STEWART: After the parade?

SPALDING: After the parade, yes.

STEWART: Do you recall any of the discussion, or….

SPALDING: No, I just happen to remember -- I think I remember best the way he handled the proceedings while he was reviewing the crowd because he would look around. The people that he had been closest to all got seats in this stand. I suppose there were a couple of thousand people in his stand right beside him, or behind him, rather. And all through the afternoon he'd look around and find somebody in the crowd who'd been somewhere, either in Wisconsin or in Oregon or in New Hampshire, or somebody that he had had a contact with, and he'd call them up to his box and sit there and talk and review what had happened and just reminisce for a minute, thank them for their help, and carry on.

STEWART: I think this dinner that you attended that night after the parade is, you know, a fairly important thing. And whatever you can remember about it, because it was Inauguration Day, of course, and his first day as President, I think would be of some interest.

SPALDING: If it's that important, I'm not so sure whether it wasn't lunch the next day, or perhaps it was lunch the next day.

STEWART: Oh really?

SPALDING: Of course, there were only the two of us there. Jackie, I think, was dead tired and was upstairs. And we had lunch downstairs, which must have been the situation the next day because it obviously couldn't have been the day of the Inauguration because he went right from the swearing in, I imagine, over to the reviewing box.

STEWART: Well, there was a big luncheon.

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SPALDING: But that was not in the White House.

STEWART: No, no.

SPALDING: Then it would have been the next day. And there was just the two of us. I remember we had chicken, and he put in a call for currant jelly. It came back so fast that he made some humorous remark about the chow was going to be pretty good. And that was just about that.

STEWART: Do you recall anything more about the discussion, or…

SPALDING: I don't. These discussions are all -- all of them that we've discussed. I mean, I don't come as any specialist. If I came there to discuss economics or…. All these discussions are much the same. The ones we're talking about are all just the discussions that two friends might have. And they were trivial, and the aim of them was to amuse one or the other. Perhaps more of that effort fell on me than it did on him. But they weren't specialized.

STEWART: Well, let me broaden it to talk about the first, say, two or three weeks in the White House. Are there any impressions of his reactions that stand out in your mind?

SPALDING: No, I don't think -- the only thing that I can, that is particularly special…. Let's lump all of these. I went down there many times. Sometimes it was for dinners or the parties and many other times it was just to come down and catch up and talk and just have dinner together, with himself and with Mrs. Kennedy. They were no more unusual than anything I've disclosed to you so far. The only thing that was particularly interesting or might be of some interest was the Cuba weekend. The other events were all the same. They're differentiated only in trivial things, you know, by something amusing that may have happened or something that seemed amusing to us. But they weren't historical.

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STEWART: You mentioned the Cuba weekend. (That's a list -- you know, they kept some sort of records of the President's activities every moment of the day. I'm not so sure that that's that complete, but possibly some of those things would bring something to your mind.)

SPALDING: Yes. Well, this does. Let's see, what were the dates here? Which was the weekend right after the…

STEWART: It would have been April 17th…

SPALDING: That's the day of the Bay of…

STEWART: The Bay of Pigs happened. So it would have been the 22nd.

SPALDING: That's right. Now the 9th I noticed I was there at Glen Ora. He told me at that time that the Cuban event was going to happen. The euphoria that was on him right after the election and through the Inauguration and the early days when you couldn't make any mistake and everything seemed so much brighter was still there, and he expected a success here. He didn't expect any troubles. He said, "What do you think about it?" And other than making the hope that it wouldn't turn out the way the British event had in the Suez, and his saying, "Well, everybody's gone over it. They're pretty sure that they can make this work," I don't recall anything. He just mentioned that, and it was startling news to me. Then afterwards everything changed so dramatically because it turned out so badly. And then what would be more interest perhaps would be his feelings on April the 23rd, which is marked down here, and he was really then as low as I ever recall him. Perhaps he recalled the lightheartedness of his mood before the Cuban disaster. And he just kept saying over and over to himself, "How could I have done it?" He took all the blame upon himself, and he just felt that he'd made a mistake, and how could he have let it happen. How could it have happened? That's all he

repeated, again and again.

It mentions here that we were hitting golf balls. Well, there was a corn field out there, and he was just whacking some of these balls into the cornfield just to take his mind off what was going on. But that's the only time in all the time that I knew him that he was really beside himself over a mistake. I mean, many times things hadn't gone right, but he never felt this sense of despondency, to my knowledge, that he felt over this. He was really hard hit by this. And then when there was nothing else to do, he reacted in the typical fashion. He adjusted to it and tried to figure out how he could best handle it from then on in. But that did change his entire mood. The presidency was never easy from there on in. It was just a series of difficult situations which he responded to in that manner, in a very sober mood.

STEWART: Was there an air of unreality about the whole situation in the first, say, two months, or had the fact that he was nominated…

SPALDING: There was less tension. He was accustomed to being under a certain amount of tension. He was accustomed to being under fire. You had the feeling that he

was somebody in the midst of a struggle who hoped to come out, but who wasn't always certain how things were going to develop. I tried to describe that when you asked me about the campaign or about his days as a senator. That's, to me, the way he handled it all. There was a sense of wariness about him, a certain, you know, caution. And he lost that only momentarily right after the Inauguration. I think this terrific sense of power descended; it was more than he had anticipated. Like a lot of things, you know, he didn't have the time to anticipate them. And then things seemingly were going so well, and this could only be another bright feather. He'd been so reassured by the CIA and by the Army personnel, who were convinced that the matter would work. And when you consider how -- I'm not certain I have the accurate information, but I gather that it failed only because of the inability to

muster a slight number of planes that would have turned it the other way, probably could have been that. But he wasn't at that time prepared to risk those steps, and this ended up as a mess.

STEWART: Is this your reaction or his reaction?

SPALDING: Well, my own reaction, and I just pieced it together from things…. He was confronted by Mr. Stevenson who was never taken into anybody's confidence about Cuba and who defended the American position and said in the U.N. that these weren't American operated planes and then was shown obviously that they were. Then I think that he must have called in and said, "Now, look, if you're going to use any more air power, I'm walking out of the U.N." I suppose anybody who'd won the election by a very few votes…. That much he was conscious of. He knew that he didn't have a great popular support just by counting the votes, and he was concerned about that. So I suppose the first thing he thought of was losing his position and losing his grip on the people. Any support -- he needed all that he had, and I think probably…. That may be totally wrong, but my feeling was that he was concerned about that and wasn't prepared just because…. Militarily, it would have been so simple to have won the day. The question was whether to risk Mr. Stevenson's support at that time, to have him come out and…. Relations never were good between those two. They never got on. They just didn't understand each other.

STEWART: That was something I was going to ask you. Do you think you know about, or did the President talk to you enough about his relationship with all of the Cabinet members that you would want to comment on what they were?

SPALDING: Well, briefly, if it's of any help, he always had a difficult time with Mr. Stevenson because he felt that as a loyal Democrat he

had supported Stevenson strongly in the early days and deserved something better in return than he got. And Stevenson's petulant announcements about he wasn't seeking the Secretary of State job, and when he finally got down to the house in Georgetown and got his appointment to the U.N. instead of, you know, he didn't even make a gracious reply, as I recall. It was more or less, "I want to make it clear -- I think these are approximately his words -- that I was invited down here. I didn't come here." And when he made the introduction before the election in California, to me it was a most restrained introduction for somebody who could be as eloquent as Stevenson. Then I think his reluctance to come out and support Kennedy all through that after Kennedy had supported him completely in his own efforts. And I recall that when they used to travel when Mr. Stevenson was simply that there wasn't this ease on Mr. Stevenson's part to banter with Kennedy. He couldn't fill in the time in between politics with lighthearted discussion. He didn't feel easy with him at all, and I think the President came to be impatient on his part. That would be about all that I could offer in that area.

STEWART: As far as the other members of the Cabinet?

SPALDING: He was tremendously impressed by Mr. McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], his great grasp of fact. Who else can we…

STEWART: Rusk [Dean Rusk]?

SPALDING: I could only repeat what I've read. Not the sensationalist things such as either the charge that Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] makes, which is that he planned to drop him, or that Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn Lincoln] makes. But I think that he had pretty much wanted to be his own Secretary of State, and he didn't probably want anybody who was going to either balk him or get in his way. And to that extent, it seemed like, from what I could see, a workable relationship.

STEWART: Do you recall any expressions of what his feelings were about Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon] and…

SPALDING: He admired Dillon tremendously. He thought at first that he was extremely capable, and then he just liked him. Dillon was an enthusiastic supporter. There's a marvelous picture of the Cabinet members arriving for their first meeting. And Dillon, you just see him walking up those steps: he's delighted to be there; he's pleased with the appointment. That was a thoroughly successful relationship and also a great friendship, and that continues on.

STEWART: Arthur Goldberg?

SPALDING: I think he liked Goldberg tremendously. I think he sometimes kidded about his volubility. He was a great speaker. But he liked Goldberg, he admired him, and he thought he was good and capable.

STEWART: Stewart Udall. There have been stories of a bit of strain.

SPALDING: I think Udall is almost a taciturn personality. He's quiet, he's subdued. But he was great help in the early days. He must have been in some respects -- it was certainly more of a political appointment, I would think, than Mr. Dillon's. And that area, the Southwest, I think Udall did a great deal to help swing to Kennedy. But that was just his personality. He wasn't the sort of person -- he didn't have a particularly vibrant or interesting or colorful personality, let's say.

STEWART: Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff].

SPALDING: He liked Ribicoff because, again, he was an early supporter and a vehement supporter and a great help in the Convention. This was a

political relationship, and a successful one. These have to be just sort of on the spot impressions because if one were there on a day by day basis…. For instance, Bundy [McGeorge Bundy] -- he was tremendously taken by Bundy, and Bundy did a spectacular job. We'd be upstairs after lunch, and Mr. Bundy would come up with his analysis or check of what had happened and what had to be one. He was obviously incredibly capable, and the President appreciated and admired his abilities.

STEWART: Did the President ever discuss any of the problems that he had at various times throughout his Administration with members of his immediate staff. There were, again according to the stories, certain factions among the people at the White House.

SPALDING: Can you describe those?

STEWART: Well, for example, the supposed splits that occurred on various issues between Ted Sorensen and Myer Feldman and those people as opposed to the political people, O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], Dungan [Ralph Dungan], and so forth.

SPALDING: I don't think that they could have been terribly deep -- they may have been philosophically deep -- because Sorensen and Feldman were very close friends, so close that when…

STEWART: No. I meant Sorensen and Feldman on the one hand and the more politically

oriented…

SPALDING: I don't think they were very deep because they'd all been through the thing now for a long period of time. What usually happens in any office is people try to express themselves the best they can and exercise their -- somebody bumps into somebody. He probably gave a certain amount of rein, but it never got out of hand. I don't know, you know, how Ted Sorensen feels about Kenny O'Donnell but I just would imagine they were totally different personalities, they had

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totally different duties, and maybe they clashed at times when there was an overlap. But if they did, it certainly wasn't of any major proportion.

STEWART: And you don't recall the President ever talking about it or expressing any…

SPALDING: Never. He never mentioned it at all. That doesn't mean that it wasn't deeper than I might have recognized it to be. But I think if there was any deep rift, I might have heard about it -- I think I probably would have heard about it, or he would have mentioned it. I don't think he considered it to be important.

STEWART: As a general thing, when you saw the President at lunch or at dinner at the White House, did he normally talk about the problems that had involved him during the day.

SPALDING: Not too much.

STEWART: Or did you get the feeling that this was a time to cut himself off from…

SPALDING: I think in my case. I think it might have been totally different than if he had dinner with Benny Bradlee [Benjamin C. Bradlee] or some reporter with whom he wanted to discuss something that would be coming up in the papers at that point. But in my case, it was obviously the opposite. He wanted to hear something of what I was doing and what was going on in the world that he had completely left, in a sense. You know, his friends in New York and who was doing what, et cetera. I would say that it was just the opposite. He didn't want to discuss those with me. I mean if it was something of real importance, he would know that maybe I would be curious and he would always be at pains to tell you what he could and discuss it. He would always ask, you know, how am I doing or "What do you hear?" Since I was in business, he'd always kid me somewhat. You know, "What does the business community feel about what I'm doing

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right now?" So we'd discuss it, and I'd try to answer what he was…. But, basically, he wanted to divert himself. We'd discuss almost anything. He wouldn't want to go over the detail of an ordinary day since it was just tiring. So he'd much prefer to talk about a book or a play or a person.

STEWART: Did he have trouble relaxing at night or breaking himself away? Was this ever a problem?

SPALDING: No. I mean nobody…. Everybody that I can remember was amazed at the effort he would make over the people that would come. I mean you wouldn't be surprised if he just went and sat down in a corner and put his head in his hands and just rocked there. But he never did anything of the sort. He was always accessible, always ready to talk, always ready to go over matters and discuss them or talk about anything else. He was good at coping with these things, extremely good. I think it might have been an effort because he was extremely sensitive and high strung. But one of the greatest qualities he had was this ability to cope with these things.

STEWART: To go over just a very few of the major things that happened during the Administration, do you recall him saying anything to you about his meeting with Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev] in June of 1961? Do you recall what it was?

SPALDING: Well, that was a shock, initially -- the abrasiveness of that personality. Initially, he seemed to lose hope that he could ever communicate with such a person. I think what he always felt was -- again, we talked about this earlier -- that if he could possibly meet with such a person, being so extremely rational and compelling, in a sense, himself, he could make some progress with almost anybody. And I think the shock of the meeting, at least the feeling I got about it was the shock that he didn't think for the moment he was going to be able to reach him; that he was just out too far away and there was too much of a difference

and a determination on the part of the other not to. That was one of the great triumphs, I think, that he had -- especially considering that most of it transpired after Cuba -- that he was able to get through. There's no telling, unfortunately, how far he could have gone. I guess when somebody does write it up in detail, that would be one of the most exciting episodes because Khrushchev obviously banked so much of his career on his ability to reach Kennedy and his….

When Kennedy was gone, I'm told by -- there was somebody in the Kremlin at this time, at the time of the assassination, who was doing a story on Khrushchev and on the Soviet at that time -- he was absolutely distraught. Of course, it brought about his own downfall. But Kennedy did feel he reversed that completely. And when he would talk about it, he never would talk about it and say, "This is how I'm doing," but he would make it clear

that he was making progress, that he could get through to him, that he could speak to him, that he could reach him, that he had established communications, that letters were being exchanged. Then, of course, the adroitness with which he handled the missile crisis and was able to do so deftly leave Khrushchev without any embarrassment previously, might have done it another way.

STEWART: Did you see him around the time of the missile crisis? Or anywhere near, just after? Not according to this, but I wouldn't vouch for the accuracy of this.

SPALDING: He used to call all the time. At that time I was living by myself in New York out around Bedford. And he had a habit of calling me about any time of the night, just to relieve the tension, I guess. Sometimes the calls came in late. And I'd never give the numbers so he had a terrible time finding out where I was. He never could find out for the longest time. That used to be sort of a -- he'd amuse himself trying to find out what that number was. He'd get the operators to try and find it out. But it happened that he called

about the afternoon just before it was finally decided.

STEWART: Before his speech…

SPALDING: The missile crisis, as I recall, the boats were on this collision course. But yet it was apparent he was going to win on this one. It hadn't been announced or anything. I remember that conversation particularly well.

STEWART: And do you remember what he said?

SPALDING: Oh, yes. It was a totally different frame of mind than the days before the Cuban Crisis, the Cuban disaster, let's say. He was now, even though he knew he had won so far as the missile crisis, very guarded and very circumspect and very serious and not overjoyed in any way.

STEWART: What about the various civil rights crises that come up, I guess the biggest one being in September of 1962 at the University of Mississippi when they enrolled James Meredith? Do you recall seeing him during this period, shortly after, and any of his reactions?

SPALDING: They were all so consistent with what he said publicly that I have nothing to add. He was responding in private just as he responded in private just as he responded in public. He discussed it over the television when he made his final plea. That's all I recall of it.

STEWART: You can take this question out of the transcript if you want, but you mentioned at lunch this business of him, to settle in his own mind what his position should be or would be, you mentioned that he would take the opposite approach and question people.

SPALDING: Yes. But that was during a period when he had much more time to discuss matters. That was when he was sick up in the hospital with

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his back and he lay up there for months. And I'd go…

STEWART: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you meant this was during….

SPALDING: Well, he may have been. But, as I say, I had no contact with him when he was trying to solve these matters. I used to see him, I used to go up in the evening when he was up in the hospital, and we'd talk. That's the way he would adopt a position and then argue from it. He might hold that position for a couple of weeks, and then two or three weeks later he'd change it. But it was adopted just purely to solicit facts and to test opinions.

STEWART: Did he do this on occasion when he was President?

SPALDING: He may have, but I wasn't in a position to see it. We never had enough time for that.

STEWART: At small gatherings or…

SPALDING: No, we never had enough time. I mean it requires being able to sit and talk for hours. When he was sick, we'd sit there and talk. That was a period of time when we used to spend just hours talking away the night. We didn't have that opportunity after that.

STEWART: He made a statement at one time at a press conference in response to -- I can't recall the specific question, but his response was that the White House isn't a very good place to make new friends and that he was very content with the old friends that he had. Do you recall that?

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: Was this, in fact, consistent throughout the Administration that there were very

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few new friends that he picked up?

SPALDING: Well, I think, you know, you have to draw some distinction between friends and acquaintances. His schedule was so demanding and his work was so encompassing that there just isn't the time to explore a person. Somebody may float into your life, and you may see a great deal of them, you may admire them, and you may like them a great deal. But I think in that kind of pressure, it's all in the context of day to day work. SO that if you're talking about friends, he'd probably turn to people like Charlie Bartlett, and Lem [K. Lemoyne Billings] and Bradlee and people, Kenny O'Donnell, Torby Macdonald [Torbert H. Macdonald], those people that he'd known so long and was so easy with.

STEWART: Did he always try to keep this distinction between his professional or political acquaintances and his personal friends?

SPALDING: No, I don't think he tried to at all. I think it just was there. As I say, although he didn't act like a very sensitive person in the halting sense, he was…. That's just the way it worked out. I mean he couldn't have been more friendly with all the other people. But it's just that there was a different relationship between people he may have found in the course of his work.

STEWART: For example, there were very few members of his staff who ever became socially close to him.

SPALDING: I don't think that that's true because, I mean, he had a sort of social way of conducting that made him easy to work with. You could walk into his office at any time; you could just walk in. He left it open for all of those people, for Ted and for Arthur and for anybody; Ralph Dungan, any of those people -- within reason, obviously. But he

was on call for them at any time. And those meetings between them which involved every time something of importance were always handled in such an easy, friendly way -- the ones that I'm aware of. I would see these people come into his office and say, "This has happened and here's what I propose to do," or "What should I do?" It was always…. So I just think the thing is that he saw those people all day long on a friendly working basis, and so when it came down to what are generally regarded as social hours, he just looked for some fresh faces just to relieve the tedium. But it wasn't any distinction at all.

STEWART: You mentioned that he would kid you on occasion about his reputation or his image in the business community in which you were involved. Was he ever seriously concerned about his image among businessmen?

SPALDING: I think he thought that they should have met him on more halfway terms than they did. He felt that he had made more of an effort than he had to make, that he'd gone and made two speeches, one over at Yale University I think and one to the business -- perhaps it was the AMA, but it was a business group in the city. It was such a cold response on their part, and he had gone out of his way. He wasn't antagonistic as Roosevelt was, or appeared to be; he didn't intend to bait business; he didn't intend to chide them or to make his antagonism to them an issue of support which it often seemed to me that Mr. Roosevelt would do. You know, he would turn his scorn on them, and, in turn, would get a reward from a broader number. But Kennedy never proposed to do that. So that when the steel crisis came up and once he thought he'd just completely been taken advantage of, well, I think his patience was taxed to the end. He couldn't get on with them, wasn't going to get on them, and then when this came on top of it, I think he lost all hope of communicating with them as a group. There were a lot of individuals that he easily reached and was attracted to. But as a segment he lost patience with them then.

STEWART: A lot has been made of the President's relationship with the press and his supposed sensitivity

to criticisms in the press. Do you recall him discussing this at all?

SPALDING: Yes, and he was. But I suppose anybody is who sits there and watches himself in some detached way in public, watching the reaction that they're getting. *Time* magazines used to drive him mad with their -- and finally, I think he had just enough, and he called Mr. Luce [Henry R. Luce] down to Washington and said, "Now, just what would you do?" And I gather he unburdened himself in that conversation. He thought that they were extremely unfair and perhaps he'd been…. You know, you can always say that, after all, you have to expect a certain amount of this, but he was sensitive to what was said, and if he thought it was unjustified, he was mad.

One amusing time he called up Pierre Salinger about something that appeared in *Time*, and he said, "Have you read *Time*?" Pierre said, "Yes, it's the worst thing I've ever seen." And the President said, "I just don't understand how they can be this one-sided. It's just too much. I'm going to get a hold of some of those fellows because that really makes me mad. It isn't so; it isn't accurate; it's distorted. Everything." And Pierre said, "I just couldn't agree with you more." Pierre said, "I don't understand how they can say I'm that fat." So all this time Pierre had read something unattractive about himself. The President said, "I'm not talking about what they're saying about you. It's what they're saying about me." So I suppose anybody is sensitive about it. But he was sensitive. He didn't like it. Unless he thought there was something to be said.

STEWART: Do you recall him expressing any particular feelings about the play that was \ made in the press about his private life, the play that was given to Mrs.

Kennedy and the children and so forth? Was he always intent on keeping this at a minimum, keeping the pictures of the children at a minimum and so forth?

SPALDING: Yes, I think so. I think he never intended to -- again, this is such a question of balance. I think that, from what I saw of it, he exercised such unusual judgment about it because I suppose a

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President with two kids has to use those pictures, in a sense, in a political sense. But basically what I think he tried to do, never losing sight of what he had to do politically, but was to make it as normal as possible, as normal for his kids as he could possibly make it. So if on occasion Caroline rode the pony up into the office, that was a natural thing to do. It wasn't staged or reporters weren't called in to say, "At 10:45 Caroline's going to run the pony in, and I want you to get a picture of it." All these things happened. Or John in the wastebasket. And those things were -- of course, I'm certain he realized it made it that much more attractive when it did happen. But that did have a very spontaneous air about it. He tried to run that just as normally as he could. If there were times when he didn't want the kids around, he'd tell them, "Get lost." But it was all an effort to make a totally abnormal situation as normal as it could be.

STEWART: You were at one point, I believe, appointed -- I wrote it down -- as chairman of the Citizens Advisory Commission for Federal Participation in the World's Fair."

SPALDING: Yes. [Laughter]

STEWART: Is there anything at all about this that…

SPALDING: Well, maybe only from my own point of view. It was interesting for me because the reason for the committee was that they needed some official backing for the amount of money they were asking for participation in the World's Fair, and they thought that that ought to come from a leading group of citizens, almost all of whom were located here in the city. So he asked me to organize them, and I did, and get them together, and they were to write a statement, which they did. That statement was to be the basis of a request for funds for the Fair. It involved me with an awful lot of interesting people like Mr. Sarnoff [David Sarnoff] and the head of NYU and just a series of interesting influential people in the city, all of whom were very helpful. Eventually we got a report out, and eventually we built the building at the fair.

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STEWART: Did you at any point consider going to Washington, joining the Administration?

SPALDING: Yes. He asked me to take a job as an ambassador to a small country. Either that or to go to work in the Defense Department. I just preferred to stay here.

STEWART: He certainly didn't press it or…

SPALDING: No. I think he was kind of relieved.

STEWART: Really?

SPALDING: Well, I think there were so many…. Again, it seems, as we were talking at lunch, it cast a different light on things and, again, this enabled us to keep a totally abnormal situation reasonably normal. I had my life, and he had his. I think he was much easier under those -- it made it much easier. I think it must have made it easier for him to deal with people in those jobs. He would have known that had I gone, I would have wanted to do it as well as possible,e and then you really can't be treated as a friend under those circumstances because if your friend makes a grotesque error, as he might, or if he does terribly well, you've got to cope with a lot of things you don't have to face if he's a friend.

STEWART: Had he been forced to cope with this type of situation in other cases?

SPALDING: Well, I don't know of them. But I assume so, in a broader…. I'm sure we could both go over and think of any number of people who fell into both camps. And he always handled that. I don't think it would have been any problem. I'm egotistical enough to assume I could have done what was asked of me without any undue trouble, but I just preferred to go the other way. And I'm glad I did it the other way. I don't for a minute regret it, from my side, and I assume that from his side it made it much pleasanter too.

STEWART: Did you do any traveling with the President while he was in the White House?

SPALDING: Yes, as this list indicates.

STEWART: I meant overseas.

SPALDING: Oh no, I didn't. He used to mention it and he said that -- one of the trips that he was planning which he asked me about, which I would have been fascinated to be included on, was a trip to Japan. That never took place, but that's what we had thought about.

STEWART: Do you recall -- again, when he came back from Ireland, the story was, and

the story still is, that those were among the happiest days of his years in the White House, the chance he had to go to Ireland, that it was such a relaxed trip and so forth. Was this your general impression?

SPALDING: Yes. I wouldn't make any judgment on the comparison of the days before Ireland and afterwards. But certainly the trip was. But he liked all the trips. He enjoyed the trips. But that particularly so; it was a colossal success. But it seems to me that almost all of his trips were colossal successes. It just was that that had a certain emotional background to it and a color and a success that may have been more meaningful to him than any of the others.

STEWART: Looking over this list, were there any of these occasions that stand out in your mind either because of what he may have said or what his feelings or attitudes were at the time?

SPALDING: No. I think that really I've characterized -- you know, I could give you a thousand meaningless anecdotes. I see here February the 10th it makes mention of the day we all went to lunch at Voisin's, which included a bet that he made about walking fifty miles.

Just that note typifies the sort of things that were apt to happen when we met, or when I met him with…

STEWART: A bet he made with you?

SPALDING: With me and with Prince Radziwill [Stanislaus Radziwill], that we couldn't walk fifty miles. But I don't really think it's worth going over at this point.

STEWART: Did you?

SPALDING: Yes, sure.

STEWART: Oh, on February 23rd.

SPALDING: [Laughter] We made it with such ease that it made him sick.

STEWART: Really.

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: I guess there's nothing usual about his golf game at….

SPALDING: Discussed at great….That's right.

STEWART: Senator Smathers [George Smathers] was a source of some controversy because of his lack of support of the President. Did this affect their relationship at all?

SPALDING: Now, that's one…. I remember an incident there. We were together down in Florida, and I asked him, "How in the world have you managed to keep your relations so because you might have expected so much more support?" And he said, "Well, we got into the Senate at the same time. We both had the same

time. We both had the same ambitions, and look how it's worked out for me, and look how it's worked out for him." He said, "Under the circumstances, I hope that I'd have been as little affected as he has." He really appreciated the disappointments that Smathers, he felt, must have experienced. And he didn't hold it against him at all. But he frequently did that.

I remember somebody during the Profumo scandal, somebody pointing out -- what was the name of the fellow that was the scapegoat? Well, Profumo. Somebody had made some obvious remark, and critical remark. But he was so quick to see, to defend him, and to say how easy he thought it might have been for a fellow under Profumo's circumstances as he understood him, to make that kind of a mistake and how unjustified, in a sense, the extreme criticism was. He was very tolerant that way. Tolerant of Smathers. I mean when other people -- it was an easy way to criticize somebody.

STEWART: Which raises a bit of a question. Did you ever get the feeling that he was terribly concerned with the possibility of scandal in his Administration or did he ever talk about -- give you any….

SPALDING: I think that he had so many examples before him. And that's one of the things. But I just think basically he was so careful. He knew it could happen, he knew politics well enough, and he knew how to take the precautions. And he did. That really, so far as I can tell, is…. Well, you've seen it here so recently in the city. So often they're the result of naivete on the part of the superior. And he certainly wasn't naive.

STEWART: As you say, there are a thousand little stories that you could probably tell, and it's probably almost impossible to sort them out.

SPALDING: I suppose you and I have been at this now for about four or five hours, and they aren't meaningful, or this late in the afternoon

they don't…. Unless you can refresh me with something like the question about Smathers, I don't really recall that there was anything. I can remember lots of details. But if I had to characterize my relationship with him, almost everything in it is typical and doesn't have the importance that it might have if I had been an officer or Cabinet member.

STEWART: Just let me quickly see if there's anything in here that we didn't really get. Did he ever talk at any great length about his post-presidential career, what he was going to do?

SPALDING: Yes, a great deal. A great deal.

STEWART: Do you recall what specifically was on his mind?

SPALDING: That used to be one of the topics that he could talk about, and it would amuse him to talk about it because it had a certain degree of relevance. And it was on which it was easy to make fun of. I mean,it was one that I could twit him about or anybody could tease him about, and it was one that he could tease himself about. Also, it was one that he could speculate about seriously. What was he going to do? What do you do after you're done and you're still a relatively young man? What do you do when you're really quite young and the highest mountain has been climbed, so to speak? He used to talk a great deal about it. I think it's most likely that he probably would have wanted to come back as a senator.

STEWART: Really?

SPALDING: Yes, I think so.

STEWART: This business of becoming president of Harvard…

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SPALDING: It's possible. But I just don't think it suited his personality. Maybe sometime, you know, had he lived a long life, he very possibly would have because you can't believe that he would have endured forever in the Senate. But there would have been so much for him to do in any administration. We never have had a situation like that that I can recall, have we, where a relatively young man…. I mean, presumably, he -- supposing he had ended up his second term on the same note he left? I mean if he was anywhere near that high a plateau, and more likely he would have been higher, he would have been in such demand and would have had more prestige than anybody else in the country. So I would have thought there would have been an endless amount of work of the kind he would have enjoyed and would have been so able to fulfill.

STEWART: Did he ever mention to you the possibility of not having Mr. Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] on the ticket in 1964?

SPALDING: No, he never did. He never did. I never heard a word about that, which doesn't alter the possibility. Well, it does alter it somewhat. I mean I've always been skeptical -- I'm perfectly aware of how little I knew, but…. Actually, you see, he hadn't even discussed the second term at this point other than to say he hoped it was Barry Goldwater.

STEWART: Well, as you say, it is late and…

SPALDING: Well, have I left anything untouched from your point of view?

STEWART: I don't think so. We really didn't get in any more about his relationship with other members of the family. You know, we hit on it all through this thing. Maybe you could just say a few words about this relationship during the Administration.

SPALDING: With whom?

STEWART: First of all with his father and secondly with his brothers.

SPALDING: In all the time that I knew him, he had a great relationship with his father, and he maintained that right up until the time that his father was sick. He used to consult with him, but his father used to wait for the call. And it was really touching if you knew Mr. Kennedy, who was a terribly aggressive individual, the way he would hold himself in check and the way he would make his recommendations to the President -- I mean with all respect, in all remarkable, I thought, in the restraint and in the manner in which he did it. He had a tremendous respect for his father and an admiration for him. As I say, that existed right up until the time his father was sick, which was a terribly disturbing event because it reduced him to total ineffectiveness. I think he thought that was terribly cruel, something he'd hate to have happen to himself., and if it ever did occur, he was hoping that somebody would not try to save him as he had tried to save his father, just let him pass.

STEWART: Really?

SPALDING: Yes.

STEWART: Did he ever really seriously comment on exactly how much help his brother Robert Kennedy was to him as President?

SPALDING: Oh, yes. He thought Bobby was just invaluable. I mean Bobby helped put the whole thing together, Bobby did all the heavy organizational work. He never

belittled that for a minute.

STEWART: As far as the Administration was concerned.

SPALDING: I think that, as you know, there was initially a great deal of controversy about whether he should make Bobby Attorney General.

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And Bobby's inclination would have been to step aside. But I think again, what really interested him -- again, an example of his interesting pragmatism -- was that it would be awfully helpful to have somebody that you could trust no matter what the circumstances were because he knew enough of politics to know that if you didn't know somebody that well, you couldn't trust anybody. So I've made that seem too Machiavellian or too Byzantine, but the fact of the matter is that with his brother he didn't have to worry at all. There weren't any reservations, and that's a tremendous help, to have somebody else and to be able to sound out other people through somebody you can trust completely. It helped him tremendously, and he relied greatly on his judgment.

STEWART: One final question then, and I'll read it: Arthur Schlesinger says that two of the President's deeper occupations were with death and courage, that he had a deep sense of human mortality and that he was greatly concerned with physical and moral courage. Would you agree with this?

SPALDING: Yes. And the example…. I'd rather we just continued on unless you -- I'm not running out of any time or steam as long as you've got some things where I can make a contribution. I'd like to finish it off thinking we've done it the best possible way.

STEWART: All right, fine.

SPALDING: The business about moral and physical courage. Yes, there's no doubt about that. Those were two things that he could measure and see and two things that had been required of him and he'd seen other people -- so he did have that. Not in any morbid way, I didn't think. But hasn't enough been said about that? I mean that's *Profiles in Courage*, and I don't have any other, anything…

STEWART: The preoccupation with death?

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SPALDING: Well, that I have some insight into. He never spoke about it. I don't recall that he was preoccupied with his own death. But I think he hated the thought of

death. I remember one time Caroline had a little pet bird, and the bird died, and she took it down to his office to show it to him before she buried it. And he really was upset. That was the only untoward thing I ever saw him do. That's the only time that I was startled a bit by his…. He insisted that she get it out of his sight. "Get it away from here! Don't…." Really, in all the time that I knew him -- and I made this remark once in something else that I've forgotten till today -- that's the only incident that I recall that was in any way other than totally usual. I was surprised at his -- it was either a pet sparrow or a pet robin or a pet parakeet or something that had passed along. And it really upset him. He didn't want to see it, and he didn't want to know necessarily about the funeral arrangements. He just wanted it out of the way.

STEWART: Did he mention this afterwards?

SPALDING: Not a bit. Not a bit. Of course it makes you think, you know, I suppose, that he had some intimations of his…. People always say that they thought he did. And I don't recall that to be so. I never saw a clue of it.

STEWART: I think one of the instances in which his concern for people dying was raised fairly early in the Administration or in 1962 when the possibility of sending troops in Southeast Asia, into Laos, was raised. It seems to me this was one of the things that he mentioned, the fact that there would be a goodly number of soldiers who would have to give up their lives and so forth.

SPALDING: I'm sure -- I mean early in the interview you asked me about his personality, and I spoke of his being able to give this feeling of

this more than average intensity which requires more than average awareness. And that, again, involves some heightened perception about the brevity of life, and to that extent I'm certain that that's true. He could probably feel, literally feel, the terrible deprivation of somebody else's death more than another person might. I think he really did. He'd been so sick himself, and he'd lost a brother who he was crazy about, and he'd lost a sister that he adored. He just was able to translate that into other people's feelings.

STEWART: Let me just run through a few things that may be a bit trivial, but at the same time I think your comments might add a little dimension to an understanding of him. Such things as his tastes in food and liquor. Is there anything unusual? Let me ask it this way: Did you see any great change over the period that you knew him in his taste for a particular type of food or a particular type of liquor?

SPALDING: Well, he was so limited by a very jumpy stomach so that he wasn't able to eat a great number of things. He had certain things he was very fond of. Simple

food was what, first, suited him physically better; he was able to handle it better; he was able to digest it better than other…. I don't think he could have existed on an endless French diet. Those things that he had enjoyed at home were probably the things that he liked best most of his life. Fish chowder was a mania.

STEWART: And as far as liquor?

SPALDING: Well, again, I think he was limited. His stomach wasn't able -- he didn't like it and…. He enjoyed drinking -- a bit -- but usually it was just a couple of daiquiris or a bloody mary. Those are the only two things that I can recall that he ever drank. He may have had a little champagne once in a while. But he drank those sparingly. Again, he couldn't have drunk any more if he'd wanted to. I never saw any indication that

he wanted to, just to be able to take a couple of bloody marys for lunch sometimes if it was a holiday or a weekend and a daiquiri in the evening.

STEWART: His appreciation of music. Again, I think there's been a quote in print, possibly by Mrs. Kennedy, that the only music he really enjoyed was "Hail to the Chief."

SPALDING: The song that he liked the best, she said. But there was another, there was some quote by that fellow Rovere [Ricahrd Rovere] who used to write the Washington letter for the *New Yorker* magazine, and he had said something about his limitations in this area. I think that that's valid. He didn't have any great appreciation of classical music. But again it was -- he liked so many things., and he had a deep appreciation of so many things that it was a void.

STEWART: What kind of music did he like?

SPALDING: Pop music, to the extent that he liked music. But I mean he liked music, in a sense. But it was just like the rustling of the wind in the treas. It wasn't anything that he turned to. He liked pop tunes. And just about like that.

STEWART: Television, movies. Again the story goes that, at least during the time he was in the White House, he could never sit through a movie completely.

SPALDING: He liked movies. That started out, you know, as one of the things -- his father was occupied in the movies business when he was…. And so he started bringing home movies to his house and having them run there privately. They always used to have a movie. It had to be a pretty good movie to keep the President in his chair, but he did enjoy movies.

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STEWART: Do any, as far as the years in the White House, that you may have seen with him stand out in your mind?

SPALDING: Well, I mean, you know, the sort of thing that he might stick around for would be the *Guns of Navarone* and -- but anything, anything that was any good. I don't mean that it…. That happened to have involved the War, and that also was something that he knew a bit about. He admired that author particularly, but otherwise it had to be pretty good. I remember his going to see -- he enjoyed the theater a great deal -- we went to see "How to Success in Business Without Really Trying," which was a prize winning play and a good play by any standards. But that night for some reason, either because he was there and everybody was so anxious to see how he reacted, it didn't seem to come off as well as it might have. And he was restless through that. He stayed through the whole performance. He wouldn't have thought to leave. But he was amused by those things, that's all, not concerned too much.

STEWART: Did he usually try to criticize plays that he saw in any great depth?

SPALDING: Oh sure, what he thought about it, and wondering what…. He was curious, he said, "I think this is overrated." And then the second act he liked better.

STEWART: A lot, again, has been made of the parlor games that were frequently played at Hyannis Port, and I think I've read or heard someplace that very often he didn't really shine in those games, that in some cases Mrs. Kennedy outshined him.

SPALDING: Oh, I think that might be true. I don't think he ever felt any sense of competition in the things. He thoroughly enjoyed those and invented some of them. That's all I can recall.

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STEWART: Was his sense of competition athletically as great as has been written about?

SPALDING: Well, again he was limited so by his problem so that he couldn't compete athletically. But there was a terrific sense of competition. He found a release for that in which he was doing.

STEWART: Is there anything outstanding about his attitude concerning the rearing of children that stands out in your mind?

SPALDING: I just thought that he was doing that superlatively well just before his death.

He was enjoying hi dgkids I think to a terrific degree. There weren't so many in his family as there were in his own so I think it was even more enjoyable to him than he had thought it would be. But he really came to understand them, and he plate din that marvelous way that some people have and some people haven't. SO he was just spectacularly successful with his kids at that point.

STEWART: Do you recall him ever making an effort to, oh, for example, read any books about child psychology or…

SPALDING: Oh no. Not child psychiatry. I don't recall that he ever did that. I thought you were going to say books with the children. He was always reading with Caroline and stories to John and constantly talking and telling stories and discussing things back and forth, at their level.

STEWART: What was his general attitude as a parent? Did he try to treat his children with permissiveness or… [Interruption] Was he interested in disciplining of the children?

SPALDING: Yes. I think that he was interested in seeing that they had the security in knowing how far they could go and that they couldn't go away

further. Beyond that I don't think he was anxious to do any more than he had to. But he was making it obviously clear that there were limits.

STEWART: I asked you at the beginning about his attitudes toward religion and towards his church in general, and you mentioned what they were, at least at that time. Did you ever see any change in these attitudes during the time of the presidency?

SPALDING: No. By that time they were hardened into habit.

STEWART: Was there much discussion, at dinner or ever, about religious topics? Was he, for example, aware or very interested in all of the changes, that were going on in the Catholic Church during that time?

SPALDING: I don't think particularly. He was particularly interested in the Pope, Pope John. He thought he was a tremendous figure. And I think he undoubtedly approved of the modernization of the Church.

STEWART: But you never recall discussing…

SPALDING: What I said earlier applies here. We wouldn't have talked anymore particularly

about that. I mean, we would have talked about it but not in any more detail than we talked about other matters.

STEWART: Do you recall anything about his attitude toward women in public life? This again is a subject that people have mentioned, that the President and the Administration in general weren't overly enthused about working with women on an equal basis.

SPALDING: I think that's true. I think that's just instinctively true. I don't think he even bothered to think about whether -- he just would

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have been much more comfortable with Secretary McNamara than he would have been with Mrs. Perkins [Frances Perkins]. It just seemed incongruous to him that a woman would have to appear at the Cabinet meeting, and he'd have to deal with her on a special basis.

STEWART: Following from that, is there anything about his attitude towards sex in American life that stands out in your mind?

SPALDING: No.

STEWART: I'm running out, I think. How about his interest in clothes? Again…

SPALDING: [Laughter] I think we are running out. I think we ought to stop. I've had doubts about this whole interview. You've been so patient and helpful through it, but at this point I think I've exhausted all my knowledge, and I can't be anything except superfluous.

STEWART: All right.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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